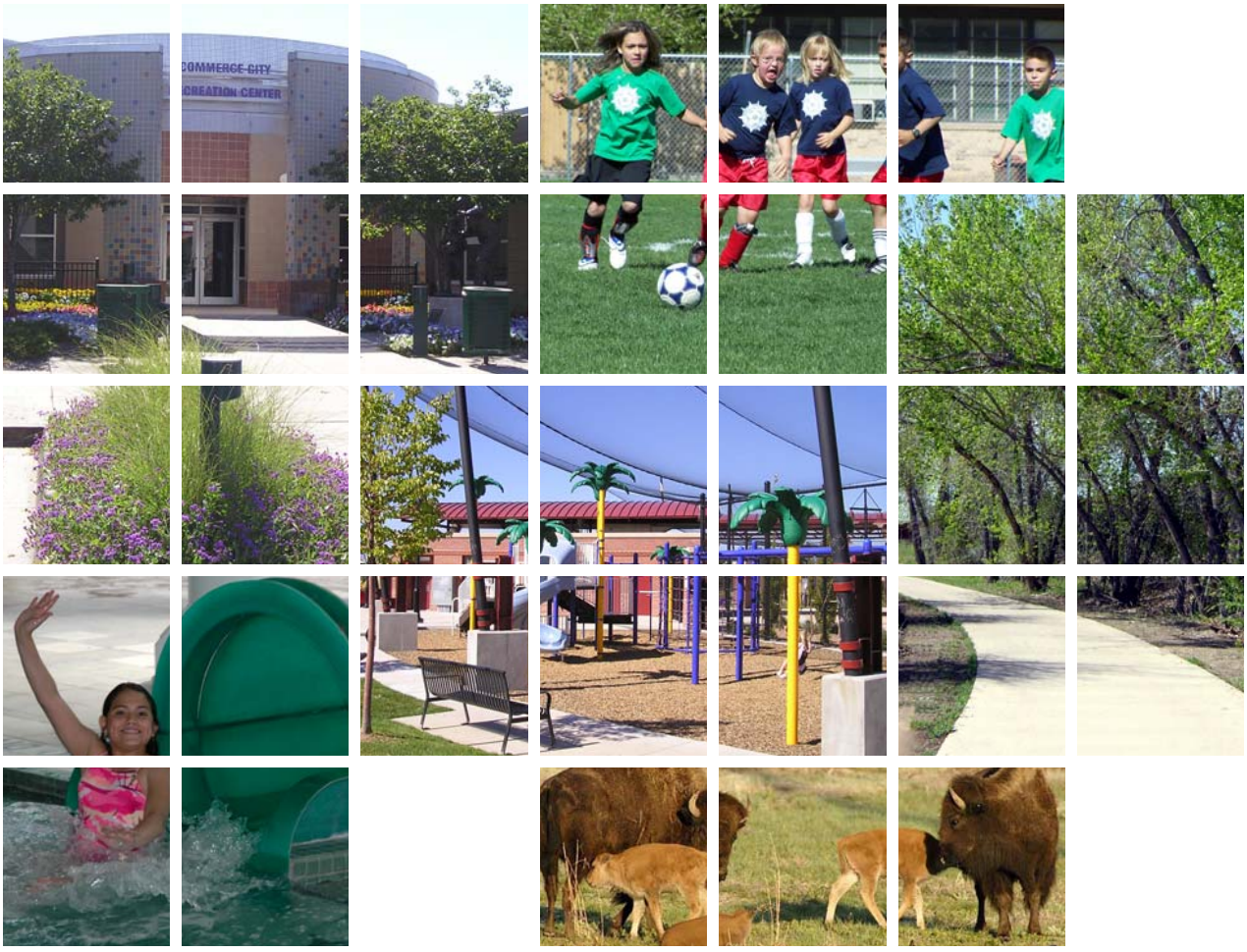

Commerce CITY

COMMERCE CITY, COLORADO

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

AUGUST 2007

Acknowledgements

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I. Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Commerce City leadership and residents value parks and recreation programs and facilities as important to the quality of life of the community. As the City develops to the north, demand for parks and recreation services are increasing. The Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department is faced with a challenge to assess the current programs and facilities and plan for the future evolving needs of the community.

The purpose of this Plan is to provide strategic direction to the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department and the City for the delivery of parks and recreation programs, services and facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents. The strategic planning process began in October 2006 and included an extensive community input process which consisted of a series of focus groups and a statistically-valid mail survey. Community demographics and recreation trends were analyzed as well as existing community surveys and plans. Additionally, a thorough inventory and analysis of existing Commerce City parks and facilities and a review of parks and recreation programs and operations was conducted. This information, analysis and key findings are outlined in the following **Sections II-V** of the plan. The key issues identified through the needs assessment and inventory and analysis formed the basis for the recommended goals, strategies and actions outlined in **Section VI**.

This Strategic Plan for Recreation Programs, Services and Facilities provides a comprehensive approach toward maintaining and enhancing the recreation level of service, translating the City's vision and parks and recreation mission into goals and implementation strategies. A summary of the Plan follows.

KEY FINDINGS

A. Community Needs Assessment

Demographics
The City is experiencing fast growth with new residential development in the northern area. The City's estimated 2006 population is 36,049 and is projected to grow to 50,000 by 2012. The demographics show that there is a higher percentage of youth and young adults in the northern part of the community, while there is a higher percentage of older adults in the historic southern part of the City. There are also significant income differences between the northern and southern parts of the City, with 69% of households in the north earning more than $75,000 compared to 16% of households in the south. 34% of the population of the City is Hispanic (with 24% in the north, and 46% in the south). The diversity of the community presents both challenges and opportunities for parks and recreation services and facilities.

Statistically-Valid Survey Results
As part of this plan, a statistically-valid mail survey was sent to 2,000 randomly selected households. 411 surveys (a 20.6% response rate) were completed. Highlights of the survey follow.

- The top recreation **program priorities** identified from the survey (high importance/high unmeet) are:
    - Adult fitness and wellness programs
    - Water fitness programs
    - Youth Learn to Swim programs
    - Family programs
    - Nature programs
    - Youth sports programs

- The top parks and recreation **facility priorities** identified from the survey (high importance/high unmet need) are:
    - Walking and biking trails
    - Outdoor water parks/pools
    - Indoor swimming pool/leisure pool
    - Indoor fitness and exercise facilities
    - Shelter houses/picnic areas
    - Natural areas/wildlife habitats
    - Large community parks
    - Small neighborhood parks

Recreation Trends
Walking and biking trails rated the highest in importance and unmet need by the community according to the survey results. Trends indicate that exercise walking ranks the highest in participation at the national level. For age levels 55 and older exercise walking is the top recreational activity in frequency of participation.

According to the community survey, fitness and wellness programs ranked high in need by the community. National trends indicate exercising with equipment and aerobic exercise rank fourth and tenth respectively in the top ten activities in which people participate.

Aquatics facilities and youth learn-to-swim programs also ranked high in importance for consideration for future facilities and programs. National trends indicate swimming as exercise and for recreation ranks third in the number of participants at the national level.

Community Input
As part of the public process for the development of this Plan, a series of focus groups and interviews with staff and City Council members were held from October through December 2006. Highlights of this input follow.

- Community places a high value on parks and recreation.
- Additional parks and recreation programs and facilities to meet growing needs of Commerce City are needed.
- Improvements to park amenities in south Commerce City are needed.
- Expanded trail system and connections is desired.

- Preservation of open space/natural spaces is important.
- Funding to support new parks and recreation facility development and operations is needed.

B. Existing Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

Recreation Programs
The Parks and Recreation Department has dedicated professional staff that offers a variety of programs for all ages. The Department has successfully used partnerships with school facilities and the Belle Creek Family Center to expand programming. The following program issues were identified through the findings phase of the planning process.

- A variety of programming for all ages is offered.
- Recreation programming in the north is limited due to reliance on non-Commerce City facilities.
- Methods for customer feedback are inconsistent.
- Partnerships are strong, yet opportunities for improvement exist.
- Staff desire to increase program specific marketing efforts.

Level of Service – The GRASP® Analysis
A comprehensive inventory of recreation components of the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as schools and alternative providers (Homeowner Associations and Metropolitan Districts), was conducted to evaluate the location, quantity and quality of components in the City. The *Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Program (GRASP®)* was used to analyze the Level of Service (LOS) provided by the system's parks, indoor facilities, trails and open space. A summary follows.

- Currently, there is a higher LOS in south Commerce City; however, as residential areas in the north develop, LOS will continue to grow.
- Higher concentrations of service are around the Commerce City Recreation Center in the south and Reunion in the north.
- Most of Commerce City has some service for active components. Currently, higher scores are found in the south area.
- Residents have access to more higher scoring active components than passive components. As the community ages, there may be demand for more passive components.
- Commerce City Recreation Center is the primary indoor facility in the City.
- Taking schools into consideration, most of City has access to at least one component of indoor recreation.
- There is little trail connectivity and a higher level of service for trails in the south.

Alternative Provider and Partnerships
Alternative providers and partnerships are an important aspect of parks and recreation service in Commerce City and supplement the programs and facilities of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Challenges and opportunities to further enhance partnerships were identified through the findings phase of the planning process.

- There is no formal Partnership Policy to guide overall partnership development by the Department.

- Ongoing planning and coordination with the two major alternative providers in north Commerce City – Reunion and Belle Creek Metropolitan Districts – is needed.
- Many outdoor and environmental education program partnership opportunities exist with nearby resources such as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Barr Lake State Park and the Sand Creek Regional Greenway.
- Partnerships with schools are strong, but could be further enhanced.

C. Administration and Operations

Operations
The City has a strong commitment to parks and recreation, which is reflected in the diversity of facilities and programs that exist. Coordinated planning efforts and the resources to support additional programs and facilities to meet the growing needs of the community will need ongoing commitment of resources. To maintain standards, continued attention to appropriate staffing levels for both programming and maintenance is paramount.

Funding
One of the challenges facing Commerce City is identification of additional capital as well as operating funding to support the development of additional parks, recreation, open space and trails as the City grows. The City makes use of grant funding when possible, however, new sources of funding is needed to develop the large inventory of recently acquired land for community parks as well as develop trail connections through the City. In addition, the Department has identified the need to develop a cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy to help guide decisions about program-related fees and charges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning process identified six action themes for recommendations: Consistent Level of Service Provision, Trail System Connections, Growth Management and Planning, Program Development and Expansion, Partnership Development and Management and Organizational Development. Following is a summary of Strategic Plan goals and strategies.

Action Theme One: CONSISTENT LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVISION

GOAL 1.1: Provide consistent and equitable Level of Service (LOS) for parks.

Strategies:
1.1.1 Upgrade select park components to increase LOS of existing parks.

Actions:
- Upgrade Leyden Park Playground
- Enhance Joe Reilly (Merchants) Park Plaza
- Pave Monaco Vista Basketball Court
- Replace Fairfax Park Group Picnic Shelter
- Complete Monaco Park Trail Loop

1.1.2 Upgrade select park modifiers to increase LOS of existing parks.

Actions:
Consider upgrading park modifiers (such as seating, shade, restroom facilities, etc.) at the following park sites:

- Derby Park
- Gifford Park
- Leyden Park
- Joe Reilly Park
- Monaco Vista Park
- Prairie Gateway Open Space
- Urquidez Centennial Park (Adams County School District is responsible for maintenance and operations)

1.1.3 Add park components to increase LOS of existing parks.

Actions:

- Initiate an "Art in Parks" program.
- Add loop walks to existing parks, when appropriate.

1.1.4 Redevelop Fairfax Park.

GOAL 1.2: Provide a consistent Level of Service for Indoor Recreation Facilities.

Strategies:

1.2.1 Maximize the use of the Commerce City Recreation Center by residents of north and south Commerce City.

Actions:

- Conduct a special marketing campaign to encourage the use of the Commerce City Recreation Center by residents in the Northern Range.
- Work with RTD to improve public transportation access to the Commerce City Recreation Center with routes between south and north Commerce City.

1.2.2 Study the feasibility of developing a new indoor facility in the Northern Range.

Actions:

- Consider locating in a central community park location, such as First Creek Park (currently undeveloped).
- Explore partnerships in the development and operation of a new recreation center.

1.2.3 Continue to work with partners and alternative providers to expand indoor recreation choices, with a focus on fitness and wellness facilities.

Actions:

- Continue shared-use facility partnerships with schools.
- Work with private fitness providers to complement City facilities, with a focus in northern Commerce City.

Action Theme Two: TRAIL SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

GOAL 2.1: Implement Trail Master Plan, with priorities on connectivity and completing loops.

Strategies:

2.1.1 Complete a looped trail in the Northern Range, using Second Creek, O'Brian Canal, and the utility easement south of 104th or the trail on the north side of 104th as the primary corridors.

2.1.2 Create spur trail connections from this trail to the Platte River Greenway and the new E-470 trail or Second Creek.

2.1.3 Complete the O'Brian Canal Trail and the Second Creek Trail for their remaining lengths through Commerce City.

2.1.4 Work with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge to create trail connections along the perimeter.

2.1.5 Create safe crossings of streets, railroads, and other barriers wherever possible to allow for better connections to the trails and to parks and other recreational facilities.

GOAL 2.2: Increase recreational and fitness biking, running/walking opportunities for residents.

Strategies:

2.2.1 Add loop walks to existing parks, when appropriate.

2.2.2 Strive to include loop walks in all new parks.

2.2.3 Provide mileage markers along loop walks and trails.

2.2.4 Include loop walks and trails and mileage on park system map.

Action Theme Three: GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

GOAL 3.1: Review all current policy and legislative tools to ensure that development growth supports the City's parks and recreation Level of Service standards and goals.

Strategy:

3.1.1 Conduct a Park Impact Fee Study and update impact fee requirements.

GOAL 3.2: Ensure that the City parks and recreation Levels of Service standards are being met by private developers.

Strategies:

3.2.1 Formalize and communicate expected parks and recreation Levels of Service standards for private developments.

Actions:

- Consider adopting minimum park standards proposed in this plan of at least four components (possibly two active components such as courts and athletic fields and two passive components such as picnic shelters, natural areas or landscaped gardens or public arts).
- Develop list of component choices.
- When possible, require some form of public input process to determine types of components to include in park designs.
- Formalize these standards and guidelines in written development agreements.

3.2.2 Ensure that parks and trails owned and operated by HOA's are preserved and maintained in good condition as a community resource for the long-term.

Actions:

- Create standards for park equipment ensuring commercial-grade quality for park amenities (playgrounds, etc.).
- Sponsor annual meeting of management of HOA's to share information on citywide parks and recreation services and park management and maintenance best practices and coordinate planning, as needed.

GOAL 3.3: Continue to coordinate planning for parks and recreation services and facilities with Reunion and Belle Creek Metro Districts.

Strategy:

3.3.1 Convene a meeting annually to review the Parks and Recreation Master Plans of each entity to ensure services and facilities complement the City's and address identified community needs.

GOAL 3.4: Implement a 5-Year Master Planning schedule as well as bi-annual updates to the Strategic and/or Master Plan.

GOAL 3.5: Update the park system database annually.

Action Theme Four: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

GOAL 4.1: Develop a standard practice for customer program feedback, program evaluation and program development.

Strategies:

4.1.1 Develop a standard practice to get customer feedback.
4.1.2: Develop program evaluation criteria and process and implement annually.
4.1.3 Implement new programs (based on research and feedback).

4.1.4 Provide concurrent youth and adult programming as a way to increase participation.

GOAL 4.2: Address the recreation programming needs in north Commerce City.

Strategies:

4.2.1 Strengthen the partnership with School District 27J.

4.2.2 Capitalize on the use of Belle Creek Community Center.

4.2.3 Promote fitness and wellness to citizens in the north through the Commerce City Recreation Center as well as alternative provider indoor facilities.

Actions:

- Hold joint fitness and wellness special events with partners.
- Continue to cross-market facilities and programs in Commerce City and alternative providers.

GOAL 4.3: Foster a sense of community pride and celebrate cultural diversity through programming efforts.

Strategies:

4.3.1 Continue to offer special events that bring whole community together.

4.3.2 Develop a pilot community arts project.

4.3.3 Be responsive to cultural diversity in the community.

Actions:

- Recruit and hire qualified bilingual staff (Spanish/English), especially for Recreation Center information desk.
- Continue bi-lingual marketing and outreach efforts.

Action Theme Five: PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

GOAL 5.1: Enhance and maximize partnerships opportunities.

Strategies:

5.1.1 Formalize a Partnership Policy.

5.1.2 Re-evaluate existing Partnership Agreements with Belle Creek Family Center and the School Districts and update and enhance as needed.

5.1.3 Increase nature and environmental education programs through enhanced partnership with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

5.1.4 Explore the development of a soccer partnership regarding youth soccer programs.

GOAL 5.2: Formalize volunteer recruitment, training and procedures.

Strategies:

5.2.1 Develop a volunteer manual.

5.2.2 Develop a volunteer orientation program and annual trainings.

5.2.3 Evaluate the existing annual volunteer recognition event.

Action Theme Six: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Park and Athletic Field Maintenance

GOAL 6.1: Develop and institute an Athletic Field Closure Policy.

GOAL 6.2: Continue to develop and refine life cycle costing assessments for facilities and equipment.

GOAL 6.3: Plan for maintenance staffing and equipment needs of new parks, recreation indoor facilities, open space and trails.

Strategies:

6.3.1 Continue to track labor hours and equipment use for park and athletic field maintenance tasks.

6.3.2 Budget for increased maintenance staffing and equipment needs of new park and recreation facilities.

Cost Recovery and Funding

GOAL 6.4: Develop a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy and implement.

Strategies:

6.4.1 Adopt a Pricing Policy and Strategy.
6.4.2 Track costs.
6.4.3 Identify citywide participant categories of service.
6.4.4 Determine fee schedule and subsidy levels.
6.4.5 Re-evaluate the Fee Reduction/Waiver Policy.
6.4.6 Enhance financial tracking and analysis.
6.4.7 Consider policy revisions to increase revenue generation potential.

GOAL 6.5: Create a Sponsorship Policy.

GOAL 6.6: Solicit additional grants and private donations.

Strategy:

6.6.1 Continue to refine and implement an annual grant action plan.

GOAL 6.7: Identify funding sources to support park and facility development and operations.

Strategy:

6.7.1 Develop a bond or sales tax initiative to generate funds for priority improvements.

Marketing

GOAL 6.8: Incorporate a benefit-based marketing approach into marketing and communication materials.

GOAL 6.9: Enhance strategic marketing of high priority program areas.

Strategies:

6.9.1 Develop a targeted marketing campaign to promote adult fitness and wellness programs.

6.9.2 Develop a targeted marketing campaign to northern Commerce City residents to share information and promote participation in Department programs and facilities.

GOAL 6.10: Streamline marketing procedures.

GOAL 6.11: Continue to cross market programs and special events open to the public with partners and alternative providers.

II. Past, Present and Future – The Planning Context

This section of the plan provides a context from which the plan was developed. First, the City's vision and mission as well as the Parks and Recreation Department's mission is provided, followed by the purpose of this strategic plan. Next, a brief history of Commerce City and the Parks and Recreation Department is summarized. Finally, the planning process methodology and timeline is outlined.

A. Vision and Mission

The City of Commerce City's **Community vision** is: Maintaining a *"Quality Community for a Lifetime."*

The City of Commerce **City's mission** is to:

- *Provide municipal services and programs valued by our citizens*
- *Plan and develop a unified sustainable Community*
- *Enhance the quality of life in our Community by/through:*
  - *Economic diversity and development*
  - *Offering unique leisure activities and opportunities*
  - *Planning and developing a quality physical environment*
  - *Enhancing the social fabric of our Community.*

The City of Commerce City **Department of Parks and Recreation's mission** is to *provide quality leisure opportunities for the life long enrichment of the community through:*

- *Parks, trails, open space and other recreation facilities*
- *A wide variety of programs and services to meet individual and community needs*
- *Beneficial and sustainable partnerships*

- All of which are vital to a safe, viable and unified city.

B. Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide strategic direction to the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department and the City for the delivery of parks and recreation programs, services and facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents.

C. Community Overview

Commerce City was originally settled in the 1850's and was known as Commerce Town. In 1952 Commerce City was incorporated and changed the name from Commerce Town to what we know today. "Crossroads of Colorado" is the name that Commerce City assumed because it is the meeting place of railroads, highways and airport traffic. Located eight miles from downtown Denver and adjacent to Denver International Airport, the City continues to attract new commercial and residential development and is rapidly growing in the "Northern Range" of the City, representing 43 square miles of developable land.

The historic "City Center" in the southern part of the community, is primarily characterized as an industrial, multi-ethnic, blue-collar community that includes a large Hispanic population. The growing Northern Range development is more suburban in nature with demographics that predominantly reflect a middle-income, white collar, Caucasian community.

D. Parks and Recreation Department History

The City of Commerce City is a place of great recreational opportunities. Recreation resources include the Gold Medal Award winning Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department, the Commerce City Recreation Center; the award winning Buffalo Run Golf Course; the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge; the Prairie Gateway and Dick's Sporting Goods Park; the close proximity of Barr Lake State Park; and numerous parks, open space and trails including the Sand Creek Regional Greenway, a trail corridor connecting Commerce City to the City of Aurora and the City and County of Denver.

On April 1, 1984 the City of Commerce City entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Adams County School District 14 (ACSD 14) for the provision of Recreation programs and services. Prior to that that time, ACSD 14 provided recreation programming in the community and the Parks Division was part of the City's Public Works Department.

In 1984 the Parks and Recreation Department was established as we know it today. Steady growth in the community increased the demand for the availability of year-round recreation programs and services. At that time, Commerce City relied heavily on school facilities for its indoor recreation needs. While the City and ACSD 14 had a cooperative working relationship, schools were not always available to meet the growing needs of the community, hence the planning for a new recreation center that would be owned and operated by Commerce City.

On February 20th, 1987 the new 49,000 square foot Commerce City Recreation Center was dedicated and quickly became the crown jewel of the community and obvious focus for civic pride. In 1997, an addition of 18,000 square feet was constructed completing the master plan for the center existing today. The residents of Commerce City and surrounding communities continue to enjoy the state of art facility including an indoor running track, gymnasium, weight/fitness areas, ceramics, arts and crafts rooms, multi-purpose rooms for a variety of programs and meetings, dance/aerobics rooms, racquetball courts, an indoor swimming pool, gymnastics center and senior activity center.

The Commerce City Recreation Center has been open for two decades. Throughout that time, over 2.5 million daily visits have been registered including daily admissions, annual passes and

punch cards. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Department currently offers over 120 different classes for people of all ages, interests and abilities.

Today, the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department continues to work cooperatively with school districts including ACSD 14 and 27J, making use of both indoor and outdoor amenities for a variety of recreation programs and services. In addition to the Commerce City Recreation Center, the City has access to indoor and outdoor amenities owned and operated by metropolitan districts including Reunion and Belle Creek. Continued growth resulting in the increasing demand for programs, services and facilities in Commerce City established the need for completion of a Recreation Strategic Plan based on the evaluation of existing opportunities as well as unmet needs identified by Commerce City residents.

E. Related Planning Efforts and Integration

Commerce City has completed planning studies to guide the development and preservation of parks, recreation, open space and trails. In addition, the City has been part of regional planning efforts related to open space and trails systems that serve the broader Denver metropolitan area community. Below are some of the plans that were reviewed as part of this strategic planning process.

Past Plans and Studies

- *Prairieways Action Plan* (1999)
- *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (June 1994)
- *The Prairie Gateway Project Proposed Development Strategy, Summary Report* (January 2001)
- *Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge, Surplus Property Master Plan*
- *Sand Creek Regional Greenway Brochure*
- *The Sand Creek Corridor Master Plan*
- *A Commitment to Excellence: Investments in Parks, Greenways and Trails*
- *The Emerald Strands: A Cooperative Park, Open Space, and Trail Plan for the Area Surrounding the New Denver International Airport* (February 1990)
- *Commerce City Bikeways and Trails*
- *Community Needs Assessment Study* (2005)

F. Accomplishments from the "Prairieways Action Plan"

The *Prairieways Action Plan* (1999) provided a framework as well as action steps for the development of parks, trails and open space in Commerce City's Northern Range that includes roughly 43 square miles bounded by the South Platte River, Barr Lake State Park, Denver International Airport, Pena Boulevard, East 56th Avenue, Quebec Street and 88th Avenue. Commerce City has implemented a majority of the land acquisitions and recommendations identified in this Plan. Following is a summary of the major land acquisition and development accomplishments from this Plan. Commerce City has been proactive in acquiring land for future parks and open space and is now faced with the

challenge to identify adequate funding to develop parks and recreation amenities on this land.

Land Acquisitions

Community Parks

- Prairie Legacy Park (190 acres)
  The plan for the park changed from the concept in the Prairieways Action Plan. Instead of a developed community park it will be a passive open space with wetlands and trails.
- First Creek Community Park (71 acres)
- Second Creek Community Park (Buffalo Run Community Park)
  (35 acres acquired, 102 acres left to acquire)
- Buckley Community Park (25 acres acquired; 40 acres to be dedicated)

Neighborhood Parks

- River Run Park (15 acres)
- Potomac Farms/Turnberry Park (15 acres)
- Second Creek Park (20 acres)
- Stampede Park (9.5 acres)
- Buckley Crossing Park (20 acres)

Trail/Greenway/Open Space

- O'Brian Canal and Burlington Ditch (18 acres of land adjacent)
- Second Creek Flood Plain (146 acres)
- First Creek Flood Plain (14.5 acres)
- Ragweed Draw (47 acres)

Developed Parks

- River Run Park
- Stampede Park

Remaining Acquisitions

- 4-5 additional neighborhood parks (to be dedicated by developers)
- Second Creek Community Park (102 acres)
- Buckley Community Park (40 acres to be dedicated by developer)
- Box Elder Community Park (to be dedicated by the developer)

G. Methodology of the Planning Process

This project has been guided by a project team made up of key staff, as well as a public input process. The project team met with consultants from the GreenPlay consultant team and provided input throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort creates a Strategic Plan that fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates local knowledge and institutional history. The project consisted of the following tasks:

Needs Assessment and Public Involvement:

- Review of previous planning efforts and City historical information;
- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including anticipated population growth
- Extensive community involvement effort including focus groups, meetings with key stakeholders, a community-wide public meeting and a statistically-valid community interest and opinion survey
- Identification of alternative providers of recreation services to provide insight regarding the market opportunities in the area for potential new facilities and services
- Research of trends and statistics related to American lifestyles to help guide the efforts of programming staff

Level of Service Analysis:

- Interviews with staff to provide information about parks and recreations facilities and services, along with insight into the current practices and experiences of the City in serving its residents and visitors
- Analysis addressing parks, recreation, open space, trails and related services

Inventory:

- Inventory of parks and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess the condition of the amenities and surrounding areas

Assessment and Analysis:

- Review and assess relevant plans
- Measurement of the current delivery of service using the GRASP® Level of Service Analysis and allowing for a target level of service to be determined that is both feasible and aligned with the desires of citizens as expressed through the citizen survey; this analysis is also represented graphically through maps
- Exploration of finance and funding mechanisms to support development and sustainability of the system

Recommendations and Implementation Strategies:

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into themes, goals and strategies for implementation
- Development of an action plan for recommendations and capital improvements including cost and timeframe to support the implementation of the Plan

H. Timeline for Completing the Master Plan

Start-up	September 2006
Community Process	October-November 2006
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Facilities	October- January 2006
Demographic and Trends Analysis	September-November 2006
Analysis of Area Programs and Services	October 2006-February 2007
Community Needs Assessment Survey	January-February 2007
Financial Analysis	November 2006-January 2007
Findings Compilation Report	March 2007
Presentation of Findings Report	March-April 2007
Draft Strategic Plan	July 2007
Presentations of Draft Strategic Plan	August-September 2007
Adoption of Strategic Plan	September 2007

III. What We Want - Our Community and Identified Needs

Identification of the current park resources as well as recreation trends, community demographics and needs help us better understand future parks and recreation needs and opportunities for Commerce City. Following is an overview of the Commerce City community and a needs assessment of parks and recreation facilities and services. This section first describes key community demographic information and national trends in parks and recreation services. Additionally, community input from stakeholder interviews and a series of focus groups identifies strengths, weaknesses of and opportunities for Commerce City's parks and recreation facilities and services. Next, results from a statistically-valid community survey are highlighted to further clarify park and recreation needs and interests. Furthermore, the GRASP® inventory of current parks and recreation facilities is reviewed. Finally an overview of alternative recreation providers and partnerships are discussed. All of this information provides a framework to understand Commerce City's context, community needs and future direction.

A. Community Profile and Demographic Study

Service Area and Population

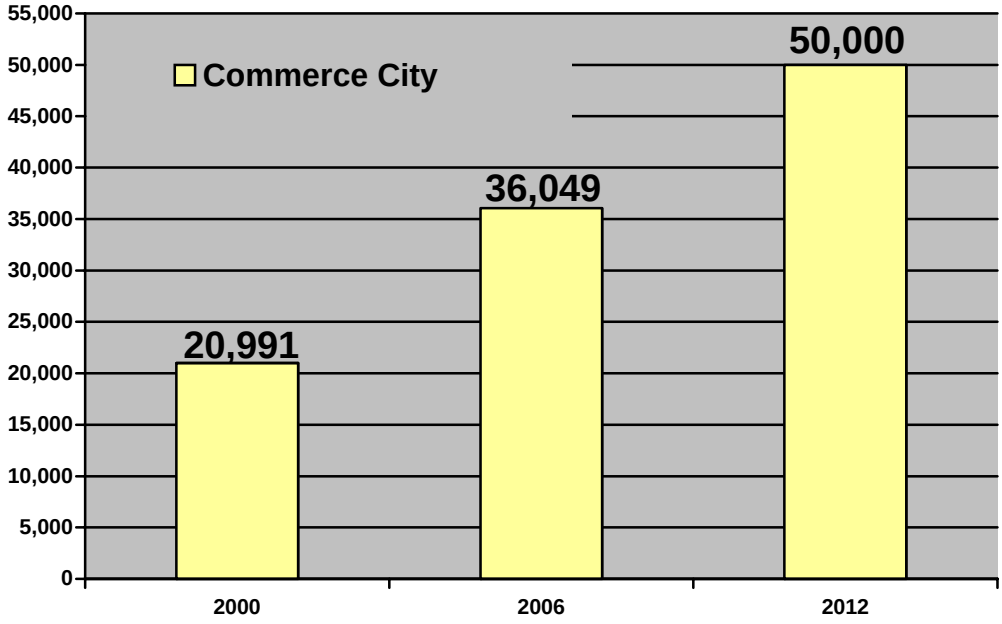
For this study, a combination of sources was used for Commerce City demographic information. The primary source of information was census data collected by Corona Research, Inc., under contract with the City of Commerce City. This data provides demographic numbers for two geographic areas, roughly north and south of 96th Avenue. ESRI Business Information Solutions was examined to determine state and national demographic numbers.

The 2006 population estimate for the City of Commerce City is 36,049 based on information from Corona Research, Inc. The population of North Commerce City is 16,865, and the population of South Commerce City is 19,184. The population of North Commerce City is growing rapidly and is expected to exceed the population in the historic South Commerce City in the coming years. As the demographics of the community change, Commerce City is faced with challenges to respond to the evolving needs of the community, while at the same time striving to create a sense of unity.

Population Forecasts

Although we can never know the future with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it in order to plan for the future. The population estimates in **Figure 1** are derived from the following sources. The 2000 population estimate is from the US Census. The 2006 population is from the Corona Research census and the 2012 projection is from the City of Commerce City. **Figure 1** details the fast growth that Commerce City is undergoing. (Note: This growth does not take into account any future annexation potential.)

Figure 1: Population Projections 2000 to 2012



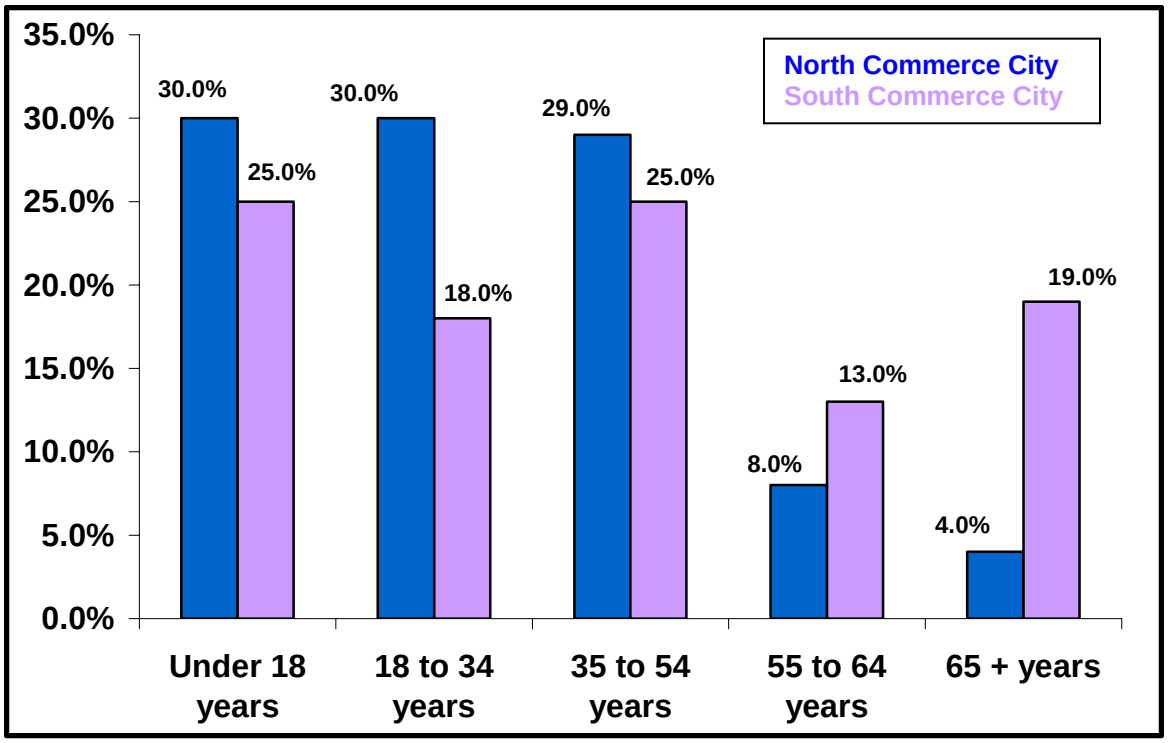
Population, Age Ranges, and Family Information

Age Distribution

The following age breakdown is used to separate the population into age-sensitive user groups and to retain the ability to adjust to future age-sensitive trends. Population distribution by age for North and South Commerce City is demonstrated in **Figure 2.**

- **Under 18 years:** This group represents a large span of potential program participants from preschool through school age programs. The upper range of this group represents teen/young adult program participants moving out of the youth programs and into adult programs.
- **18 to 34 years:** This group represents young adult program participants, with characteristics of beginning long-term relationships and establishing families.
- **35 to 54 years:** This group represents users of a wide range of adult programming and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters.
- **55 to 64 years:** This group represents users of older adult programming. Many in this age category are approaching retirement or already retired and typically enjoying grandchildren.
- **65 years plus:** This group will be doubling in 14 years. Recreation Centers, senior centers and other senior programs can be a significant link in the health care system. This group generally also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

Figure 2: Population Breakdown – Commerce City, CO (2006)



Source: Corona Research, Inc.

Population Comparisons

Figure 2 illustrates the population breakdown by age categories for both North and South Commerce City. North Commerce City has the higher percentage of population under age 54, especially in the 18 to 34 years category, while the higher percentage of older population 55 years and up resides in the South Area.

South Commerce City has higher percentages of residents in the 65+ age category when compared to the North Area, as well as the State and Nation. This demographic information reinforces the importance of maintaining and expanding a diversity of programming geared toward older adults.

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions, the 2006 median age for the City of Commerce City is 31.0, which is significantly younger than the median age for the State of Colorado (35.6) and the Nation (36.5).

Race (2006)

As shown in **Table 1**, the race with the largest population is White (65% in North and 47% in South Commerce City), while the second largest race is Hispanic/Latino with 24% and 46% of the population respectively.

Table 1: Race Comparisons (2006)

Race	North Commerce City	South Commerce City	Commerce City Totals
White Alone	65.0%	47%	57%
African American Alone	2.0%	.2%	2%
American Indian Alone	1.0%	1.0%	1%
Asian Alone or Pacific Islander Alone	3.0%	2.0%	2%
Two or More Races	4.0%	3.0%	3%
Hispanic/Latino Origin (Any Race)	24%	46%	34%

Source: Corona Research, Inc.

Education

According to Corona Research, Inc., 45% of the population of Commerce City has a High School Diploma. 17% of the population has a Bachelor's degree, and 5% of the population has a Graduate degree. The educational attainment breakdown for North and South Commerce City is shown in **Table 2**. Overall, North Commerce City has a higher percentage of education attainment of Associate's Degree or higher than South Commerce City.

Table 2: Educational Attainment – 25 Years and Older (2000)

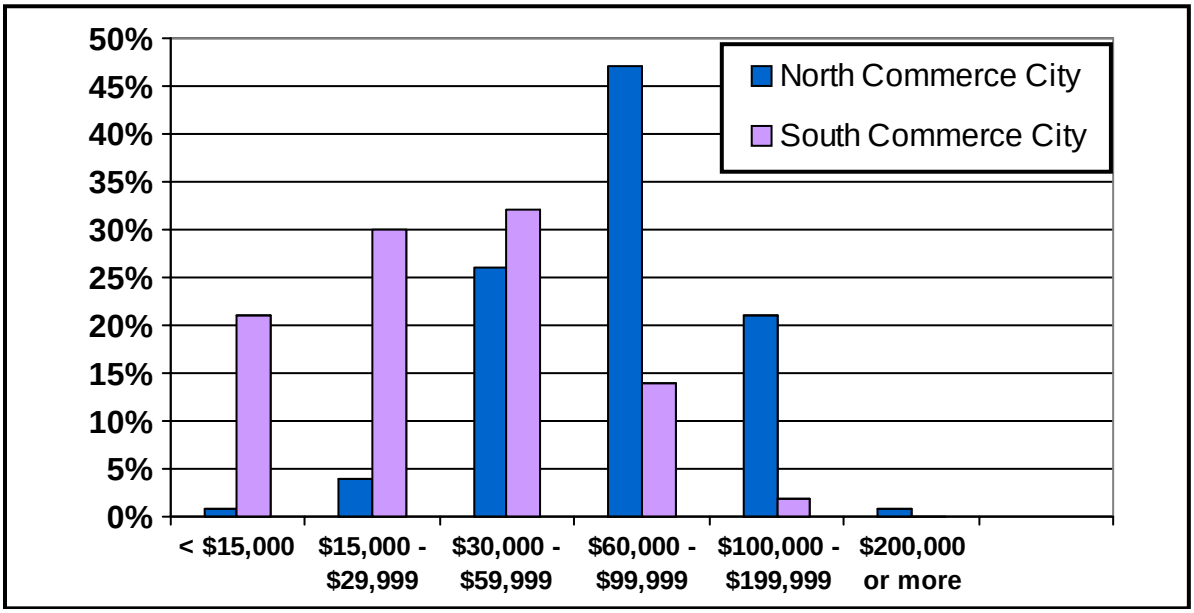
Degree	North Commerce City	South Commerce City	State of Colorado	US
Less than 9th Grade	3.0%	12.0%	4.8%	7.5%
9th-12th Grade, No Diploma	5.0%	18.0%	8.2%	12.1%
High School Graduate	41.0%	52.0%	47.2%	49.6%
Associate Degree	17.0%	11.0%	7.0%	6.3%
Bachelor's Degree	25.0%	5.0%	21.60%	15.5%
Graduate Degree	8.0%	1.0%	11.1%	8.9%

Source: Corona Research, Inc.

Household Income

Figure 3 shows households by income**.** While only a very small percent (1%) in North Commerce City earn less than $15,000 annually, a large share of households in the South Commerce City (21%) earns less than $15,000 annually. In North Commerce City, 69% earn more than $75,000, while in South Commerce City only 16% earn this amount. In comparison, 36.4% of the households in the State of Colorado and 32.1% of the households in the US earn more than $75,000 annually.

Figure 3: Households by Income (2006)



Source: Corona Research, Inc.

Household Units

Table 3 shows Owner Occupied and Renter Occupied Housing Units within North and South Commerce City compared to Colorado and the United States. Both areas of Commerce City have significantly higher percentages of home ownership than both the state and nation, indicating a stable resident population.

Table 3: Housing Units (2006)

Housing Units	North Commerce City	South Commerce City	Colorado	United States
Owner Occupied Units	95.0%	80.0%	62.7%	61.6%
Renter Occupied Units	5.0%	20.0%	26.3%	28.9%
Vacant Housing Units	Not available	Not available	11.1%	9.5%

Source: Corona Research, Inc. and ESRI Business Solutions, Inc.

Additional Information

Health and Obesity

The United Health Foundation has ranked Colorado 17th in its 2005 State Health Rankings. It was 13th in 2004. The State's biggest strengths include:

- low prevalence of obesity at 16.7 percent
- low rate of cardiovascular deaths
- low percentage of children in poverty
- low rate of cancer deaths

Some of the challenges the State faces include:

- low per capita public health spending
- limited access to adequate prenatal care
- low immunization coverage

Source: http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/shr2005/states/Colorado.html

Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department would benefit from continued collaborations and partnerships with health care professionals to combat some of these health issues.

Demographic Summary

The demographic differences between the South and North Commerce City are significant, with the South being characterized as older and working class, while the North is characterized as younger with more white-collar professionals. There is a significant Hispanic/Latino population in the South (46%); however, the population in the North has diversity with 24% of the 2006 population of Hispanic/Latino origin.

The Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department will need to assess the unique recreation and leisure interests of its diverse population and respond with programs and facilities to address these needs.

B. Current Recreation Trends

Various data sources convey national recreation trends which can influence Commerce City. The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) 2005 survey on sports participation revealed several activities pertinent to Commerce City are currently very popular or growing in popularity. These include various aquatics related activities, sports, walking and exercising with equipment. Selected activities relevant to the City are highlighted below.

Youth Participation

- For youth 7 to 11 years of age, bicycle riding has the highest number of participants. The fastest growing activity by change in participation rate is skateboarding (219%), followed by snowboarding (91%). Between 1995 and 2005 participation in-line skating decreased more than 45%.
- In 2005, the top three (3) activities that youth ages 12 to 17 years old participated in are: basketball, bicycle riding, and fishing.

Fitness

- Exercise walking is the number one activity for Americans, with 86 million participants in 2005.
- The top three sports activities for persons 65 years and older in 2004 were: exercise walking, exercising with equipment and swimming.
- Fitness sports participation showed increases for all activities between 2004 and 2005 including: exercise walking (1.5%), swimming (8.5%), exercising with equipment

(4%), bicycle riding (7%), weightlifting (35.4%), aerobic exercising (14.4%), running and jogging (9.5%) and off road, mountain biking (14.9%). These activities are listed in descending order of total participation.

- In 2004 the average number of days of participation in Pilates was 42.5 days up from 38.3 days in 2003.
- Exercise walking has experienced a 22% increase since 1995. For women exercise walking is also the number one activity with 51.8 million participants.
- Yoga and Tai Chi had total participation of 5.6 million in 2003. The 2005 data indicates that women account for 87.2% of the total participation.
- Weightlifting participation increased 35.4% between 2004 and 2005.

Team Sports (from various sources)

- Team sports continue to experience an overall trend of declining participation.
- Overall participation in amateur softball has been declining since 2000. The number of adult Amateur Softball Association teams decreased three percent (3%) between 2004 and 2005. (2007 Statistical Abstract)
- Overall participation in Lacrosse has doubled between 2000 and 2005. (Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, SGMA)
- Among the team sports, tackle football (20.1%) and soccer (18.1%) experienced the largest increases in participation between 1995 & 2005. At the same time a decline in softball (-20%) and volleyball (-26.5%) participation occurred. (NSGA)
- Women playing team sports have been on the increase. Females account for a significant number of softball participants: slow-pitch 47% and fast-pitch 75%. In court and grass volleyball, females represent the majority of participants and in beach volleyball they represent 46% of all players. (SGMA)

Other noteworthy national recreational trends include:

- Participation in structured programmed activities has decreased; programs are moving towards unstructured, individual, and drop-in programs.
- Baby Boomers place value on exercise and fitness and tend to participate in more individualized activities rather than group events.
- Demand is increasing for family programs and programs for girls and women.
- Young adults and Americans with annual household incomes of $50,000 or more are more inclined than the total public to engage in outdoor activity frequently.
- More activities are being adapted for disabled participants. Programs should strive to be "universally" accessible.
- Fitness and wellness are viewed as a lifestyle that stresses the integration of mental, physical, and spiritual well-being.
- Sixty percent of American adults do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. (CDC, 2004)
- Action sports (in-line skating, snowboarding, skateboarding, etc.) are the strongest area of growth in the sporting goods industry.

Recreation Trends in the Hispanic Community

The Hispanic estimated population in Commerce City in 2006 was 34% (with 46% living south of 96th Street). In addition to direct input from Hispanic members of the community through the public input process, it is helpful to consider some of the national recreation trends and issues related to the Hispanic community.

The following trends are noted in a March 2006 Outdoor Industry Foundation report, *The Hispanic Community and Outdoor Recreation* by the UCLA Anderson School of Management:

- Available leisure time in the Hispanic community is growing; however, total leisure time available is currently low.
- Hispanics are interested in participating in sports and other physical activities for social reasons as well as health reasons.
- A strong commitment to family and friends drives leisure decision making.
- Income level does not drastically impact participation and is not a factor in outdoor activity interest.
- Obesity is a major issue with Hispanics. Nearly 25% of Hispanic children 12-18 are overweight, compared to 12.9%of whites and 21.8% of blacks.

An article entitled *Reaching Out to Hispanics in Recreation* by McChesney, Gerken and McDonald on the National Recreation and Park Association website, states that leisure in the Hispanic community is focused around "spending time together." They suggest that communities need to provide a variety of parks and recreation facilities for social gatherings. They encourage parks and recreation departments to reach out to Hispanics through "inviting, involving and including" Hispanic residents in recreation services through marketing, and inclusion as staff and board members.

C. Community and Stakeholder Input

As part of the public process for the development of this Plan, a series of focus groups were held in Commerce City in October through December 2006. Seven (7) focus groups were held that included community residents in the northern and southern parts of the city (one conducted in Spanish), Advisory Committee members, and alternative providers/partners. Three (3) focus groups were held with staff representatives from different City departments. In addition, interviews were held with six (6) council members. Over 100 individuals participated in the public process described above. Participants were asked for input related to the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities related to parks, recreation, open space and trails in Commerce City.

(In addition, twenty-two (22) staff members were interviewed. This staff input regarding Parks and Recreation Department programs and operations is integrated into Sections III and IV of this document.)

RESIDENT FOCUS GROUPS

Northern Range Resident Input
Two focus groups were held in the northern part of Commerce City on November 8, 2006 at Second Creek Elementary School (with 12 participants), and November 9 at Thimmig Elementary School (9 participants). The input from these two focus groups is also included in the summary.

What are the **strengths** of parks and recreation in Commerce City?

- Nice parks (Pioneer, River Run, etc.) and Recreation Center
- Affordable rental and program opportunities
- Programs (diversity, summer camp, gymnastics, seniors, etc.)
- Good non competitive youth sports program
- Advertising – City Lights, flyers from school, Activity Guide
- Buffalo Run Golf Course

What are the **weaknesses** of parks and recreation in Commerce City?

- Lack of adult programs – fitness, sports
- Location of the Recreation Center is not convenient if you live north
- Not enough connected trails
- Reunion Recreation Center is only for residents
- High demand up north and not lot of things to do
- Have to drive everywhere
- Lack of youth activities
- No off leash dog park that is fenced
- Lack of parking at some parks
- Price issues for low-income families

What are the **opportunities** related to parks and recreation in Commerce City?

- More unity in the community – "programs, facilities to bring us together"
- A centrally-located Recreation Center
- Programs for working parents and their kids
- Increase adult program variety and times offered
- Expand indoor facilities (i.e. multi-generational center, recreation center in north, youth/teen center, ice rink etc.)
- Expand outdoor facilities (i.e. dog park, outdoor aquatics, skate park, sports stadium, practice fields, new park in Foxton Village, fishing pond, etc.)
- More interconnected trails
- Use existing school facilities to offer recreation programs
- Better park planning with developers
- Preservation of open space and wildlife corridors

What are the **threats/barriers** that get in the way of providing parks and recreation facilities and services?

- North/ South divisions and perceptions
- Finances
- Uncertainty about growth/what's going to be developed in the north area
- Graffiti – kids are bored
- Potential prairie dog migration

Suggested improvements to existing recreation facilities and parks

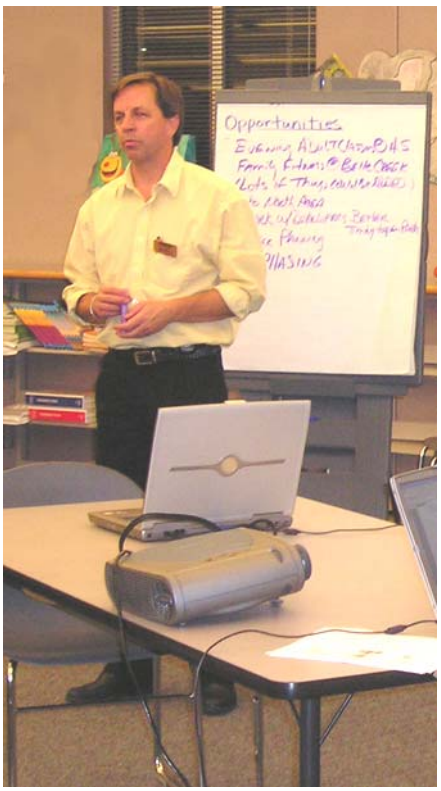
- Lights at baseball fields at Thimmig Elementary and River Run City Park
- Fairfax Park improvements – landscape, benches/dug outs, need concessions, restrooms

- Add play features for young children to Recreation Center pool
- Improve bike paths and safety; maintenance
- Park amenities needed in Belle Creek (playgrounds)
- Add more programs at Belle Creek Family Center

Funding
A majority of focus group participants indicated that they would support a property tax increase, operating levy, or bond issue to improve, build and operate parks and facilities desired by the community. In addition there was an interest in funding through developers as well as sponsorships. There was also an idea expressed for a one-time, HOA assessment for new park development and ongoing maintenance.

Top Priorities
The top priority for northern range residents that attended this focus group was a Recreation Center in the north, followed by a connected trail system. Other suggestions included an indoor pool and increased programming.

Advisory Council Input
A focus group was held on October 17 with seven representatives of the Parks and Recreation, Senior and Youth Advisory Committees. Following is a summary of this input.



Strengths
- Recreation Center – a draw for Seniors in area
- Quality staff
- Volunteer participation (special events, committees)
- Well kept parks

Weaknesses
- Perception/image of Commerce City
- Lack of trail connections between north and south
- Lack of centralized recreation facility
- Seniors in north have no place to socialize

Opportunities
- Improve image
- Bring community together though youth activities, social events
- More youth programming that is affordable
- Encourage youth volunteerism with incentives (free passes)
- New facilities (i.e. indoor ice rink, boxing rink, tennis, Recreation Center in north, etc.)

Threats/Barriers

- Divisions between north and south
- Transportation barriers
- Two different school districts
- Timing and public education is important to gain support for possible tax increase

Top Priorities

- Senior programs
- Recreation Center in north
- Affordable youth opportunities
- Increase community involvement and outreach

Spanish-speaking Resident Input

The public input process included outreach efforts specifically designed to obtain input from Spanish-speaking, Hispanic residents of Commerce City: a focus group and a survey (to supplement the statistically-valid, mail survey that was conducted as part of the needs assessment of this strategic plan.)

Spanish Focus Group

A focus group was held on November 29, 2006 at the Commerce City Recreation Center with ten (10) Spanish-speaking participants. This session was conducted in Spanish and facilitated by Avanza Business Group. Below is a summary of the input from this focus group.

Recreation Center

- **Visiting parks and exercising at the Recreation Center** were stated by participants as the **top two options of things to do in Commerce City** to entertain themselves and their family.
- A majority of the participants had visited the Recreation Center in the past year. Participants **felt that the admission price was high**, especially for households with more than one child. They showed a low awareness level concerning annual memberships and punch cards.
- The least acculturated participants were **disillusioned with the lack of Spanish-speaking employees** at the Recreation Center; however, they were **pleased with the Spanish translation of the Activity Guide.**

Parks

Participants were thankful for the access they had to parks. Most of them went to the parks that were close to home. A couple of the parks mentioned during the session were Fairfax, Pioneer Park (to play baseball), City Park (for children to play in the swings), and the park off Monaco (because it is near the house).

- All participants thought the City offered its residents a **good variety of parks** and locations where families and kids could spend an afternoon.
- Several participants stated there was not a need for more parks in the City. They just wanted the existing parks to be improved with the following.

- **Plant more trees and add more picnic tables** near the children play area, so adults can enjoy the company of friends while keeping a close eye on their children.
- **Improve and add more playground equipment** for children of all ages.
- Have more soccer fields that are located at the current parks.
  - When participants were asked about Prairie Gateway and the twenty-three (23) sports fields, they did not express a high level of enthusiasm. They thought these new fields were far from their home and would not offer any other surrounding amenities such as playground equipment, picnic area, etc.
- **Have police** become more involved with the surroundings of the park and **visit the parks on-foot or bike**.
- A few of the participants expressed an interest in outside swimming pools located in the parks with water slides, lazy rivers, etc.
- Another item on the wish list included the addition of an outside amphitheater for concerts during the warm months.

Trails

- Only two (2) participants had been on one of the **trails** that the City offers (Sand Creek). Both expressed a **high level of feeling unsafe** while walking or biking on the trail. *"There are some sections that are not well maintained and even dark." "I never saw anybody on the trail; it made me feel unsafe."*
  - When others were asked about the trails and if they were interested in learning more about them; there was a unanimous no. They **did not think that trails added any value to their daily lives.**

Open Space

- When probed about the open spaces, only one (1) participant provided any sort of feedback. This individual was very proud about the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge property. *"I feel so lucky that my backyard is the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. I think it is the coolest place."*

Funding

- **Most participants understood and supported the need for bonds to support improvements** associated with Parks and Recreation. Eight (8) of the ten (10) participants would support an amendment similar to the one recently passed to build a new Adams 14 high school building.

Spanish Survey

Separate from the statistically-valid mail survey, Commerce City developed an informational, survey (translated into Spanish) and distributed it to participants at the Commerce City Health Fair at Our Lady Mother of the Church on November 5, 2006. The responses of the thirty-five (35) surveys collected are summarized below.

Participation

- A majority of participants were not currently involved in recreation programs (22 or 63%).
- The second biggest reason for non-participation was the need for child-care (11), following not being aware of programs offered (13).

Programs

- The top programs identified for program expansion were children's (ages 6-12) and teen programs (ages 13-17), followed by adult sports and fitness and wellness programs.
- Specific youth programs respondents identified as needed included organized youth sports and non-school hour programming.
- A majority (67%) felt that program fees were about right, while 30% felt they were too high.
- A strong majority (86%) of respondents indicated that the most convenient way to register for programs is in-person at the Recreation Center.
- Participants find out about programs primarily through the Activity Guide, followed by through the schools (flyers), and friends or word of mouth.

Parks, Trails and Facilities

- Most respondents were satisfied with the number of parks, trails and recreation facilities near their home (62%).
- 63% of respondents had visited a Commerce City park in the past year (with Fairfax, Monaco, Pioneer, City and Los Valientes Parks as visited most often).
- A majority rated the physical condition of the parks as fair or good (72%).
- Asked "what amenities you would like to see" in the parks, participants said: restrooms, safety/security lighting, drinking fountains, and playgrounds.
- New facilities that were ranked highest include: ballfield complex, outdoor aquatic facility, skate park and youth/teen center.
- Asked how these facilities should be paid for, respondents' top choice was public/private partnerships, followed by taxes, entrance fees and sponsorships.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT – City Council, Staff and Partners/Alternative Providers

City Council Interviews

Six City Council members were interviewed on November 30 and December 1, 2006. A summary of this input follows.

Vision/Goals for Parks and Recreation

- Parks for everyone; finding balance between all groups
- Continue improving trail system, preserving open space
- Additional recreation facilities in north needed (i.e. fitness area, tennis courts, pool, parks, etc.)

Opportunities

- Additional parks and facilities in north (parks, recreation center)
- Pioneer Park development plans
- Strong support for recreation in community
- Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
- Prairie Gateway trails and open space
- Commerce City as a regional sport center (Rapids, minor league baseball)
- Partnership with Boys and Girls Club

Threats/Barriers

There was unanimous agreement that funding was the biggest challenge to expanding parks and recreation facilities and services in Commerce City.

- Funding
- Housing starts are slowing
- Higher taxes in north with Belle Creek and Reunion Metro Districts
- Limits to use of Reunion Recreation Center
- Difficulty in managing recreation services (many players); need for closer working relationship
- Divisions between north and south (some in north petitioning to change name of city)

Financial Resources

While funding was identified as the biggest threat, there was reluctance due to the current climate of slower housing starts to increase fees related to development. However, one council person indicated that improvements to development impact fees were needed.

Members of Council expressed the importance of recreation facilities and services to the community. There was an interest in keeping fees affordable, especially for those most in need, and an acknowledgement that recreation should be subsidized. However, there was an interest in pursuing a variety of sources of funding including user fees, private donor contributions, etc.

Priorities

Members of Council expressed a variety of priorities including:

- Finishing Pioneer Park improvements
- Improving north/south trail connections
- Adding recreational opportunities in the north

Key Findings from City Council Input

- Recreation is a priority of the City and its residents
- There is a need to expand recreational opportunities in the north part of city
- Funding is the greatest challenge to expanding recreation facilities and services

Staff Input
A series of three focus groups were held with thirty-three (33) staff on October 17, 2006. Staff shared many of the overall assessments that the community focus groups identified of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers facing the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Staff identified the need to improve walking and biking trail and path connections throughout the city, recognizing the challenges with the developed southern part of the city and the opportunities of the developing north. The Prairieways Action Plan was acknowledged as a good planning tool to help guide the parks, open space and trails development in the north.
The development of a cohesive regional trail system was identified as an opportunity.

Staff felt that the City should expand programs, parks and facilities, especially as the population grows in the north. Design standards for parks were also identified as a need in order to maximize the recreational value of parks. Funding to support new development and ongoing operations of an expanded park system was recognized as a challenge for the City. Pursuing additional grants was seen as an opportunity.

Staff highlighted some internal City operations issues that could be improved. One of the issues identified was the need to improve information systems to make systems between different City departments more compatible. For example, it was noted that the maintenance information system does not interface with other City department computer information systems and that the program registration systems does not interface with the finance system.

SWOT Analysis Summary
Attendees of the staff focus groups were asked to participate in a SWOT Analysis to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that exist for Commerce City. A summary is presented below.

Table 4: Staff SWOT Summary

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
PROGRAMS		
• Strong senior programs, primary provider in city • Good special events and programs at reasonable fees	• Programs lacking in north • Diversity of fitness programs • More relevant programs for a diverse population • Scheduling limitations with use of school facilities	• Add environmental education programs • Increase youth sport activities
FACILITIES/PHYSICAL		

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
• Commerce City Recreation Center • Pioneer Park • New soccer fields	• Lack of walking and bike paths in south • Some trail areas perceived as unsafe • Many small parks with detention areas/poor design • No boxing facility, dedicated dance room	• Develop trail system • Improve natural area maintenance • Improve park designs • Add parks, recreation center and sports facilities in north • Expand Recreation Center
ORGANIZATIONAL		
• Quality staff • Prairieway Action Plan to plan for parks, trails in north	• Lack of funding for new development • Staff does not reflect diversity of community • Marketing efforts (trail locations, programs, etc.) • Information technology	• Develop P&R plan to better manage growth and increase the level of service • Increase staff diversity
Threats/Barriers		
• Limited resources • North/south divisions (attitude, physical distance/separation) • Lack of cooperation between neighboring cities • Fast growth and development • Lack of public transportation		

Partner/Alternative Provider Input
There were two focus groups held with Partners or Alternative Recreation Providers on November 30 and December 1, 2006 with over twenty participants. Representatives from the following organizations participated: Belle Creek Metro District, Reunion Metro District, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Stapleton Parks and Recreation (Denver), Adams County School District 14, Sand Creek Regional Greenway, Community Enterprise, Tri County Health, Thriving Communities, Migrant Education and Brighton Parks and Recreation. These organizations were asked to describe their services and/or facilities. There was then a discussion of opportunities for the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department to address community needs as well as expand partnerships.

There was an acknowledgement that Commerce City could play an important role in facilitating communication and coordination between partners and alternative recreation

providers in the area. It was also recognized that there is a need to have complementary facilities and services and minimize duplication of efforts. Based on a discussion of issues, the following opportunities for the Commerce City Recreation Department were identified:

- Play strong information sharing/coordination role for parks, recreation and trail planning and development (Metro Districts, Brighton, Stapleton, Schools, etc.)
- Expand partnerships with schools; if transportation is an issue, bring more programs to the schools
- Expand programming
    - Sport programming for girls
    - Performing arts programming – theater, dance, music, etc.
    - Family programming
    - Walking, nature programs (i.e. Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge, trails)
    - Teen programs
- Add baseball/softball fields in north
- Explore additional funding/grant opportunities (philanthropic, corporate)
- Engage volunteers
- Maintain free or low cost opportunities
- Recreation Center or City could serve as a clearinghouse, resource center for recreation and community programs and services
- Explore cross marketing opportunities with partners

KEY THEMES OF PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- Community values parks and recreation
- Need for additional parks and recreation programs and facilities to meet growing needs of Commerce City
- Need to continue to enhance park amenities in south Commerce City
- Desire for expanded trail system and connections
- Desire to preserve open space/natural spaces
- Need to identify and secure funding to support new parks and recreation facility development and operations

D. Statistically-Valid Survey

Overview of Methodology

Commerce City conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey during January of 2007 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Commerce City. The survey was administered by Leisure Vision through a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with Commerce City officials, as well as members of the GreenPlay, LLC project team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

In January of 2007, surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in Commerce City. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed each household that received a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone, either to encourage completion of the mailed survey or to administer the survey by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 411 surveys having been completed. Of the 411 completed surveys, 53% live north of 96th avenue, and 47% live south of 96th avenue. The results of the random sample of 411 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-4.8%.

Below are highlights from the survey results based on the Importance-Unmet Needs Matrix. The full **Survey Executive Summary** can be found in **Appendix A**. In addition, the Commerce City select survey results are compared to survey results from other cities across the country in **Appendix B, Survey National Benchmarking**.

Survey Result Highlights

The **Importance-Unmet Needs Matrix** is a tool for assessing the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation facilities and recreation programs in Commerce City. Each of the facilities and programs that were assessed on the survey were placed in one of the following four quadrants:

- **Top Priorities** (higher unmet need and higher importance). Items in this quadrant should be given the highest priority for improvement. Respondents placed a high level of importance on these items, and the unmet need rating is high. Improvements to items in this quadrant will have positive benefits for the highest number of Commerce City residents.

- **Opportunities for Improvement** (higher unmet need and lower importance). Respondents placed a lower level of importance on these items, but the unmet need rating is relatively high. Items in this quadrant should be given secondary priority for improvement.

- **Special Need Areas** (lower unmet need and higher importance). This quadrant shows where improvements may be needed to serve the needs of specialized populations. Respondents placed a high level of importance on these items, but the unmet need rating is relatively low.

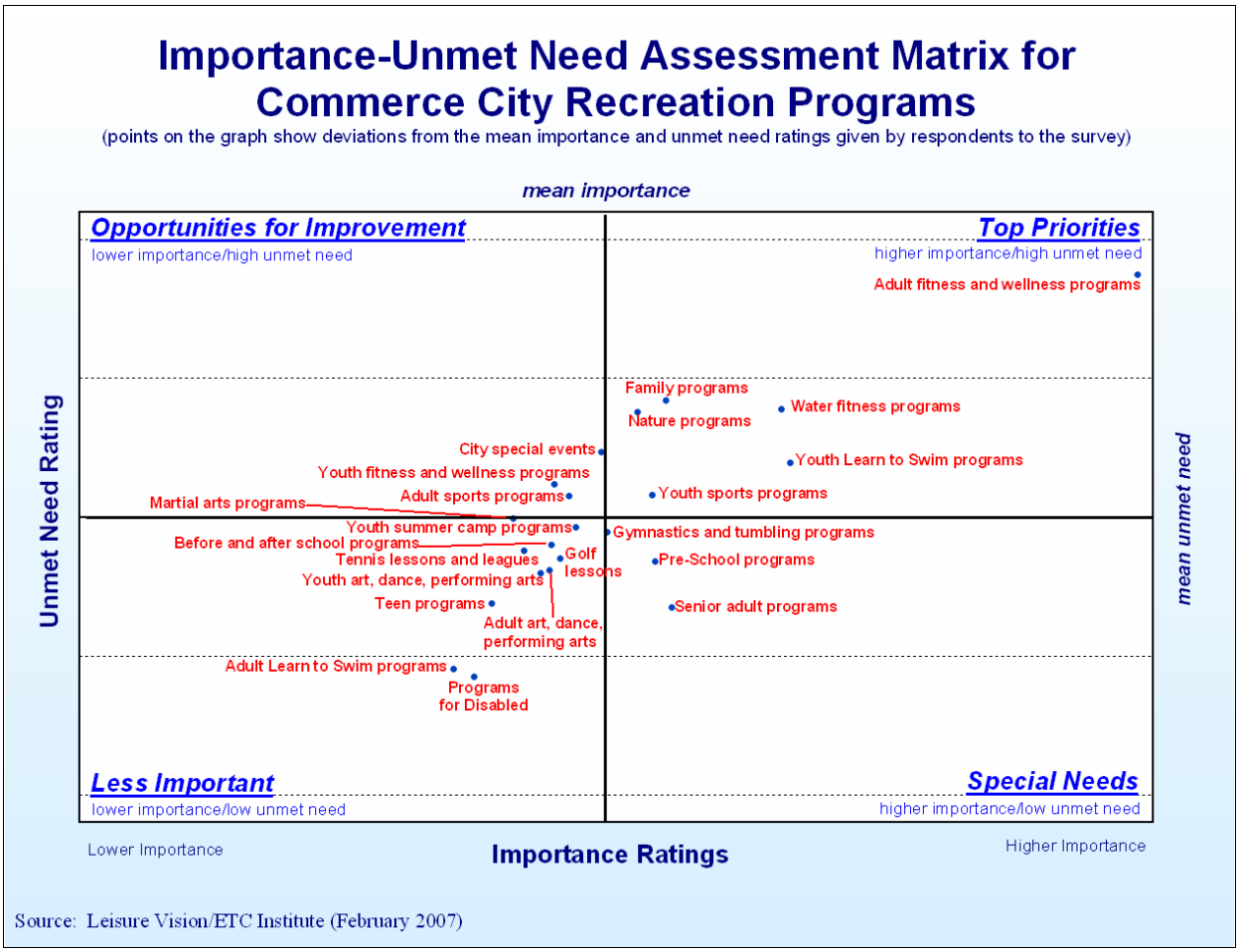
- **Less Important** (lower unmet need and lower importance). Items in this quadrant should receive the lowest priority for improvement. Respondents placed a lower level of importance on these items, and the unmet need rating is relatively low.

As shown in the matrix in **Figure 4**, the top recreation **program priorities** identified from the survey (high importance/high unmeet need as shown in the upper, right quadrant) are:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs

- Water fitness programs
- Youth Learn to Swim programs
- Family programs
- Nature programs
- Youth sports programs

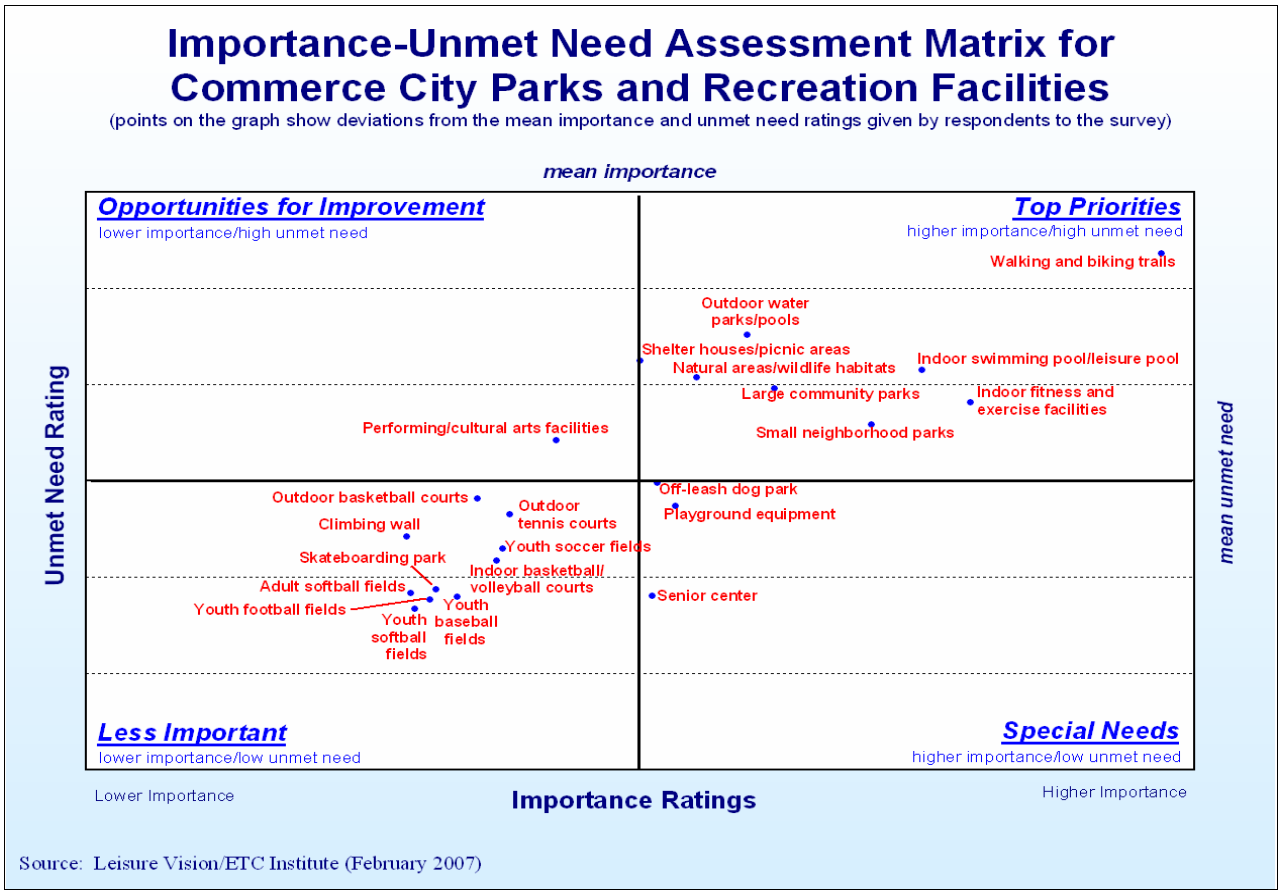
Figure 4: Program Importance-Unmet Need Matrix



As shown in the matrix in **Figure 5**, the top parks and recreation **facility priorities** identified from the survey (high importance/high unmet need as shown in the upper, right quadrant) are:

- Walking and biking trails
- Outdoor water parks/pools
- Indoor swimming pool/leisure pool
- Indoor fitness and exercise facilities
- Shelter houses/picnic areas
- Natural areas/wildlife habitats
- Large community parks
- Small neighborhood parks

Figure 5: Facility Importance-Unmet Need Matrix



Other survey highlights include:

Potential Improvements to Commerce City Parks

- The improvements that respondents would most like to have made to Commerce City parks are: restrooms (53%), shade (42%), walking trails (41%) and security lighting (40%).

Organizations Use of Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

- Commerce City Parks and Recreation (45%) is the organization used by the highest percentage of respondent households. There are four other organizations used by at least 20% of respondent households: private or public schools (25%), churches (22%), Homeowners Associations (22%) and attractions/amusements (20%). (Note: The use of HOA programs and facilities is high in Commerce City compared to the national average, most likely due to the presence of the two Metro Districts in the north area.)

Potential Indoor Programming Spaces Respondents Would Use

- The indoor programming spaces that the highest percentage of respondent

households would use are: walking and jogging track (60%), weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (50%), leisure pool (49%) and warm water area for therapeutic purposes (48%).

Potential Indoor Programming Spaces Respondents Would Use Most Often

- The indoor programming spaces that respondent households would use most often are: walking and jogging track (47%), leisure pool (37%), weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (35%), and warm water area for therapeutic purposes (32%). It should also be noted that a walking and jogging track had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the indoor programming space they would use most often.

Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks, Facilities and Programs More Often

- "Too far from our residence" (36%) is the reason preventing the highest percentage of respondent households from using parks, recreation facilities, and programs of Commerce City more often. (Note: This response is higher than the national average of 15%. This could be due to the physical distance in between the Recreation Center in the south from the new residents in the north that are not in close proximity to an indoor recreation center.) The other most frequently mentioned reasons preventing respondent households from using parks, facilities, and programs more often include: "we are too busy" (25%), and "I do not know what is being offered" (20%).

Recreation Programs Respondents Currently Participate in Most Often

- The programs that the highest percentage of respondents currently participate in most often at Commerce City facilities are: adult fitness and wellness programs (10%), City special events (7%), water fitness programs (7%) and Youth Learn to Swim programs (7%). It should also be noted that adult fitness and wellness programs had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the program they currently participate in most often at Commerce City facilities.

Ways Respondents Learn About Programs and Activities

- The Commerce City Program Guide (60%) is the most frequently mentioned way that respondents have learned about Commerce City programs and activities, followed by newspaper (38%), and word of mouth (28%).

Level of Satisfaction with Various Parks and Recreation Services

- The parks and recreation services that the highest percentage of respondents are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with are: maintenance of City parks (56%), ease of registering for programs (45%), number of City parks (42%), and availability of information about Commerce City programs or facilities (41%).

Parks and Recreation Services that Should Receive the Most Attention

- The parks and recreation services that respondents feel should receive the most attention over the next two years are: number of walking/biking trails (25%), number of City parks (21%) and maintenance of City parks (19%). It should also be noted that the number of walking/biking trails had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the parks and recreation service that should receive the most attention over the next two years. (It is also interesting to

note that a higher percentage of respondents in north Commerce City feel that the number of walking/biking trails should receive the most attention, 30.6% versus 19.5%, as well as the number of City parks, 28.2% versus 12.8%.)

Level of Satisfaction Received from Commerce City

- Thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents indicated being either very satisfied (11%) or somewhat satisfied (24%) with the overall value their household receives from the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, 20% of respondents indicated being either very dissatisfied (9%) or somewhat dissatisfied (11%) with the overall value received from the Parks and Recreation Department.

Ways Respondents Travel to Use Parks and Recreation Facilities

- The ways that respondent households most prefer to travel to the parks and recreation facilities they use are: driving (75%) and walking (39%). Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents indicated they do not use any city parks or facilities.

Importance of Parks and Recreation Services Compared to Other Priorities

- Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents indicated that parks and recreation services are either very important (45%) or somewhat important (39%) compared to other Commerce City priorities. Only 7% of respondents indicated that parks and recreation services are not important, and 9% indicated "not sure."

Top Priorities for New Park and Recreation Facility Development

- Based on the sum of their top two choices, respondents' top priorities for new park and recreation facility development are: recreation center (47%), neighborhood parks (33%) and trails (31%). (It is interesting to note that "recreation center" was ranked highest among residents north of 96th Ave (47.7%) as well as south of 96th Ave (45.1%). In addition, while trails ranked high in importance and need, it is ranked third in terms of priorities for new development.)

Ways to Fund Improvements to Parks and Recreation Facilities

- Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents indicated an amusement/admission/attraction tax as their preferred way of funding improvements or new facilities. In addition, 15% of respondents prefer a parks and recreation tax, 13% prefer a sales tax increase, and 7% prefer a property tax mill levy. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents indicated they do not support any additional funding.

Voting on a Tax Referendum to Fund Parks, Trails, Recreation and Fitness Facilities

- Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents indicated they would either vote in favor (22%) or might vote in favor (25%) of a tax referendum. An additional 17% of respondents would vote against the tax referendum, and 36% indicated "not sure." With proper public education, those unsure voters could be influenced to vote in favor of a possible tax referendum.

Trends Findings in Relation to Survey Results:

The activities that people participate in for leisure, recreation and exercise is varied and can change from community-to-community, and state-to-state, depending on climate, geographical location and interest. The following results taken from the citizen's survey has been compared to national trends taken from National Sporting Goods Association and other sources where applicable.

Walking and biking trails rated the highest in importance and unmet need by the community according to the citizen survey. Trends indicate that exercise walking ranks the highest in participation at the national level. For age levels 55 and older exercise walking is the top recreational activity in frequency of participation.

According to the citizen survey, fitness and wellness programs ranked high in need by the community. National trends indicate exercising with equipment and aerobics exercise rank fourth and tenth respectively in the top ten activities in which people participate.

The American Council on Exercise identified the following 2007 fitness trends:

- Expanded specialized fitness programming for older adults to help fight osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, and reduce injury risk.
- Small-group personal training, 3 to 5 people, for all age groups.
- Focus on youth programming, especially physical activities to reduce obesity.

Aquatics facilities and youth learn-to-swim programs also ranked high in importance for consideration for future facilities and programs. National trends indicate swimming as exercise and for recreation ranks third in the number of participants at the national level.

E. Highlights from Previous Needs Assessment Study (Corona Research)

In early 2005, Commerce City retained Corona Research to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment study of community residents to learn opinions and needs regarding various city services. This study consisted of a community and youth resident survey, focus groups and a demographic analysis of the city's population. Below are key findings from this study related to parks and recreation. This information is provided to supplement the statistically-valid survey results conducted as part of this Recreation Strategic Plan.

Recreation

Survey Findings

- Eighty-six (86) percent of adults indicated that they believe **recreation opportunities are important to quality of life**, however there was a low level of awareness of recreation facilities and programs.

- Facilities **most desired by adults were paved walking and biking trails and outdoor swimming pools.**

Focus Group Findings

- Residents responded that they would like **trails that are safe**, scenic and wide enough for use by multiple people and for multiple activities.

- While there was a high familiarity with the parks and recreation programs due to City communications, residents' reported **use of these facilities is low**.

Youth Recreation and Organized Activities

Survey Findings

- **Indoor swimming pools were highly desired** by boys and girls of all ages in the city. Other popular facilities were indoor fitness and exercise facilities, outdoor basketball courts, and a boxing ring. Boys also were interested in football/lacrosse/field hockey fields.

- Organized activities of most interest to girls were foreign language classes, arts & crafts, dance and drawing/painting classes; while boys expressed interest in computer courses, foreign language classes, drawing/painting classes and wood carving classes.

- **Cost is the most common barrier for students that prevent them from participating** in recreation, educational, or social activities in Commerce City.

Focus Group Findings

- Overall, **youth thought that Commerce City offers little to do in terms of social activities and entertainment.**

- Youth indicated that they are **highly satisfied with the Commerce City Recreation Center and staff**.

- Youth expressed a **belief that there are enough parks and fields**, but that the existing parks and fields could use improvements (i.e., lighting, drinking fountains, and improved maintenance). This differed from adult residents who believed that there are not enough parks in the city.

- In group discussion, there was a more moderate, yet still high, **interest in swimming pools and a somewhat higher interest in indoor fitness facilities**, as compared to the survey findings.

Other

- **Buffalo Run Golf Course has the highest rating among City departments** (from the survey results).

Spanish-speaking residents want more youth sports opportunities and leagues. (In particular, creating a Commerce City youth soccer league was expressed as an interest in focus group discussions.)

IV. What We Have Now – An Analysis of Public Programs and Spaces

Following is a description and analysis of the Commerce City's current programs, parks and facilities, and trails and open space. The GRASP® Inventory and Analysis section provides a management tool to identify how parks and recreation facilities are meeting current needs and to plan for future needs. This section of the Plan concludes with a description of some of the key area recreation providers and partnerships to help assess how these alternative providers impact Commerce City's future opportunities for expanded parks and recreation services in a growing community.

A. Community Recreation Programs – Recreation Division

Community Recreation Programs
The Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department provides many types of leisure and recreation opportunities to the community. Programming includes multiple offerings in the areas of aquatics, senior activities, youth sports, adult sports, preschool, gymnastics and martial arts. Sport activities are recreational in nature. Major programs for each area and participation information are provided below. Issues affecting all program areas are identified based on a review of programming related information as well as program staff interviews. Furthermore, relevant survey results are highlighted by program area.

The Commerce City Recreation Program Matrix, Error! Reference source not found. breaks down the major program areas of the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department. The table identifies the primary populations served by the programming, times of day the programs are offered, and if drop-in opportunities exist. Additionally the table identifies if the program areas utilize volunteers or partnerships, offer financial scholarships, and seek customer feedback about program offerings. Finally, based on public input and survey data, satisfaction and demand levels are noted.

Table 5: Commerce City Recreation Program Matrix

Program Area	Main Population(s) Served M=Male, F=Female, B=Both					Main Class Opportunities					Utilizations				Household Need Being Met *(per survey results)*			Demand *(per survey)*	
	Pre- School	Youth	Teen	Adult	Senior	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Drop –in	Scheduled	Partnerships	Volunteers	Scholarships	Customer Feedback	High	Medium	Low	Higher	Lower
Community Services					B	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Fitness & Wellness				F	B	X	X	X	X	X	X*		X				X	X	
Special Interest			B	B			X	X	X	X			X			X			
Aquatics	B	B	B	B	B	X		X	X	X			X				X	X	
Gymnastics	B	B	F			X		X		X		X	X	X		X			
Dance	F	F	B	B	B			X		X			X		X				X
Martial Arts		B	B	B				X	X	X			X	X		X			X
Youth Services	B	B	B						X		X		X	X		X			X
Youth Sport		B	B				X**				X	X	X	X		X		X	
Adult Sports				B				X								X		X	

**Silver Sneakers only*
*** Practices and games are scheduled at various times*

In reviewing the Commerce City Program Matrix, Error! Reference source not found., it is evident that the Department has a wide variety of program offerings that serve all segments of the population. Many program areas have some form of drop-in opportunities, but overall they are limited. Other findings are summarized below.

Customer Feedback – All Program Areas
Understanding the satisfaction levels of those participating in leisure and recreation programming is very important. While some program areas seek customer feedback, others do not. The methods of those program areas that do seek customer feedback do not seem to be uniform and consistent.

Scholarship Programs – All Program Areas
Financial scholarships exist for all program areas. A scholarship application is available for low-income, Commerce City residents. Qualified individuals can receive a 25-50% discount for programs with fees that exceed $20.

Partnerships – All Program Areas
Partnerships, which also include grant funding, exist in a few of the program areas. The Community Services Division (i.e. senior programming) receives grant assistance, as does the preschool program in the Youth Services Division. The Fitness and Wellness Division partners with Axia Health to bring SilverSneakers® programming to the Center. Youth Sports indirectly partners with non-profit youth sports providers in assisting with program development and securing fields for their use.

Volunteers – All Program Areas
Volunteers are used extensively in the Community Services and Youth Sport program areas, as well as for special events as well as trail clean-up activities. Gymnastics also utilizes volunteers for tournaments and meets. Other program areas have not developed volunteer services.

Major Program Areas
The following is a summary of the major program areas provided by the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department. Main program activities are identified and the capacities at which the programs are running based on the 2006 Program Status Report are identified. Based on information provided by staff, primary issues and key focus areas are identified.

Community Services
This Division of the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for senior programming. Programs are held in the Recreation Center and the Conter Community Center in the south part of the City.

Senior Programming

Programs have been offered to seniors in Commerce City for the last 25 years. There is a long tradition of trying to meet the leisure and recreation needs of seniors of the community. Currently senior programs serve 550 people annually. Senior focused programs and services include but are not limited to:

- Health Services
- Transportation Services
- Income Tax Preparation Services
- Volunteer Programs
- Instructional Programs (e.g. computer use)
- Social Activities (billiards, cards, teas)
- Arts and Crafts
- Trips and Outings

Senior Programming Capacity

Many senior programs are close to capacity at 75% to 100% of the maximum number of program registrants. Programs that offer trips and excursions, computer training, parties and driving classes seem to be the most popular according to 2006 program status report. Other senior programs such as bowling, creative writing and dance classes have low participation rates barely covering the minimum required to hold the program.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas – Senior Programming

- Attracting the "Boomers" age 55 to 65 to the programs
- The need to upgrade senior fitness programming
- Developing new strategies to attract more participants to programming

Survey Feedback – Senior Programs

The need and importance for senior programming is greater in the south part of the city compared to the northern part. This makes sense given that a larger percentage of the senior population resides south of 96th Avenue. Satisfaction levels of current senior programs and the need to continue to provide these programs are rated as high in the citizen survey.

Fitness and Wellness

Commerce City Parks and Recreation offers a small selection of fitness and wellness classes focused primarily on adults. Fitness and wellness classes are offered at the Recreation Center, Belle Creek Family Center and at Thimmig K-8 School.

Opportunities include drop-in fitness classes at the Recreation Center. These classes are offered at no additional charge for members (annual, six month, or monthly membership) or punch card holders and offered for a daily fee for drop in participants. Drop in fitness classes are held at a variety of times and days of the week and include:

- Aerobics Classes
- Spinning Classes
- Sculpting and Toning
- SilverSneakers® Fitness Program
- Aquasize

Specialized fitness and wellness classes are also offered. These classes are fee based and usually run six weeks. Classes include:

- Pilates
- Yoga
- Satellite Classes at Belle Creek Family Center and Thimmig School
- Dance-obics

Personal training is also offered for an additional fee.

Fitness and Wellness Program Capacity

According to the 2006 program status report, fitness classes (not including drop-in classes) were poorly attended overall when compared to the maximum number of participants the classes could handle. Out the 486 total spots available, only 77 were filled. Several factors may be attributed to this including the type of class being offered, the time the class is being offered or the cost of the class. In addition, enhanced marketing may be needed, especially since the survey indicated a high demand for fitness and wellness programs.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas – Fitness and Wellness

- Gaps in service in the North
- Need of increased promotion of fitness and wellness programs
- Need to be more dynamic in fitness and wellness offerings
- Need to better understand at what times and at what cost classes will be successful
- Need to increase number of certified staff

Survey Feedback – Fitness and Wellness

Of all of the programming provided by the Department, overall, fitness and wellness for adults rated as the highest demand and the greatest unmet need by survey respondents. Regardless if the respondent was north or south of 96th Avenue or white or Hispanic, the need for more adult fitness and wellness programs was expressed.

Special Interest (Non Senior)

The Department has a limited number of special interest classes held throughout the calendar year. The primary special interest classes are:

- Bob Ross Painting (teen and adults)
- Hunter Safety
- Ceramics
- Guitar

Special Interest Program Capacity

According to the 2006 Program Status Report the Hunter Safety classes are running at 1/3 total capacity with the most interest being in the spring and late summer when specific hunting seasons are not far off. Ceramics classes are filling to more than 50 % capacity while the Bob Ross Painting class has very low registration.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas – Special Interests

- Interest in expansion of successful special interest classes such as ceramics (i.e. evening classes) or Hunter Safety (i.e. reduce number of annual offerings but increase opportunities during high demand, spring and late summer/early fall)
- Need to create new special interest classes based on customer demand

Survey Feedback – Special Interest

Overall special interest programs such as art and cultural opportunities rated low in demand and unmet need according to survey respondents. While the demand appears low, this survey result could also indicate that the current needs are being met by the Department.

Aquatics
The Department has a variety of aquatics programming that are held throughout the year at the indoor pool in the Commerce City Recreation Center. Aquatic programs cover all age groups from 6 months to seniors.

Program opportunities include:

- Open Swimming
- Fitness – Drop In (i.e. lap swimming, water walking)
- Fitness - scheduled classes (aquacise)
- Parent -Tot Swim Lessons (6 months to 3 years)
- Youth Swim Lessons (3 years to 12 years)
- Teen and Adult Swim Lessons (13 years and up)
- Competitive Swim Team - CARA (Colorado Association of Recreational Athletics)
- American Red Cross Lifeguard Training

Aquatics Programming Capacity
Overall in 2006, aquatics programming filled around 50% of the available slots. The programming that focuses more towards the beginner swimmer has higher participation than programming that focuses on the advanced swimmer. For instance First Step, Second Step, Parent/Tot and Jellyfish swim lessons fill to around 75% capacity while more advanced lessons fill to around 30% capacity.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas- Aquatics

- Need to recruit and retain lifeguards
- Need to retain swim lesson customers

Survey Feedback – Aquatics
The need for Youth Learn to Swim programs is somewhat greater in the northern part of the city. This may be in part due to the lack of indoor aquatic facilities in the north. Overall aquatic programming demand, especially for youth and water fitness classes, is high. In addition, the public interest for indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities rated high.

Gymnastics, Dance, Martial Arts
Gymnastics, dance and martial arts programs are some of most successful in the department.

Gymnastics
The Commerce City Recreation Center sports its own dedicated gymnastics space which is a key to the success of the gymnastics programs. Gymnastics programs serve youths from 2 years to 17 years with beginning to competition level classes. Registrations for gymnastics have grown close to 35% from 2004 to 2006. Gymnastics programs include:

- Parent Taught (2 years – 4 years)
- Pre-Gymnastics (4years – 5 years)
- Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced Gymnastics (6 years to 17 years)
- CARA Gymnastics League (6 years to 17 years)

Gymnastic Program Capacity
Overall gymnastics programs are running at 60% to 70% capacity. Programs that are focused towards boys tend to have lower enrollment. Pre-gymnastic programs, beginner, intermediate and CARA league programs are very popular.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas – Gymnastics

- Maintain quality of programs as demand grows
- Identify and plan for long range staffing needs
- Identify and plan for program expansion and new program creation

Dance
Dance classes, although popular, have space limitations. Overall participation in dance classes has grown nearly 200% from 216 in 2004 to 619 in 2006. Dance classes are offered to all age groups and in various styles such as:

- Creative Movement (3 years to 4 years)
- Ballet & Tap (6 years to 17 years)
- Hip Hop (10 years to 18 years)
- Ballroom, Swing & Salsa (16 years and up)

Dance Program Capacity
On the whole adult dance classes are running at around 33% capacity, youth focused classes are running close to 85% capacity, and senior focused dance classes are marginally attended.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas - Dance

- Lack of dedicated program space
- Youth programs are popular and have growth potential

Martial Arts
The Department has a limited offering in martial art programming that serves youth from age eight (8) to adults. Like dance programming, martial arts has space limitations. Specialized programming for women and those wishing to compete in tournaments along with basic martial arts instruction cover a wide variety of needs. Total program

participation has seen modest growth from 157 in 2004 to a 188 in 2006. Martial arts programs include:

- Taekwon-Do
- Women's Self Defense
- Freedom Fighters (scheduled classes and drop in)

Martial Arts Programming Capacity
Taekwon-Do programs are running at 50% capacity, Freedom Fighters are at 40% capacity, and Women's Self Defense at 10% capacity.

Primary Issues/Focus Area – Martial Arts

- Securing additional or new space that can be dedicated for scheduled martial arts classes
- Need to increase registration

Survey Feedback – Gymnastics, Dance and Martial Arts
The demand for dance and martial arts programming seemed to be low according to the survey. However, whether this is due to a lack of interest or due to the limitations of what the Department can offer is difficult to tell. Gymnastics on the other hand has medium demand. According to the survey results, the need for gymnastic is greater in the north.

Youth Services
This Division of the Parks and Recreation Department is in charge of pre-school; after school; summer, spring and winter camps; and teen programs. Many of these programs provide a service to working parents and also allow for early childhood education opportunities for preschool aged youths. The cost for these programs is less expensive than similar ones in surrounding communities. A grant from 21st Century* is used to support the after school programs. Several partnerships have been developed to help expand curriculum in the programs. These organizations include:

- Creative Expression (non-profit) for theater program
- Open Fairways – golfing program
- Boy Scouts
- Americorp

**The 21st Century Grant offers an array of services, programs, and activities such as: youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; art, music, and recreation programs; technology education programs; and character education programs that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students. In addition, community learning centers offer opportunities for literacy and related educational development to families of participating students.*

Programming opportunities cover a wide age group and variety of needs. Preschool programming includes:

- Parent-Tot (1 ½ years to 4 years)
- First Steps (2 years to 3 years)
- Tiny Tots (3 years to 4 years)
- Kinder Kids (4 years to 5 years)

After School and Camp programming includes:

- After School (school year only)
- Summer Camps (10 weeks)
- Winter Break Camp (2 weeks)
- Spring Break Camp (1 week)

Youth and teen programs include:

- Friday Night Live
- Teen Jam
- Daddy/Daughter Dances
- Mom and Son - Camp Out

Youth Services Programming Capacity

The 2006 Program Status Report shows that preschool programs are near 100% capacity. Summer Adventure Camp, held at the Recreation Center in the south, attendance has dropped from 2,115 in 2003 to 1,450 in 2006. (This enrollment difference is due to the lower number of camp days.) Conversely, attendance at Summer Discovery Camp, held at the Second Creek Elementary School in the north, has risen from 180 in 2003 to 2,255 in 2006. This program was new in 2003 and has grown in number of days and enrollment numbers.

Friday Night Live attendance dropped from 972 in 2005 to 630 in 2006, but Teen Jam attendance rose from 1,224 in 2005 to 1,581 in 2006. These two programs have an overlap in the age of those allowed to attend and due to enhancements to the Teen Jam program some of the participants have switched participation to the Teen Jam program.

Primary Issues/Focus Areas – Youth Services

- Limited capabilities to expand preschool programs due to space limitations
- Need for formalized program procedures (expansion of staff training and procedure and operating manuals
- Need for the creation of a volunteer programs including manuals, job descriptions, and applications that are in accordance with regulations of Colorado Human Resources, Child Care Division
- Need to access and understand client's willingness and ability to pay for quality preschool programs

Survey Feedback – Youth Services

Interestingly, the importance and need for youth services such as preschool or after school programs ranked low for both the northern and southern parts of the City according to the survey. This seems to be in direct contradiction with the current high participation some youth service programs have seen. This survey result could also indicate that many of the current youth services program needs are being met.

Youth Sports

The Division offers a good variety of traditional recreational level sports to the youths of the community. Team sport activities currently offered by the Department include:

- Basketball (Grades K – 6)
- Soccer (Grades K – 6)
- Baseball (5 years to 14 years)
- Tennis (4 years to 16 years)
- Flag Football (Grades K – 6)
- Volleyball (Grades 2 to 8)

The Division utilizes a number of volunteers primarily for coaching. Coaches are paid a $100 stipend per team. The Division also supports other local providers of youth sports through providing athletic fields and providing expertise to new program development.

Youth Sports Programming Capacity

Youth Sports programming enjoys good popularity and support from the community. The Division provides quality low cost team sport activities. According to the 2006 Program Status Report, baseball programs are running at 60% capacity, basketball at 50% capacity, volleyball at 20%, flag football at 38%, and soccer at 40%.

Primary Issues/Focus Area – Youth Sports

- Finding and retaining quality coaches
- Improving quality and increasing quantity of indoor facilities (i.e. school gyms) for youth sports such as basketball and volleyball
- Improving school use-agreements and communication to reduce scheduling conflicts
- Expanding programs (lacrosse programs, soccer league, etc. per recreation trends and public interest)

Survey Feedback – Youth Sports

Youth sports programs have a high demand, importance and need according to the survey. These elements are slightly greater in the northern part of the City as numbers of families moving into the area continues to grow.

Adult Sports

Adult sports offerings are limited to volleyball, basketball and softball leagues. Basketball is offered in the winter; volleyball is offered in the summer, fall and winter; and softball is offered in the spring, summer and fall.

Adult Sports Programming Capacity

The most popular adult sports programming is the men's and coed softball leagues. These leagues are running at 75% to 100% capacity.

Survey Feedback – Adult Sports

Adult sports rank high in demand, importance and need. Like youth sports, the unmet need is greater in the northern part of the City than the southern part.

Summary of Key Findings – Community Recreation Programs
After extensive input from recreation programming staff, it is clear that the quality of the programs offered is of great importance. Program areas such as youth sports, senior activities, gymnastics, early-age swim programs, and after school and summer programs are highly successful and are filled at or near capacity in many cases. Deficiencies do exist but staff appears to have a good handle on what they are and what solutions exist (short term and/or long term). Below is a summary of the key findings for Community Recreation Programming.

- Many staff felt that the marketing of recreation programs and services could be enhanced.
- Volunteer programs, while they exist, need to be expanded. Keeping in mind that volunteer programs for the Youth Services Division will need to be in accordance with state regulations.
- Seeking customer feedback happens in some program areas and does not in others. The development of a consistent customer feedback system and policy should be put in place in order to understand and address the needs of program participants.
- Providing recreation programming in the northern area of the community is a challenge due to the lack of Commerce City facilities and the reliance on non-Commerce City facilities such as schools and HOA's. Scheduling conflicts, at times, make consistent program offerings difficult.
- Space limitations of Commerce City Recreation Center hinder the growth of some popular program areas such dance and preschool.
- The 2006 Program Status Report shows a number of the participant slots in many of the program areas go unfilled. A clearer understanding is needed on where to focus program resources and where programs offerings could increase or decrease based on demand. Enhanced marketing strategies could be considered as well.
- Demand for aquatics, fitness and wellness, and weight and cardio is high overall, but the survey indicates a greater demand in the north where these facilities are limited.

B. Level of Service – The GRASP® Analysis

Commerce City Context
Commerce City is situated on the Northeast side of the Denver Metro area, along what has historically been one of the region's most important transportation corridors. From the time of the Overland Stage, people and goods have traveled to and from Denver along the South Platte River, passing through what is now Commerce City. Railroads and highways followed, and today Commerce City abuts Colorado's primary link to the rest of the world, Denver International Airport. This flow of commerce through the area provided Commerce City with its name.

The presence of employers in the agricultural, industrial and transportation fields has historically made Commerce City a working-class community, but today that is changing. New neighborhoods are attracting people to Commerce City to live in state-of-the art

communities built around a framework of parks, trails, open space, recreational amenities and other public spaces. These new areas are separated from the older parts of Commerce City by the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, which has become a significant natural area and wildlife preserve within the expanding urban fabric of the Front Range. Meanwhile, the older core of the City enjoys a number of more mature, established parks as well as newer facilities such as the recreation center and Pioneer Park.

The South Platte River also offers a significant natural amenity along Commerce City's western edge. Trails, open space and abundant wildlife can be found here.

Existing Infrastructure

The parks and recreation system can be thought of as an infrastructure that serves the health and well-being of people. This infrastructure is made up of parts and pieces that are combined in various ways to provide service. The result is a system of parks, trails, open space, and other facilities. The current inventory includes the following main features.

Larger Parks

City Park

City Park is located in the heart of the original part of Commerce City, and provides a large playground, picnic shelters, and some open lawn. It is also the location for the city's primary indoor recreation and community gathering spaces. A lot of activity is packed into a relatively small and congested area, but access to this site is good from all directions due to its location near Highways 2, 85, and I-270.

Fairfax Park

Fairfax Park provides for a variety of active outdoor uses, including softball, basketball, tennis, and in-line hockey. A playground and picnic shelters are also found here. A below-grade crossing of the railroad provides access to this park from the west. Vault toilets are provided at this park.

Monaco Park

Monaco Park offers a large expanse of turf grass for active use, volleyball courts, a basketball court, a playground, and a picnic shelter for group use. A slope on the south end of the park makes a good sledding hill when there is snow. Vault toilets are available at this park.

Pioneer Park

Pioneer Park provides four tournament-quality ball fields with grandstands, a concession stand and group picnic shelters. Additional amenities include a water spray ground, skate park, batting cage and restrooms. An outdoor leisure pool is planned, but currently unfunded.

River Run Park

This park is located in the northern part of Commerce City, and provides a large playground, group picnic shelters, volleyball court, and large expanses of grass fields for sports. Vault toilets are available.

Smaller Parks

Commerce City has a number of smaller parks distributed throughout the city. These parks provide a variety of amenities, such as playgrounds, open turf, and picnic shelters close to home for the residents. In the older areas, these are City-owned and maintained, while many of the newer ones are owned and maintained by homeowners associations, the Reunion Metro District or the Belle Creek Metro District. While the non-City-owned parks are primarily intended to serve the needs of the immediate neighborhood, they are open to the general public.

Trails

Segments of trails exist throughout the city. The most significant of these is along Sand Creek in the southern part of the city. A number of trailheads provide access to the trail system and beyond. These typically include a place to park a vehicle, and may include signage, seating, and other features. Fernald Trailhead is a good example of a trailhead that provides access to the regional trail system beyond Commerce City, as is the Sand Creek–Dahlia Trailhead.

Overall, the City's trail system lacks connectivity. Trail segments do not connect to each other or to specific destinations. This may be remedied in the northern half of the city as it develops. Much of this part of the City is currently undeveloped, but is experiencing steady growth. New trails will be added as development occurs, filling in the gaps in the trail system.

In the southern half of Commerce City, a system of on-street trails exists that provides loops and connectivity to the parks and trailheads. Improving connectivity here will be difficult due to the large number of barriers, including highways and railroads. Grade-separated crossings will be needed in some locations. These are expensive and difficult to coordinate with the entities involved.

Open Space

The current inventory of open space includes a variety of lands. Some of these are dedicated as permanent open space and some are undeveloped parcels awaiting development as parks or other facilities. In addition, Commerce City is fortunate to have large tracts of open space managed by other agencies nearby. One of these is the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. Another is the greenway along the Platte River that serves as the City's western boundary.

Indoor Facilities

The City's primary indoor facility is the Commerce City Recreation Center, a large multi-purpose facility with aquatics, fitness, gyms, and spaces for youth and senior programs. The Conter Community Center is also available and used for smaller programs and activities focused on the senior population.

The City also programs activities in gymnasiums, auditoriums, and classrooms at local schools. The planned new Adams City High School will also offer a swimming pool.

Indoor facilities are also available at the Belle Creek Family Center, which has a conference room, multi-purpose room, and other spaces. This Center is open to the larger community, in addition to serving the resident in the Belle Creek Metro District. The Reunion Recreation Center is available to residents in the Reunion Metro District and includes a gym, dance space, weight room, game room, and multi-purpose rooms. Non-Reunion residents are currently charged a high fee to use the facility ($20/day), limiting public access to this facility.

Inventory of Existing Components

In planning for the delivery of parks and recreation services, it is useful to think of parks, trails, indoor facilities, and other public spaces as combining to create an *infrastructure*. This infrastructure allows people to exercise, socialize, and otherwise maintain a healthy physical, mental, and social well-being. The infrastructure is made up of *components* that support this goal. Components include such things as playgrounds, picnic shelters, courts, fields, indoor facilities and other elements that allow the system to meet its intended purpose.

For Commerce City, a detailed inventory of these components was conducted. The inventory located and catalogued all of the components and evaluated each one as to how well it was serving its intended function within the system. This information was used to analyze the *Levels of Service* provided by the system.

The inventory was completed in a series of steps. The planning team first prepared a preliminary list of existing components using aerial photography and the City's Geographic Information System (GIS). Components identified in the aerial photo were given GIS points and names.

Next, field visits were conducted to confirm the preliminary data and collect additional information. The inventory team visited all of the park sites and the indoor facilities owned by the City, Belle Creek Metro District, Reunion Metro District and other homeowner associations. Some, but not all of the school sites were visited, so the inventory relies on the aerial photos and the familiarity of City staff for the completeness of the inventory the school data.

During the field visits, missing components were added, and each component was evaluated as to how well it met expectations for its intended function. During the site visits the following information was collected:

- Component type
- Component location
- Evaluation of component condition/record of comfort and convenience features
- Evaluation of comfort and convenience features
- Evaluation of park design and ambience
- Site photos
- General comments

The inventory team used the following three-tier rating system to evaluate each component:

B = Below Expectations (1)
M = Meets Expectations (2)
E = Exceeds Expectations (3)

The scores were based on such things as the condition of the component, its size or capacity relative to the need at that location, and its overall quality.

Components were evaluated from two perspectives: first, the value of the component in serving the immediate neighborhood, and second, its value to the entire community.

The setting for a component and the conditions around it affect how well it functions, so in addition to scoring the components, each park site or indoor facility was given a set of scores to rate its comfort, convenience, and ambient qualities. This includes such things as the availability of restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery, etc.

Information collected during the site visit was then compiled and corrections and comparisons made to GIS. Following the comparisons and compilation, the inventory was sent to the City staff for corrections and comments.

The compiled inventory data can be found in **Appendix C** for the **GRASP® Inventory Table** and in **Appendix F** for the **GRASP® Inventory Maps. (**This plan uses an inventory analysis approach called the **Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Program** or **GRASP®**. This methodology evaluates the quality, quantity and distribution of amenities or components and will be further explained throughout this section.)

Level of Service Analysis

During the planning process, several methods were employed to analyze the current system in relation to the needs of the community. This relationship is often referred to as Level of Service, or LOS, and each method used in this analysis provides a different look at the community and addresses different aspects of the system. These tools allow for analysis of the inventory, location, distribution, and access to the parks and recreation. When the results of each analysis are considered together as a group, a full view of the system and the LOS that is provided to each resident is created upon which recommendations can be formed.

NRPA Standards

Level of Service is typically defined in parks and recreation master plans as the capacity of system components and facilities to meet the needs of the public. The traditional means of measuring Levels of Service (LOS), often called the **NRPA** (National Recreation and Parks Association) **Standards** method, and was typically based on providing X number of facilities or acres per 1,000 population (or "capacity"). This methodology was developed in the 1970's and 80's and it is now recognized as not accurate for the majority of public agencies because each community has different demographics, physical conditions and market conditions that make national standards inappropriate. Even NRPA officials are now calling this standards methodology "obsolete

This plan incorporates an enhanced approach using the **Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Program** (**GRASP®**). This methodology builds on traditional community standards based on capacity, but can track not only the quantity, but also quality and distribution of amenities or components.

Process

In the inventory stage of the plan, each of various components found within the park and recreation system were evaluated for quality and condition, and assigned a score. The geographic location of each component was also recorded. The quantity of each component is recorded as well providing a look at capacity.

Comfort, convenience, and ambience characteristics that are part of the context and setting of a component were also evaluated and recorded in the inventory. These comfort and convenience features are items such as drinking fountains, seating, and shade. They are not characteristics of the component itself, but when they exist in proximity to a component they enhance the value of the component. In GRASP® terminology these are referred to as *modifiers.*

Using GRASP® methodology, a **Base Score** is calculated for each component using the following formula:

Component Score x Modifier Value x Design and Ambience Score = **Base Score**

By combining the base scores of each component it is possible to measure the service provided by the entire park system from a variety of perspectives and for any given

location. This was done, and the results are presented in a series of maps (*Perspectives* in GRASP® terminology) and tables that make up the GRASP® analysis of the study area.

GRASP® Level of Service Perspectives show how well the community is served by any given set of components by using maps to graphically display the GRASP® values, and with quantified measurement spreadsheets (as presented in the Summary Tables and the Capacities LOS Chart). This quantification system provides a benchmark against which a community can determine how well it is doing providing services in relation to the community's goals, presently and over time.

The GRASP® enabled dataset is "living" digital data. Commerce City is encouraged to maintain and update this valuable resource, so that further analyses may be performed in the future to measure progress in maintaining and enhancing levels of service for the community.

GRASP® Perspectives

For each Perspective or map, each inventoried component has been assigned a service value, or GRASP® score, and a service area, (or *buffer*), based on a radius from the component. Components were scored two ways, first for their value to the surrounding neighborhood, and second for their value to the entire city (community wide score). For example, a small tot-lot in a pocket park might have a high value to the immediate neighborhood and a low value to someone who lives across town. For the GRASP® mapping, only the neighborhood scores are used. The community scores are used to determine community levels of service for key components, which will be discussed in a later section.

The buffer is the distance from which getting to the component can be accomplished within a reasonable time frame. One mile buffers have been placed around each component and shaded according to the component's GRASP® score. This represents a distance from which convenient access to the component can be achieved by normal means such as driving or bicycling. In addition, a one-third mile buffer has been plotted for each component. The one-third mile buffer shows the distance that a resident can reasonably walk in 10 minutes. Scores are doubled within the 1/3 mile buffer to reflect the added accessibility of walking, since almost anyone can reach the location on their own by walking, even if they don't drive or ride a bicycle.

When service areas, with their scores, for multiple components are plotted on a map a picture emerges that represents the cumulative service provided by that set of components upon the geographic area. Where service areas for multiple components overlap, a darker shade results from the overlap. **Darker shades indicate locations that are "served" by a combination of more components and/or higher quality ones.** The shades all have numeric values associated with them, which means that for any given location on a GRASP® Perspective, there is a numeric GRASP® Level of Service score for that location and that particular set of components.

The maps can be used to determine levels of service throughout the community from a variety of perspectives. These perspectives can show a specific set of components, depict

estimated travel time to services, highlight a particular geographic area, or display facilities that accommodate specific programming.

In the completed Perspectives, it is not necessary for all parts of the community to score equally in the analyses. The desired level of service for any particular location will depend on the type of service being analyzed, and the characteristics of the particular location. Commercial and industrial areas might reasonably be expected to have lower levels of service for parks and recreation opportunities than residential areas. Levels of service for retail services in high-density residential areas might be different than those for lower-density areas.

The Perspectives can be used to determine if current levels of service are appropriate in a given location. If so, then plans can be developed that provide similar levels of service to new neighborhoods. Conversely, if it is determined that different levels of service are desired, and then new planning can differ from the existing community patterns to provide the desired LOS.

Reading the GRASP® Perspectives

Each Perspective shows the cumulative levels of service across the study area when the buffers for a particular set of components are plotted together. **Where there are darker shades, the level of service is higher for that particular Perspective.** It is important to note that the shade overlaying any given point on the map represents the cumulative value offered by the surrounding park system to an individual situated in that specific location, rather than the service being provided by components at that location to the areas around it.

By reviewing the Perspectives, it is possible to see where higher and lower levels of service are being provided from a given set of components. Decisions can then be made regarding the appropriateness of the levels of service and whether or not to change the system in some way to alter levels of service in various locations.

GRASP® Map Descriptions

The GRASP® Perspective maps A-I can be found in **Appendix F.**

Map A: Inventory

This map shows the existing components of the system contained within the dataset and where they are located. High concentrations of components are found in the original part of Commerce City and in the Reunion development. The map also shows trails and the classification of lands that are designated as parks, open space, or other uses relevant to parks and recreation.

Perspective B: Analysis Sub-Areas and Pedestrian Barriers

This analytical map or Perspective shows the areas in which the community has been divided for analysis purposes. These analysis areas are used for comparative purposes, and to determine targets, goals, and strategies for providing appropriate levels of service for different parts of the community.

Two sub-areas have been identified. These are the area north of E. 88th Avenue and the area south of E. 88th Avenue. The geographic centers of these two areas are separated by a distance of nearly ten miles, and by the large tract of land that makes up the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. Access between them is limited to the corridors of Highway 2 and US 85. The two areas differ primarily in their age. The area south of E. 88th Avenue is the older part of Commerce City, which grew out of the City's agricultural and industrial past. It is a typically gridded American small town, although it does not have a traditional "downtown" in the sense of many towns. It does have a commercial area centered on the intersection of Brighton Boulevard, US 85 and Highway 2. Around this are neighborhoods constructed mainly during the mid-20th century.

The northern area is a newly developing collection of 21st century neighborhoods and large tract developments. A large portion of this area is undeveloped at this time, but will be developed over time.

This map also shows the barriers to walking that have been identified for Commerce City. These barriers have been taken into account in the Level of Service analysis to provide an accurate portrayal of how service is currently being provided. In each Perspective, the 1/3-mile buffers are truncated wherever they cross a barrier. The barriers do not affect one-mile buffers.

Perspective C: Access to All Outdoor and Indoor Components

This Perspective utilizes all components provided by all providers to give a picture of how the system of public spaces is serving the overall parks and recreation needs of Commerce City. Each component is given both a 1/3 mile radius and a one mile radius. The **LOS Summary Sub-Area Analysis Table** in **Appendix E** shows the GRASP® scores for the sub-areas identified on Perspective B and provides further analysis of the LOS.

GRASP® Target Scores

Perspective C shows the cumulative level of service available to a resident at any given location in the City. It is a blended value based on the number and quality of opportunities to enjoy a recreation experience that exist in a reasonable proximity to the given location. If a philosophy is adopted wherein the goal is to provide some minimum combination of opportunities to every residence, a GRASP® score can be calculated that represents this minimum.

A reasonable goal would be to offer a selection of active and passive recreation opportunities to every residence, along with access to a recreational trail. The formula for calculating the GRASP® value of such a combination of components is:

Number of Components x Score for each Component x Modifier Value (will be 1.2 if adequate set of modifiers is present) x Design and Ambience Score (will be 2.0 if met to normal expectations-EXPLAIN)* = ***Base Score***

Components:

If we assume that **at least two active components** (courts, athletic fields, etc.) and **two passive components** (picnic shelters, natural areas, landscaped gardens, art,

etc.) should be made available to each home, then the number of components for a **minimum level of service is four**. "Making available", as used in GRASP®, means that they exist within a reasonable distance of the home.

Components that meet normal expectations for size, quality, capacity, and condition receive a score of two in the GRASP® system, so that score will be used to calculate the target minimum score.

Modifiers:
In addition to components, parks and other public spaces have things in them to make them more comfortable and convenient to use. In the GRASP® system, these are called modifiers. The presence of features such as drinking fountain, shade, seating, and restrooms in proximity to a component has the effect of increasing the value of the component. Modifiers encourage people to stay longer and enjoy the components more fully.

In the inventory process, modifiers were scored by a process similar to that used for components. These scores were used to calculate a modifier value for each site. If a site has a high modifier value, the values of the components located there are increased by a factor of 1.3. A modifier value in the middle range is considered "normal", and increases the values of the components by a factor of 1.2. A site with a modifier value in the low range will increase the value of components located there by a factor of 1.1, and at a site with no modifiers the value of the components is not increased.

For the purpose of calculating a minimum target score, therefore, a modifier value of 1.2 is used.

Design & Ambience:
The quality of the users' experience is also enhanced by a pleasant setting and good design. Components within a park that is well-designed and maintained in good condition offer a higher level of service than ones in a park that nobody wants to visit. Good design not only makes a place look nice, it makes it feel safe and pleasant, and encourages people to visit more often and stay longer. In the GRASP® formula, a site with a level of design and ambience that is consistent with local norms will have its component scores raised by a factor of two. Sites where design and ambience is below expectations receive a multiplier of one, and therefore do not see an increase in the value of the components, and sites with exceptional design and ambience receive a multiplier of three. A design and ambience factor of two will be used to calculate the minimum target score.

Computed Minimum Base Score:
Plugging in the assumptions described above, a minimum base score is calculated:

Number of Components ***(4)*** *x Score for each Component* ***(2.0)*** *x Modifier Value (****1.2****) x Design and Ambience Score (****2.0****) =* ***Base Score (19.2)***

Because the ability to walk to components makes them more available, GRASP® places a premium on their scores for the area within walking distance. On the Perspective the **Base Score is doubled within 1/3 mile of the component**. (The 1/3 mile distance represents an approximate 10-minute walk. Barriers that restrict walking have also been taken into account, by cutting off the double-score value around the component at the barrier.) When the score is doubled, the desired GRASP® score is therefore **38.4** for any given residential location, assuming that the basic set of components and other conditions described above have been met.

In built-out areas, in addition to the service received from the basic set of components described above, homes will also have access to components located further away from them than 1/3 mile. GRASP® assumes that components up to a mile away are "available" to a home. A mile is easily traveled by automobile, bicycle, or other means within a reasonable amount of time, unless unusual circumstances exist. The service value of these components is equal to their base score for the components, calculated according to the formula above. If the standard of having the basic set of components within 1/3 mile of each home is met uniformly across the entirety of an area within a one-mile radius of a given home, there could be as many as seven or more parks serving the home with the basic (non-doubled) score of 19.2 points. The total value of these would add another 134.4 points, raising the score at the subject residence to a total value of **172.8**. This explains why values much higher than the basic minimum of 38.4 are typically found on this Perspective.

However, the mix of components needs to be considered further. For example, a home that is within 1/3 mile of four tennis courts and no other amenities would meet the basic numeric standard, but not the intent of the standard. Other duplications are even more likely within the one-mile radius. Based on this, it is recommended that the goal be to provide the minimum score to as many homes as possible, but also to exceed the minimum by some factor whenever possible.

Also, the minimal score does not include trails, alternative providers or community-wide components such as sports facilities, pools, or indoor recreation. When these are taken into account, targets can be set for scores and the percentages of the city that should be covered within each target. This will be done as part of the recommendations phase of this strategic plan.

LOS Summary Table

The **GRASP® LOS Summary Sub Area Table** in **Appendix E** for the Perspective C: *Access to All Outdoor and Indoor Components* shows that the area north of East 88th Street is nearly double in size to the south area. However, currently only 68% of the north area has service on this perspective, while nearly 85% of the south area has service. The average service value for the north is 92 points for those acres that have service, while in the south the service value is 149 points.

Currently, 15.4% of the south area has no service (GRASP® score = zero), while 32% of the north area has no service. However, it should be kept in mind that the north area will be adding new developments with parks and other facilities at a rate that is likely to be much

greater than such new development in the south. At the same time, the parts of the south area with zero service are likely to be large industrial tracts or other areas where lower service is acceptable.

Using 38.4 as the minimum target score as described above, it is found that for the *areas with service* in each of the sub-areas, 22.6% of the area with service in the south falls below this goal, and 28% of the area in the north falls short. Citywide, 26% of the area with service falls short of the target. *This suggests that a recommendation may be made to increase LOS by adding components, upgrading components, or by enhancing the modifiers in existing parks to raise the GRASP® scores where LOS is lower.*

Using the higher score of 172.8 points as an ideal, it is found that this is achieved for 32% of the area with service in the south and 14.1 % of the north area. Citywide, 20.7% of the area with service achieves this ideal score.

The above results indicate that higher **service values are found in the south, the oldest part of Commerce City**, where there are a number of established parks and community-wide facilities. Several schools are located within this area as well, providing additional opportunities for park and recreation services. *A recommendation to consider is to locate new community-wide facilities, when they are needed, to the north area.*

On all of the Perspectives, it can be seen that a large gap exists in the "neck" of Commerce City between the north and south areas. This is an industrial area of the City and thus not expected to provide residential service.

Lower service scores occur at the perimeter of the City. This is normal, because these areas are receiving service from one direction only, and because these areas are typically less developed or may have relatively less residential density than the areas with higher service scores. The lower scores here are somewhat compensated for by the proximity of large amounts of open space and natural areas, such as the South Platte River corridor and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal.

Barriers have a significant effect in Commerce City, particularly in the western half of the city. This is due to the large number of highways, railroads, and other corridors found here as a result of Commerce City's history as a transportation corridor and industrial center.

Perspective D: GRASP® Composite Values Walkable Access to All Outdoor and Indoor Components

This Perspective shows the level of service provided to the community at a walkable level. All components are shown and each has only a 1/3 mile buffer. These buffers have been truncated at the barriers shown on the map. Scores within the buffers are equal to the base score for the components, calculated as described earlier, and doubled to reflect the walkable access, as was done on Perspective C. In a sense, this is Perspective C with the one-mile buffers removed.

Perspective E: Access to All Active Outdoor Components and Trail Network
Recreation components that provide active outdoor recreation opportunities are shown in this perspective. Active outdoor components shown on this map include: ball fields, basketball courts, batting cages, dog parks, fitness courses, golf courses, multi-purpose fields, open turf, playgrounds, pools, skate parks, tennis courts and loop walks.

This Perspective shows that much **of Commerce City has some service for active components**. Currently, higher scores are found in the south area than in the north, but this is likely to change as the north area continues to develop.

Perspective F: Access to All Passive Outdoor Components and Trail Network
This Perspective shows the level of service that is being provided to residents by outdoor components that provide a passive experience for users. These components include outdoor facilities such as: open turf, shelters, loop walks, public art, natural areas, picnic grounds, memorials and trails. It is important to note that significant open space and natural areas exist immediately beyond the city's boundaries but were not included in the scoring for this analysis.

The Perspective shows that at least **some level of service for passive components is found across most of Commerce City**. When the natural areas outside the city are taken into consideration, virtually all of Commerce City enjoys proximity to passive areas. However, overall scores are lower in this perspective than in Perspective E, indicating that there currently might be more emphasis on active rather than passive recreation. This is normal for communities like Commerce City that have a high proportion of families with children living in them. However, as the community matures, there may be increased demands for passive recreation. *Consideration should be given to assuring that the balance between active and passive recreation is appropriate for the needs of the community.*

Perspective G: Access to All Indoor Components
Indoor recreation components that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities are shown in this Perspective. Typical components used on this Perspective include: gyms, indoor pools, fitness and meeting rooms, and other specialized facilities.

The Perspective shows that most of Commerce City has access to at least one component of indoor recreation. In many cases, this is provided by school facilities, such as gyms and classrooms, used by agreement with the school district. It should be noted that the Parks and Recreation Department currently provides youth programs in school facilities, but that the level of service provided is limited due to the hours of availability of school facilities. In addition, Reunion Recreation Center provides service to the residents who live within the boundaries of the Reunion Metropolitan District. The level of service from both schools and the Reunion Recreation District should be viewed with these limitations.

The City's primary indoor facilities are located in the Commerce City Recreation Center in the southern part of the city. This facility is seen by many residents in the northern part of Commerce City to be difficult to get to.

Perspective H: Access to Trail Network

For this Perspective, trails that offer significant recreational value, including amenities such as high scenic value, proximity to natural areas, and such things as benches, interpretive signs, etc. are scored at a value equal to that of two components with normal modifiers and ambience. This is because these types of trails function much like a park with a combination of active and passive components, and because of the high value that is typically placed on trails in the needs assessment process. This Perspective shows that the trails are scattered in segments around Commerce City, with little connectivity. However, it also shows the significant service provided by the Sand Creek corridor trail. Because of the way trails are scored, adding new recreational trails with amenities has a significant effect on the GRASP® scores for a neighborhood. *A recommendation should be considered to add such trails wherever feasible.*

Perspective I: Access to Dedicated Open Space Areas & Trail Network

This Perspective includes both trails and lands that are identified as dedicated open space. In preparing this perspective, all dedicated open space lands are assigned equal value. Therefore, the map does not show the relative quality of one open space parcel versus another. Size of the open space parcel also does not affect its value for the purposes of this map.

What the map does show is relative opportunities to enjoy an open space experience. Locations with more open space parcels and/or trails available have a darker shade overlaying them on this map.

The Perspective shows that the **north area of Commerce City enjoys greater opportunities for open space experiences than the south**. This is because of efforts by the City and developers to set aside open space as a part of new developments. However, **the south area enjoys relatively easier access to regional trails and greenways at this time.** C*apitalizing upon these opportunities by assuring safe and easy connections from residential areas to these regional trails and greenways is recommended.*

Significant open space opportunities are also available at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. The effects of this facility are not reflected on this map because it lies outside the corporate boundary of Commerce City; however, it is an important part of the City's open space context. *A recommendation should be considered to assure the best possible access to this open space for residents of Commerce City.*

Community-wide LOS

The GRASP® maps show how service is distributed within the community. For some components, location is less important than having an adequate quantity or capacity at an expected level of quality. Because GRASP® scores are a blend of quantity and quality they can be used to create numerical indices for LOS that account for both characteristics. **Table 6: Community Components GRASP® Score and Population Ratios**, shows these indices for key components in Commerce City. Definitions for these key facilities are found in the **Outdoor Component Definition Table** in **Appendix D.**

Table 6: Community Components GRASP® Score and Population Ratios

Community Components	Current Population	36,049		Projected Population	50,000
	Total GRASP® score per component type	GRASP® score per 1000 population (GRASP© Index)		Total GRASP® score needed at projected population	Additional GRASP® score needed
Aquatic Center	0	0.00		0	0
Ballfield	83	2.30		115	32
Dog Park	0	0.00		0	0
Golf (18 Hole)	5	0.14		7	2
Hockey In-line	13	0.36		18	5
Multi-use Field - large	113.2	3.14		157	44
Outdoor pool	2	0.06		3	1
Picnic shelter - large (group)	58.2	1.61		81	23
Playground, Destination	0	0.00		0	0
Skate Park	11.7	0.32		16	5
Tennis Complex	6.6	0.18		9	3
TOTAL	**292.70**	**8.12**		**406**	**113**

The first part of **Table 6** shows the total GRASP® scores for that component when all of the components in the dataset are included. During the inventory process, two sets of scores were assigned to each component, a Neighborhood score and a Community-wide score. The Community-wide scores are used to create this table.

Looking at the first set of scores, the citywide values range from a score of zero for some key facilities such as an outdoor aquatic center, dog parks, and destination playground, because Commerce City currently has none of these facilities. Higher scores are found for multi-use fields and ballfields.

The second column in the table shows the index that results when the GRASP® score is divided by the current population of Commerce City, in thousands. This is the GRASP® Index for that component. The third column in the table shows the total GRASP® score that must exist to achieve the same GRASP® Index at the projected population, and the fourth column shows the additional number of GRASP® points needed to achieve that score.

This information can be used to plan for future improvements to the parks and recreation infrastructure to accommodate growth. Because GRASP® scores are a blend of quantity and quality it is possible to increase them by either adding components or improving the quality of existing ones. In most cases, a combination of the two will be recommended. Used in conjunction with the information presented **on** Error! Reference source not found., the best combination of quantity and quality can be determined for planning purposes. The

GRASP® Indices also allow the community to benchmark its combined LOS for quality and quantity of service over time and measure its progress.

Capacities Level of Service (LOS) Findings
For some components, the quantity needed is proportional to the population that will be served by that component. This is a fairly easy calculation when components are programmed for use. The programming determines how many people will be using the facilities over a period of time. Sports fields and courts fall into this category. For other components, the ratio of components to the population may vary, depending upon the size or capacity of the component and the participation levels within the community for the activity served by the component. Skate parks and group picnic facilities fall into this category.

Error! Reference source not found., closely resembles a traditional LOS analysis and shows how the quantities of certain park and recreation components compare to population. For each component, the table shows the current quantity of that component on a "per-1000 persons" basis (referred to as the Capacity LOS) and the pro-rata number of persons in the community represented by each component. This kind of analysis can be used to show the capacity of the current inventory – in other words, how many people are potentially being served by park components.

It is important to note that this table is simply one tool that is used to make final recommendations and establish budgets. The numbers of facilities and costs shown on this table may differ from the final recommendations and projected Capital Improvement Project budgets. One reason for this is that some components may be added to existing parks on land that is currently owned by the City, or may be an expansion or upgrade of existing facilities, while others may require the purchase of additional land. In some cases, the prescribed additional components may be provided by partner agencies or other entities to the satisfaction of the City, and therefore there may be little or no cost to the City.

Using both the Capacities LOS and the GRASP® Indices, recommendations can be made that assure that the appropriate blend of quantity and quality will be maintained within the parks and recreation system over time.

Table 7: Capacities Level of Service for Outdoor Community Components

Commerce City, Colorado	Aquatic Center	Ballfield	Dog Park	Golf (per 18 Holes)	Hockey In-line	Multi-use Field	Outdoor pool	Picnic shelter large (group)	Playgrounds, Destination	Skate Park	Tennis Complex
INVENTORY											
City Components	0	7*	0	1	2	4	0	12	0	1	0
Schools	0	19	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	1
HOA/Metro Districts	0	0	0	0	0	8	4	5	0	0	0
Other (Soccer Fields at Dick's Sporting Goods Park)	0	0	0	0	0	23**	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**0**	**26**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**49**	**4**	**17**	**0**	**1**	**1**
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION											
***CURRENT POPULATION 2006:* 36,049**											
Current Ratio per 1000 Population	0	0.72	0	0.03	0.06	1.36	0.11	0.47	0	0.03	0.03
Population per component	36,049	1,387	0	36,049	18,025	736	9,012	2,121	0	36,049	36,049
***PROJECTED POPULATION 2012:* 50,000**											
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population	**0**	**36**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**68**	**6**	**24**	**0**	**1**	**1**
Number that should be added to achieve current ratio at projected population	*0*	*10*	*0*	*0*	*1*	****19*	*2*	*7*	*0*	*0*	*0*

* This number includes 6 lighted fields

** This number includes 2 lighted artificial turf fields and 21 lighted turf soccer fields at the privately-owned Dick's Sporting Goods Park which the Parks and Recreation Dept. has access to.

*** Note: This projected number of multi-use fields needed is high due to the recent addition of the 23 soccer fields and should be interpreted cautiously.

C. Alternative Providers and Partnerships

Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department sees alternative providers and partnerships as key to a comprehensive strategy for providing recreation programs, services and facilities to the community. Commerce City is in a favorable situation with the unique natural areas that border the City along with having the ability to help influence leisure and recreation opportunities in new growth areas. Following is a brief description of the main alternative providers in and around Commerce City that service residents. Partnerships between these alternative providers and the Parks and Recreation Department are noted when applicable including any relevant Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA's).

Metropolitan Districts

Commerce City is unique in having two separate taxing entities within the city limits: Reunion Metropolitan District and Belle Creek Metropolitan Districts. These two Districts have the responsibility to provide services including parks and recreation services in return for collecting a special property tax levy from owners in the District boundaries. Because these two Districts are by far the largest and most significant "alternative provider" in Commerce City, the parks and recreation facilities owned and operated by these Districts have been included in the inventory and level of service analysis for City.

Following is a description of both of these Districts, including partnerships with the Commerce City Department of Parks and Recreation.

<u>Reunion Metropolitan District</u>

Description:

The Reunion Metro District (RMD) encompasses the 3,200-acre Reunion development. About 15% of the site is currently developed, with a target population of close to 45,000 upon build out. This planned development is divided into 12 villages and will consist of single and multi-family residential units, school sites, town centers, commercial property, and several recreational facilities including parks, open space, bike trails, and lakes. The property was annexed to the City and a Preliminary Development Plan was approved in 2000.

The RMD collects a property tax within the district boundaries that support services including parks and recreation facilities and services. Currently there are 150 acres of parks, 10 miles of trails and 170 acres of open space (according to the website www.reunionco.com).

The largest park is the 52 acre Reunion Park which includes 8 acres of lakes, ballfields, an amphitheater and picnic areas. The Reunion Recreation Center is located in this park and features a gymnasium, fitness area and weight room, aerobics/dance studio in addition to an outdoor pool. Limited pre-school, youth and adult programs are offered. This facility is free for Reunion residents in exchange for their property taxes. Non-residents pay $20 a day for use. (Guests of a resident pay $5 a day.)

Partnerships:
When the Reunion Recreation Center first opened, Commerce City provided programming support, but no longer does so. The Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department continues to partner with the Reunion Metro District in providing community events and the promotion of programs such as summer camp offered by the Department. In addition, the Department will have secondary scheduling priority for athletic field use at new athletic fields at Reunion Park.

Belle Creek Metropolitan District
Description:
The Belle Creek Metropolitan District No. 1 is responsible for services including park maintenance and Belle Creek Family Center operations. The Belle Creek existing development is about 60% of its total build out. The parks in Belle Creek are generally small turf areas, with the exception of the park around the Family Center which has a playground. The Belle Creek Family Center consists of a gymnasium (shared with the adjacent Belle Creek Charter School, K-8th grade), a multi-purpose room, a weight room, and the Bright Horizons childcare program. Programs offered at the Family Center have included yoga, aerobics, dance and special events. According to a Belle Creek staff person, their program focus is on social and community programs versus recreation programs. Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department staff offers some programs at the Family Center.

Intergovernmental Agreement/ Partnership:
Upon the development of the Belle Creek Family Center by the Belle Creek Metropolitan District, the City entered into an agreement with the District for use of the Center. The basis for the agreement was to provide indoor recreation opportunities for non-residents of Belle Creek Metropolitan District, to meet a need in the north part of the city for recreation services. Fees for recreation program opportunities provided by the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department are charged in accordance with City fee policies and are retained by the City. In exchange for the use of the Belle Creek Family Center, the City has agreed to an annual contribution towards operations and maintenance costs. This contribution is reviewed annually and subject to availability of funds identified in the City's annual budgeting process.

In November of 2006, the City agreed to give the District approximately $150,000 towards the construction of a multi-purpose field adjacent to the Family Center. In return, the City will receive programming rights on the field. The Metro District will be responsible for field maintenance.

Schools

Adams County 14 School District

Description:

Adams County 14 School District facilities include: seven elementary schools, two middle schools and the high school. School athletic fields, playgrounds, gymnasiums, and classrooms are used, as a second priority to school use, for indoor and outdoor youth programs run by Parks and Recreation Department staff.

There is a new high school planned for the Prairie Gateway development that will include multiple athletic fields (i.e. baseball, softball, soccer/football), a stadium and tennis courts. There is an opportunity to incorporate use of this facility into future IGA's. Commerce City has older Intergovernmental Agreements with the Adams County 14 School District that are currently under review by the City.

27J School District

Description:

The gyms, playgrounds and baseball fields at Thimmig and Second Creek Elementary Schools are used for afterschool programming by Parks and Recreation Department staff. Currently, the Prairie View High School is not being used by the Department for ongoing programming, but has been used for events such as dance recitals. This facility presents an opportunity for future program space in north Commerce City.

Joint Development and Use of Real Property IGA:

For several properties in the northern section of Commerce City, the City has entered into an agreement with School District 27J to jointly develop school/parks sites. The basis for the agreement is to capitalize on resources to provide two essential community needs, schools and parks. The two entities work jointly to attempt to ensure that design of each site will benefit the other. For example, the School District will design facilities that have purposeful use by the City such as gymnasiums for programming. In turn, the City will

incorporate design into the parks that have purposeful use by the District. The joint development sites include:

- River Run School / Park Site
- Fronterra School / Park Site

Joint Use of Facilities for Public Recreation IGA:
The basis for this agreement is to seek reciprocal use of school and City facilities. Through a set of principles and goals of cooperation, the two agencies seek to:

- Cultivate joint planning and sharing of special expertise to expand ability to serve the community;
- Share resources without compromising responsibilities; and
- To encourage shared use, cooperative scheduling and consistency in use.

Basic components of the agreement are as follows:

- Each agency's own needs take priority.
- Secondary priority is given to the other agency.
- Fees and charges are waived whenever possible.
- Each agency will be responsible for maintenance of their own facilities. (Damage beyond normal wear and tear will be the responsibility of the offender.)
- Facilities will be used under the accordance of each agencies facility use policies.

Natural Areas/Trails

Sand Creek Regional Greenway
Description:
Commerce City has participated in a regional effort to create a 14-mile trail along Sand Creek from the High Line Canal in Aurora to the South Platte River greenway in Commerce City. The four-mile trail connection in Commerce City was recently completed. This trail addition increases the level of service for trails in the southern part of the city. This trail is in close proximity to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and offers potential trail linkages through the new Prairie Gateway development.

Partnership:
The City has provided funding for trail construction, and staff from the Parks and Recreation Department has actively participated in the Sand Creek Regional Greenway organization along with the cities of Denver and Aurora. The next steps for the organization include adding signage and other amenities to the trail. The Parks and Recreation Department has an opportunity to promote the use of this trail, as part of a broader trail system, through publicity and programs.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Description:
The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge borders Commerce City on the southeast. The Refuge is a unique asset to Commerce City and the region, as it is the largest contiguous open space in the metropolitan area with nearly 17,000 acres of open prairie for wildlife. The site is undergoing a large prairie restoration project. Environmental education programs are offered to youth through schools in the metro area. Visitors can drop-in at the Refuge on weekends to enjoy 9 miles of interpretive and recreation walking trails, catch-and-release fishing, nature programs and special events, trolley-tram tours and the Visitor Center. (A new Visitor Center will be constructed as part of the Prairie Gateway development southwest of the Refuge.)

Partnerships:
Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department partners with the National Wildlife Refuge on community events. They anticipate increased programs and partnerships when the new Visitor Center opens as part of the Prairie Gateway development. The Wildlife Refuge offers a great opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Department to partner in providing outdoor and environmental education to youth and families in the area.

Barr Lake State Park
This state park borders Commerce City on the northeast and offers outdoor recreation including non motorized boating, fishing, hunting, biking, hiking, bird and wildlife watching, and education programs at the Nature Center. The Commerce City Parks and

Recreation Department does not currently have formal partnerships with the park. This state park is a resource for outdoor and environmental education that the Department could help promote through program partnerships.

Private Providers

Dicks Sporting Goods Park (Rapids Soccer Stadium)

Description:

In the spring on 2007, the Colorado Rapids' new soccer stadium in the Prairie Gateway development in southeast Commerce City. This 18,000 seat stadium will also host concerts and other events. The stadium complex will include 23 youth practice fields to serve the region and one professional field dedicated to Rapids soccer practice.

Partnerships:

Commerce City has been in close negotiations with the developers of this stadium complex. The Parks and Recreation Department has priority access to soccer fields throughout the complex at a discounted rental fee. The Department also anticipates partnering to provide community events. This new sport complex is a regional draw and offers a unique opportunity for Commerce City to position itself in the area as leader in high quality sport facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department is also presented with a challenge of making these fields accessible and affordable for local youth and adult soccer players.

Homeowner Associations (HOA's)

Multiple HOA's in the city's northern range provide parks and in some cases facilities such as playgrounds and small leisure pools to their residents. These facilities provide a level of service to the resident members of these HOA's, but are not intended to meet the larger community recreation needs. These HOA's are included in the inventory conducted as part of this Strategic Plan.

Private Fitness Providers
Curves – a women-focused, fitness and wellness franchise – operates in Commerce City at 6025 E. Parkway Drive.

Snap Fitness – a small fitness center – is located in north Commerce City at 104th and Tower Road.

Neighboring Parks and Recreation Departments
Brighton
Description:
The Brighton Parks and Recreation Department operates a large recreation center at 555 North 11th Avenue with amenities including: gymnasium, weight rooms, aerobic/dance studio, running track, racquetball courts, leisure pool, lap pool, hot tub, community rooms, and childcare area. The center offers reasonable resident and non-resident fee options.

Partnerships:
Commerce City and Brighton have an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for reciprocal use of each others recreation center when their center is closed for maintenance. There are no other formal partnerships between the agencies. However, some residents in the north part of Commerce City use the Brighton center because they believe it is more convenient to get to than the Commerce City Recreation Center.

Thornton
Description:
The Thornton Parks and Recreation Department operates the Carpenter Recreation Center, a 78,780 square foot center located at 112th and Colorado Boulevard. The center includes the following amenities: gymnasium, two leisure pools, whirlpool, steam room, sauna, gymnastics studio, racquetball courts, running/walking track, fitness/dance room, preschool/child care and multi-purpose rooms.

Thornton also operates a Community Center and Teen Center that offer additional recreation and leisure programs and amenities including: a two-court gymnasium, dance room, senior billiards room, multi-purpose room, weight room, and skate park.

In addition, Thornton has two outdoor pools and the Thorncreek Golf Course, an 18-hole course located at Washington and 135th Street.

Partnerships:
There are currently no formal partnerships between Commerce City and Thornton Parks and Recreation Departments.

Denver
Description:
The Denver Parks and Recreation Department operates parks south of Commerce City in the Stapleton neighborhood of Denver. There are plans for a new recreation center to be included in the Central Park, a new park to open in the summer of 2007. Denver staff also

indicated that a regional sports complex as part of a future high school around 56th Street is in the early planning stages.

Partnerships:
Denver and Commerce City Recreation Departments cooperate on the Sand Creek Regional Greenway and other regional projects. There are no other formal partnerships between the two parks and recreation departments.

Non-Profit Organization
Boys and Girls Club
The Boys and Girls Club (BGC) does not currently operate in Commerce City. However, there are discussions underway between Commerce City and the BGC to explore a partnership to bring the organization to Commerce City to expand programs to youth in the southern part of the city.

Hospitals/Health Organizations
Tri-County Health Department
Commerce City works with Tri-County Health Department as the lead agency of the Thriving Communities Project to work on programs, policies and environmental changes that support healthy eating and active living. This three to five year project is funded by Kaiser Permanente and was launched in 2005-06. A number of partner organizations have worked together to expand cooking and nutrition classes, conduct walkability audits in neighborhoods, and work on safe routes to school.

Alternative Provider and Partnership Key Issues

- Facility and program alternative providers and partnerships are an important aspect of parks and recreation level-of-service in Commerce City and supplement the programs and facilities of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

- There is no formal Partnership Policy to guide overall partnership development by the Department.
- Ongoing planning and coordination with the two major alternative providers in northern Commerce City – Reunion and Belle Creek Metropolitan Districts – is a unique challenge faced by the Department.
- Many outdoor and environmental education program partnership opportunities exist with nearby resources such as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Barr Lake State Park and the Sand Creek Regional Greenway.
- Partnerships with schools could be expanded as new facilities are built.

V. How We Manage - Analysis of Findings and Oversight

The management of the Parks and Recreation Department not only requires attention to its programs and facilities, but also to the administration, management, operations and funding practices. This section gives an overview and assessment of these areas.

A. Administration and Management

Commerce City Government

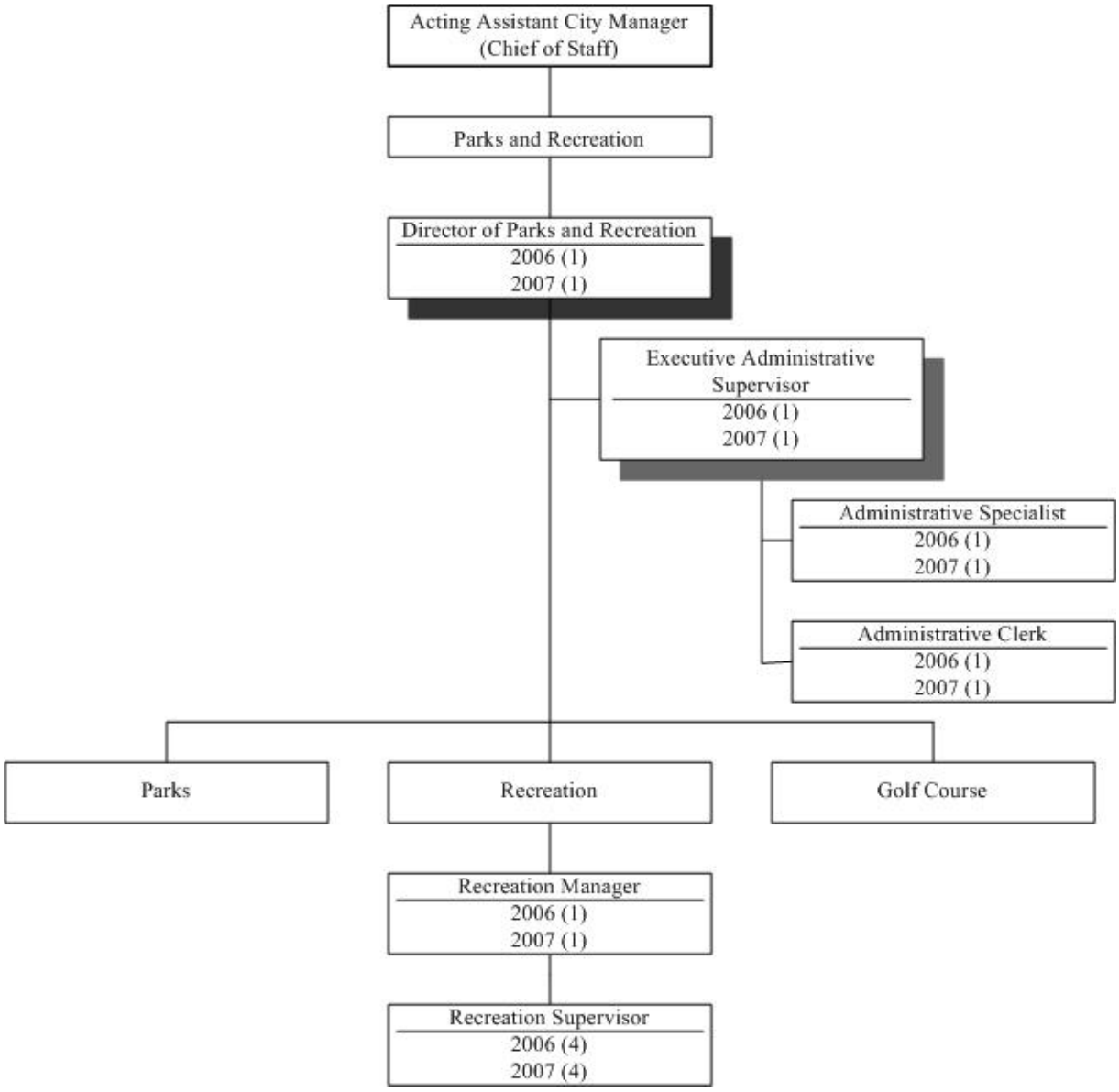
Commerce City is governed by a City Council made up of nine members, elected by City residents. The Council selects the City Manager who manages the City's six departments: City Manager, Community Planning and Development Services, Finance, Parks and Recreation, Police and Public Works.

Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department is made up of four areas: Administration; Park Planning, Development and Operations; Recreation Programs; and Golf Course. The Recreation Division accounts for just under half of the total Department budget. The Buffalo Run Golf Course seeks to cover its operating costs and functions as an enterprise fund. **Figure 6** shows the Department Administration organizational chart.

Staffing
According to the 2006 budget, there are thirty-three (33) full-time employees (FTE) in the Department. The Department also utilizes volunteers to support program operations. According to the 2006-2007 Budget Document, close to 13,000 volunteer hours were projected to be contributed to the Department. Many of these volunteers work with the senior programs at the Recreation Center and the Conter Community Center. Staff indicated a need to continue to work to formalize volunteer recruitment, training, and procedures for the Department overall.

Figure 6: Parks and Recreation Department- Administration Organizational Chart



B. Marketing and Communications

In 2005, the City renewed its focus on marketing with the formation of a Marketing and Public Relations Division within the City Manager's office. A re-branding effort took place that resulted in a new City logo with an image of a tree growing out of the prairie grass.

This logo is intended to convey the values of the community. The grass represents the prairie, a tie to the earth and the roots of the community, history and strength. The growing tree represents a growing community, a city in transition, and a strong base with a creative and bright future.

The Marketing and Public Relations Division staff works closely with the Parks and Recreation Department on marketing materials. The Division produces a quarterly Parks and Recreation Activity Guide in Spanish and English with a distribution of close to 18,000 through direct mail to residents' homes.

In addition, in keeping with the branding effort of the City, marketing staff developed flyer templates to be used by Parks and Recreation staff to create specific program flyers to supplement the Activity Guide. The main distribution source for these flyers is through the schools. Marketing staff expressed an interest in training Parks and Recreation staff in how to make more effective flyers and in writing press releases.

The Marketing and Public Relations Division's goals are to work closely with the Parks and Recreation Department to improve their marketing efforts through planning, improved marketing materials, customer feedback and strengthening the website and use of technology (online registration, customer feedback forms, etc.). Parks and Recreation staff expressed an interest in tailoring some of the marketing strategies and materials to specific programs.

C. Information Management and Technology

The City's information technology staff supports the Parks and Recreation Department through hosting the recreation class software (Active Networks), as well as providing network services. In the staff focus group, staff indicated that the use of technology overall could be improved, especially in the area of interfacing between different City departments and program areas. For example, there are different processes for maintaining inventories. In addition, the recreation computer registration system is incompatible with the finance system. Furthermore, while the Department does not currently have an on-line registration system, IT staff expressed a growing demand for this service. The IT Department is currently in the process of updating its strategic plan.

D. Planning and Design

The Parks and Recreation Department has two planning positions – the Parks Planning and Operations Manager and the Parks Planner – that interface with the City's Department of Community Planning and Development Services. Commerce City combines planning and maintenance responsibilities into one job description (Parks Planning and Operations Manager) to ensure that maintenance issues are taken into consideration in the planning and design of park and recreation facilities.

Recent park planning efforts have been primarily guided by the *Prairieways Action Plan* (1999), which provides a framework for park, open space and trail development in the growing northern area of Commerce City. The parks planning approach embodied in this plan is for private developers to provide for smaller pocket parks within their developments to serve the immediate needs of residents in that subdivision, while the City's efforts are focused on larger neighborhood and community parks, open space and trails. A central goal of the plan is to locate a neighborhood park and school in the middle of each square mile section, as mandated by residential density. Another plan goal is to have trail access within a half a mile of each residence. According to planning staff, around 80% of the community parkland identified by this plan in the north has already been acquired. Most of this land, however, is not yet developed. Identifying funding to develop this newly acquired parkland in the north was identified as a challenge by staff and City Council members.

E. Park Maintenance

The Commerce City Parks and Recreation, Parks Planning, Development and Operations Division is responsible for the maintenance of the following areas:

- Parks
- Trails
- Natural areas
- Parkways and medians
- City owned athletic fields and sport courts, i.e. basketball and tennis
- Recreation building grounds
- Civic buildings
- Special event set up and take down (for all City departments)

For Commerce City parks, the survey results showed that the majority of households felt the quality of the parks was adequate. To a lesser degree, survey respondents felt the quality of the parks was excellent and a small amount felt the quality was poor. Pioneer Park received the highest marks for quality, followed by River Run Park, Monaco Park, Fairfax Park, Stampede Park and Sand Creek Regional Trail.

The Division has a park/turf maintenance program that includes scheduled weekly/ monthly / annual tasks such as mowing, fertilization, aerations, etc. Currently the Division is in the process of developing and updating life cycle costing assessments for park amenities such as playgrounds, irrigation systems and picnic shelters as well as for park maintenance equipment.

Park Maintenance Key Issues
Based on staff input, the following maintenance issues were identified.

- Football and soccer athletic fields are being used beyond their capacity.
- There is a need to refine athletic field scheduling and maintenance practices.
- Continued planning is needed to ensure new park openings include appropriate maintenance budget allocations.
- Appropriate funding is needed to keep up with growing park maintenance needs.

F. Traditional Funding - Operations

General Fund and Tax Revenues
The General Fund supports the City's ongoing operations and maintenance for park and recreation facilities, programs and services. Tax revenues include sales and use taxes, investment earnings, loan repayment interest, and loan repayment fund balance. The Commerce City property tax mill levy is 3.28 mills and has not changed since 1998. The City collects a 3.5% tax on the sales of tangible personal property and specific services including building materials, motor vehicles, furniture, fixtures, supplies and equipment.

Overall Department Operating Budget
The Parks and Recreation Fund is supported by the General Fund. This Fund is made up of revenues from recreation fees, investment earnings, donations, miscellaneous revenues and transfers in from sales and use tax fund and general fund. Expenditures are from administration, various recreation areas, parks maintenance, trails and open space, the Belle Creek Agreement, and in previous years, transfers out to the parks and recreation capital fund and capital expenditures fund.

Subsidy as an Investment Philosophy
Examples across the country show a wide range of facility subsidy levels or tax investment, from 15% to 80% and higher, depending upon the mission of the organization, construction funding payback, operation funding availability, the community's philosophy regarding subsidy levels and user fees, and structure of agency budgets. Dr. John Crompton from Texas A&M University, a leading educator and researcher on the benefits and economic impact of leisure services indicates that the national average is around 34% cost recovery, conversely indicating an average of around 66% subsidy.

Department Budget Analysis
The Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department was forecasted in 2006 to recover 16.7% of direct operational and maintenance costs for all City parks, facilities, programs and services. Cost recovery for the Parks and Recreation Department through fees, charges and alternative funding slightly increased, a little over 1% since 2002, with the highest cost recovery actualized in 2003. **Table 8** shows revenues, expenses and cost recovery over the last six years, as well as transfers in to balance the budget.

Table 8: Commerce City Parks and Recreation Six Year Fund Comparison

	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	2007 Plan
Revenues (fees, charges, and alternative funding)	$472,618	$531,058	$635,613	$744,926	$800,469	$846,708
Expenses	$3,079,921	$3,031,301	$4,389,737	$4,657,291	$4,923,386	$4,999,113
% Cost Recovery through Fees and Charges	15.4%	17.5%	14.5%	16%	16.3%	16.9%
Transfers In (General Fund) <transfers out>	$8,169	$5,790	$734	$173,092	$150,000 <$124,165>	$0
Transfers In (Sales Tax)	$2,497,352	$2,729,125	$3,658,542	$3,840,943	$3,848,752	$4,152,405

Transfers to Capital Expenditures
New to the 2006 budget was a $124,165 transfer to capital expenditures. This is not budgeted for 2007. (These items were a one-time approval by ordinance for projects including the Belle Creek Multi-Use Sports Field and the Parks, Trails and Open Space Map.)

Operating Procedures and Policies
Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department has been developing a Policies and Procedures Manual primarily aimed toward facility operations. Procedures and training for the handling of monies and conducting financial transactions exist, and procedural forms have been developed by the Finance Department. The Parks and Recreation Department is in compliance with the Finance Department's procedures.

Fees and Charges in the General Fund
Activity fees are charged for the Recreation Center and various activities, rentals, programs and services. There is not a formal cost recovery policy. Annual approval of fees and charges such as facility admissions and rental fees is conducted by the policy making governing board which is the City Council. Information regarding park, field, shelter or building usage fees or rentals for profit, non-profit and private use is well defined. The cost recovery for the Department as a whole has been around 16% the last couple of years.

Specific Recreation Operating Budgets
In 2004, the expense budgets and cost recovery reflected a new facility services allocation to all applicable facility and programs based on the percentage of the building that the program area generally used. The budgets also reflect a computer allocation. In addition, all non-supervisory level, full-time staff salaries were transferred from the Administration budget into their respective program(s) budgets to more accurately reflect all direct program expenses. In 2007, all printing and marketing costs were permanently moved to

the City's Marketing & Public Relations Department budget. The cost recovery reflects revenues from fees and charges only for programs, admission and services.

Note: The following recreation program area budgets (Tables 10-23) account for direct and indirect costs differently and therefore should not be used for comparison purposes. In Section VI, Recommendation 6.4 addresses the need for the Department to develop a consistent cost recovery philosophy and policy, and to consistently track direct and indirect costs.

Table 9 shows the a six-year budget comparison for the Park Maintenance Division budget by program area, and **Tables 10-23** show the Recreation Division budgets with cost recovery by program area.

Table 9: Park Maintenance Budget

Park Maintenance	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Park Administration						
Expenses	$ 897,987	$1,007,909	$687,391	$876,241	$787,367	$1,070,822
Trails and Open Space						
Expenses	$42,307	$30,522	$75,090	$91,748	$92,400	$94,227
Pocket Parks						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	$28,676	$39,929	$41,227	$43,039
Neighborhood Parks						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	$71,533	$55,006	$51,229	$68,789
Community Parks						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	$235,428	$293,650	$288,736	$325,076
Buildings and Grounds						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	$62,660	$62,019	$44,334	$55,370
Beautification						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	$33,844	$30,307	$29,520	$27,463
Satellite Operations						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	$15,266	$12,212	$12,017	$15,364
Prairie Gateway						
Expenses	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	$190,726
Total	**$ 940,294**	**$1,038,431**	**$1,209,888**	**$1,461,112**	**$1,346,830**	**$1,890,876**

**2006 had an adjustment/decrease in the facility allocation*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The 2007 Parks Maintenance budget has increased over 100% since 2002; however, the budgets have fluctuated year-to-year and reflect minimal increases in staffing. Expenditures increase significantly due to utilities and supplies related to additional park acreage. The park and open space increase in acreage has added to the park maintenance workload, including the recent addition of Prairie Gateway in 2007. Since there are no revenues in the park maintenance budget, there is no cost recovery.

Table 10: Aquatics Program Budget

Aquatics	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$12,860	$35,634	$45,354	$45,235	$40,605	$40,000
Expenses	$165,420	$186,609	$336,445	$352,482	$291,523	$330,542
% Cost Recovery	**7.8%**	**19.1%**	**13.5%**	**12.8%**	**13.9%**	**12.1%**

**In 2006, the aquatics salaries and facility services allocations decreased significantly*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Aquatics Division includes learn to swim classes; lifeguards and lifeguard training; water safety instruction (WSI); open swim; private lessons; summer swim team and swim meets; water walking and lap swimming. The pool has also been rented for kayaking and scuba diving. The division's cost recovery has increased since 2002 and the 2007 operating budget has almost doubled since 2002. In 2003, the division actualized their highest cost recovery of 19.1%. In 2004, each division that held programs in the recreation center received a facility allocation expense of building services and maintenance from the Public Works Department budget; and an information technology allocation from the City's IT Department.

Table 11: Youth Sports Budget

Youth Sports	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004* Actual	2005 Actual	2006** Budget	2007*** Plan
Revenues	$23,552	$21,009	$42,462	$29,930	$32,149	$38,040
Expenses	$92,732	$98,268	$101,779	$104,787	$92,896	$118,166
% Cost Recovery	**25.4%**	**21.4%**	**41.7%**	**28.6%**	**34.6%**	**32.2%**

** Opened Pioneer Park*
*** 2006 decrease in salaries and contract services*
****2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Youth Sports Division runs programs by the City with volunteer coaches and paid officials. The Division does not use non-profit, volunteer youth Sports Associations to manage these organized programs. Sports include baseball; softball; t-ball; soccer; football; lacrosse and basketball programs, leagues, and tournaments; skateboarding lessons; and events like the NFL Punt, Pass and Kick; and the Hershey Track Meet. These programs are

typically for youth under 16 years of age. Since 2002, the cost recovery has increased with a low in 2003 of 21.4% and a peak in 2004 of 41.7%.

Table 12: Adult Sports Budget

Adult Sports	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004* Actual	2005** Actual	2006*** Budget	2007**** Plan
Revenues	$14,906	$13,322	$23,646	$43,724	$41,661	$39,001
Expenses	$13,898	$13,315	$22,878	$23,303	$24,641	$24,403
% Cost Recovery	107%	100%	103%	188%	169.1%	159.8%

* *Opened Pioneer Park*
** *New adult programming at Pioneer Park*
*** *2006 decrease in salaries and contract*
****2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Adult Sports Division provides indoor and outdoor league play. The interest levels and participation have fluctuated over the years with declining registration in softball and steady involvement in basketball. There have been other attempts to offer sports such as dodgeball, bike riding, fishing trips, etc. In 2005 revenues almost doubled due to the opening of Pioneer Park and renewed interest in participation. Since 2002, the cost recovery in this Division has almost doubled, creating some excess revenue over direct expenditures for the Department.

Table 13: Performing Arts Budget

Performing Arts (Dance/ Gymnastics)	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$19,998	$21,778	$27,884	41,978	$45,209	$58,049
Expenses	$58,563	$45,753	$131,810	$161,617	$133,924	$171,195
% Cost Recovery	34.2%	47.6%	21.2%	26%	33.8%	33.9%

**2006 had an adjustment/decrease in the facility allocation*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Performing Arts division includes dance and gymnastics programs primarily for the youth, and martial arts. The Recreation Center has a large dedicated gymnastics space. Gymnastics participation was on the decline but interest in this program and dance renewed in 2005. The operating budget has more than tripled since 2002 while the revenues have more than doubled, not really keeping pace with additional costs of providing the programs. The cost recovery for this division reached an all time high in 2003 at 47.6%. The cost recovery was 33.8% in 2006.

Table 14: Creative Arts Budget

Creative Arts	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$9,282	$5,804	$6,797	$6,672	$6,233	$11,553
Expenses	$19,988	$12,195	$21,728	$23,849	$16,865	$24,372
% Cost Recovery	**46.4%**	**47.6%**	**31.3%**	**28%**	**37%**	**47.4%**

**2006 had an adjustment/decrease in the facility allocation*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Creative Arts Division includes programs for adults and youth in crafts and visual arts like ceramics, drawing and painting, guitar, and the Missoula Children's Theater. There is a dedicated kiln room for firing ceramics and pottery which garners fees. The operating budget has fluctuated over the years with a variance of almost 100%. The expense variation is not consistent with the revenue variation. In 2003 the Division reached its highest cost recovery of 47.6% and in 2005 the lowest at 28%. The projected cost recovery in 2007 is 47.4%.

Table 15: Fitness/Wellness Budget

Fitness/ Wellness	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005* Actual	2006** Budget	2007*** Plan
Revenues	$4,931	$8,439	$16,508	$35,359	$33,284	$37,714
Expenses	$37,688	$32,664	$73,374	$82,127	$64,836	$94,682
% Cost Recovery	**13.1%**	**25.8%**	**22.5%**	**43.1%**	**51.3%**	**39.8%**

**Transfer in pass and admission revenue from recreation center budget*
***2006 had an adjustment/decrease in the facility allocation*
****2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Fitness/Wellness Division includes land and water aerobics, martial arts, weight training, yoga, personal training, and the Silver Sneakers® programs. A portion of the admission and pass fees are transferred to this division as several of the aerobics classes are included as a benefit of admission and pass fees. The 2007 operating budget has almost tripled since 2002; and the cost recovery reached an all time high in 2006 at 51.3%. The projected cost recovery in 2007 is 39.8%.

Table 16: Special Events Budget

Special Events	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005* Estimated	2006 Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$950	$465	$908	n/a	n/a	n/a
Expenses	$14,565	$16,515	$16,431	$1,468	n/a	n/a
% Cost Recovery	6.5%	2.8%	5.5%	0%	n/a	n/a

**Special Events transferred to City Manager's budget*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Special Event Division included Creepy Hallows, a two-day Halloween Event; and the Easter Eggstravaganza. In 2006 all special event budgets were transferred to the City's Community Events budgets.

Table 17: Recreation Center Budget

Recreation Center	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$263,934	$291,182	$288,536	$275,462	$264,175	$274,871
Expenses	$265,032	$288,805	$721,355	$841,994	$674,435	$724,637
% Cost Recovery	99.6%	101%	40%	32.7%	39.2%	37.9%

**2006 had a significant adjustment/decrease in the facility allocation*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Recreation Center division generates revenues from admission and pass sales for drop in use of the facility and some fitness/wellness programs. Activities include open swim (revenues are transferred to that division budget as all the expenses are reflected there), open basketball, open volleyball, weight room use, billiards, and rentals of the facility's many rooms. Rental revenue is generated from private party room use during normal operating hours, after hours and overnight. Birthday parties in conjunction with open swimming also generate revenue. The Center also has a pro-shop which has merchandise for re-sale and vending.

In 2004, each division that held programs in the recreation center received a facility allocation expense of building services and maintenance from the Public Works Department budget; and an information technology allocation from the City's IT Department. What wasn't attributed directly to each program area was attributed to the Recreation Center. This had a significant impact on the Recreation Center budget from 2003 to 2004.

Table 18: Senior Citizens Budget

Senior Citizens	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$34,587	$39,407	$41,189	$40,195	$30,492	$31,484
Expenses	$85,459	$129,326	$310,090	$303,413	$305,554	$254,921
% Cost Recovery	**40.5%**	**30.5%**	**13.3%**	**13.3%**	**10%**	**12.4%**

**2006 had a significant adjustment/decrease in the salaries (temporary) and the facility allocation; as well as a significant increase in revenues*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions, including $10,000 in senior transportation program*

The Senior Citizen Division has a large dedicated senior lounge which is open from 8 am to 3 or 4 pm. Classes, day trips, overnight excursions, and luncheons generate revenues. The senior lounge is free and there are many clubs or social groups that use this area. In 2003 the full-time staff assigned to this program was reflected here. In 2007, several full-time positions were re-assigned to other budgets to more accurately reflect actual work.

Table 19: Youth Services Budget

Youth Services	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006* Budget	2007** Plan
Revenues	$56,133	$70,733	$83,623	$115,254	$83,580	$107,405
Expenses	$127,225	$133,213	$189,180	$274,488	$197,887	$278,824
% Cost Recovery	**44.1%**	**50.1%**	**44.2%**	**42%**	**42.2%**	**38.5%**

**2006 had an adjustment/decrease in the facility allocation*
***2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Youth Services Division includes preschool and school age programming for summer camp, winter break camp and spring break camp held at the recreation center. Revenues and expenses for Kinder Kids, Tiny Tots and babysitting (which was discontinued in 2005) are also reflected here. Cost recovery was at an all time high in 2003 at 50.1%; but has held fairly consistently around 43% average the last several years until a projected drop in 2007 to 38.8%.

Table 20: Satellite Budget

Satellite	2002 Actual	2003* Actual	2004** Actual	2005 Actual	2006*** Budget	2007**** Plan
Revenues	n/a	$2,026	$35,167	$69,646	$54,145	$108,652
Expenses	n/a	$20,063	$89,262	$83,012	$72,848	$ 93,555
% Cost Recovery	**n/a**	**10.1%**	**39.4%**	**83.9%**	**74.3%**	**116.1%**

**This program area began in 2003 to fund summer and school break programs at the two Brighton 27J elementary schools in the north area*
***Added management of pool operations at the high school*
****Stopped pool operations at the high school*
*****2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Satellite Division includes school age programming for summer camp, winter break camp and spring break camp held at the two Brighton County School District 27J elementary schools: Thimmig and Second Creek in the northern part of the City. This division also includes some programming at Belle Creek. In 2007 this division plans to recover more than 100% of direct costs making excess revenues over expenses.

Table 21: Conter Community Center Budget

Conter Community Center	2006 Budget	2007* Plan
Revenues	$1,116	$4,000
Expenses	$30,354	$47,725
% Cost Recovery	**3.7%**	**8.4%**

**2007 reflects the proposed budget reductions*

The Conter Community Center began as a satellite facility and in 2006, once the center had a facility allocation, a separate budget was created. The City's senior and adult programming divisions operate the facility and the programming for the Conter Community Center. The front desk is staffed by senior volunteers.

Conter Estates is a 55+ years old retirement living community adjacent to the Conter Community Center. The management organization for the Conter Estates contracted with the City of Commerce City to provide a staff member to organize and manage exclusive programming for their residents.

Table 22: Pioneer Park Program Budget

Pioneer Park	2007* Plan
Revenues	$51,565
Expenses	$21,448
% Cost Recovery	**240.4%**

**2007 new budget and it reflects the proposed budget reductions*

Pioneer Park is a three youth baseball/adult softball field sports complex which opened in 2004 and whose operational budget is now reflected separately. Previously it was reflected in Adult Sports. (Note: **Table 22** reflects only program revenues and expenses and does not include any park maintenance costs.)

Table 23: Special Interest Budget

Special Interest	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004* Actual
Revenues	$4,340	$2,655	$1,873
Expenses	$2,831	$1,938	n/a
% Cost Recovery	**153%**	**137%**	**100%**

**This division was eliminated in 2004*

The Special Interest Division included youth events (Daddy/Daughter Sweetheart Dance, Mom/Son Bingo) which were moved to the Youth Services division. Guitar, hairbraiding and other specialty classes were moved to the Cultural/Visual Arts division.

Key Findings – Financial Operations

The cost recovery varies by program area with no consistent cost recovery philosophy. In comparing 2005 to 2006 for example:

- Aquatics = 12.8% to 13.9%;
- Youth Sports = 28.6% to 34.6%;
- Performing Arts = 26% to 33.8%;
- Fitness/Wellness = 43.1% to 51.3%
- Adult Sports = 188% to 330%
- Recreation Center = 32.7% to 39.2%
- Senior Citizens = 13.3% to 32.8%

The Department should establish cost recovery goals based on who benefits (the community as a whole (taxpayers), an individual (fees and charges), etc.) and the mission of the department.

Additionally, overall expense increases have outpaced revenues generated from fees, charges and alternative funding. The Department seems to be slowly increasing the overall cost recovery and is close to meeting the best year's performance in 2003 of 17.5%.

G. Traditional Funding – Development and Capital Revenues

Commerce City uses many different sources of funding to support capital development of parks and recreation facilities. Following is an overview of current and potential sources of funding.

Conservation Trust Fund
The Conservation Trust Fund is a holding place for pass through Colorado lottery proceeds for eligible entities and qualified projects. Monies can be carried over from year to year. For fiscal 2006, the City of Commerce City revenues were budgeted to be $254,356, with expenditures of $225,000 and a fund balance of $55,194. 2007 is forecasted to have revenues of $261,987, expenditures of $225,000 with a $92,181 fund balance.

An eligible entity for this Fund is a county, municipality or special district which has created and certified to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) that a conservation trust fund has been established. Population estimates are prepared and updated annually; and funds are distributed based on these estimates.

Land Dedication or Fees-in-Lieu
The City requires park land dedication by private developers of three percent (3%) of the square feet of usable land area in the subdivision (which excludes floodplains, public right-of-ways, commercial and industrial sites and public sites such as schools and parks). Fees are not accepted in lieu of park land dedication. The City should analyze their formulas and structure for both effectiveness and fair market value. As the north area continues to grow, the acquisition of land to fulfill the Strategic Plan's recommendations and standards, focusing on connectivity, developable and desirable parcels, or adequate fees-in-lieu for development becomes increasingly important.

Impact Fees or Park Improvement Fees
The City charges a public park development fee for new developments. These fees are designed to defray the impact of new residential development; this includes all types of residential development from single family homes to apartment units. New development increases the number of residents which impacts the resources and services in a community. Generally the developer pays this fee through the permitting process. The developer then passes the cost on to the purchaser of these new units.

The impact fees collected normally support the capital development of new facilities or renovation of parks and facilities in a defined service area. Often a park improvement fee is comprised of a neighborhood and community park component, as well as trails, open space and recreational facility development. It is usually based on the Level of Service (LOS) standards adopted by the agency in their Comprehensive Plan and the current costs of acquiring and building those parks. In some states, jurisdictions must prove that dollars collected from a development will be kept within that service area for recreation facility construction or renovation.

The City employs this type of fee and estimates that there will be a shortfall of current fees collected to cover park improvement costs. The City should analyze the adequateness and structure of impact fees as the north area continues to grow.

Property Tax – Dedicated Levy for Parks and Recreation Services
The unincorporated community and surrounding area continues to grow, and the impacts from the growth affect services. The exploration of increasing the millage rate and dedicating a portion toward parks capital improvements could alleviate some growth and service needs. A property tax increase would require voter approval before it can be implemented. This may be a viable opportunity for the City in the future.

Revenue Bonds
Another traditional funding strategy that could be considered is the use of revenue bonds. These bonds are a form of non-guaranteed debt, meaning that they are not backed by the full faith and credit of the government entity. Instead, revenue bonds are sold on the basis of repayment from other designated revenue sources. If revenue from the designated sources falls short of what is required to make debt payments, the government entity does not have to make up the difference. Revenue bonds are typically used to fund capital projects which will generate adequate excess revenue to cover both operational costs and service of the bond debt, and are often are issued for 15, 20 or 30 years. Facilities that may use revenue bonds for development include golf courses, multi-generational recreation centers with revenue generation components, and marinas. Most revenue bonds are granted with assurances that planned facilities will generate revenues at 125% of the yearly debt payment.

With the cost recovery of the Recreation Center at only 39%, and the Department being greatly subsidized, the use of revenue bonds to build something new is probably not feasible at this time. The current population figures and survey results may support the use of this funding source for the planned summer leisure pool which is currently not funded.

General Obligation Bonds
General obligation bonds are taken out by a government against the value of taxable property, and are paid through taxes on property owners. These bonds have a life of between 10-20 years and are tied to interest bearing notes. Payment includes the principal and the interest on the bond.

The City currently uses this type of capital project funding. This continues to be an option for the City as long as the City is in a position to incur more debt.

Lease Purchase Agreement
As a way to build facilities and defer some costs, some agencies are using lease purchase agreements (LPA). A LPA features an entity that provides financing to the governing agency to build a facility. The government entity then leases back the facility until the loan is paid off. Financing for LPA's are not done on open markets, so interest rates are normally higher than bonds. This is an option for the City as long as the City is in a position to incur more debt.

Amusement or Admission Tax
This is a tax imposed as a percent of a cent spent for the privilege of engaging in an amusement open to the public. It is tax levied on the admissions prices to places of amusement, entertainment and recreation. Amusements can include such things as athletics or theater events, craft shows, bowling alleys, golf courses, ski facilities or county fairs. The amusement tax is considered a tax on patrons, even though it is collected from the operators of the amusement. Some cities apply their sales tax to admission fees while others impose a separate admission tax. The specific details vary from state to state. In Colorado, non-home rule (statutory) cities do not have the authority to levy an admissions tax.

This may be an option for the City in the future once the new summer leisure pool is built, or additional facilities such as a theater are explored as the City grows and there is a need for new attractions. With the opening of the new Rapids stadium, an amusement tax could be considered.

H. Alternative Funding

Specific grants have been used in the past but none appear to be forecasted for fiscal 2007. Funds from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) have been received in the past through the Commerce City Cultural Council, a 501 (c) 3 organization that benefits the City. Great Outdoor Colorado (GOCO) funding as well as Conservation Trust funds have also been received in the past. The City has been a partner through contracts with the School District to provide federally grant funded programs. These grants are from the State to Adams County School District 14 for school age programs from the 21st Century and No Child Left Behind funding.

VI. Great Things to Come: Goals, Strategies and Action Plans

A. Challenges and Opportunities

Core to the mission of the City of Commerce City is the value of parks and recreation, as highlighted below.

The City of Commerce **City's mission** is to:

- *Provide municipal services **and programs valued by our citizens***
- *Plan and develop a unified **sustainable Community***
- *Enhance the quality of life in our Community by/through:*
  - *Economic diversity and development*
  - *Offering **unique leisure activities and opportunities***
  - *Planning and developing a **quality physical environment***
  - *Enhancing the **social fabric** of our Community.*

Guided by this mission, the City will be able to build on its strengths and face its challenges as it evolves and grows as a community. Commerce City is clearly changing due to its location in the path of development emanating from Denver and the proximity to the Denver International Airport and E-470. Because parks and recreation systems are long-term investments for a community, decisions made today will affect the lives of future residents of Commerce City for many years to come. It is important to make these decisions with a long-range vision in mind.

As Commerce City evolves from a blue-collar working community to a mix of blue-collar hometown and white-collar suburb, doing things that unify residents and support the overall sense of pride and citizenship are important. Balancing the Level of Service (LOS) between the north/south and old/new parts of the city will be important. Connecting the two halves and encouraging people from one neighborhood to visit another and recreate with people from all across the City is also important. Short-term actions should support these long-range goals. With this in mind, the following recommendations in this section of the Strategic Plan are made.

B. Future Level of Service Analysis

The GRASP® Level of Service analysis indicates that current policies are providing an adequate LOS for neighborhood parks in the Northern Range. Levels of Service there are currently lower than in the south, but this is mainly due to the fact that the area is not yet built-out (hence there are gaps in the service areas). Also, more of the city's community-wide facilities, such as the Recreation Center and Pioneer Park, are located in the south. As the Northern Range continues towards build-out, the City should work with developers to assure that neighborhood parks are continuing to provide LOS commensurate with current levels in the developed part of the City. Meanwhile, opportunities should be pursued to place some community-wide features, such as sports fields, large parks, and indoor recreation within the Northern Range to balance out the current accumulation of these

facilities within the southern portion of the city. Ideally, some large, high-profile community wide features should be located between the two areas as a connecting element that will draw from both areas.

C. Master Plan Goals and Strategies

The following recommended goals and strategies are organized by action themes that were identified in the findings phase of the strategic planning process. These goals and strategies form the basis of the action plan that follows in ***Section VI-D***.

Action Theme One: CONSISTENT LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVISION

Following are a number of recommendations to provide a consistent level of service for parks and recreation facilities. (**Recommendations Map J** in **Appendix F** highlights the key recommendations for parks and trail improvements)

GOAL 1.1: Provide consistent and equitable Level of Service (LOS) for parks.

As the City continues to grow, new parks and recreation facilities will be needed. Top needs and priorities identified from survey results include: additional walking and biking trails, outdoor and indoor aquatic facilities, indoor fitness and exercise facilities in the northern part of the City, natural areas/wildlife habitat, small neighborhood parks and large community parks. The survey also identified the following desired park improvements to existing parks: restrooms, shaded areas, walking trails and security lighting.

Strategies:

1.1.1 Upgrade select park components to increase LOS of existing parks.

Existing components, such as playgrounds and ballfields, that were scored as "Below Expectations" in the inventory process should be reviewed to determine an action to be taken. These actions may include:

1) *Do nothing. The score is appropriate for this component.* An example of this would be one of the three ballfields at Pioneer Park that received a score of one for neighborhood service because it is locked and only available for official games. This field is intended primarily to serve community-wide needs, which it does very well, and its service to the neighborhood is a by-product, in that it provides an opportunity to participate in or watch a game close to home. So a low score for neighborhood use would be acceptable. Similarly, a component like the Gifford Park Playground meets expectations for neighborhood service, and offers some limited community-wide service, even though it is not necessarily intended to serve the larger community. So it is acceptable for this playground to have a lower score for community-wide service.

2) *Remove the component.* One reason for a component to fall below expectations is that it is obsolete or no longer needed; therefore it has been allowed to fall into

disrepair. The skate park at Fairfax Park is an example. This feature has been removed. (A new skate park is scheduled to open at Pioneer Park in late 2007.)

3) *Repair or Replace the component.* If a component is broken, outdated, or sub-standard but still gets used and is a desired feature at that location, it should be repaired or replaced.

Actions:
Recommended actions for consideration for components in the inventory that have been scored with a one (1) or below expectations for **neighborhood value** are:

- **Leyden Park Playground**
  This playground may need upgrading.
  Currently budgeted in CIPP 2008: $32,000

- **Joe Reilly (Merchants) Park Plaza**
  This plaza is not particularly appealing or useful in its current state. The addition of shade and other amenities would enhance its usefulness.
  Currently funded for renovation: $22,000

- **Monaco Vista Basketball Court**
  This court is a small half-court that is not paved. It should be removed if it is not needed, or upgraded with paving if desired by the neighborhood.

Note: Pioneer Park Ballfield - This facility was scored low for neighborhood service because it is locked and available for programmed use only. This is an acceptable condition, therefore no action is required.

Actions:
Recommended actions for consideration for the components in the inventory that received a score of one for **community-wide value** include:

- **Fairfax Park Group Picnic Shelter**
  Only one of the three shelters at this park rated a score of one. This shelter could be replaced with a newer one.
  Currently listed in CIPP.

- **Joe Reilly (Merchants) Park Plaza**
  Same comment as in the neighborhood service category above.

- **Monaco Park Trail**
  This park could be upgraded to a score of two by completing path it into a full loop. This would be a relatively simple and cost effective improvement. (In addition, the irrigation system at this park is in need of replacement.)
  Currently listed in the CIPP.

Note: 1. Gifford Park Playground – This playground serves the neighborhood adequately, but is not of high value to the broader community. This is an acceptable condition, so no action is required. 2. Monaco Vista Basketball Court - This court is a small half-court that is not paved. It provides little or no community-wide service but is not intended to do so. It should be addressed in terms of neighborhood service as described above, but no action is required from a community LOS standpoint. 3. Monaco Park Sledding - This small hill serves the neighborhood, but is not likely to be a community-wide destination for sledding. However, this is an acceptable condition in this case. No action is required.

In addition, the following items are intended to serve neighborhood needs, so no action is required for community LOS: Rose Hill Grange Park Group Picnic Shelter, Rose Hill Grange Park Open Turf, Urquidez Centennial Park Basketball (2 Half-Courts), Urquidez Centennial Park Open Turf, Urquidez Centennial Park Picnic Shelter, Urquidez Centennial Park Playground, and Belle Creek Family Center Grounds.

1.1.2 Upgrade select park <u>modifiers</u> to increase LOS of existing parks.

In addition to addressing sub-standard components, efforts can be made to upgrade Comfort & Convenience modifiers ***– such as shade, seating and amenities such as restroom facilities and drinking fountains*** - at sites where modifiers are below expectations. When the modified Comfort & Convenience score is 1.1 or less, consideration should be given to improving these, thereby increasing the LOS for all components at that site. The following sites are in this category. The budget would vary depending upon the desired improvements. Each site should be reviewed to determine if the addition of shade, seating, or other amenities will enhance the overall LOS. These are often relatively simple and inexpensive additions to provide, and can do much to enhance overall LOS.

Actions:
Consider upgrading park modifiers at the following park sites:

- Derby Park
- Gifford Park
- Leyden Park
- Joe Reilly Park
- Monaco Vista Park
- Prairie Gateway Open Space
- Urquidez Centennial Park

1.1.3 Add park <u>components</u> to increase LOS of existing parks.

Where space allows and needs suggest, components can be added to existing parks to increase the LOS. For example, loop walks are highly desired components. The ability to make a circuit around and through a park has almost universal appeal among park users of all ages. Currently, River Run Park and the Pioneer Park are the only City-owned parks listed in the inventory as having loop walks or trails within them. Pioneer Park has three loop walks. (In addition, several HOA and District parks have loop walks) Often, adding only a small section of walk to an

existing park will form a complete loop when combined with existing walks. If distance markers and/or signage are added that allow people to measure the length of their walk, loops become even more desirable.

Art is another component that can be added to existing parks. Art does not have to be a stand-alone object in a park. Art can be integrated into functional components, such as playgrounds, shelters, or pavements. It can also be incorporated into comfort and convenience features, such as benches, security lights, etc. and thereby enhances the value of the park through modifiers.

Actions:

- Initiate an "Art in Parks" program.
- Add loop walks to existing parks, when appropriate.

1.1.4 Redevelop Fairfax Park.

Fairfax Park offers a large and significant park facility in the heart of Commerce City. However, the existing park has several problems that are being addressed by a new Master Plan. This plan proposes to mitigate drainage problems, improve parking and upgrade the existing courts and playground. It also proposes new landscaping, trails and restrooms. All of these improvements will enhance the level of service provided by this park. Not only will the value of the components themselves within the park increase, the modifier values will also increase, raising the overall LOS value generated by the park.

GOAL 1.2: Provide a consistent Level of Service for Indoor Recreation Facilities.

As the population grows, the demand for leisure and recreation activities that require indoor spaces and facilities also grows. The citizen's survey Importance-Unmet Needs Assessment Matrix shows the need for additional indoor fitness and wellness and indoor aquatics.

Staff recognizes that their ability to expand programming in north Commerce City is limited due to reliance on partner facilities. As the northern area of the community grows, the need for additional indoor facilities will need to be studied and planned for. In the meantime, the City should continue to market the programs and services of the Commerce City Recreation Center to residents in the north.

Strategies:

1.2.4 Maximize the use of the Commerce City Recreation Center by residents of north and south Commerce City.

Actions:

- Conduct a special marketing campaign to encourage the use of the Commerce City Recreation Center by residents in the Northern Range.
- Work with RTD to improve public transportation access to the Commerce City Recreation Center with routes between south and north Commerce City.

1.2.5 Study the feasibility of developing a new indoor facility in the Northern Range.

The survey results indicated a need for adult fitness and wellness and water fitness programs. In addition, top facility priorities identified by the survey were indoor fitness and exercise facilities as well as indoor and outdoor pools. Currently, the Commerce City Recreation Center is the main provider of indoor recreation programs in Commerce City. As the City's population in the north grows, a demand for indoor recreation facilities also grows. Continued use of partnerships such as Belle Creek Family Center and school facilities is needed. Furthermore, as the population grows the addition of another recreation center in a central, easily accessible location should be considered.

Actions:

- Consider locating in a central community park location, such as First Creek Park (currently undeveloped).
- Explore partnerships in the development and operation of a new recreation center.

1.2.6 Continue to work with partners and alternative providers to expand indoor recreation choices, with a focus on fitness and wellness facilities.

The survey results indicated a need for indoor fitness and exercise and indoor swimming facilities.

Actions:

- Continue shared-use facility partnerships with schools.
- Work with private fitness providers to complement City facilities, with a focus in northern Commerce City.

Action Theme Two: TRAIL SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

Commerce City has great potential to further develop the trail system and establish needed links. Trails consistently rank highest among potential park and recreation amenities in terms of national public needs and desires, and the statistically-valid survey for Commerce City shows this to be true as well. Commerce City is well-situated relative to some of the region's premier greenways and trails. Both the Sand Creek Trail and the Platte River Greenway can be accessed from within the boundaries of Commerce City. These, in turn connect to other trail systems throughout the region, allowing for potential trips of a hundred miles or more to be made entirely on recreational trails from Commerce City. While Commerce City has a trails plan to make these desired trail connections, strategies for funding and implementation are key.

GOAL 2.1: Implement Trail Master Plan, with priorities on connectivity and completing loops.

The trail system plan and implementation should:

- Provide trailheads at appropriate locations;
- Provide waysides or public land access when available;
- Implement an effective and consistent system of signage;
- Protect and restore existing natural features affected by trail construction, and improve degraded areas along the trail corridor;
- Construct trails according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable codes; and
- Provide bike/pedestrian over and under passes where trails cross major roads where possible.

Strategies:

2.1.6 Complete a looped trail in the Northern Range, using Second Creek, O'Brian Canal, and the utility easement south of 104th or the trail on the north side of 104th Street as the primary corridors.
This loop would approach nearly 10 miles in length.
Budget Range: TBD

2.1.7 Create spur trail connections from this trail to the Platte River Greenway and the new E-470 trail or Second Creek.
Budget Range: TBD

2.1.8 Complete the O'Brian Canal Trail and the Second Creek Trail for their remaining lengths through Commerce City.
Budget: TBD

2.1.9 Work with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge to create trail connections along the perimeter.
Budget: TBD

2.1.10 Create safe crossings of streets, railroads, and other barriers wherever possible to allow for better connections to the trails and to parks and other recreational facilities.
Budget: TBD

GOAL 2.2: Increase recreational and fitness biking, running/walking opportunities for residents.

Strategies:

2.2.5 Add loop walks to existing parks, when appropriate.

2.2.6 Strive to include loop walks in all new parks.

2.2.7 Provide mileage markers along loop walks and trails.

2.2.8 Include loop walks and trails and mileage on park system map.

Action Theme Three: GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

Commerce City is evolving from a small working class town into a mixed-income, growing suburban community with new growth focused in the northern part of the City. The City has an opportunity to guide this development to support the community's high standards for parks, recreation, open space and trails. The City should develop and adopt strong policy and legislative tools to ensure sustainable growth that meets community goals.

GOAL 3.1: Review all current policy and legislative tools to ensure that development growth supports the City's parks and recreation Level of Service standards and goals.

The City has a strong commitment to parks and open space. The following policies and practices should be reviewed to ensure they support City parks and recreation standards and goals.

Strategy:

3.1.1 Conduct a Park Impact Fee Study and update impact fee requirements.

While much of the land in the north has already been platted and impact fees established, there will continue to be development in the City. For this reason, it is recommended that Commerce City's current park impact fee be re-evaluated to ensure that it adequately supports future community park development and is reflective of the true park development costs. Commerce City has been pro-active in planning for and acquiring land for park development in the growing Northern Range, however, the current challenge is identifying the capital funding to develop these parks as the population grows. The current park impact fee does not appear to adequately reflect the park development costs.

The Impact Fee Study and Fee should:

- Consider the projected build out population, expected acres to be developed and expected cost of development per acre.
- Include an automatic inflationary fee adjustment to reflect the true costs of park development.

GOAL 3.2: Ensure that the City parks and recreation Levels of Service standards are being met by private developers.

Strategies:

3.2.1 Formalize and communicate expected parks and recreation Levels of Service standards for private developments.

Develop clearer standards or minimum requirements for a privately developed and maintained neighborhood park, such as a minimum number of components

(playgrounds, fields, walking loops, etc.), allowing for flexibility based on neighborhood needs and interests.

Actions:

- Consider adopting minimum park standards proposed in this plan of at least four components (possibly two active components such as courts and athletic fields and two passive components such as picnic shelters, natural areas or landscaped gardens or public arts).
- Develop list of component choices, such as:
  - Group picnic shelter
  - Individual shelters
  - Open turf area
  - Natural area
  - Amphitheater
  - Basketball
  - Bocce ball
  - Fitness course
  - Playground
  - Public art
  - Volleyball
  - Tennis
  - Loop walk, etc.
- Where possible, require some form of public input process to determine types of components to include in park designs.
- Formalize these standards and guidelines in written development agreements.

3.2.2 Ensure that parks and trails owned and operated by HOA's are preserved and maintained in good condition as a community resource for the long-term.

While the zoning code ensures protection for areas platted as park and open space uses, it is important that these parks continue to meet the level of service and maintenance standards of the City for the long-term. In many years, after build-out, a Homeowner's Association must continue to meet its obligations as an important alternative provider of parks and recreation services. This includes not only operation and maintenance costs but also expensive replacement costs of playgrounds and other facilities. The City should work with HOA's as needed to ensure the continued financial and operational success of its parks and open space system.

Actions:

- Create standards for park equipment ensuring commercial-grade quality for public park amenities (playgrounds, etc.).
- Sponsor annual meeting of management of HOA's to share information on citywide parks and recreation services and park management and maintenance best practices and coordinate planning, as needed.

GOAL 3.3: Continue to coordinate planning for parks and recreation services and facilities with Reunion and Belle Creek Metro Districts.

These two Metro Districts both operate parks and indoor recreation centers and are considered key alternative providers by the City. The City should continue to work closely with these two entities to coordinate programming and facilities planning efforts as needed.

Strategy:

3.3.1 Convene a meeting annually to review the Parks and Recreation Master Plans of each entity to ensure services and facilities complement the City's and address identified community needs.

GOAL 3.4: Implement a 5-Year Master Planning schedule as well as bi-annual updates to the Strategic and/or Master Plan.

This Plan identifies strategic areas of focus for program and facility planning and implementation and supplements the 1999 *Prairieways Action Plan*. It is recommended that the Department institute a 5-year planning cycle to update this Strategic Plan and/or the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. While some agencies attempt to adopt Master Plans for more than five years it is very difficult to plan accurately more than five years in advance. Technological advancement, along with changes in needs and trends, alter greatly over short periods of time. In order to continue a proactive and managed approach, it is recommended that the City allocate resources in 2009 to update and a major update every five years by allocating resources starting in 2012.

Since this Strategic Plan has been created using dynamic land management tools (including GRASP® and GIS), the next updates (both bi-annual and five year) should be easier and less time-consuming, but will still require stakeholder involvement (which should include a statistically valid survey) and a needs assessment, along with reexamination of management practices and the future cost recovery and budget realities.

GOAL 3.5: Update the park system database annually.

It is important for the Parks and Recreation Department to keep an accurate inventory of parks, open space, trails and facilities. Due to the fast growth, it is common for new parks, trails, and open space to be added to (or in some cases removed from) the inventory. An updated inventory and database of the park system will aid the Department in land management and planning. In addition to updating the City-owned facilities, the Department should update the inventories of key alternative providers (Metro Districts, HOA's and schools).

Action Theme Four: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

Commerce City is experiencing rapid growth in the northern part of the City. Providing needed and desired programs for new citizens is a challenge as a comprehensive array of recreation venues has not yet been built. The City has facilities such as a recreation center which includes indoor aquatics, a gymnastic venue and sports fields in the southern part of

the City but fails, to some degree, to attract people north of 96th Avenue to them. Difficulty in traveling the congested Highway 2 corridor contribute to the lower participation in this facility by northern residents.

As the northern part of the City continues to grow, the Department will need to be prepared to respond to the increased demands for programs. Conversely providing programming to meet the needs of the southern part of the City will be equally important. Based on the survey results, the Table below shows program needs by residents living in the northern and southern parts of the City.

Table 24: Programming Needs for Northern and Southern Parts of the City

Rank	North of 96th Avenue	South of 96th Avenue
1st	Adult fitness and wellness programs (59%)	Adult fitness and wellness programs (46%)
2nd	Youth Learn to Swim programs (42%)	Water fitness programs (36%)
3rd	Water fitness programs (40%)	City special events (31%)
4th	Nature programs (40%)	Family programs (28%)
5th	Family programs (39%)	Nature programs (25%)
6th	Youth sports programs (38%)	Senior adult programs (25%)
7th	City special events (35%)	Youth Learn to Swim programs (22%)
8th	Gymnastics and tumbling programs (33%)	Youth sports programs (21%)
9th	Youth fitness and wellness programs (31%)	Youth fitness and wellness programs (20%)

As **Table 24** shows the programming needs and priorities of the northern and southern part of the City are quite similar. Programs such as adult fitness, aquatics, nature, and family programs to name a few are all important regardless of the respondents' locations. However, there is a greater need for older adult programming in the south, reflecting the City's demographics of a higher percentage of seniors living in the south. The demographics in the north includes a higher percentage of families with children and the survey shows a strong support for youth programs, in particular gymnastics and tumbling programs.

Limitations for Program Expansion
For the northern part of the City the lack of programmable space is the primary limitation for the creation and/or expansion of City recreation programs. This is true for many aspects of programming including aquatics, fitness and non-sport programming as the City must currently rely on school facilities (District 27J) or HOA or Metropolitan District facilities (Belle Creek Family Center). Since these facilities have multiple uses and are not owned and operated by the City, the availability of these spaces is inconsistent.

While the southern part of the City has adequate facilities to provide needed programming, the City has been struggling to find the right formula to create higher and consistent participation rates, especially for adult fitness classes. While some programs struggle, other program areas such as seniors and youth dance are seeking additional programming spaces in order to expand. As **Table 24** shows, the need for types of programming in north and south Commerce City is similar; however, opportunities that do not exist in the northern part of the City such as aquatics and gymnastic facilities rank higher while the need for senior programming ranks higher in the southern part of the City due to the higher percentage of seniors residing there. Until new facilities are built, an evaluation of current programs and proposed new programs will need to be performed to ensure they are and will continue to meet community needs and expectations.

GOAL 4.1: Develop a standard practice for customer program feedback, program evaluation and program development.

Developing programs based on customers needs, wants and expectations will be important to the success of the Department. At this time there is not a consistent method of soliciting customer feedback in regards to satisfaction levels, convenience and suggestions to improve program offerings.

The citizen survey identified many program areas that the community would like to see created or expanded. Available space may hinder new or expanded opportunities in some cases. Successful programs come from continuous creative assessment and planning. The Department should create a process that evaluates the success of current program offerings and criteria to determine if new program ideas should be instituted or if changes should be made to current programs.

As the demographic portion of this plan indicates, the population of the community is growing at a fast pace, especially in the north. Types of facilities and programs that are desired by new residents in the north, including fitness and aquatics, are available in the southern part of the city (and to residents who live in the Reunion Metropolitan District). Residents, however, desire a facility in closer proximity to their homes.

Moreover, new leisure and recreation trends may drive different needs. It is very easy to focus on programs that have worked for a number of years, especially if they are still drawing enough interested participants to justify the program's continuation. Starting new programs, based on community demand and/or trends, can be risky due to the inability to predict their success. If the program interest seems great, as with those identified in citizen

survey, then the programs should be expanded. As described above, the citizen's survey identified a need for many different types of programming.

Strategies:

4.1.1 Develop a standard practice to get customer feedback.

Customer feedback will help improve programming by being able to respond to customer needs in a timely matter. Information sought from participants should include:

- Satisfaction levels and supporting reasoning
- Suggestions for improvements to programs
- Suggestions for new programs

4.1.2: Develop program evaluation criteria and process and implement annually.

Using historical participation levels to determine program popularity and participant feedback can be helpful in deciding if programs should be continued. In addition, utilizing citizen surveys and participant feedback, and researching trends in parks and recreation programming are useful tools in determining future program needs and desires. Sources for trends information include:

- State Parks and Recreation Associations and Conferences
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- International Health, Racquet & Sports Association
- Parks and Recreation Trade Publications

Annually all current programs should be evaluated to determine if they should be continued, changed (market segment focus, time/day offered, etc.) or discontinued. A few simple questions should be asked about each program that includes:

- Is participation increasing or decreasing? If participation is increasing then it could clearly mean that the program should be continued. If participation is decreasing are there any steps to take to increase interest through marketing efforts, change the time/day the program is offered and change the format or instructor? If not, it may be time to discontinue the program.
- Is there information contained in the participant feedback that can be used to improve the program?
- Are cost recovery goals being met? If not, can fees be realistically increased?
- Is there another provider of the program that is more suitable to offer it? If yes, the Department could provide referrals for its customers for the program it does not or is not willing or able to offer.
- Is this program taking up facility space that could be used for expansion of more popular programs or new programs in demand by the community?

4.1.3 Implement new programs (based on research and feedback).

The Department should pursue program development around the priorities identified by the survey including: fitness and wellness programs, aquatics and youth learn to swim programs, nature programs and community special events.

The following criteria should be examined when developing new programs:

- **Need:** outgrowth of a current popular program, or enough demonstrated demand to successfully support a minimal start (one class for instance)
- **Budget:** accounting for all costs and anticipated (conservative) revenues should meet cost recovery target established by Department
- **Location:** appropriate, available and within budget
- **Instructor:** qualified, available and within budget
- **Materials and supplies:** available and within budget
- **Marketing effort:** adequate and timely opportunity to reach intended market, within budget (either existing marketing budget or as part of new program budget)

Additionally, it is important that all Divisions such as maintenance, administration, and recreation staff be involved as necessary in new program and facility development. Engaging all who are associated with a new program, both directly and indirectly, in the decision making process will help ensure a quality experience for the customer.

4.1.4 Provide concurrent youth and adult programming as a way to increase participation.

There are many successful programs offered by the Department such as youth gymnastics and dance. In most case adults are bringing and picking up children for these programs. The Department may want to experiment with scheduling adult programming, such as fitness and wellness, concurrently with youth programming as a way to entice parents and guardians to stay and participate in programs.

GOAL 4.2: Address the recreation programming needs in north Commerce City.

The top programming needs identified by the citizen survey are adult fitness and youth learn to swim programs. Until the City is able to build and program facilities that will meet the needs of the residents in the north, a strategy of how to promote recreation activity participation needs to be developed through encouraging participation in the Commerce City Recreation Center as well as expanding facility and program partnerships in the north.

Strategies:

4.2.1 Strengthen the partnership with School District 27J.

At this time the School District is the best source for indoor recreation programming in the northern part of the City. Additionally, the City and the School District have a strong relationship that seeks to partner resources to benefit the community. However, inconsistencies exist in the availability of gyms and classrooms. It is in the City's best interest to negotiate permanent times in which they can have access to schools for programming. Strategies may include:

- Paying a premium rate for spaces to ensure availability (cost for guaranteed space could be recouped by participant fees)

- Reciprocate City indoor recreation space in exchange for guaranteed school space (i.e. offer the recreation center for School District fields trips at little or no cost)

Creating guaranteed time in schools may provide opportunities to build adult fitness and wellness programming. Additionally, it may provide opportunities to bring beginning level youth programming, such as gymnastics, to the northern part of the City. This exposure may create a conduit to bring customers to the Commerce City Recreation Center for higher level instruction. Dance classes, popular at the Recreation Center, could be expanded to the north, by making use of school facilities.

4.2.2 Capitalize on the use of Belle Creek Community Center.

Many of the adult fitness classes held at the Belle Creek Community Center have been successful but many have been canceled due to low participation numbers. The City should capitalize on the availability of the center until future facilities are available. Increased marketing and focus on current popular adult fitness programming will help increase participation rates.

4.2.3 Promote fitness and wellness to citizens in the north through the Commerce City Recreation Center as well as alternative provider indoor facilities.

Actions:

- Hold joint fitness and wellness special events with partners.
- Continue to cross-market facilities and programs in Commerce City and alternative providers.

GOAL 4.3: Foster a sense of community pride and celebrate cultural diversity through programming efforts.

Strategies:

4.3.1 Continue to offer special events that bring whole community together.

Physical separation, different growth patterns and varying demographics create a sense of two separate communities in the northern and southern parts of Commerce City. The community input that was a part of this planning process showed a need and desire to bridge this divide. Programming efforts can help facilitate the coming together of residents of all of Commerce City to enjoy the diversity of the community. The Parks and Recreation Department should continue and expand its programming efforts through citywide programs and events (holiday events, family and nature programming, fitness events, etc.) to bring community residents together.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently explores partnerships with local community organizations to hold community events and festivals to celebrate the diversity of the community.

4.3.4 Develop a pilot community arts project.

Community arts projects, such as a mosaic tile-bench or seating wall, that are facilitated by a professional artist and involve parents and children in the community in the design and fabrication process, can be a strong community-building process. The resulting public art piece integrated into a park can be a great source of community pride and identity.

4.3.5 Be responsive to cultural diversity in the community.

Actions:

- Recruit and hire qualified bilingual staff (Spanish/English), especially for Recreation Center information desk.
- Continue bi-lingual marketing and outreach efforts.

Action Theme Five: PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

GOAL 5.1: Enhance and maximize partnerships opportunities.

The Parks and Recreation Department has many successful partnerships as described in **Section IV.** of this plan.

Strategies:

5.1.1 Formalize a Partnership Policy.

Partnerships are integral to the parks and recreation service delivery model in Commerce City. As partnerships are created and grow in complexity, a partnership policy is helpful to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships. A ***Sample Partnership Policy*** has been provided to the Parks and Recreation Department.

5.1.2 Re-evaluate existing Partnership Agreements with Belle Creek Family Center and the School Districts and update and enhance as needed.

The City should re-evaluate its existing partnership agreements to ensure that the mutual benefits are maximized. In particular, the agreements with the Belle Creek Family Center as well as Adams County 14 and 27J School Districts should be reviewed and updated as necessary. There is potential for expanded facility use of the Prairie View High School in north Commerce City to serve the increasing number of residents in the area.

5.1.5 Increase nature and environmental education programs through enhanced partnership with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

5.1.6 Explore the development of a soccer partnership regarding youth soccer programs.

The staff and public process identified a need to expand soccer programming for community youth. The recent opening of the 23 soccer fields at the Dick's Sporting

Goods Park, presents an opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Department to develop partnership soccer programs, with a focus on youth.

GOAL 5.2: Formalize volunteer recruitment, training and procedures.

While the Department utilizes volunteers in many program areas, including senior programs and for park trails and planting projects, staff indicated a need to improve volunteer management.

Strategies:

5.2.4 Develop a volunteer manual.

5.2.5 Develop a volunteer orientation program and annual trainings.

5.2.6 Evaluate the existing annual volunteer recognition event.

Action Theme Six: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department has well-qualified staff that are motivated to continually improve programs and services. With this leadership, staff can move forward on opportunities to strengthen management and operation guidelines and practices in the following areas: park and athletic field maintenance practices, cost recovery and funding and marketing and communications.

Park and Athletic Field Maintenance

Due to current athletic field inventories, fields are at times used beyond capacity and are in a constant need of maintenance. There is not a field closure policy that defines when fields are open for play and when they are closed (i.e., athletic fields will be open for use from March 31st October 31st and closed for use from November 1st to March 30th). Additionally there is not a field closure policy that states under what conditions fields will be closed for use to prevent damage to fields (i.e. conditions such as drought, saturated turf, and safety issues).

GOAL 6.1: Develop and institute an Athletic Field Closure Policy.

Currently there is a high demand for athletic fields. With this demand athletic fields are sometimes "played to death." The City should formalize a "Field Closure Policy" through which natural turf athletic fields are taken offline for periods of time for rejuvenation.

GOAL 6.2: Continue to develop and refine life cycle costing assessments for facilities and equipment.

Further development and refinement of existing life-cycle costing assessments would provide the Department with a better understanding of deferred maintenance needs in order to plan for the renovation or replacement of facilities and equipment.

GOAL 6.3: Plan for maintenance staffing and equipment needs of new parks, recreation indoor facilities, open space and trails.

Strategies:

6.3.1 Continue to track labor hours and equipment use for park and athletic field maintenance tasks.

The CitiTech computer program shared by the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments has been upgraded and is currently used to track labor hours. This practice should continue to serve as a management tool to estimate what it takes to keep parks and athletic fields maintained to the standards desired by the City. Tracking labor costs and equipment costs for maintenance tasks allows for:

- More accurate estimating of maintenance costs for new parks and athletic fields;
- Establishing true costs for maintenance of facilities; and
- Greater understanding of the impacts of maintenance budgets fluctuations.

6.3.2 Budget for increased maintenance staffing and equipment needs of new park and recreation facilities.

Cost Recovery and Funding

GOAL 6.4: Develop a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy and implement.

It is suggested that the City create a cost recovery policy that determines fees and charges based on the organizational vision and mission of the City and who in the community benefits. (The "Cost Recovery Pyramid Methodology" has been provided to the Department as part of the strategic planning process**.)**

Developing and implementing a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy based on the City's Parks and Recreation mission will provide the foundation for setting fees and charges. It will also determine what the cost recovery and subsidy level of each program and facility is and serve as a tool to monitor if they are meeting these goals over time.

Strategies:

6.4.8 Adopt a Pricing Policy and Strategy.

If a pricing policy exists, even loosely, it should be fine-tuned to provide expanded detail in guiding management decisions. If a written policy is not in existence, one should be created.

6.4.9 Track costs.

Direct and indirect costs will need to be assigned to specific programs and facilities in order to understand balancing costs with revenues.

6.4.10 Identify citywide participant categories.

The next step is to identify the various participant categories that should be used for all City services and facilities. Participant category examples include resident and non-resident, age, partners identified through various inter-governmental agreements, non-profit organizations, and private organizations, as well as many others.

6.4.11 Determine fee schedule and subsidy levels.

Based on the Pyramid Pricing Model for each program/activity and facility, determine the subsidy/cost recovery level incorporating participant categories.

- **Partial Cost Fee:** recovers something less than full cost. This partial cost fee could be set at a percentage of direct costs, all direct costs, all direct costs plus a percentage of indirect costs, or some combination.
- **Full Cost Fee:** recovers the total cost of a service including all direct and all indirect costs.
- **Market Rate Fee:** based on demand for a service or facility. Determine the market rate by identifying all providers of an identical service (e.g., private sector providers, other municipalities, etc.) and setting the fee at the highest level the market will sustain.

6.4.12 Re-evaluate the Fee Reduction/Waiver Policy.

Since park and recreation services exist to benefit the community as a whole, ability to pay is an issue for all age groups and all persons of varying ability or participation levels.

It is recommended that the fee reduction policy be reviewed to include all persons facing difficulties with the ability to pay. A simple application procedure along with consistent and fair proof of eligibility should be implemented. Aligning with the existing eligibility requirements of another social service program offered by the City or school district, such as the school free lunch program, is one approach. Other criteria can include income verification although this is often not a reliable indicator of ability to pay for retired persons.

6.4.13 Enhance financial tracking and analysis.

Relative to the City's budget and the new **Subsidy/Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy,** the overall tracking systems should be expanded by the Parks and Recreation Department to provide information monthly, quarterly, and annually to inform management decisions.

6.4.14 Consider policy revisions to increase revenue generation potential.

Review and revise existing policies regarding senior age discounts and senior fees. There is a national trend to eliminate such age based discounts for adults and youth;

instead moving toward need and ability to pay waivers that are fairly and consistently applied based on a set of financial standards; or use discounted fees as a special promotion such as special senior hours during off peak times.

GOAL 6.5: Create a Sponsorship Policy.

Sponsorships can help supplement current funding for programs as well as facility improvements and development. A "Sample Sponsorship Policy" that includes levels of sponsorship tiers and benefits and a glossary of terms has been provided to the Department as part of the strategic planning process.

GOAL 6.6: Solicit additional grants and private donations.

Strategy:
6.6.1 Continue to refine and implement an annual grant action plan.

There are additional grant funding opportunities to support the park development and program goals of the Parks and Recreation Department. A staff person should be assigned to identify new grant opportunities and develop a schedule and action plan to solicit new funding resources. Coordination with the City Grant Administrator and Grant Review Team should continue.

GOAL 6.7: Identify funding sources to support park and facility development and operations.

Strategy:
6.7.2 Develop a bond or sales tax initiative to generate funds for priority improvements.

In order to move forward with priority improvements, capital and operating funds are necessary. While partnerships and grants should be pursued when possible, additional funding is required to realize the desired improvements.

Action:

- **Determine the steps and approvals necessary to pass a bond and/or sales tax initiative.**
  This determination should include examination of the types of bond funding or other sources that will be most appropriate, strategies for a well-outlined campaign, a detailed and comprehensive public education process and identification of necessary steps for timing and implementation. An initiative that includes community priorities such as the Family Aquatic Facility in south Commerce City and a possible recreation center or additional park in the northern area should be considered.

Marketing

According to the community survey the number three reason preventing respondent households from using Commerce City parks and recreation facilities and programs is lack of knowledge of programs and facilities. Additionally, on the whole the Department staff feels that marketing efforts could be improved.

GOAL 6.8: Incorporate a benefit-based marketing approach into marketing and communication materials.

Benefits-based marketing incorporates the many benefits of recreation, parks and trails to a community: environmental, social, health and economic benefits. These broad benefits should be integrated into marketing and communication efforts.

GOAL 6.9: Enhance strategic marketing of high priority program areas.

Strategies:

6.9.2 Develop a targeted marketing campaign to promote adult fitness and wellness programs.

Adult fitness and wellness programs were ranked highest in importance and need by the survey. The enhancement and promotion of these programs at the Recreation Center as well as the Belle Creek Family Center (run by Department staff) should be pursued.

6.9.2 Develop a targeted marketing campaign to northern Commerce City residents to share information and promote participation in Department programs and facilities.

GOAL 6.10: Streamline marketing procedures.

In addition to the regular Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, staff desires the flexibility to do additional outreach to promote program awareness and participation in the community. Additional publicity to promote a new and growing program as well as marketing procedures to maintain quality marketing and communication materials, while allowing for marketing flexibility and creativity for specific programs and services, would be beneficial.

GOAL 6.11: Continue to cross market programs and special events open to the public with partners and alternative providers.

Currently the Department works with the Metro Districts and other partners to cross market programs. This practice should continue.

D. Action Plan

This **Strategic Plan for Recreation Programs, Services and Facilities** endeavors to provide a guiding mechanism to meet existing and future community needs. The strength of this report stems from the extensive research, community involvement, analysis of needs, and public review that form the basis for the recommended goals and strategies it contains. The Plan contains goals for Commerce City and the Parks and Recreation Department that:

- Focus on consistently meeting and exceeding citizen expectations;
- Use innovative ideas and methods to successfully meet challenges posed by budgetary, facility and staffing limitations;
- Provide a system that benefits residents by increasing services to all age groups and providing diverse opportunities;
- Are guided by a stewardship approach to providing high-quality facilities, both existing and future, through judicious use of public funds;
- Foster cooperation and partnerships with alternative providers in providing recreational services and facilities; and
- Facilitate a proactive planning process guided by community needs and executable strategies; and a process for reviewing and updating this document regularly.

This Plan is designed to serve as a decision-making tool for Commerce City that helps set priorities and strategies for implementation. The Action Plan, **Table 25**, summarizes the plan goals and strategies and identifies timing and financial impact where appropriate. While most goals and strategies require a team approach to implementation, the Action Plan identifies primary responsibility for a particular action item.

This Plan is intended to be a 5-year Plan with a focus on short and medium-term priorities. Long-term priorities are also identified to guide long-term planning. The Action Plan is based on the following time framework for short, medium and long-term priorities:

- Short-term: 1-2 years
- Mid-Term: 3-5 years
- Long-term: 6 years +
- Ongoing

Table 25: Action Plan

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
Action Theme One: CONSISTENT LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVISION			
GOAL 1.1: Provide consistent and equitable Level of Service (LOS) for parks.	P&R Dept. and City Council	Varies	Ongoing
1.1.1 - Upgrade select park components to increase LOS of existing parks.	P&R Dept.	Varies	Ongoing

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
• Upgrade Leyden Park Playground	"	$32,000, budgeted in 2008 CIPP	Short-term
• Improve Joe Reilly (Merchants) Park Plaza	"	$20,000 currently funded	In progress
• Pave Monaco Vista Basketball Court	"	Proposed in 2008 CIPP	Short-term
• Complete a loop trail in Monaco Park	"	Proposed in 2008 CIPP	Mid-term
1.1.2 - Upgrade select park modifiers to increase LOS of existing parks.	"	"	"
1.1.3 - Add park components to increase LOS of existing parks.	"	"	"
1.1.4 - Redevelop Fairfax Park.	"	"	Mid-term
GOAL 1.2: Provide a consistent Level of Service for Indoor Recreation Facilities.	"	"	Ongoing
1.2.1 - Maximize the use of the Commerce City Recreation Center by residents of north and south Commerce City.	Marketing and P&R Dept.	"	Short-term
1.2.2 - Study the feasibility of developing a new indoor facility in the Northern Range.	P&R Dept.	Staff time and consultant fee, $80,000-$150,000	Mid-term to Long-term
1.2.3 - Continue to work with partners and alternative providers to expand indoor recreation choices, with a focus on fitness and wellness facilities.	P & R Director and Recreation Manager	Staff time	Ongoing
Action Theme Two: TRAIL SYSTEM CONNECTIONS			
GOAL 2.1: Implement Trail Master Plan, with priorities on connectivity and completing loops.	Park Planning, Development and Operations Division	Varies	Ongoing
2.1.1 - Complete a looped trail in the Northern Range (using Second Creek, O'Brian Canal, and the utility easement south of 104th as the primary corridors).	"	TBD	Mid-term

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
2.1.2 - Create spur trail connections from this trail to the Platte River Greenway and the new E-470 trail.	"	TBD	Long-term
2.1.3 - Complete the O'Brian Canal Trail and the Second Creek Trail for their remaining lengths through Commerce City.	"	TBD	Mid-term
2.1.4 - Work with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge to create trail connections along the perimeter.	"	TBD	Ongoing
2.1.5 - Create safe crossings of streets, railroads and other barriers.	P&R and Public Works Depts.	TBD	Ongoing
GOAL 2.2: Increase recreational and fitness biking, running/walking opportunities for residents.	"	Varies	Ongoing
2.2.1 - Add loop walks to existing parks, when appropriate.	Park Planning, Development and Operations Division	Varies	Ongoing
2.2.2 - Strive to include loop walks in all new parks.	"	Varies	Ongoing
2.2.3 - Provide mileage markers along loop walks and trails.	"	Varies	Ongoing
2.2.4 - Include loop walks and trails and mileage on park system map.	"	TBD	Next issue of Park Map
Action Theme Three: GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING			
GOAL 3.1: Review all current policy and legislative tools to ensure that development growth supports the City's parks and recreation LOS standards and goals.	P&R Dept. Planning and Dev. Dept. City Manager's Office City Council	Staff time	Short-term
3.1.1 - Conduct a Park Impact Fee Study and update impact fee requirements.	P&R Dept.	$10,000 – $15,000	Short-term
GOAL 3.2: Ensure that the City parks and recreation LOS standards are being met by private developers.	P&R Dept. Planning and Dev. Dept.	Staff time	Ongoing

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
3.2.1 - Formalize and communicate expected parks and recreation LOS standards for private developments.	"	Staff time	Short-term, Ongoing
3.2.2 - Ensure that parks and trails owned and operated by HOA's are preserved and maintained in good condition as a community resource for the long-term.	City	Staff time	Ongoing
GOAL 3.3: Continue to coordinate planning for parks and recreation services and facilities with Reunion and Belle Creek Metro Districts.	P&R Dept.	Staff time	Ongoing
3.3.1 - Convene a meeting annually to review respective Plans to ensure services and facilities complement each other.	P&R Dept. Planning and Dev. Dept.	Staff time	Ongoing
GOAL 3.4: Implement a 5-Year Master Planning schedule as well as bi-annual updates to the Strategic and/or Master Plan.	P&R Dept.	$60,000-$85,000 Bi-annual to be done in-house	Mid-term
GOAL 3.5: Update the park system database annually.	Park Planner	Staff time	Ongoing
Action Theme Four: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION			
GOAL 4.1: Develop a standard practice for customer program feedback, program evaluation and program development.	Recreation Division	Staff time	Short-term
4.1.1 - Develop a standard practice to get customer feedback.	"	Staff time	Short-term
4.1.2 - Develop program evaluation criteria and process and implement annually.	"	Staff time	Short-term
4.1.3 - Implement new programs (based on research and feedback).	"	Varies	Ongoing
4.1.4 - Provide concurrent youth and adult programming as a way to increase participation.	"	Varies	Ongoing
GOAL 4.2: Address the recreation programming needs in north Commerce City.	P&R Dept.	Varies	Ongoing
4.2.1 - Strengthen the partnership with School District 27J.	Director and Key Program Staff	Staff time	Short-term

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
4.2.2 - Capitalize on the use of Belle Creek Community Center.	Director & Recreation Division	Varies	Short-term, Ongoing
4.2.3 - Promote fitness and wellness to residents in north Commerce City through the Recreation Center and alternative providers of indoor facilities.	Marketing and Alternative Providers	Varies	Short-term
GOAL 4.3: Foster a sense of community pride and celebrate cultural diversity through programming efforts.	P&R Dept.	Part of program budgets	Ongoing
4.3.1 - Continue to offer special events that bring whole community together.	Recreation Division	"	Ongoing
4.3.2 - Develop a pilot community arts project.	Recreation Division	$20-50,000	Mid-term
4.3.3 - Be responsive to cultural diversity in the community.	P&R Dept.	NA	Ongoing
Action Theme Five: PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT			
GOAL 5.1: Enhance and maximize partnerships opportunities.	P&R Dept.	Staff time	Ongoing
5.1.1 - Formalize a Partnership Policy.	P&R Dept. (in consultation with other City Dept's. as needed)	Staff time	Short-term
5.1.2 - Re-evaluate existing Partnership Agreements with Belle Creek Family Center and the School Districts and update and enhance as needed.	P&R Dept. and Law Dept.	Staff time	Short-term
5.1.3 - Increase nature and environmental education programs through enhanced partnership with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.	Director and Recreation Division	Staff time	Mid-term
5.1.4 - Explore the development of a soccer partnership regarding youth soccer programs.	"	Staff time	Mid-term
GOAL 5.2: Formalize volunteer recruitment, training and procedures.	P&R Dept. and City Committee	Staff time	Short-term
5.2.1 - Develop a volunteer manual.	Recreation Division	Staff time	Short-term

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
5.2.2 - Develop a volunteer orientation program and annual trainings.	"	Staff time	Mid-term
5.2.3 - Evaluate the existing annual volunteer recognition event.	"	Staff time	Short-term
Action Theme Six: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Parks and Athletic Field Management and Maintenance			
GOAL 6.1: Develop and institute an Athletic Field Closure Policy.	Park Planning, Development and Operations Division	Staff time	Short-term
GOAL 6.2: Continue to develop and refine life cycle costing assessments for facilities and equipment.	"	Staff time	Ongoing
GOAL 6.3: Plan for maintenance staffing and equipment needs of new parks, recreation indoor facilities, open space and trails.	"	Staff time	Ongoing
6.3.1 - Track labor hours and equipment use for park and athletic field maintenance tasks.	"	Staff time	Ongoing
6.3.2 - Budget for increased maintenance staffing and equipment needs of new park and recreation facilities.	Director City Manager and Council	TBD	Ongoing
Cost Recovery and Funding			
GOAL 6.4: Develop a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy and implement.	P&R Dept. with input from stakeholders	Staff time and/or Consultant fee $20,000-$25,000	Short-term
6.4.1 - Adopt a Pricing Policy and Strategy.	P&R Dept.	Staff time	Short-term
6.4.2 – Track costs.	P&R and Finance Depts.	Staff time	Ongoing
6.4.3 – Identify citywide participant categories.	P&R Dept. and stakeholders	Staff and volunteer time	Short-term
6.4.4 – Determine fee schedule and subsidy levels.	P&R Dept.	Staff time	Short-term
6.4.5 – Re-evaluate the Fee Reduction/Waiver Policy.	P&R Dept. City Council	Staff time	Short-term
6.4.6 – Enhance financial tracking and analysis.	P&R and Finance Depts.	Staff time	Ongoing

Goals and Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
6.4.7 – Consider policy revisions to increase revenue generation potential.	P&R Dept. City Council	Staff time	Short-term
GOAL 6.5: Create a Sponsorship Policy.	P&R Dept. Marketing Dept. City Council	Staff time	Mid-term
GOAL 6.6: Solicit additional grants and private donations.	P&R Dept. City Grant Administrator	Staff time	Ongoing
6.6.1 - Continue to refine and implement an annual grant action plan.	"	Staff time	Short-term, Ongoing
GOAL 6.7: Identify funding sources to support park and facility development and operations.	P&R Dept. City Manager's Office	Staff time	"
6.7.1 - Develop a bond or sales tax initiative to generate funds for priority improvements.	"	Varies	Short-term
Marketing			
GOAL 6.8: Incorporate a benefit-based marketing approach.	P&R Dept. Marketing Dept.	NA	Ongoing
GOAL 6.9: Enhance strategic marketing of high priority program areas.	"	Varies	Short-term, Ongoing
6.9.1 - Develop a targeted marketing campaign to promote adult fitness and wellness programs.	"	"	"
6.9.2 - Develop a targeted marketing campaign to northern Commerce City residents to promote participation in Department programs and facilities.	"	"	"
GOAL 6.10: Streamline marketing procedures.	"	Staff time	Short-term
GOAL 6.11: Continue to cross market programs with partners and alternative providers.	"	Staff time	Ongoing

Appendix A: Statistically-Valid Survey Results

Community Attitude and Interest Survey

Executive Summary of Citizen Survey Results

Overview of the Methodology

Commerce City conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey during January of 2007 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Commerce City. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with Commerce City officials, as well as members of the GreenPlay LLC project team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

In January of 2007, surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in Commerce City. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed; each household that received a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed; Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone, either to encourage completion of the mailed survey or to administer the survey by phone.

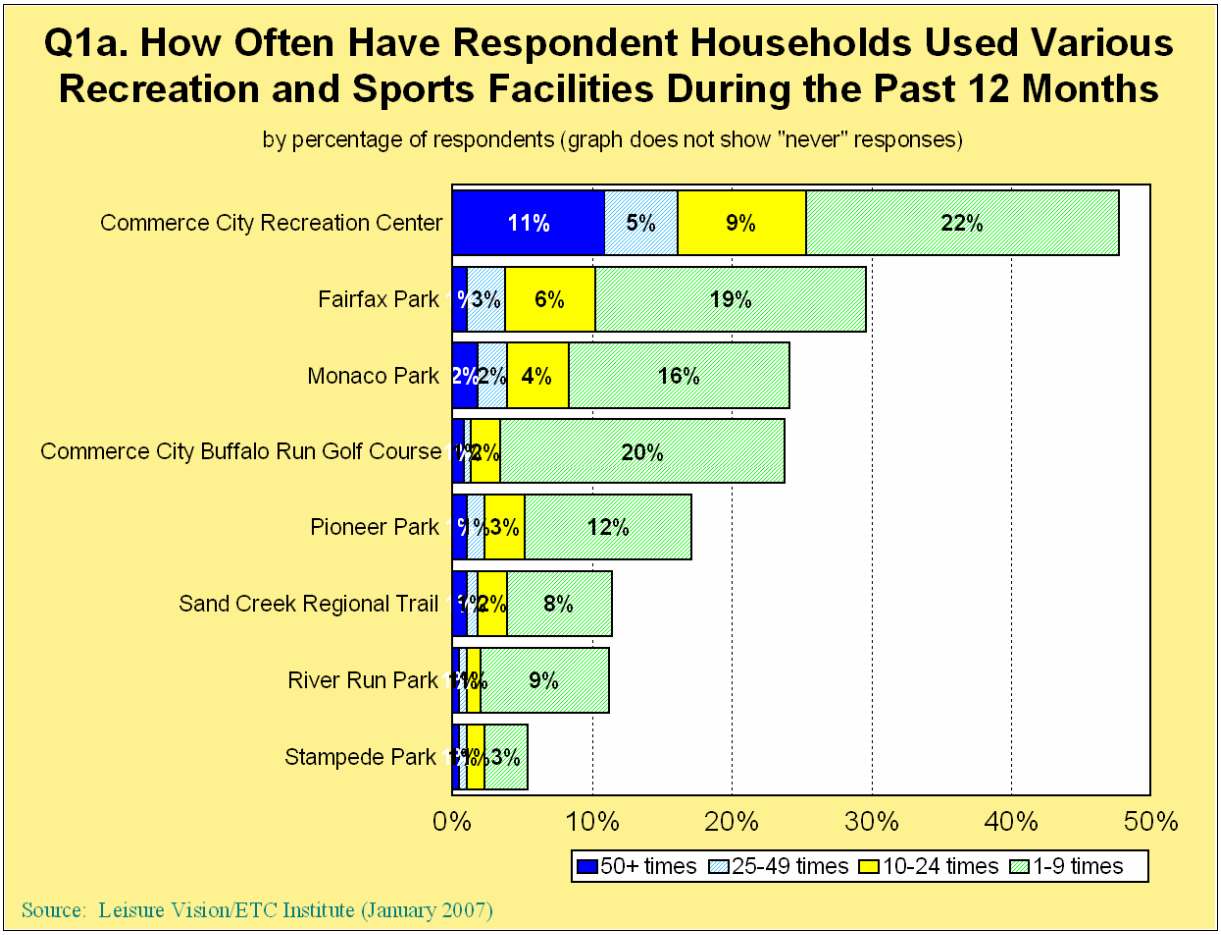
The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 411 surveys having been completed. Of the 411 completed surveys, 53% live north of 96th avenue, and 47% live south of 96th avenue. The results of the random sample of 411 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-4.8%.

The following pages summarize major survey findings.

Frequency of Use of Various Recreation and Sports Facilities

From a list of eight various recreation and sports facilities operated by Commerce City, respondents were asked to indicate how often they and members of their household have used each facility during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

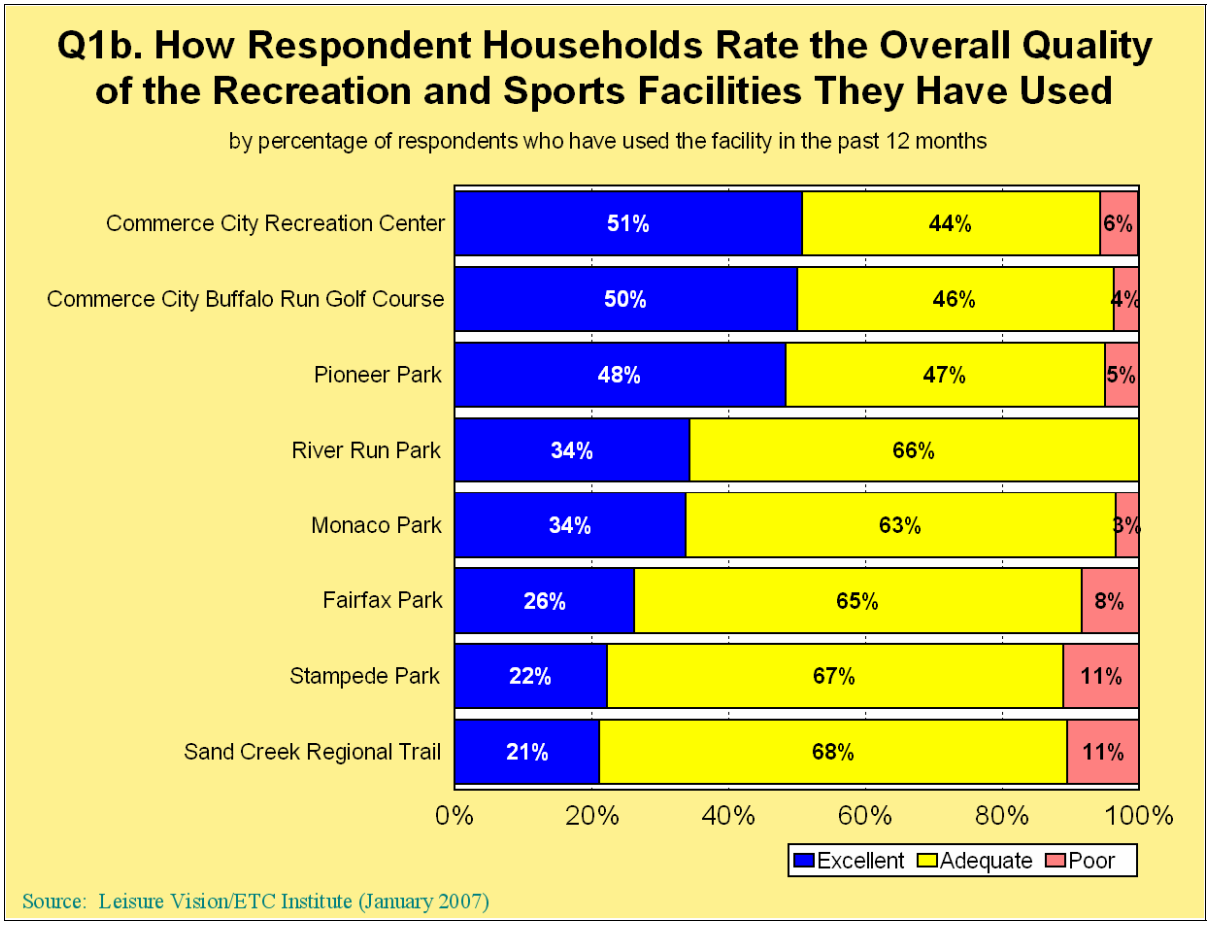
The Commerce City Recreation Center (47%) is the facility that has been used by the highest percentage of respondent households at least once in the past 12 months. The other facilities that the highest percentage of respondent households has used at least once in the past 12 months include: Fairfax Park (29%), Monaco Park (24%) and Commerce City Buffalo Run Golf Course (23%).



Quality of Recreation and Sports Facilities

From the list of eight recreation and sports facilities operated by Commerce City, respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of the facilities that members of their household have used during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

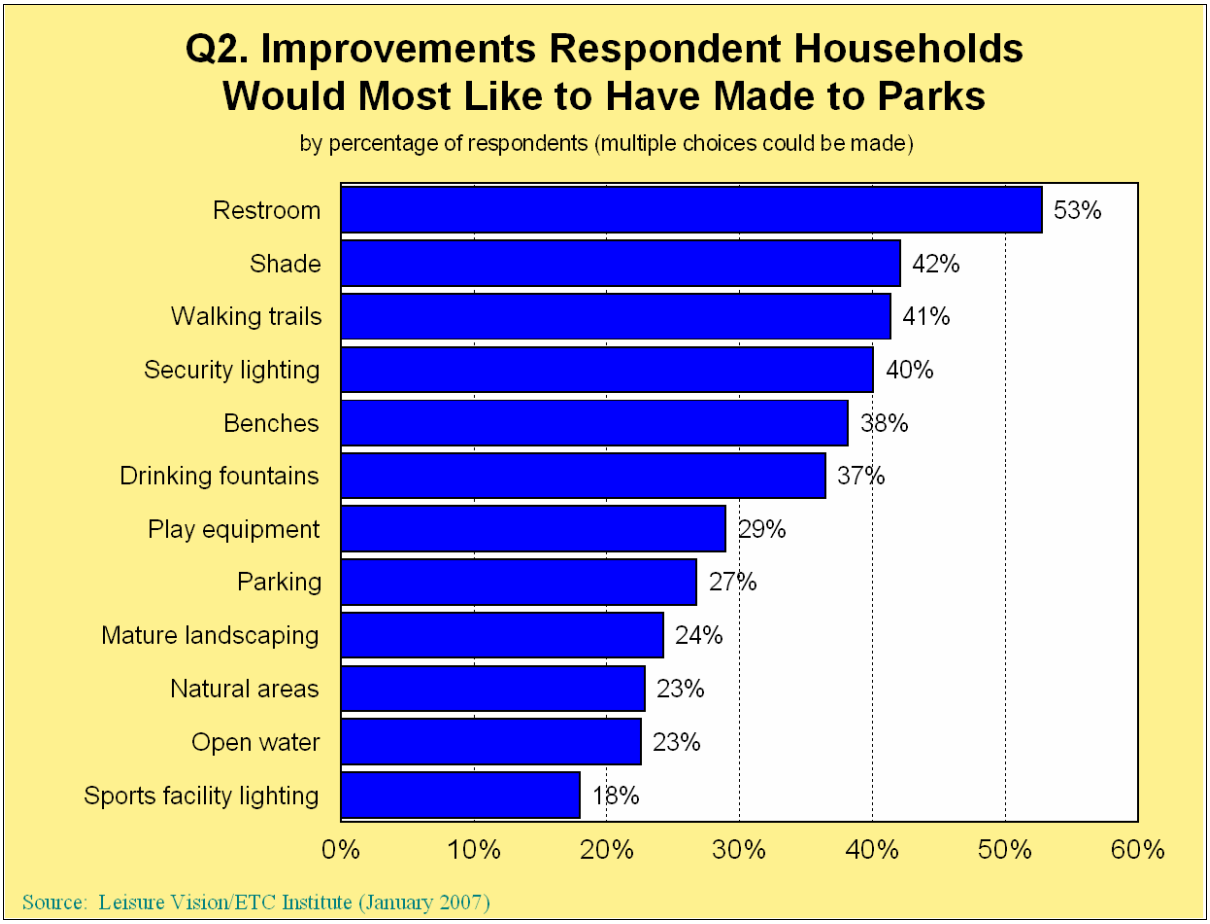
Of those who have used the facilities during the past 12 months, 51% rated Commerce City Recreation Center as excellent, 50% rated Commerce City Buffalo Run Golf Course as excellent, and 48% rated Pioneer Park as excellent.



Potential Improvements to Commerce City Parks

From a list of 12 improvements that could be made to Commerce City parks, respondents were asked to indicate all of they would like to have made. The following summarizes key findings:

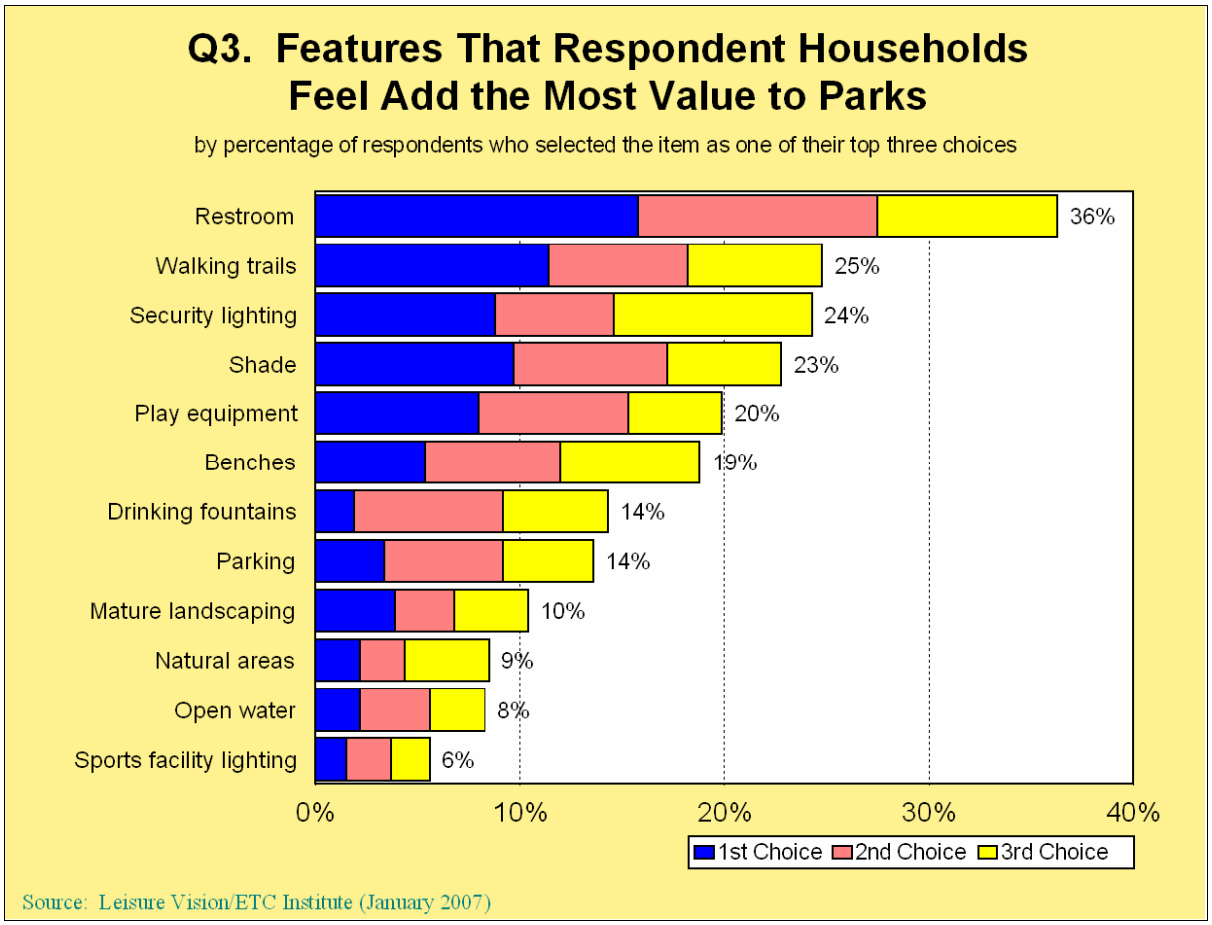
The improvements that respondents would most like to have made to Commerce City parks are: restrooms (53%), shade (42%), walking trails (41%) and security lighting (40%).



Improvements That Add the Most Value to Parks

From the list of 12 improvements that could be made to Commerce City parks, respondents were asked to select the three improvements they feel would add the most value to parks. The following summarizes key findings:

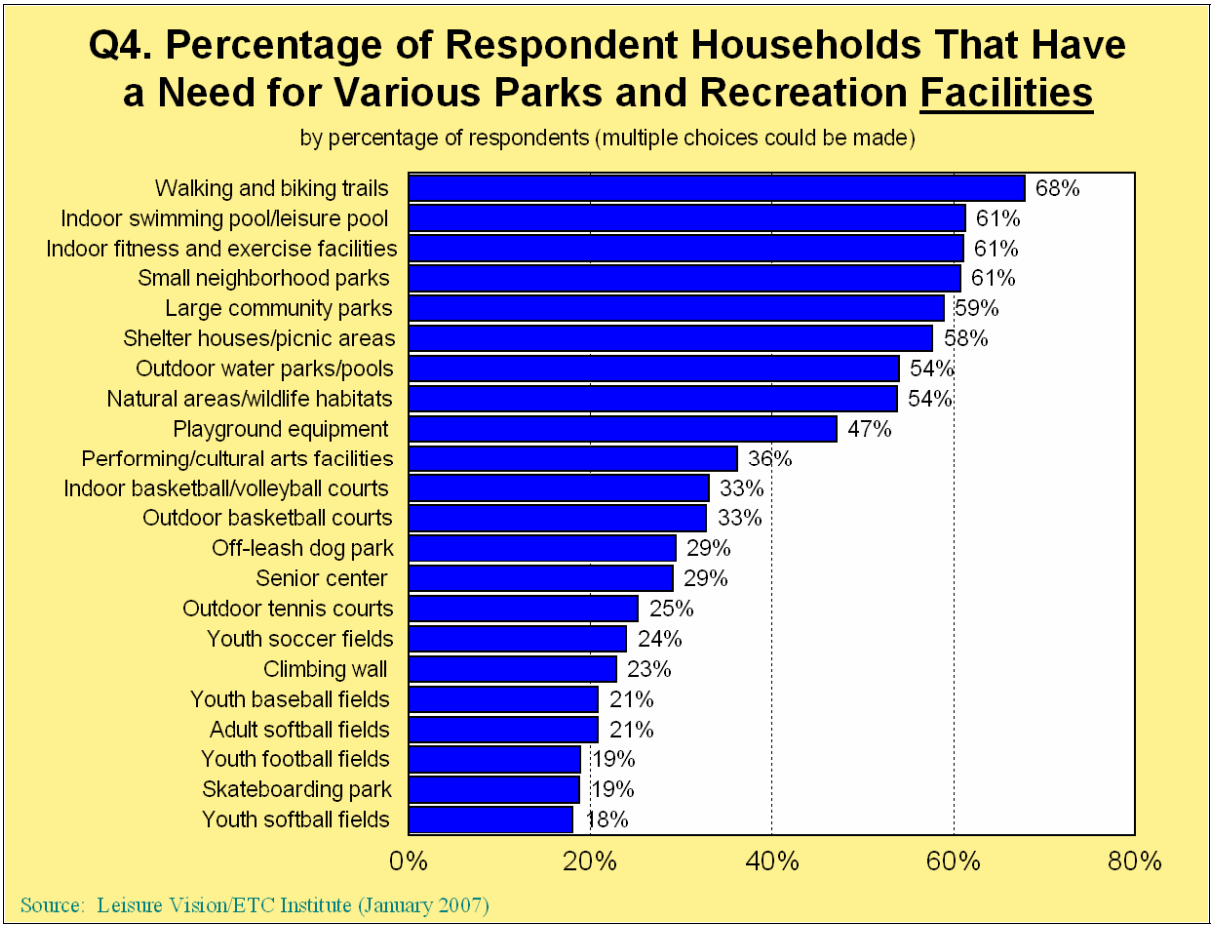
Based on the sum of their top three choices, respondents selected restrooms (36%) as the improvement that would add the most value to Commerce City parks. The other improvements that respondents feel would add the most value to City parks include: walking trails (25%), security lighting (24%), and shade (23%). It should also be noted that restrooms had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the improvement that would add the most value to parks.



Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

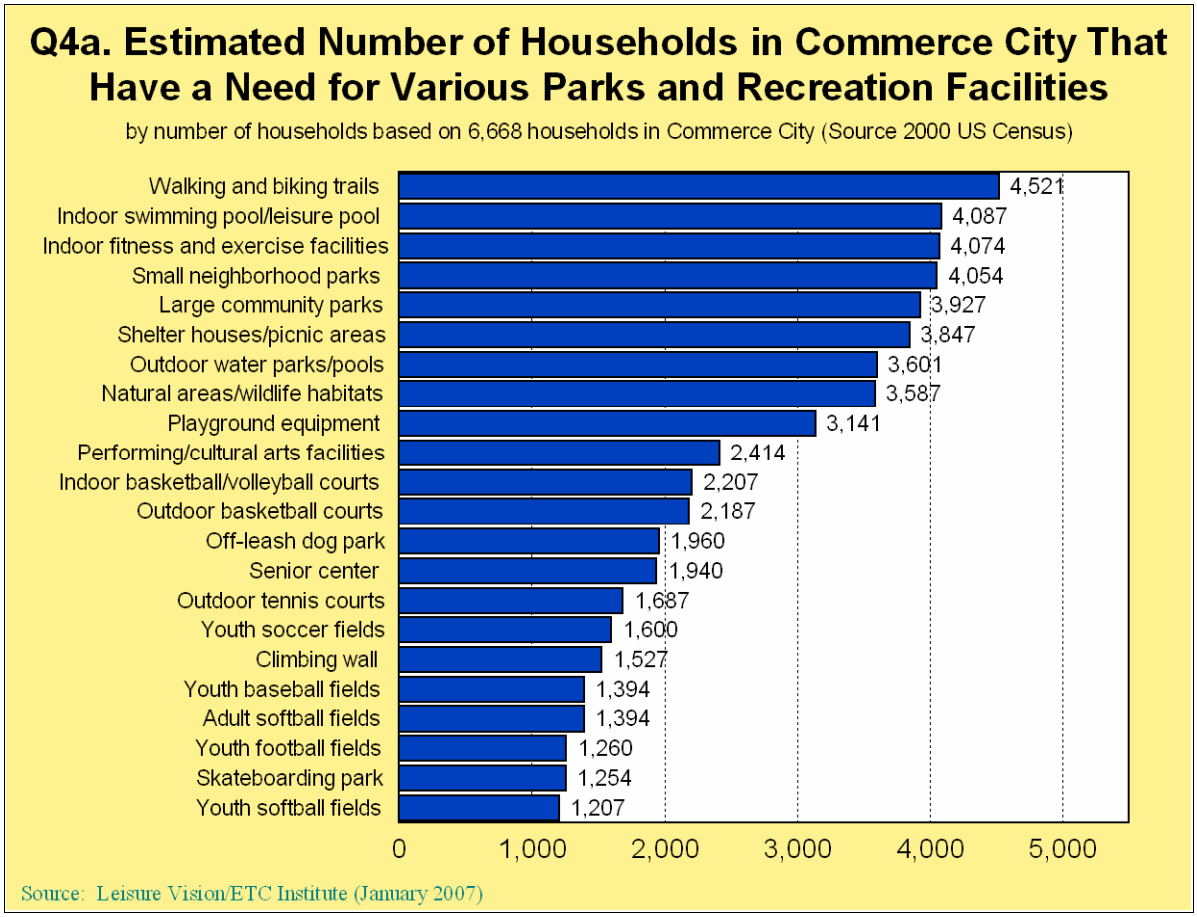
From a list of 22 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that members of their household have a need for. The following summarizes key findings:

Eight of the 22 parks and recreation facilities had over 50% of respondent households indicate they have a need for it. These eight facilities are: walking and biking trails (66%), indoor swimming pool/leisure pool (61%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (61%), small neighborhood parks (61%), large community parks (59%), shelter house/picnic areas (58%), outdoor water parks/pools (54%) and natural areas/wildlife habitats (54%).



Need For Parks and Recreation Facilities in Commerce City

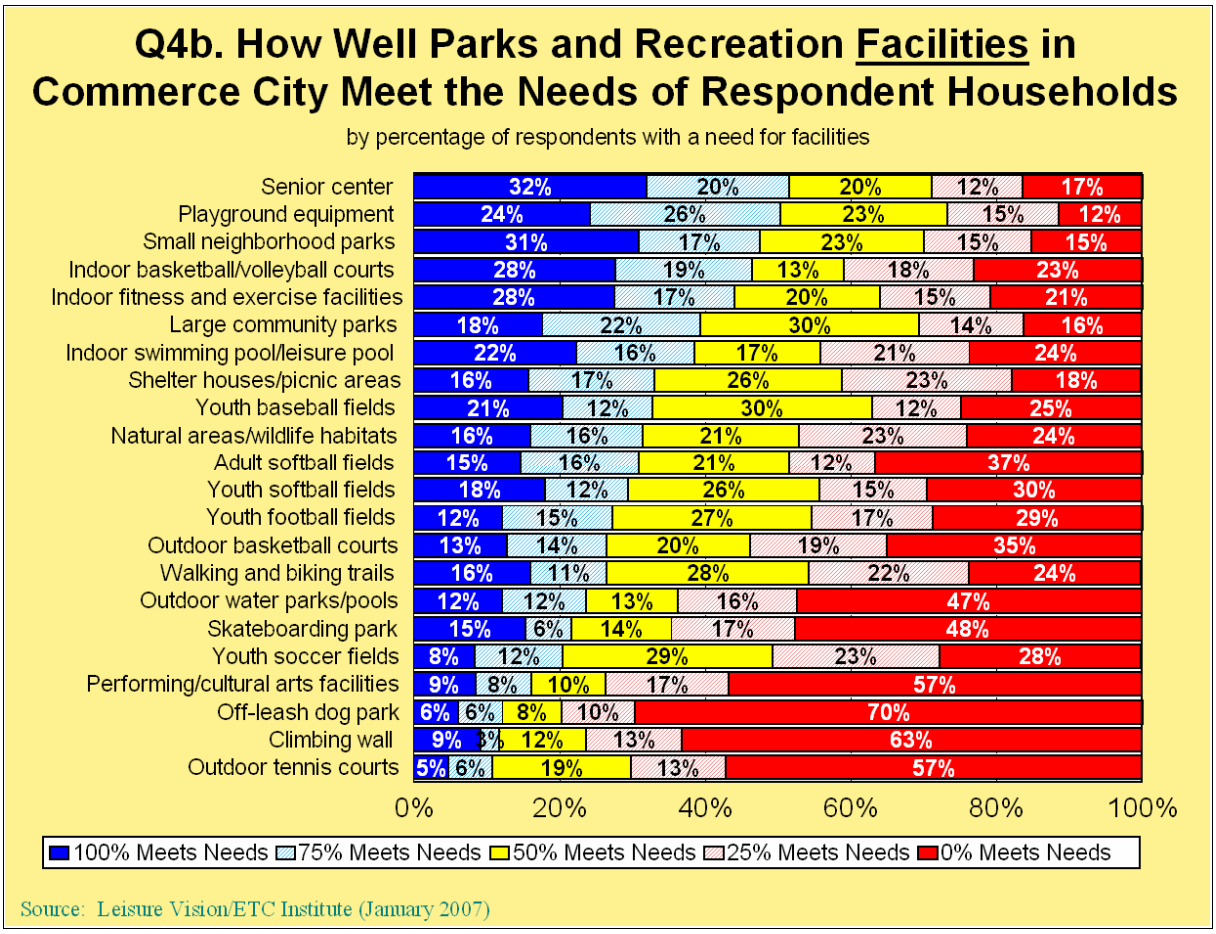
From the list of 22 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that members of their household have a need for. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Commerce City that have a need for various parks and recreation facilities, based on 6,668 households in the City.



How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet Needs

From the list of 22 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households that have a need for facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of facilities in Commerce City meet their needs. The following summarizes key findings:

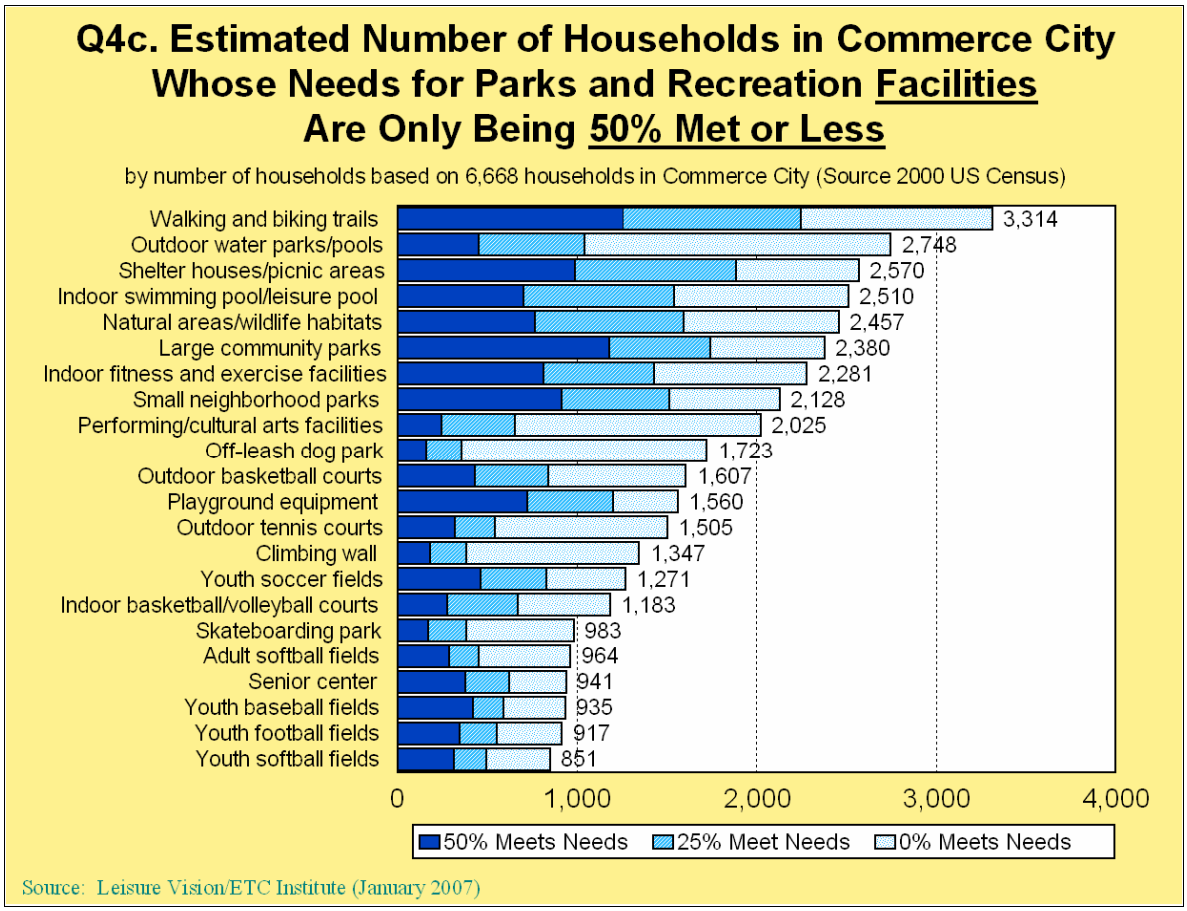
For all 22 facilities, less than 35% of respondents indicated the facility completely meets the needs of their household.



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2007)

Commerce City Households with Their Facility Needs Being 50% Met or Less

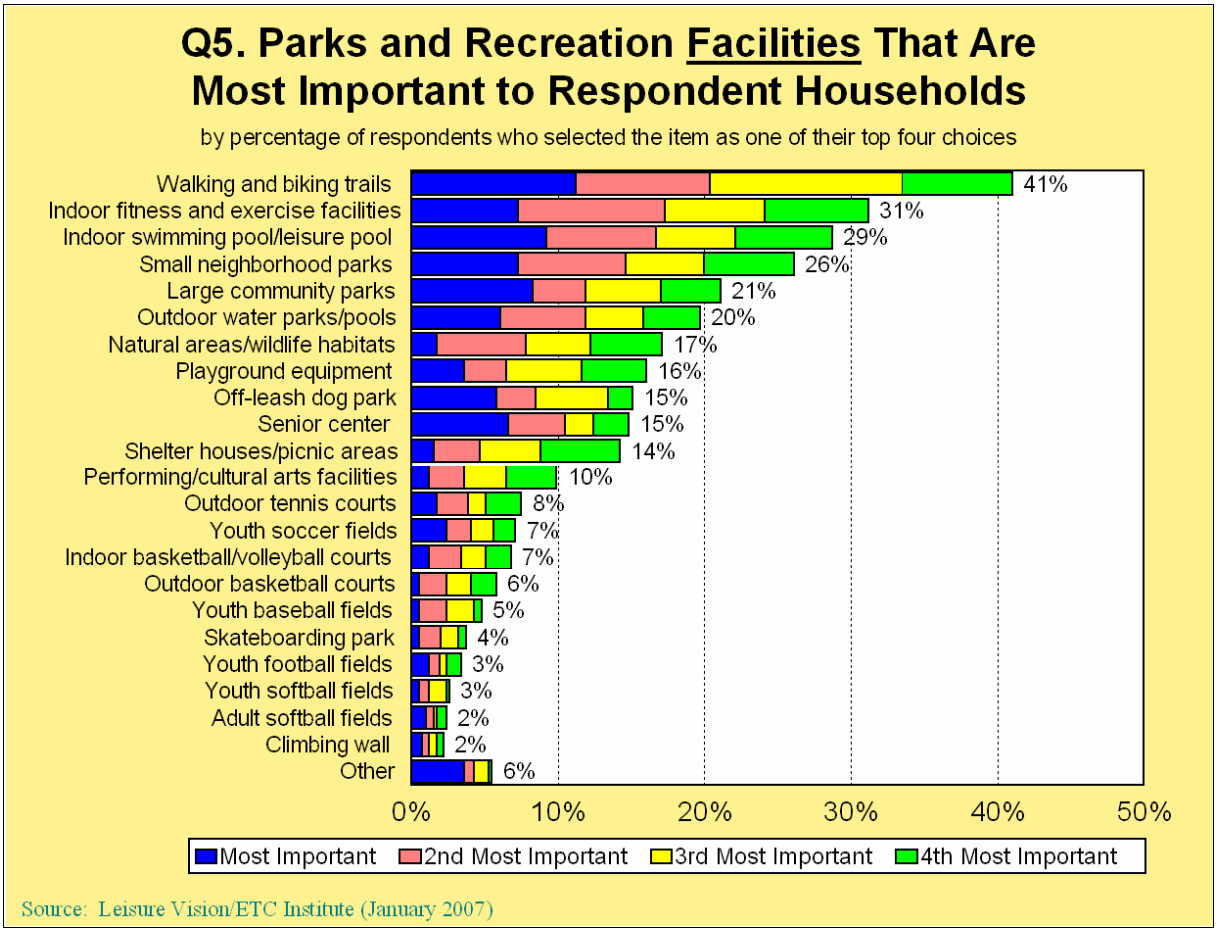
From the list of 22 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households that have a need for facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of facilities in Commerce City meet their needs. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Commerce City whose needs for facilities are only being 50% met or less, based on 6,668 households in the City.



Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities

From the list of 22 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to select the four facilities that are most important to members of their household. The following summarizes key findings:

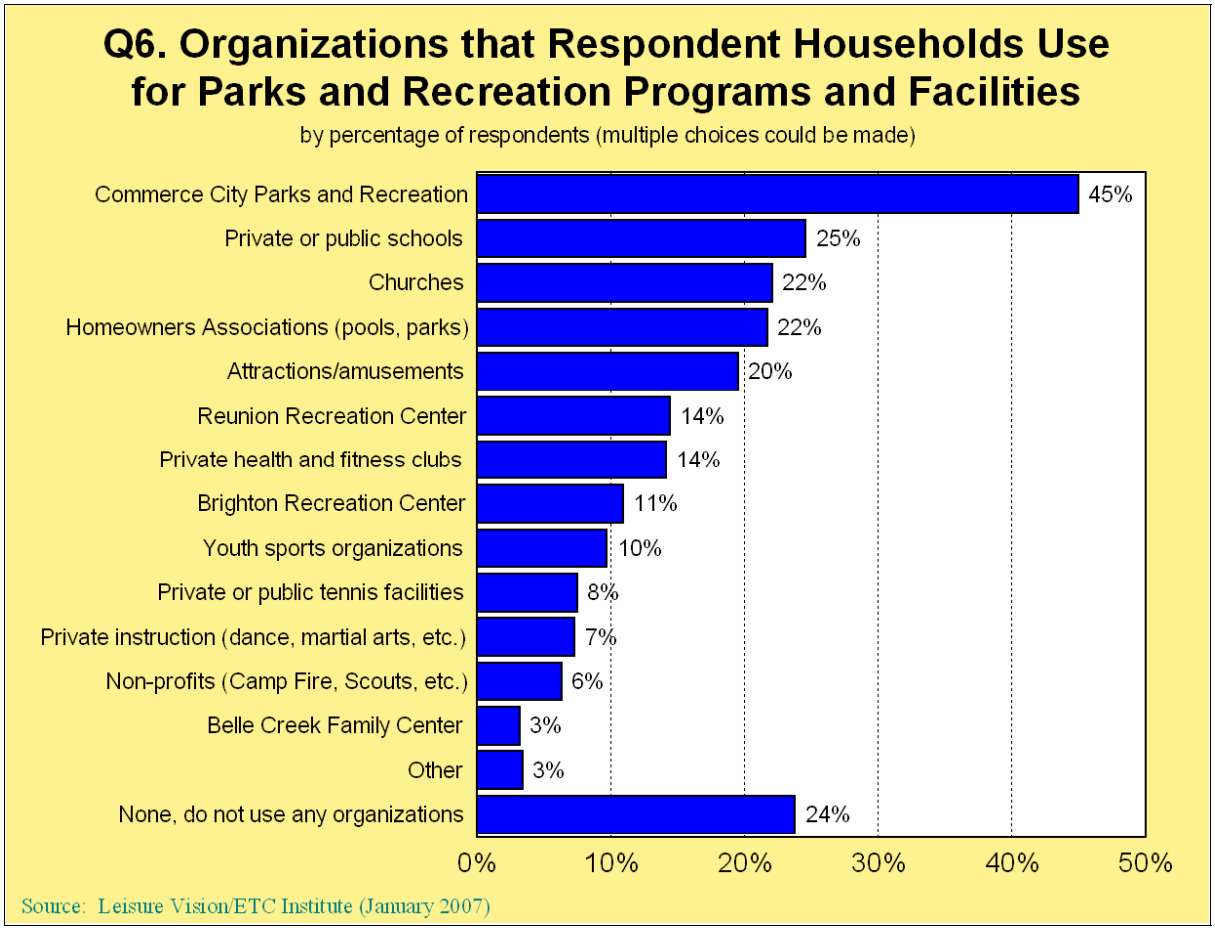
Based on the sum of their top 4 choices, the facilities that respondents rated as the most important are: walking and biking trails (41%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (31%), indoor swimming pool/leisure pool (29%) and small neighborhood parks (26%). It should also be noted that walking and biking trails had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the most important facility.



Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

From a list of 13 options, respondent households were asked to select all of the organizations they have used for parks and recreation programs and facilities during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

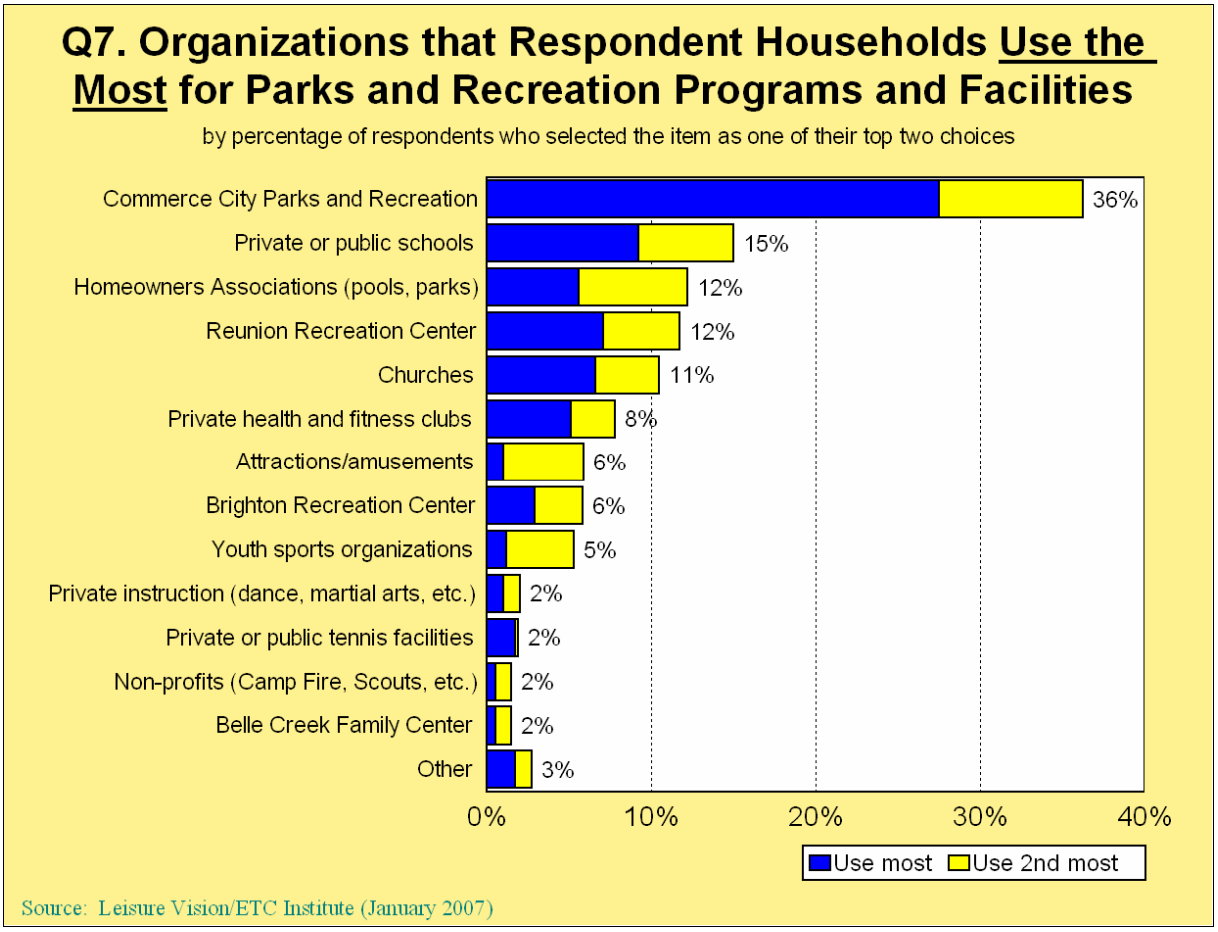
Commerce City Parks and Recreation (45%) is the organization used by the highest percentage of respondent households. There are four other organizations used by at least 20% of respondent households, including: private or public schools (25%), churches (22%), Homeowners Associations (22%) and attractions/amusements (20%).



Organizations Used Most for Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

From the list of 13 options, respondent households were asked to select the two organizations they use the most for parks and recreation programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

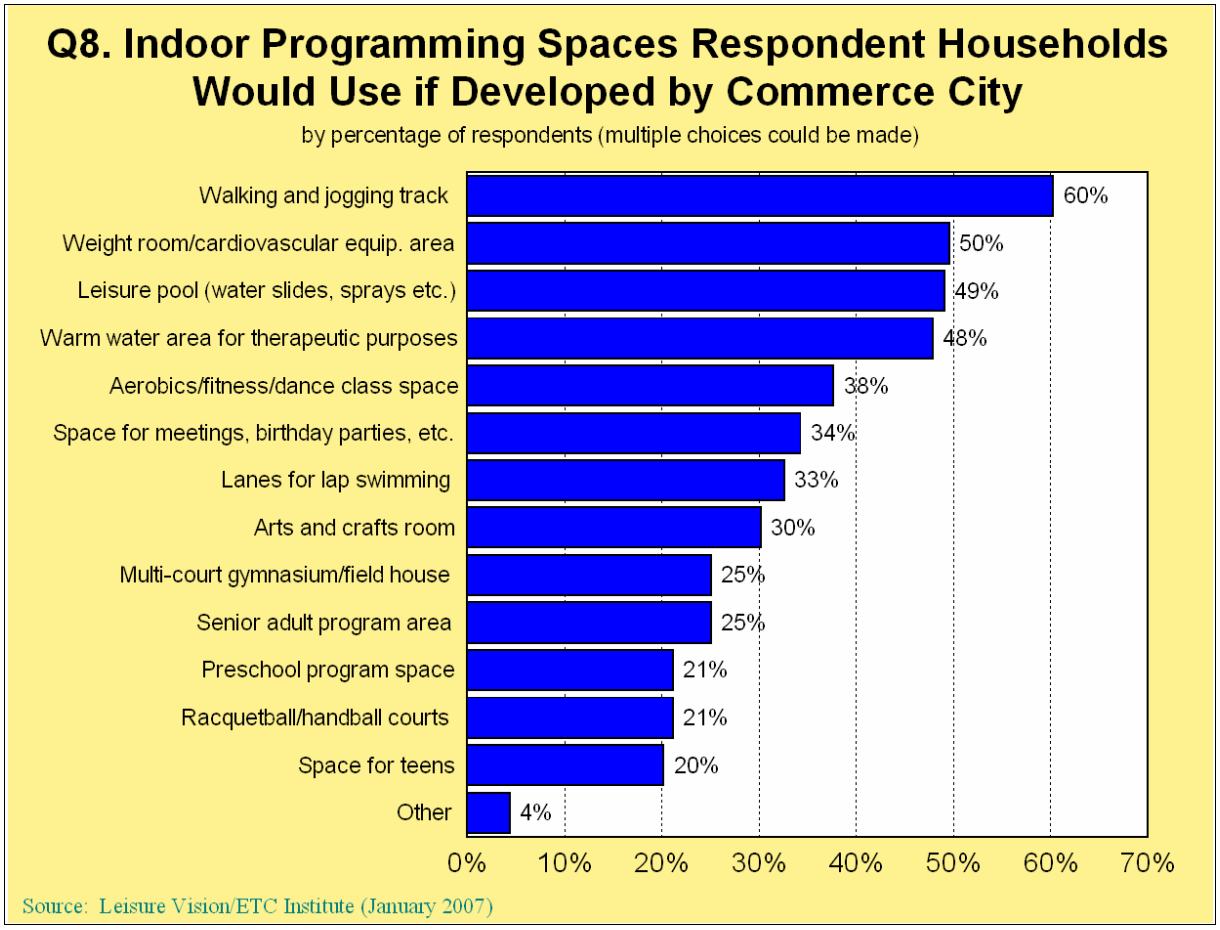
Based on the sum of their top 2 choices, the organizations that respondent households use the most are: Commerce City Parks and Recreation (36%), private or public schools (15%), Homeowners Associations (12%) and Reunion Recreation Center (12%).



Potential Indoor Programming Spaces Respondents Would Use

From a list of 13 potential indoor programming spaces, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones their household would use if developed by Commerce City. The following summarizes key findings:

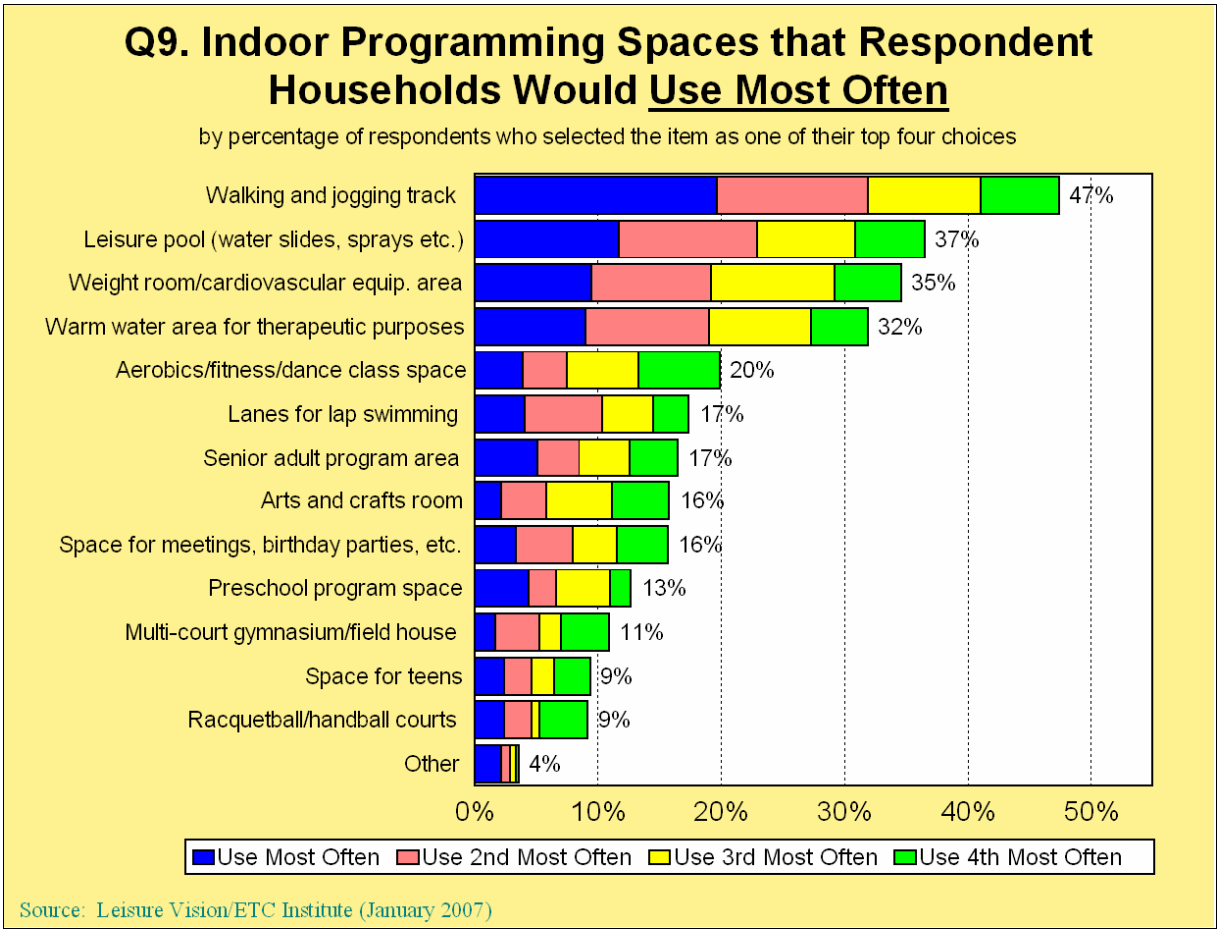
The indoor programming spaces that the highest percentage of respondent households would use are: walking and jogging track (60%), weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (50%), leisure pool (49%) and warm water area for therapeutic purposes (48%).



Potential Indoor Programming Spaces Respondents Would Use Most Often

From the list of 13 potential indoor programming spaces, respondents were asked to select the four that their household would use most often. The following summarizes key findings:

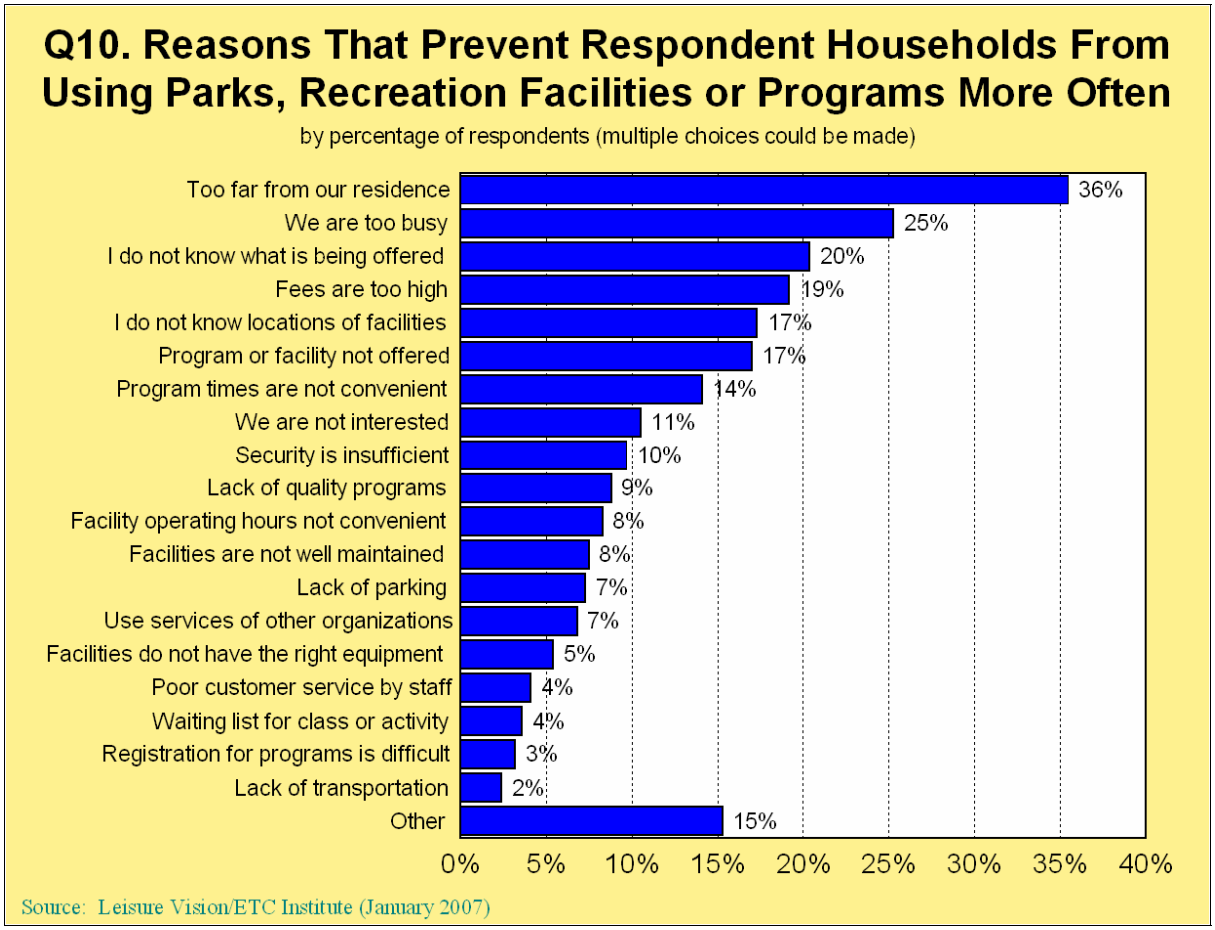
Based on the sum of their top 4 choices, the indoor programming spaces that respondent households would use most often are: walking and jogging track (47%), leisure pool (37%), weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (35%), and warm water area for therapeutic purposes (32%). It should also be noted that a walking and jogging track had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the indoor programming space they would use most often.



Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks, Facilities and Programs More Often

From a list of 19 options, respondents were asked to select all of the reasons that prevent their household from using parks, recreation facilities, and programs of Commerce City more often. The following summarizes key findings:

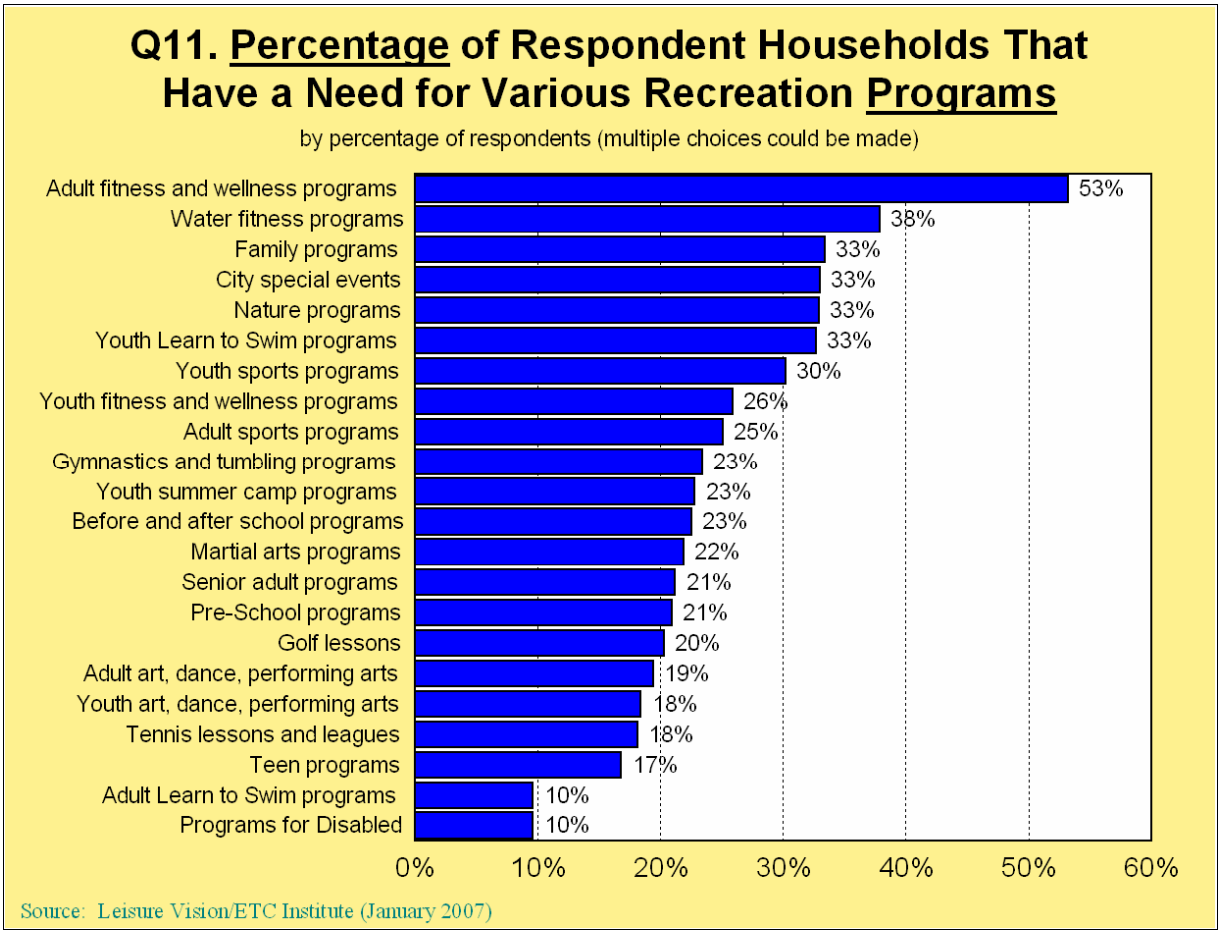
"Too far from our residence" (36%) is the reason preventing the highest percentage of respondent households from using parks, recreation facilities, and programs of Commerce City more often. The other most frequently mentioned reasons preventing respondent households from using parks, facilities, and programs more often include: "we are too busy" (25%), and "I do not know what is being offered" (20%).



Need for Recreation Programs

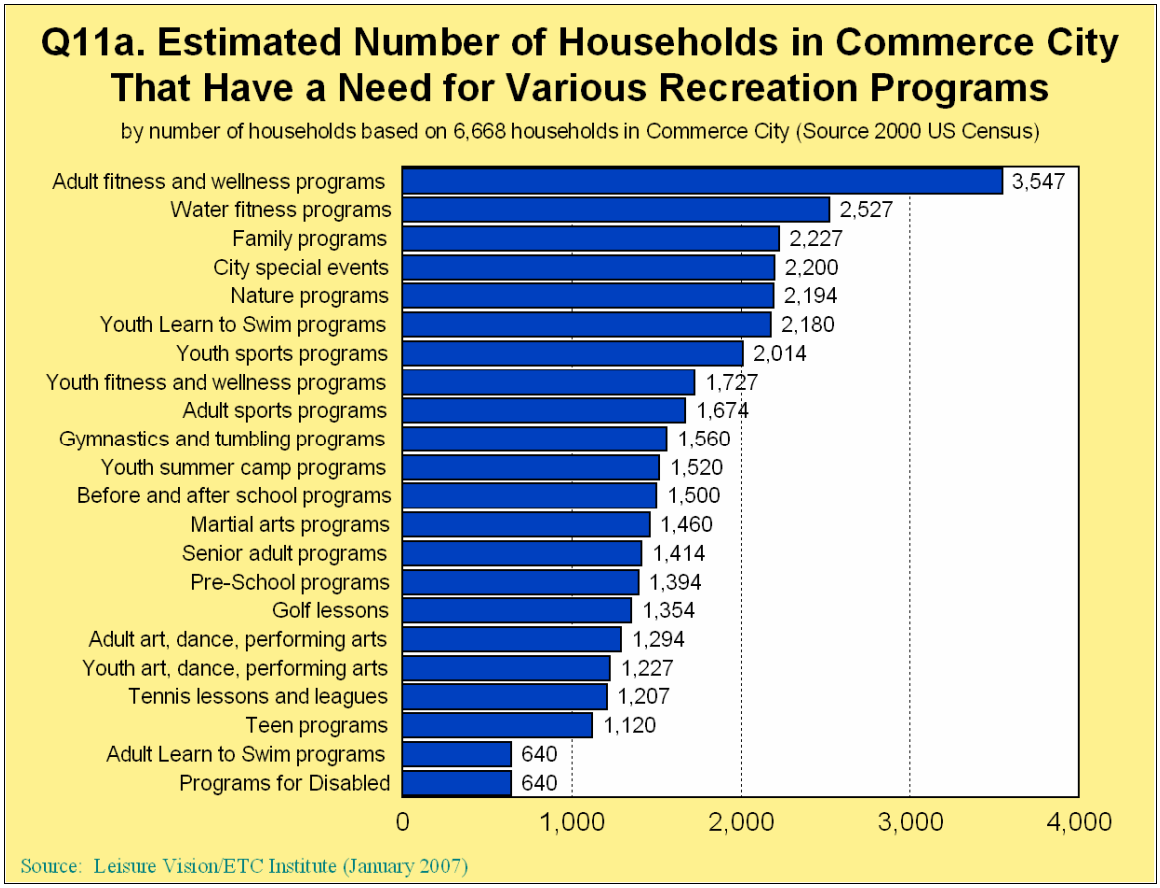
From a list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that members of their household have a need for. The following summarizes key findings:

Six of the 22 recreation programs had over 30% of respondent households indicate they have a need for them. These six programs are: adult fitness and wellness programs (53%), water fitness programs (38%), family programs (33%), City special events (33%), nature programs (33%), and Youth Learn to Swim program (33%).



Need For Recreation Programs in Commerce City

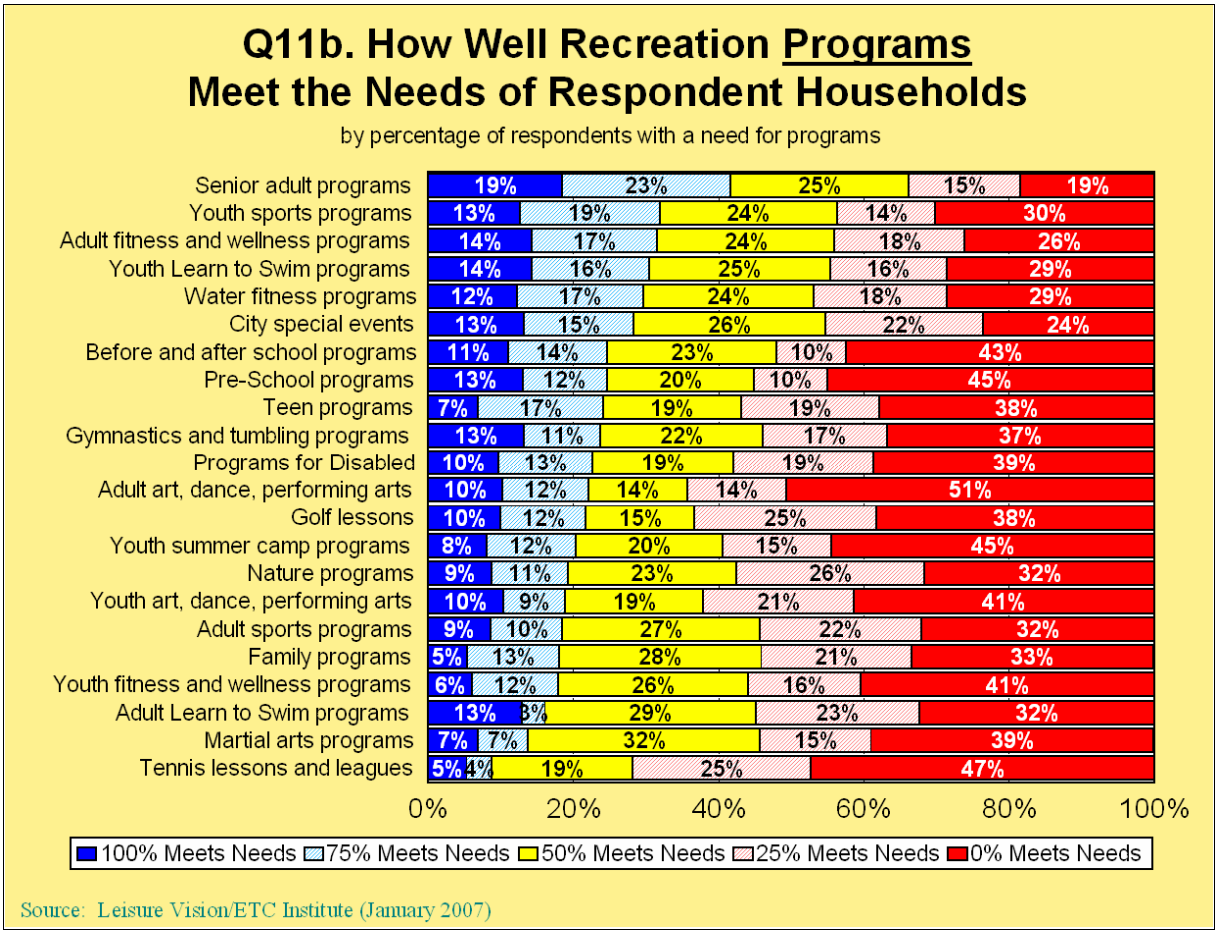
From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that members of their household have a need for. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Commerce City that have a need for various recreation programs, based on 6,668 households in the City.



How Well Recreation Programs Meet Needs

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondent households that have a need for programs were asked to indicate how well those programs meet their needs. The following summarizes key findings:

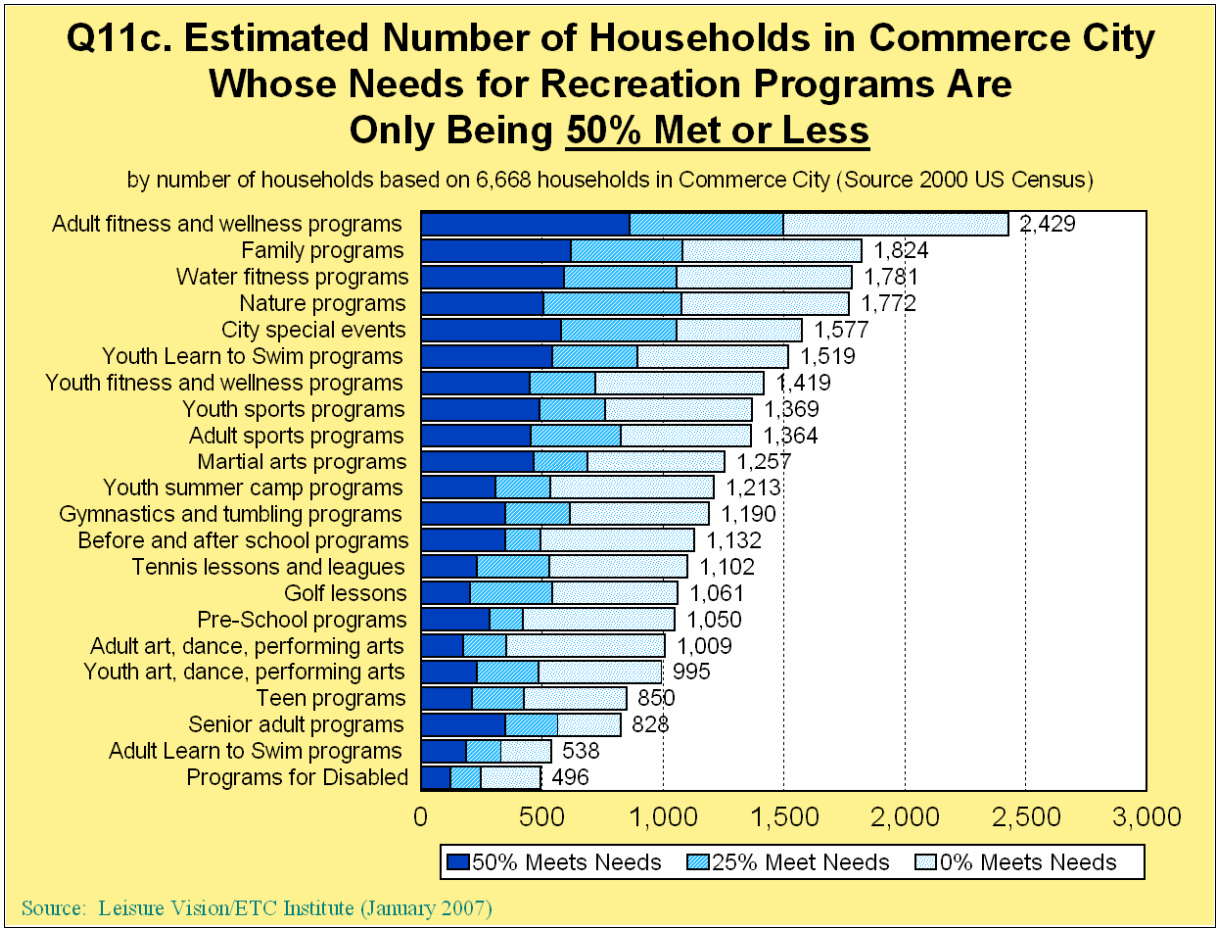
For all 22 programs, less than 20% of respondents indicated the program completely meets the needs of their household.



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2007)

Commerce City Households with Their Program Needs Being 50% Met or Less

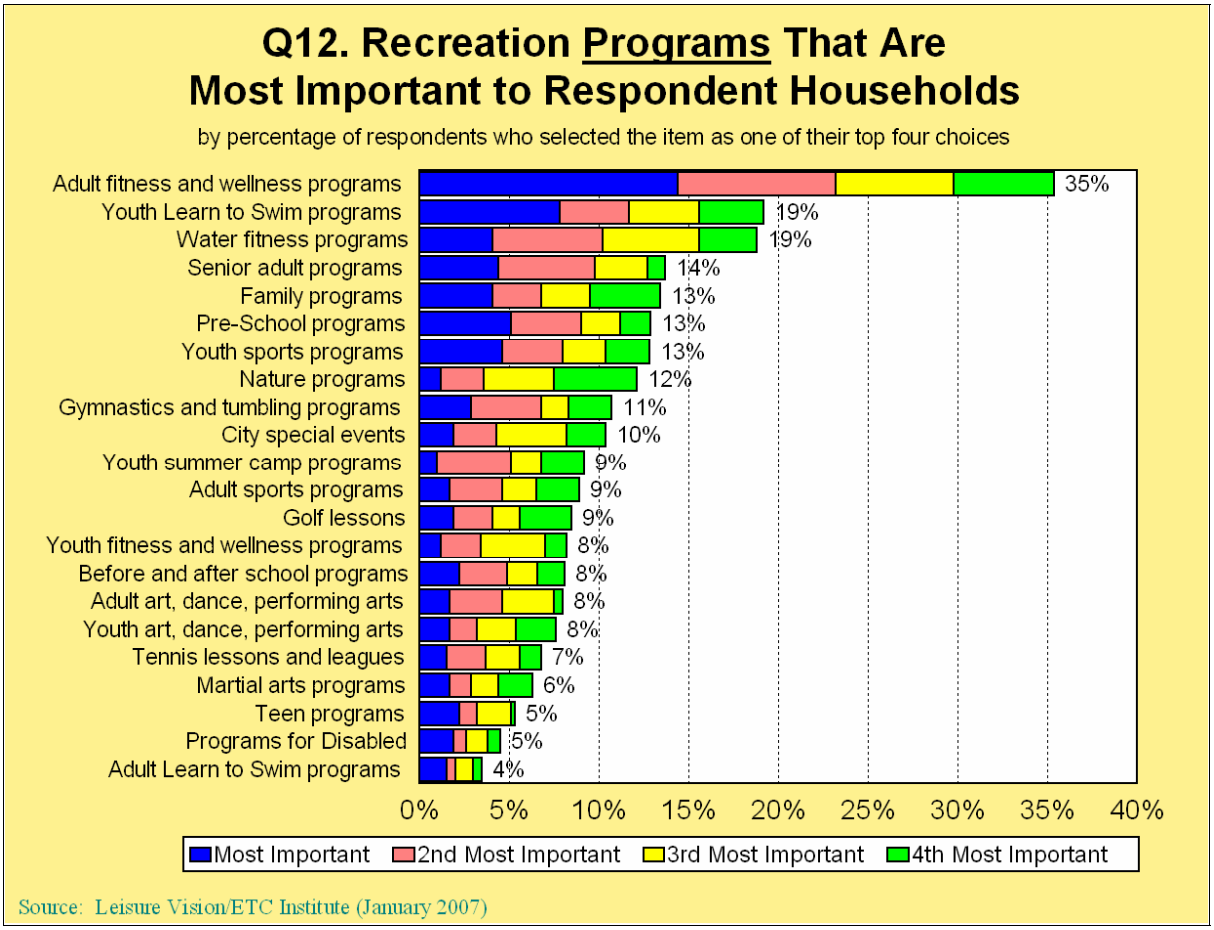
From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondent households that have a need for programs were asked to indicate how well those programs meet their needs. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Commerce City whose needs for programs are only being 50% met or less, based on 6,668 households in the City.



Most Important Recreation Programs

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to select the four that are most important to members of their household. The following summarizes key findings:

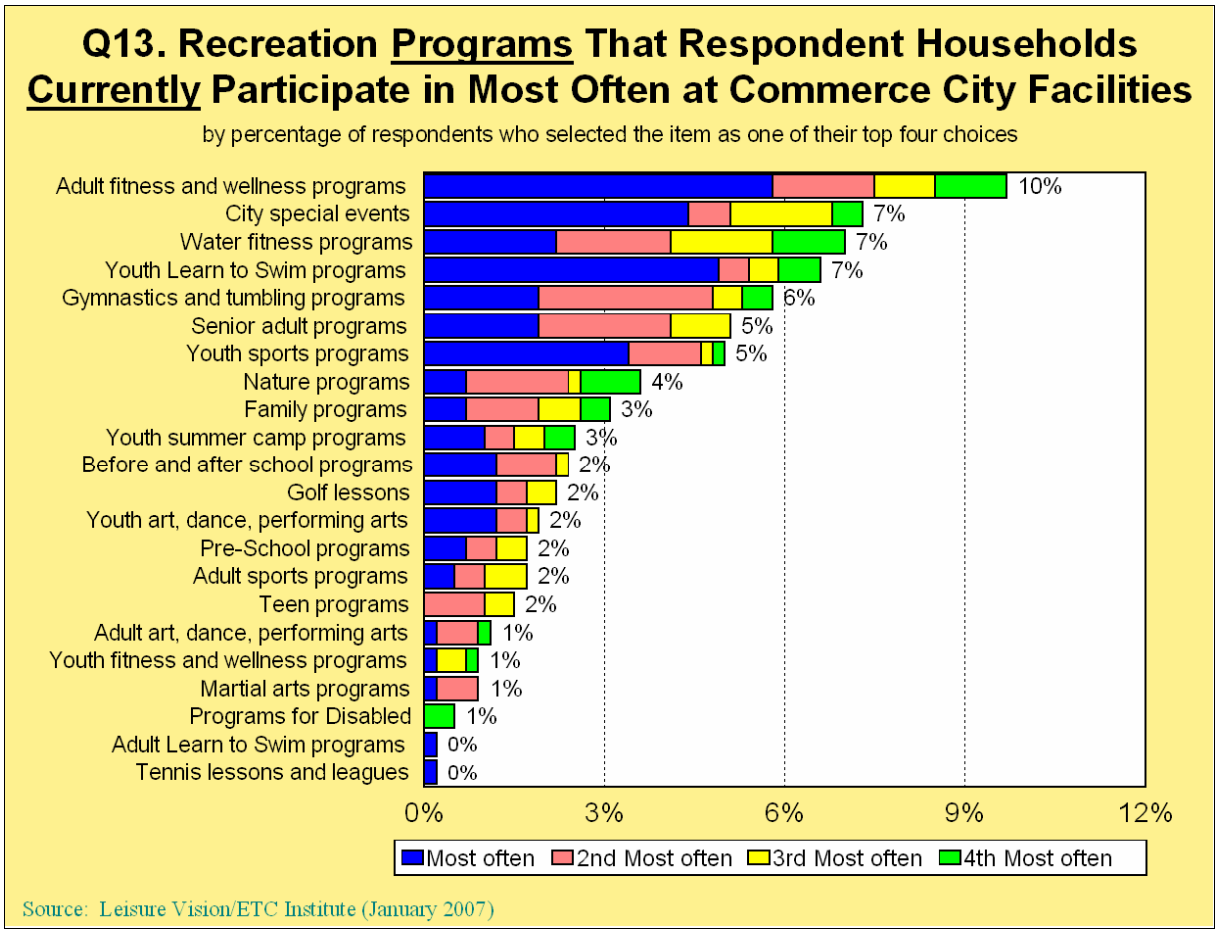
Based on the sum of their top 4 choices, the programs that the highest percentage of respondents rated as the most important are: adult fitness and wellness programs (35%), Youth Learn to Swim programs (19%) and water fitness programs (19%). It should also be noted that adult fitness and wellness programs had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the most important program.



Recreation Programs Respondents Currently Participate in Most Often

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to select the four that members of their household currently participate in most often at Commerce City facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

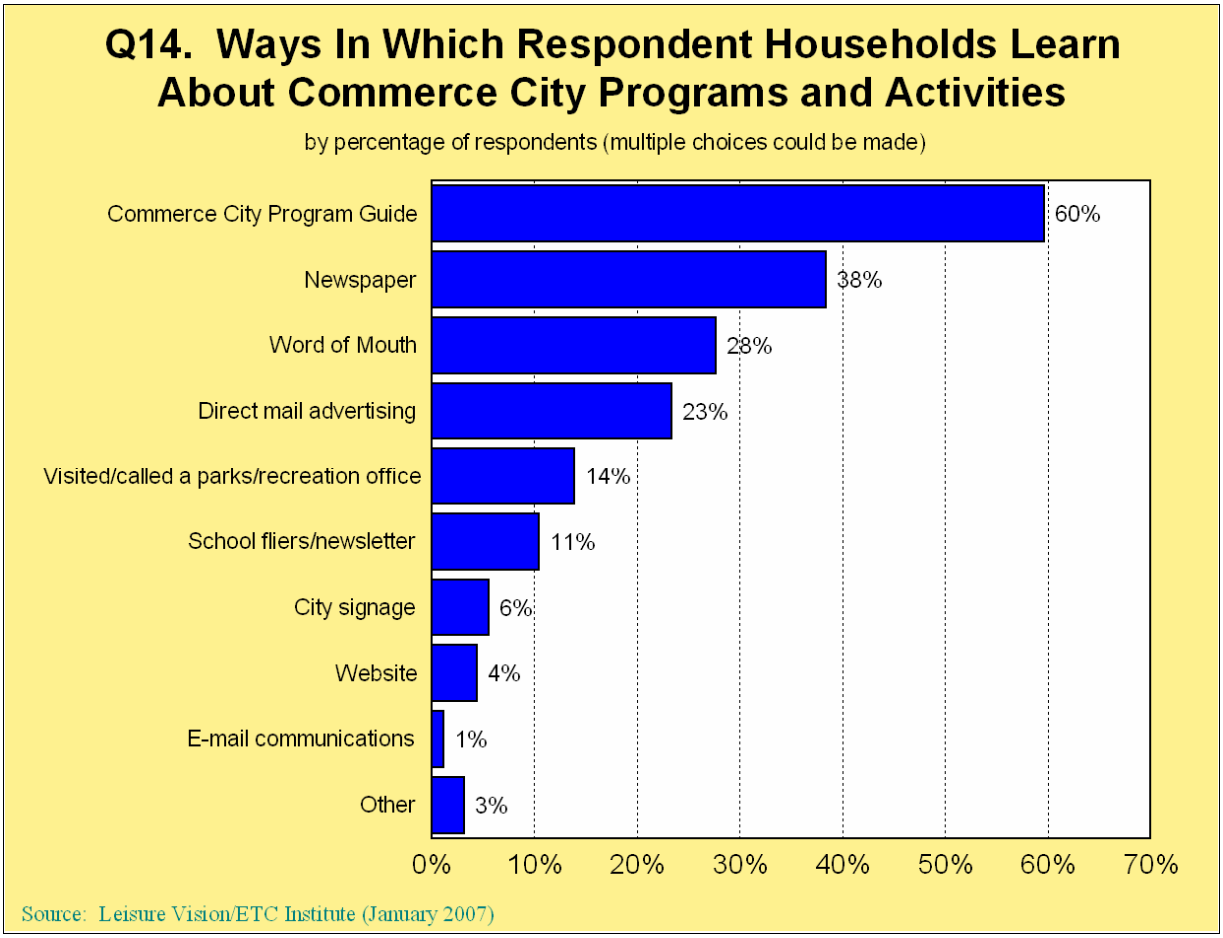
Based on the sum of their top 4 choices, the programs that the highest percentage of respondents currently participates in most often at Commerce City facilities are: adult fitness and wellness programs (10%), City special events (7%), water fitness programs (7%) and Youth Learn to Swim programs (7%). It should also be noted that adult fitness and wellness programs had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the program they currently participate in most often at Commerce City facilities.



Ways Respondents Learn About Programs and Activities

From a list of nine options, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ways they have learned about Commerce City programs and activities. The following summarizes key findings:

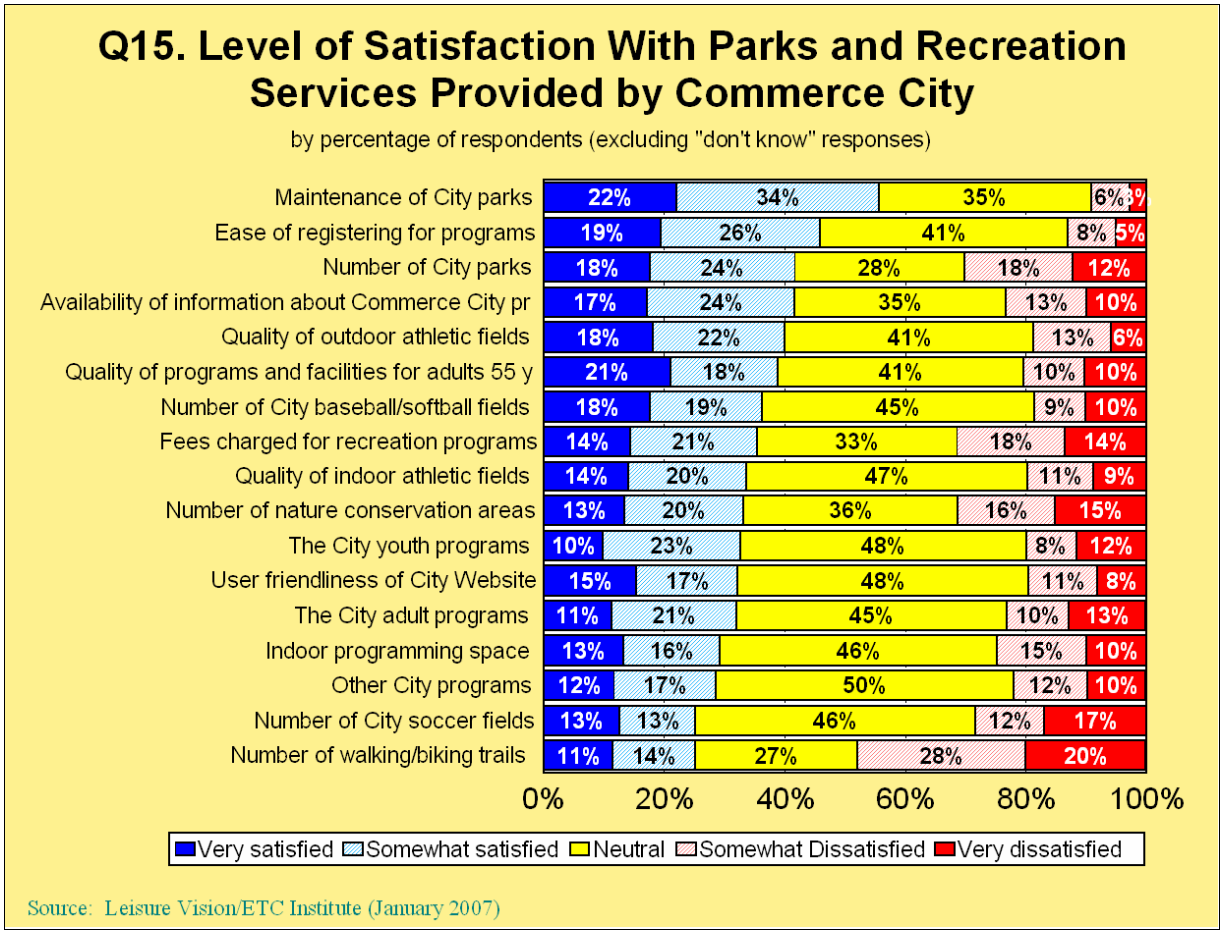
The Commerce City Program Guide (60%) is the most frequently mentioned way that respondents have learned about Commerce City programs and activities. There are two other ways that over 25% of respondents have learned about programs and activities, including: newspaper (38%), and word of mouth (28%).



Level of Satisfaction with Various Parks and Recreation Services

From a list of 17 various parks and recreation services provided by Commerce City, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with each one. The following summarizes key findings:

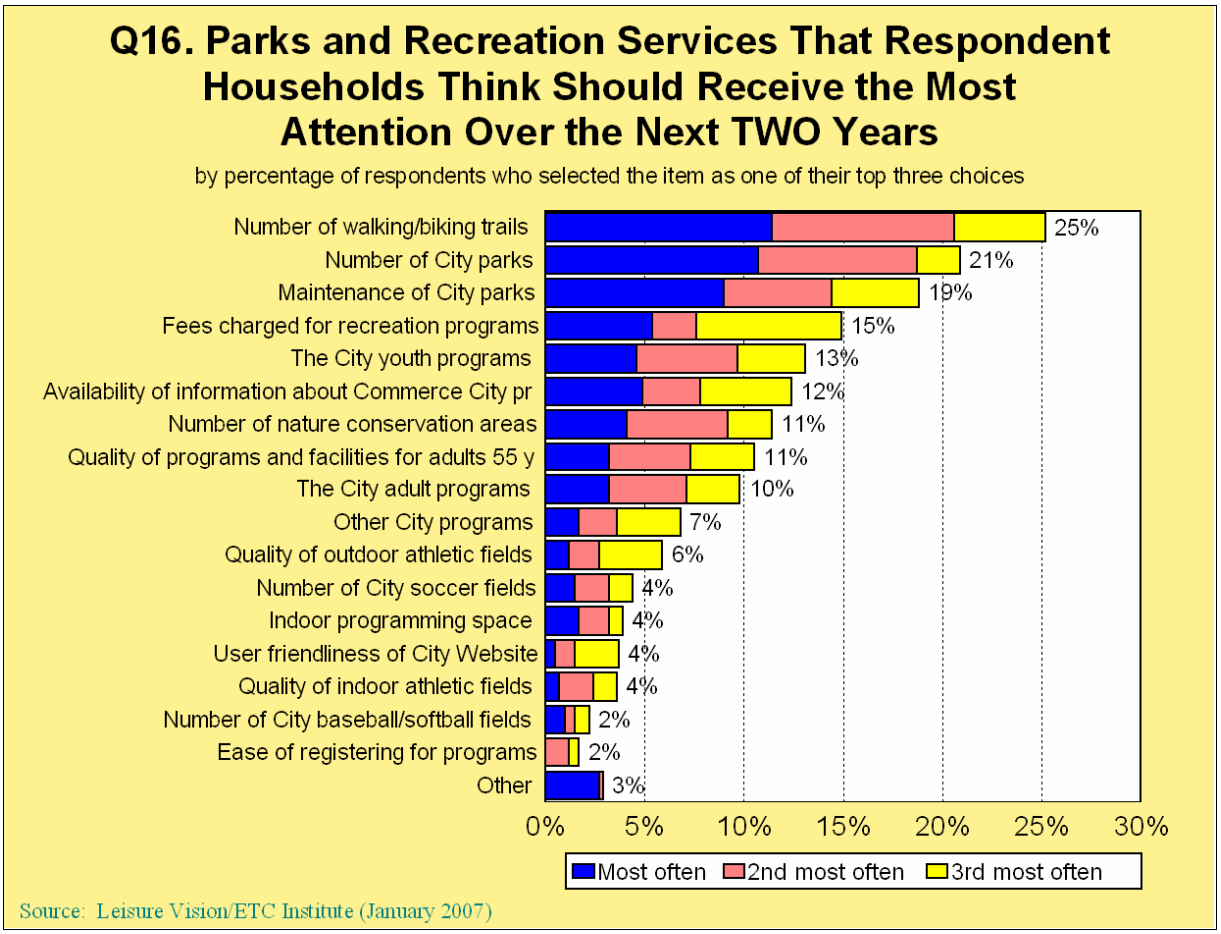
The parks and recreation services that the highest percentage of respondents are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with are: maintenance of City parks (56%), ease of registering for programs (45%), number of City parks (42%), and availability of information about Commerce City programs or facilities (41%).



Parks and Recreation Services that Should Receive the Most Attention

From the list of 17 various parks and recreation services provided by Commerce City, respondents were asked to select the three they feel should receive the most attention from Commerce City officials over the next two years. The following summarizes key findings:

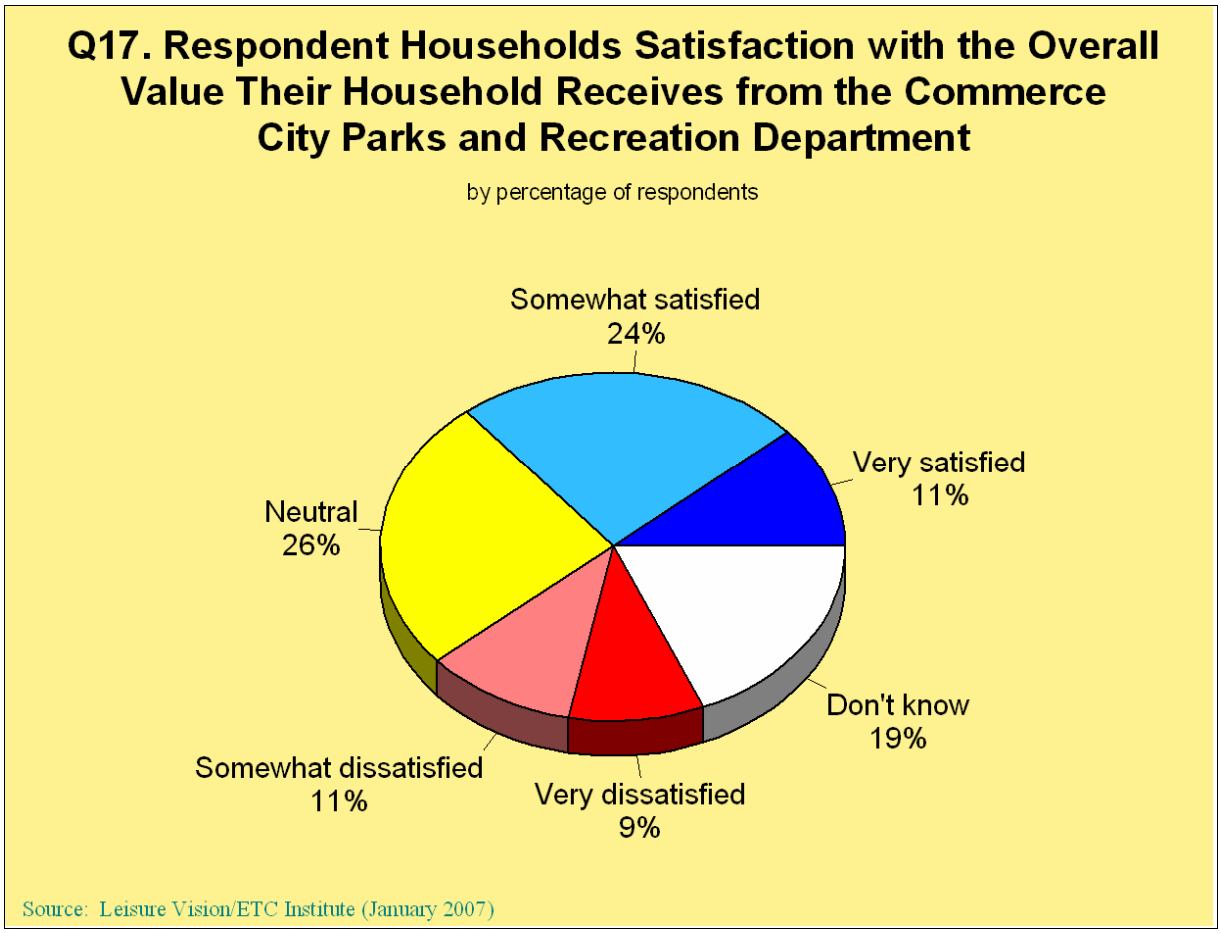
Based on the sum of their top three choices, the parks and recreation services that respondents feel should receive the most attention over the next two years are: number of walking/biking trails (25%), number of City parks (21%) and maintenance of City parks (19%). It should also be noted that the number of walking/biking trails had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the parks and recreation service that should receive the most attention over the next two years.



Level of Satisfaction Received from Commerce City

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the overall value their household receives from the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department. The following summarizes key findings:

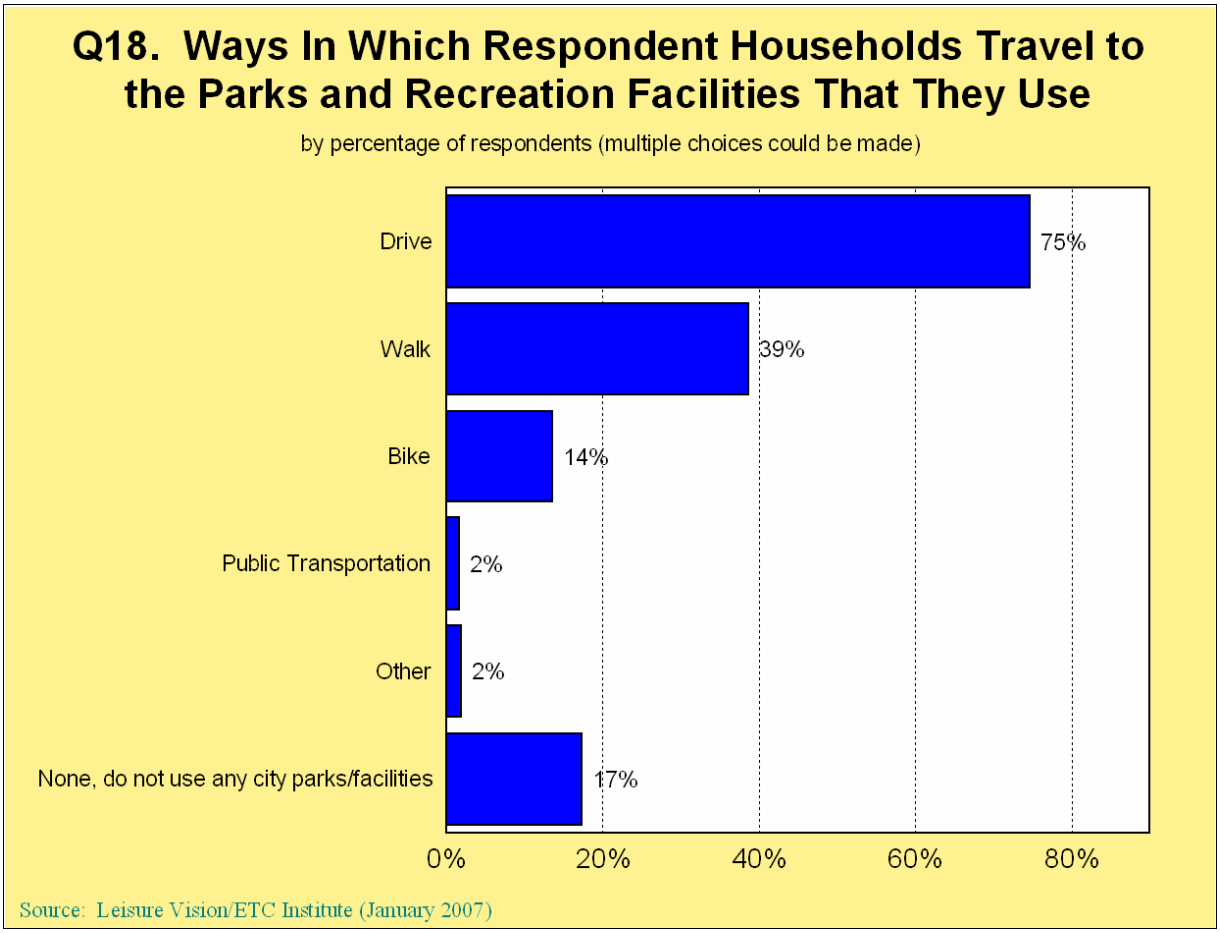
Thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents indicated being either very satisfied (11%) or somewhat satisfied (24%) with the overall value their household receives from the Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, 20% of respondents indicated being either very dissatisfied (9%) or somewhat dissatisfied (11%) with the overall value received from the Parks and Recreation Department. An additional 26% of respondents indicated "neutral" and 19% indicated "don't know."



Ways Respondents Travel to Use Parks and Recreation Facilities

From a list of four options, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ways members of their household travel to the parks and recreation facilities they use. The following summarizes key findings:

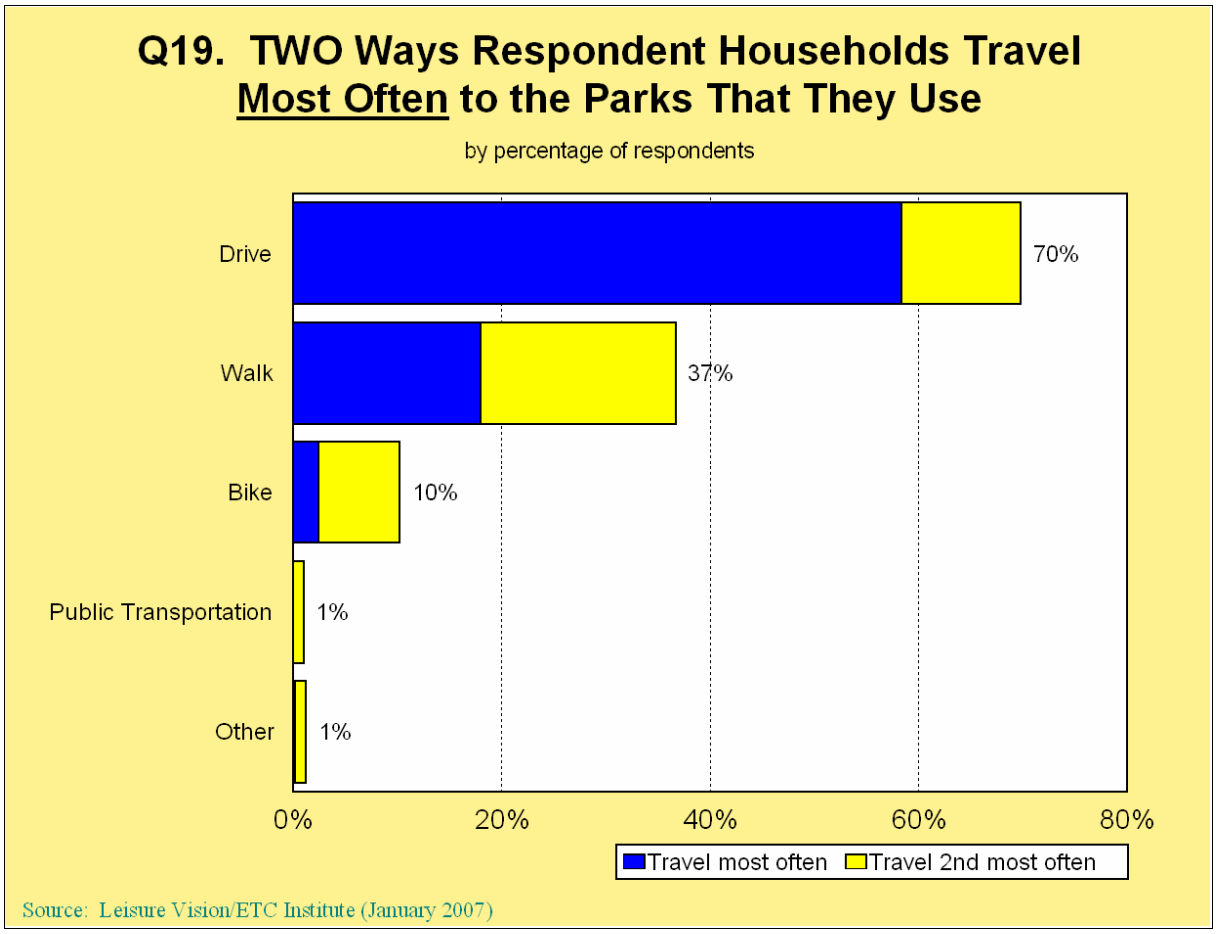
The ways that respondent households most prefer to travel to the parks and recreation facilities they use are: driving (75%) and walking (39%). Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents indicated that they do not use any city parks or facilities.



Ways Respondents Travel Most Often to Use Parks and Recreation Facilities

From the list of four options, respondents were asked to indicate the two ways members of their household travel most often to the parks and recreation facilities they use. The following summarizes key findings:

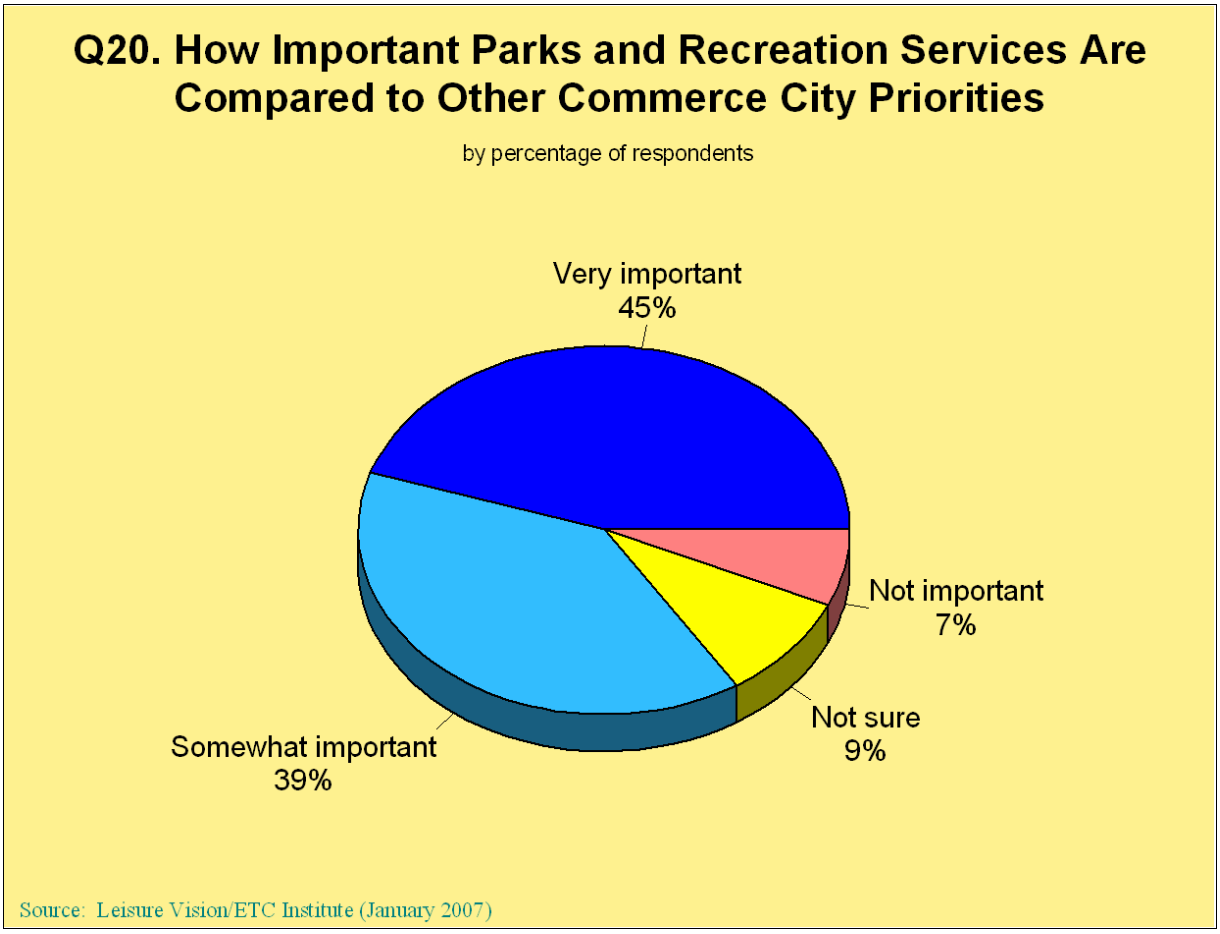
Based on the sum of their top 2 choices, the ways that respondents travel most often to the parks they use are by driving (70%) and walking (37%).



Importance of Parks and Recreation Services Compared to Other Priorities

Respondents were asked to indicate how important parks and recreation services are compared to other Commerce City priorities, such as law enforcement, fire, and streets. The following summarizes key findings:

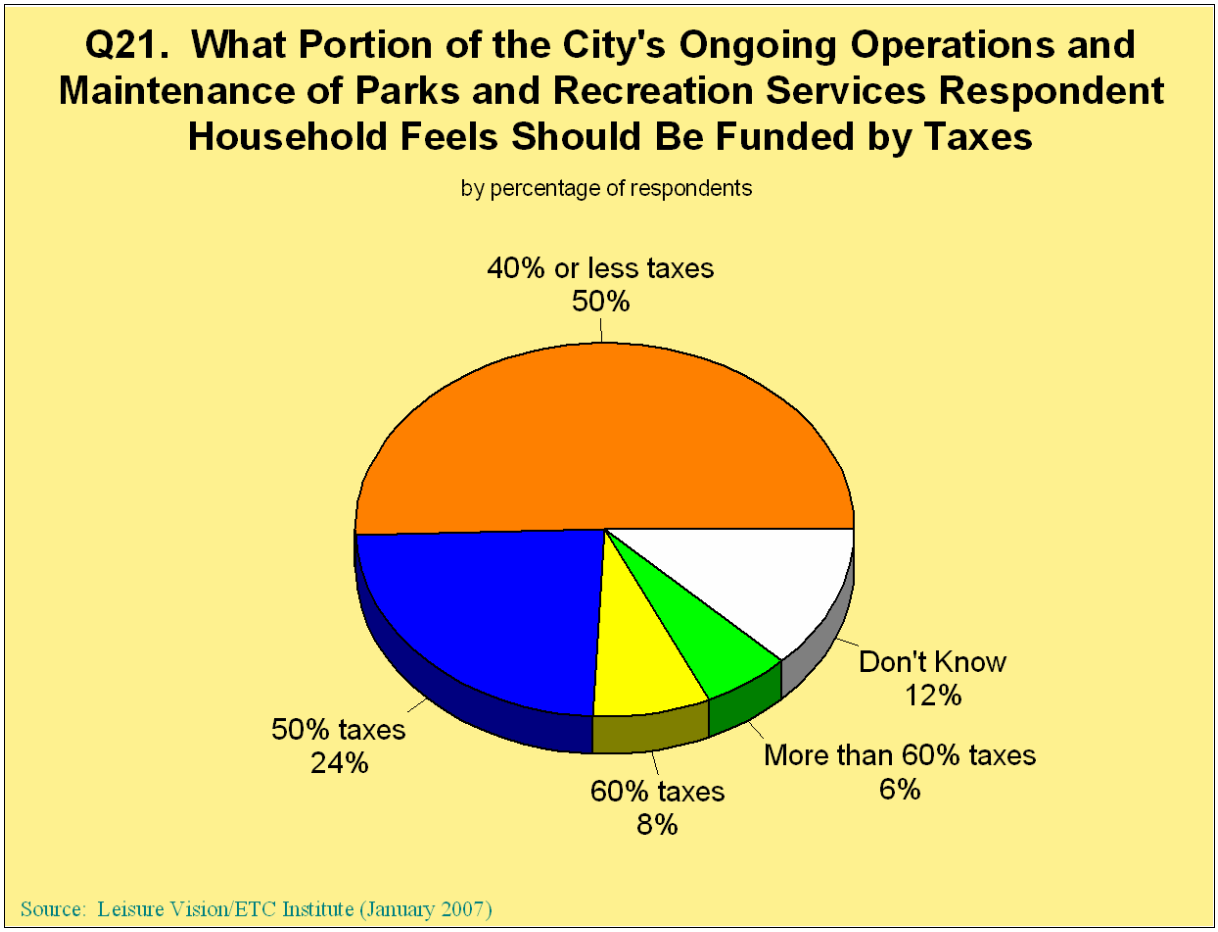
Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents indicated that parks and recreation services are either very important (45%) or somewhat important (39%) compared to other Commerce City priorities. Only 7% of respondents indicated that parks and recreation services are not important, and 9% indicated "not sure."



Funding Operations/Maintenance of Parks & Recreation Services with Taxes

From a list of four options, respondents were asked to indicate what portion of the City's ongoing operations and maintenance of parks and recreation services should be funded by taxes. The following summarizes key findings:

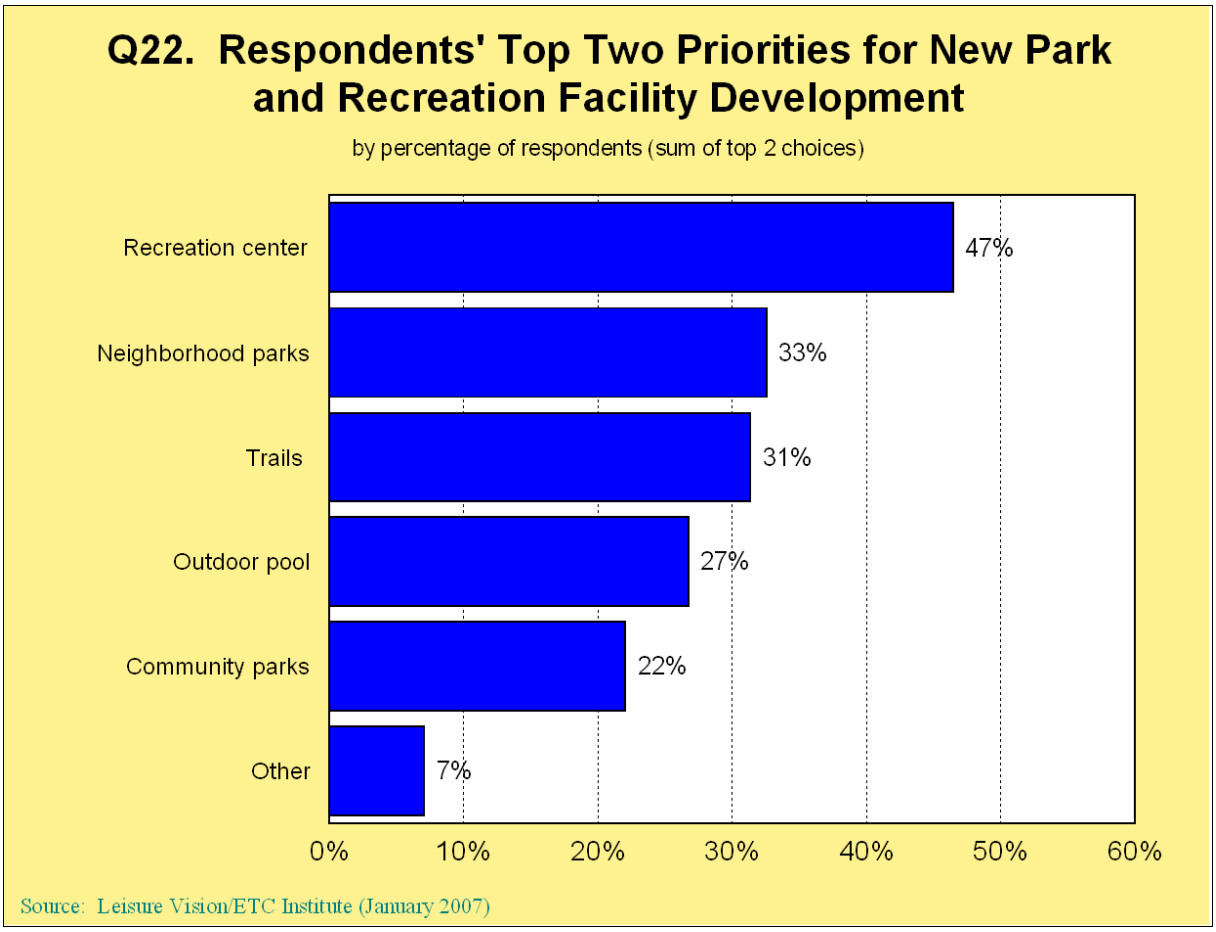
Fifty percent (50%) of respondents indicated that the City's ongoing operations and maintenance of parks and recreation services should be funded 40% or less by taxes. In addition, 24% of respondents feel the operations and maintenance should be funded 50% by taxes, 8% feel they should be funded 60% by taxes and 6% feel they should be funded more than 60% by taxes.



Top Priorities for New Park and Recreation Facility Development

From a list of five options, respondents were asked to indicate their top two priorities for new park and recreation facility development. The following summarizes key findings:

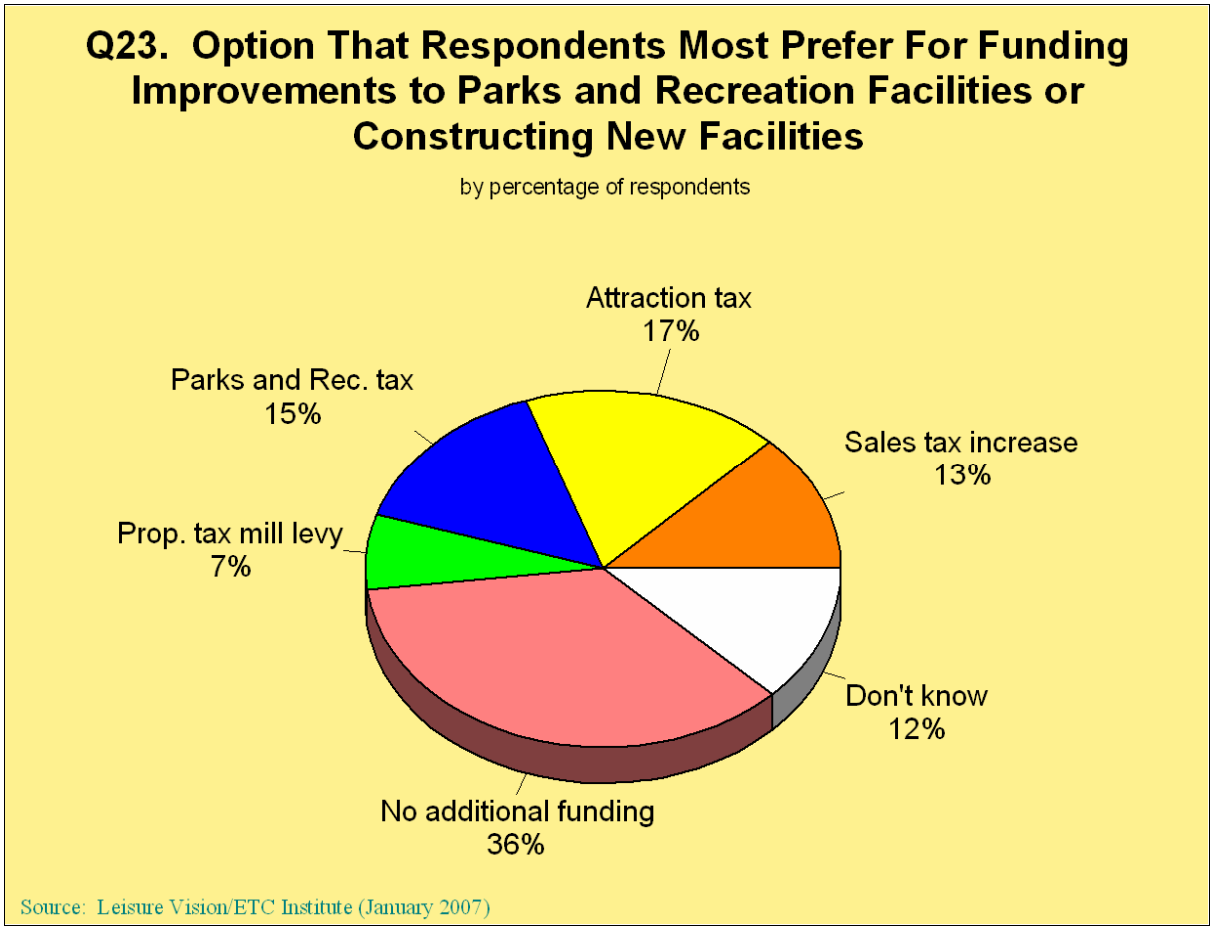
Based on the sum of their top two choices, respondents' top priorities for new park and recreation facility development are: recreation center (47%), neighborhood parks (33%) and trails (31%).



Ways to Fund Improvements to Parks and Recreation Facilities

From a list of four options, respondents were asked to indicate which way they most prefer to fund improvements to parks and recreation facilities or the construction of new facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents indicated an amusement/admission/attraction tax as their preferred way of funding improvements or new facilities. In addition, 15% of respondents prefer a parks and recreation tax, 13% prefer a sales tax increase, and 7% prefer a property tax mill levy. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents indicated they do support any additional funding.



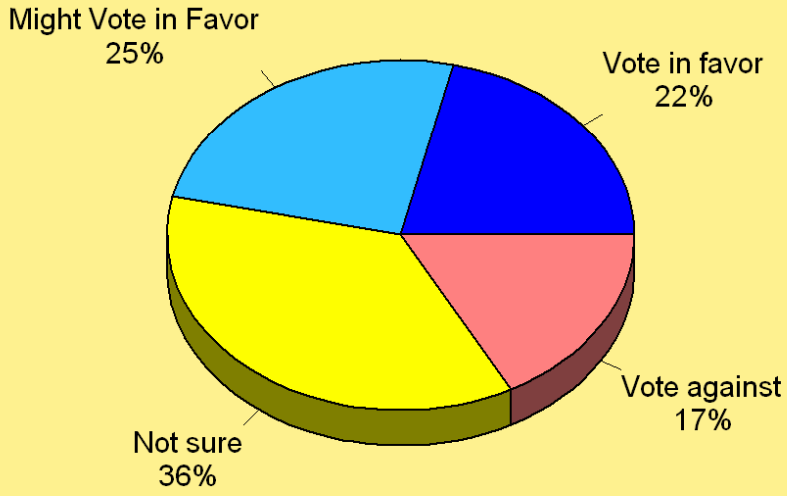
Voting on a Tax Referendum to Fund Parks, Trails, Recreation and Fitness Facilities

Respondents were asked to indicate how they would vote on a tax referendum to fund the development and operations of the parks, trails, recreation and fitness facilities that are most important to members of their household. The following summarizes key findings:

Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents indicated they would either vote in favor (22%) or might vote in favor (25%) of the tax referendum. An additional 17% of respondents would vote against the tax referendum, and 36% indicated "not sure."

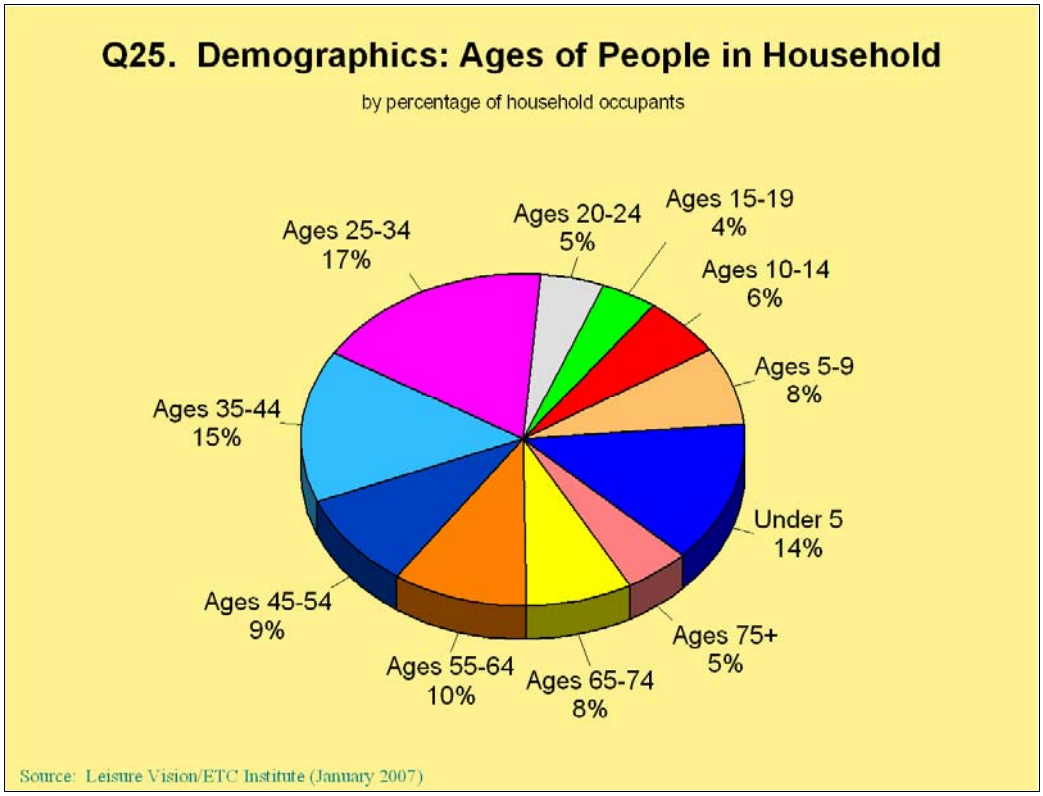
Q24. How Respondents Would Vote on a Tax Referendum to Fund the Development and Operation of the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Fitness Facilities That are Most Important to Their Household

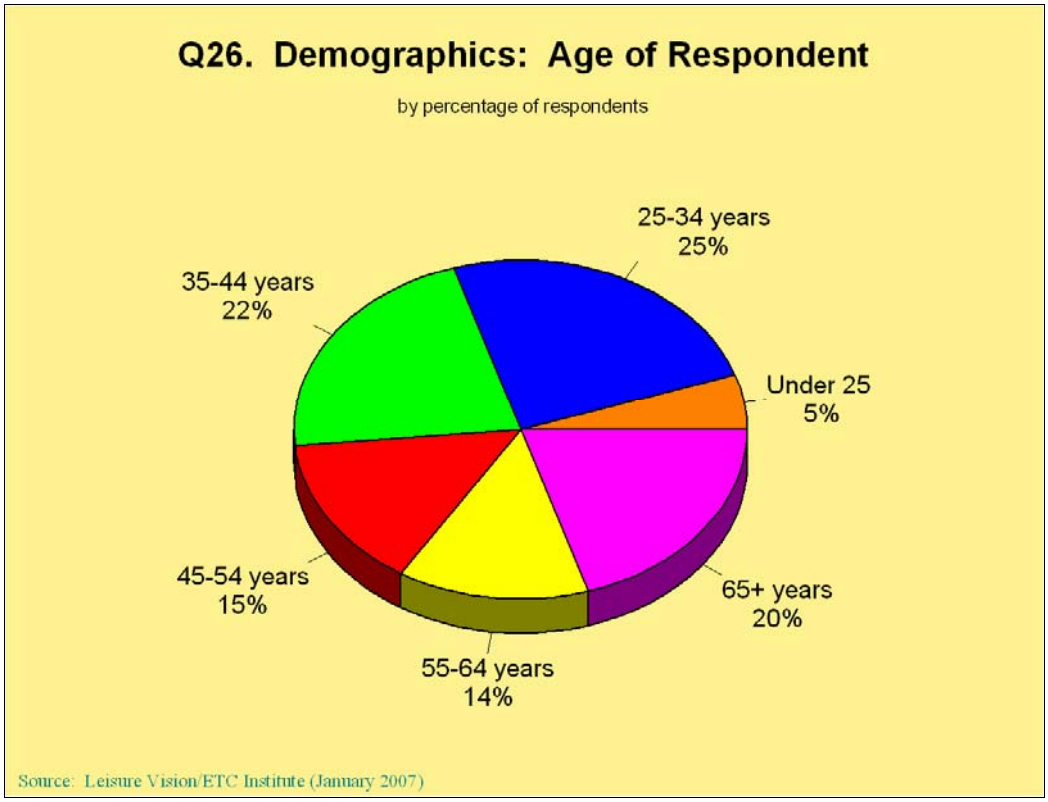
by percentage of respondents

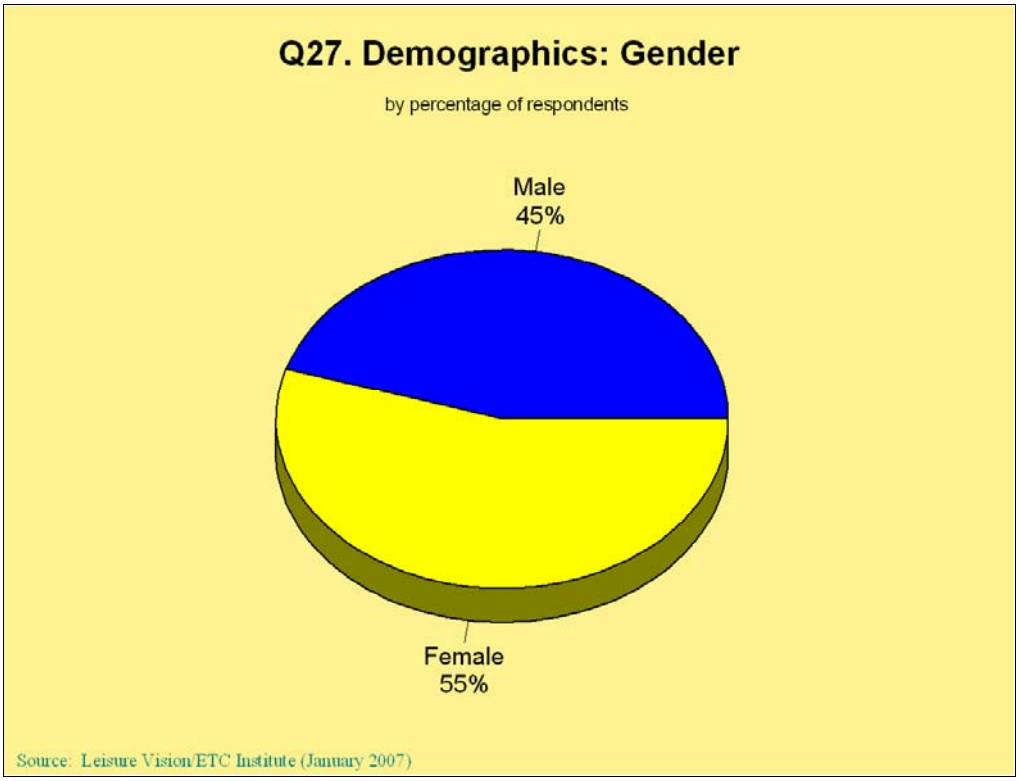


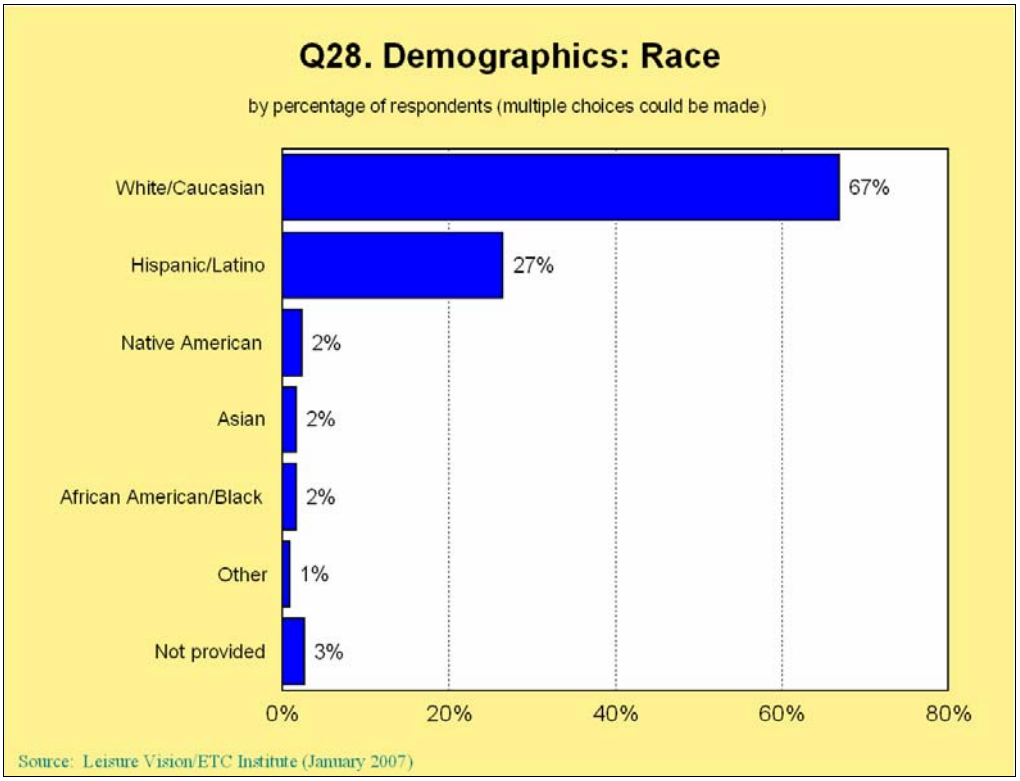
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2007)

Demographics

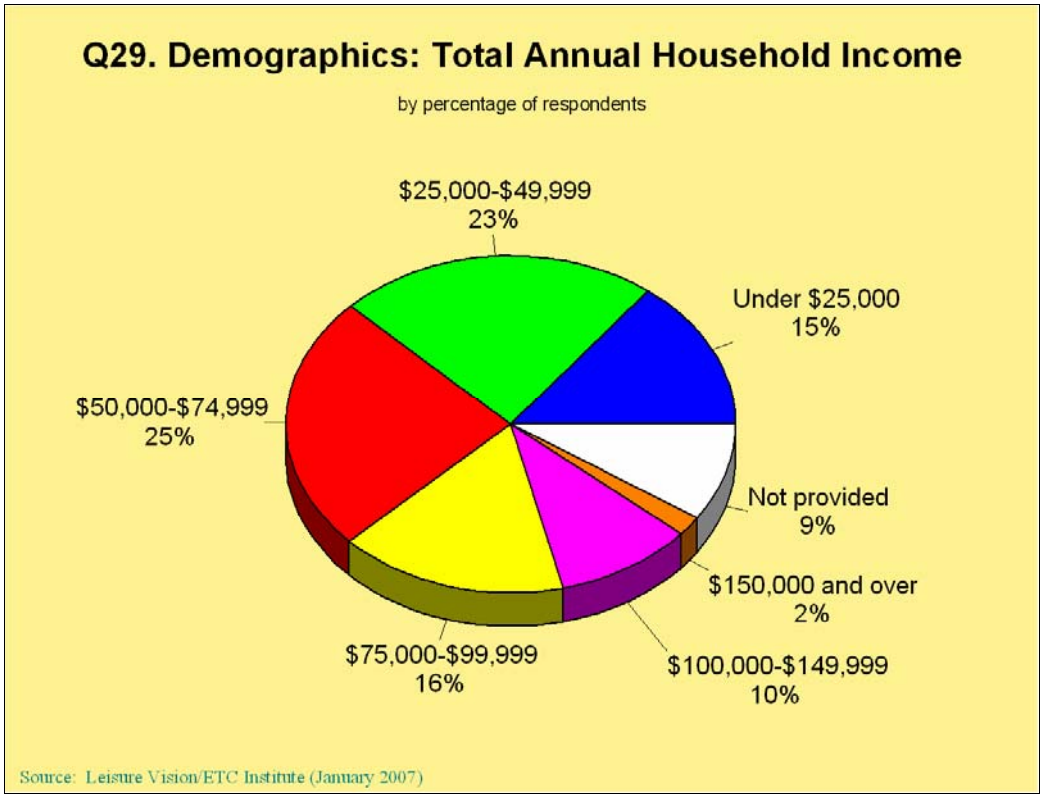





Q27. Demographics: Gender
by percentage of respondents
Male
45%
Female
55%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2007)


Q28. Demographics: Race
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)
White/Caucasian
67%
Hispanic/Latino
27%
Native American
2%
Asian
2%
African American/Black
2%
Other
1%
Not provided
3%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2007)

Demographics *(Continued)*



Appendix B: National Survey Benchmarking

Since 1998, Leisure Vision (a division of ETC Institute) has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 100 communities in over 30 states across the country.

The results of these surveys has provided an unparalleled data base of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to "National Averages" and therefore provide a unique tool to "assist organizations in better decision making."

Communities within the data base include a full-range of municipal and county governments from 20,000 in population through over 1 million in population. They include communities in warm weather climates and cold weather climates, mature communities and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

Communities within the following states are included within the National Benchmarking data base.

Arizona	Idaho	Missouri	South Carolina
Arkansas	Illinois	Montana	Texas
California	Indiana	Nevada	Utah
Colorado	Iowa	New Hampshire	Vermont
Connecticut	Maine	New Jersey	Virginia
Florida	Massachusetts	Ohio	Washington
Georgia	Michigan	Oklahoma	Wyoming
Kansas	Minnesota	Oregon	
Kentucky	Mississippi	Pennsylvania	

"National Averages" have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues including: customer satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; methods for receiving marketing information; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs, parks, facilities and trails to improve or develop; priority programming spaces to have in planned community centers and aquatic facilities; potential attendance for planned indoor community centers and outdoor aquatic centers; etc.

Results from household responses for Commerce City were compared to National Benchmarks to gain further strategic information. A summary of all tabular comparisons are shown on pages 3-6.

Note: The benchmarking data contained in this report is protected intellectual property. Any reproduction of the benchmarking information in this report by persons or organizations not directly affiliated with Commerce City is not authorized without the written consent from Leisure Vision/ETC Institute.

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

		National Average	Commerce City
Where respondents learned about recreation programs			
	Commerce City Program Guide	49%	60%
	Newspaper	38%	38%
	Word of Mouth	41%	28%
	Direct mail advertising	21%	23%
	Visited/called a parks/recreation office	18%	14%
	School fliers/newsletter	21%	11%
	City signage	NA	6%
	Website	8%	4%
	E-mail communications	4%	1%
Organizations respondents use for parks and recreation programs and facilities			
	Commerce City Parks and Recreation	48%	45%
	Private or public schools	27%	25%
	Churches	32%	22%
	Homeowners Associations (pools, parks)	14%	22%
	Attractions/amusements	NA	20%
	Reunion Recreation Center	NA	14%
	Private health and fitness clubs	23%	14%
	Brighton Recreation Center	NA	11%
	Youth sports organizations	19%	10%
	Private or public tennis facilities	NA	9%
	Private instruction (dance, martial arts, etc.)	13%	7%
	Non-profits (Camp Fire, Scouts, etc.)	NA	6%
	Belle Creek Family Center	NA	3%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

Reason that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often	National Average	Commerce City
Too far from our residence	15%	36%
We are too busy	35%	25%
I do not know what is being offered	21%	20%
Fees are too high	11%	19%
I do not know locations of facilities	13%	17%
Program or facility not offered	13%	17%
Program times are not convenient	15%	14%
We are not interested	NA	11%
Security is insufficient	7%	10%
Lack of quality programs	6%	9%
Facility operating hours not convenient	7%	8%
Facilities are not well maintained	6%	8%
Lack of parking	5%	7%
Use services of other organizations	7%	7%
Facilities do not have the right equipment	7%	5%
Poor customer service by staff	3%	4%
Waiting list for class or activity	6%	4%
Registration for programs is difficult	3%	3%
Lack of transportation	4%	2%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

Parks and recreation facilities that respondent households have a need for	National Average	Commerce City
Walking and biking trails	67%	68%
Indoor swimming pool/leisure pool	45%	61%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	47%	61%
Small neighborhood parks	59%	61%
Large community parks	54%	59%
Shelter houses/picnic areas	54%	58%
Outdoor water parks/pools	43%	54%
Natural areas/wildlife habitats	48%	54%
Playground equipment	43%	47%
Performing/cultural arts facilities	37%	36%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	27%	33%
Outdoor basketball courts	26%	33%
Off-leash dog park	24%	29%
Senior center	20%	29%
Outdoor tennis courts	25%	25%
Youth soccer fields	21%	24%
Climbing wall	NA	23%
Youth baseball fields	25%	21%
Adult softball fields	16%	21%
Youth football fields	14%	19%
Skateboarding park	14%	19%
Youth softball fields	17%	18%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities (Sum of Importance Percentages)	National Average	Commerce City
Walking and biking trails	41%	41%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	19%	31%
Indoor swimming pool/leisure pool	17%	29%
Small neighborhood parks	30%	26%
Large community parks	19%	21%
Outdoor water parks/pools	17%	20%
Natural areas/wildlife habitats	15%	17%
Playground equipment	22%	16%
Off-leash dog park	11%	15%
Senior center	9%	15%
Shelter houses/picnic areas	19%	14%
Performing/cultural arts facilities	12%	10%
Outdoor tennis courts	7%	8%
Youth soccer fields	8%	7%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	8%	7%
Outdoor basketball courts	6%	6%
Youth baseball fields	10%	5%
Skateboarding park	3%	4%
Youth football fields	3%	3%
Youth softball fields	4%	3%
Adult softball fields	5%	2%
Climbing wall	NA	2%

Appendix C: GRASP® Inventory of Parks and Recreation Facilities

Indoor Components | Outdoor Components | Separate Land Parcels

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Adams Heights Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Adams Heights Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Adams Heights Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
Adams Heights Park	Playground	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course	1-PARCEL	City	
Buffalo Run Golf Course	Golf Course	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course	Structure	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course	Structure	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course	Picnic Shelter-Group	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course	Public Art	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course Clubhouse	1-INDOOR	City	
Buffalo Run Golf Course Clubhouse	Club House	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course Clubhouse	Pro Shop	City	1.0
Buffalo Run Golf Course Clubhouse	Restaurant	City	1.0
City Park	1-PARCEL	City	
City Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
City Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
City Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
City Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
City Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
City Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
City Park	Playground	City	1.0
City Park	Public Art	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	1-INDOOR	City	
Commerce City Recreation Center	Billiards Room	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Cardio Room	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Ceramics	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Crafts	City	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Commerce City Recreation Center	Fitness	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Gymnasium	City	2.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Gymnastics	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Kitchen	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Multi-Purpose Room	City	2.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Racquetball Courts	City	3.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Running Track	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Senior Center	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Steam Room	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Swimming Pool	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Teen Annex	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Tiny Tots	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Weight Room	City	1.0
Commerce City Recreation Center	Dance Room	City	1.0
Derby Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Derby Park	Water Feature	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Fairfax Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Basketball	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Inline Rink	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Playground	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Structure	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Structure	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Structure	City	1.0
Fairfax Park	Tennis	City	4.0
Fairfax Park	Trail	City	1.0
Freedom Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Freedom Park	Open Turf	City	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Freedom Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Freedom Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Freedom Park	Playground	City	1.0
Gifford Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Gifford Park	Playground	City	1.0
Leyden Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Leyden Park	Playground	City	1.0
Los Valientes Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Los Valientes Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
Los Valientes Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Los Valientes Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Los Valientes Park	Playground	City	1.0
Merchants Park (now named Joe Reilly Park)	1-PARCEL	City	
Merchants Park	Plaza	City	1.0
Monaco Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Monaco Park	Basketball	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Playground	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Sledding	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Trail	City	1.0
Monaco Park	Volleyball	City	2.0
Monaco Vista Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Monaco Vista Park	Basketball	City	1.0
Monaco Vista Park	Horseshoes	City	1.0
Monaco Vista Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Monaco Vista Park	Playground	City	1.0
Municipal Services Center	1-PARCEL	City	
Municipal Services Center	Multi-Purpose Field	City	2.0
Olive Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Olive Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Olive Park	Open Turf	City	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Pioneer Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Pioneer Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Basketball	City	2.0
Pioneer Park	Batting Cage	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Fitness Path	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Playground	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Playground	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Skate Park	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Spray Ground	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Concessions	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Structure	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Structure	City	1.0
Pioneer Park	Public Art	City	1.0
Prairie Gateway Open Space	1-PARCEL	City	
Prairie Gateway Open Space	Trail	City	1.0
Prairie Gateway Open Space	Trailhead	City	1.0
River Run Park	1-PARCEL	City	
River Run Park	Loop Trail	City	1.0
River Run Park	Multi-Purpose Field	City	1.0
River Run Park	Multi-Purpose Field	City	1.0
River Run Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
River Run Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
River Run Park	Playground	City	1.0
River Run Park	Multi-Purpose Field	City	1.0
River Run Park	Volleyball	City	1.0
River Run Park	Ballfield	City	1.0
Rose Hill Grange Park	1-PARCEL	City	

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Rose Hill Grange Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Rose Hill Grange Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
Stampede Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Stampede Park	Multi-Purpose Field	City	1.0
Stampede Park	Natural Area	City	1.0
Stampede Park	Picnic Shelter - Group	City	1.0
Stampede Park	Playground	City	1.0
Stampede Park	Loop Trail	City	1.0
Urquidez Centennial Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Urquidez Centennial Park	Basketball	City	0.5
Urquidez Centennial Park	Basketball	City	0.5
Urquidez Centennial Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
Urquidez Centennial Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Urquidez Centennial Park	Playground	City	1.0
Veteran's Memorial Park	1-PARCEL	City	
Veteran's Memorial Park	Open Turf	City	1.0
Veteran's Memorial Park	Picnic Shelter	City	1.0
Veteran's Memorial Park	Public Art	City	1.0
Aberdeen - 104th & Peoria	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Belle Creek - 106th Pl & Dayton Way	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek - 106th Pl & Dayton Way	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek - Akron St & Beeler St	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek - Akron St & Beeler St	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek - Longs Peak Dr & Belle Creek Blvd	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek - Longs Peak Dr & Belle Creek Blvd	Loop Walk	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek - Longs Peak Dr & Belle Creek Blvd	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Filing 1 - 108th Ave & Beeler St (East)	1-PARCEL	Metro District	

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Belle Creek Filing 1 - 108th Ave & Beeler St (East)	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Filing 1 - 108th Ave & Beeler St (West)	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Filing 1 - 108th Ave & Beeler St (West)	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 108th Dr & Beeler St	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 108th Dr & Dayton Wy	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 108th Pl & Dayton Wy	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 108th Pl & Dayton Wy	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 109th & Beeler St	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 109th & Beeler St	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 9469 E 109th Pl	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Filing 2 - 9469 E 109th Pl	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center Grounds	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Belle Creek Family Center Grounds	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center Grounds	Multi-purpose Field	City	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center	1-INDOOR	Metro District	
Belle Creek Family Center	Conference Room	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center	Kitchen	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center	Multi-Purpose Room	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center	Sitting Room	Metro District	1.0
Belle Creek Family Center	Gymnasium	Metro District	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Belle Creek Family Center	Weight Room	Metro District	1.0
Buckley Ranch - 102nd Ave & Nucla	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Buckley Ranch - 102nd Ave & Nucla	Playground	HOA	1.0
Buffalo Mesa - 104th & Kittredge St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Buffalo Mesa - 104th & Kittredge St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Buffalo Mesa - 104th & Kittredge St	Playground	HOA	1.0
Buffalo Mesa - 104th & Kittredge St	Pool	HOA	1.0
Buffalo Run Mesa - Kittredge St & Joplin St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Buffalo Run Mesa - Kittredge St & Joplin St	Natural Area	HOA	1.0
Buffalo Run Mesa - Kittredge St & Joplin St	Trail	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - 112th Pl & Florence St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Dunes Park - 112th Pl & Florence St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - 112th Pl & Florence St	Playground	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - 112th Pl & Florence St	Pool	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - 112th Pl & Florence St	Structure	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - 113th Wy & Highway 85	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Dunes Park - 113th Wy & Highway 85	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - Along Canal/Ditch	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Dunes Park - Along Canal/Ditch	Trailhead	HOA	1.0
Dunes Park - Along Canal/Ditch	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Foxton Village - 102nd Pl & Blackhawk	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Foxton Village - 102nd Pl & Blackhawk	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Foxton Village MF - 104th Ave & Sable	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Foxton Village SF - 102nd Pl & Dillon Ct	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Foxton Village SF - 102nd Pl & Dillon Ct	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Fronterra Filing 3 - 98th Ave & Norfolk St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Fronterra Filing 3 - 98th Ave & Norfolk St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Fronterra Filing 3 - 98th Ave & Norfolk St	Playground	HOA	1.0
Fronterra Filing 3A - 97th Ave & Laredo St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Fronterra Filing 3A - 97th Ave & Laredo St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Fronterra MF - 97th Ave & Jasper St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Fronterra MF - 97th Ave & Jasper St	Multi-Purpose Field	HOA	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Fronterra MF - 97th Ave & Jasper St	Playground	HOA	1.0
Harvest Meadows - 102nd Ave & Chambers Rd	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Harvest Meadows - 102nd Ave & Chambers Rd	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Harvest Meadows - 102nd Ave & Chambers Rd	Playground	HOA	1.0
Linden Park - 107th Ave & Highway 2	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Linden Park - 107th Ave & Revere St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Linden Park - 107th Ave & Revere St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Linden Park - 108th Ave & Highway 2	1-PARCEL	HOA	
North Range Village - 106th Pl & Abilene St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
North Range Village - 106th Pl & Abilene St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
North Range Village - 106th Pl & Abilene St	Playground	HOA	1.0
Potomac Farms - 105th Ave & Vaughn Ct	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Potomac Farms - 105th Ave & Vaughn Ct	Playground	HOA	1.0
Potomac Farms Filing 1 - 105th Ave & Ursula St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Potomac Farms Filing 2 - 104th Wy & Potomac St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Ragweed Draw Open Space	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Ragweed Draw Open Space	Multi-Purpose Field	HOA	1.0
Ragweed Draw Open Space	Natural Area	HOA	1.0
Ragweed Draw Open Space	Trail	HOA	1.0
Reunion Box Elder Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Box Elder Park	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Box Elder Park	Picnic Shelter	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Box Elder Park	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Discovery Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Discovery Park	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Heartland Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Heartland Park	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Reunion Heartland Park	Picnic Shelter	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Heartland Park	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Harmony Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Harmony Park	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Loop Walk	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Multi-Purpose Field	Metro District	4.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Open Water	Metro District	2.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Pavilion	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Pool	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Locker Rooms (Pool)	Metro District	2.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Shade Shelter	Metro District	2.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Concessions	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Park - Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Water Feature	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	1-INDOOR	Metro District	
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Gym	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Dance	Metro District	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Weight Room	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Game Room	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Multi-Purpose Room	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Multi-Purpose Room w/Kitchenette	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Locker Rooms	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Recreation Center- Landmark Dr & E Parkside Dr N	Family Locker Room	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Liberty Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Liberty Park	Public Art	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Liberty Park	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Liberty Park	Picnic Shelter	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Pinwheel Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Pinwheel Park	Passive Area	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Southlawn - 104th Ave & Reunion Pkwy	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Southlawn - 104th Ave & Reunion Pkwy	Amphitheater	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Southlawn - 104th Ave & Reunion Pkwy	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Southlawn - 104th Ave & Reunion Pkwy	Picnic Shelter	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Southlawn - 104th Ave & Reunion Pkwy	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Sunflower Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Sunflower Park	Passive Area	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Touchstone Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Reunion Touchstone Park	Passive Area	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Unity Park	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Unity Park	Open Turf	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Unity Park	Playground	Metro District	1.0
Reunion Unity Parkway & Buckley Trail	1-PARCEL	Metro District	
Reunion Unity Parkway & Buckley Trail	Passive Area	Metro District	1.0
River Oaks - 112th Ave & Oakland St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
River Oaks - 112th Ave & Oakland St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
River Oaks - 112th Ave & Oakland St	Playground	HOA	1.0
River Run Filing 3 - 115th Ave & River Run Pkwy	1-PARCEL	HOA	
River Run Filing 3 - 115th Ave & River Run Pkwy	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
River Run Filing 3 - 116th	1-PARCEL	HOA	
River Run Filing 3 - 117th Ave & Oswego St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
River Run Filing 3 - 117th Ave & Oswego St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
River Run Filing 4 - 113th Ave & Joliet St	1-PARCEL	HOA	
River Run Filing 4 - 113th Ave & Joliet St	Loop Walk	HOA	1.0
River Run Filing 4 - 113th Ave & Joliet St	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
River Run Filing 4 - 113th Ave & Joliet St	Playground	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	1-PARCEL	HOA	
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Loop Walk	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Natural Area	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Picnic Shelter	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Picnic Shelter	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Picnic Shelter	HOA	1.0
The Village - 121st Ave & Idalia	Playground	HOA	1.0
The Village - Along Canal/Ditch	1-PARCEL	HOA	

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Turnberry - 104th Ave & Highway 2	1-PARCEL	HOA	
Turnberry - 104th Ave & Highway 2	Natural Area	HOA	1.0
Turnberry - 104th Ave & Highway 2	Open Turf	HOA	1.0
Turnberry - 104th Ave & Highway 2	Playground	HOA	1.0
Turnberry - 104th Ave & Highway 2	Pool	HOA	1.0
Turnberry - 104th Ave & Highway 2	Trail	HOA	1.0
Dick's Sporting Goods Soccer Complex	1-PARCEL	Private	
Dick's Sporting Goods Soccer Complex	Stadium (18,000 seat)	Private	1.0
Dick's Sporting Goods Soccer Complex	Multi-Purpose Field	Private	21.0
Dick's Sporting Goods Soccer Complex	Multi-Purpose Field (Artificial Surface)	Private	2.0
Dick's Sporting Goods Soccer Complex	Professional Practice Field (for Rapids team use)	Private	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	1-PARCEL	School	
(NEW) Adams City High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Football Stadium	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Tennis	School	6.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Track & Field	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	1-INDOOR	School	
(NEW) Adams City High School	Gym	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Auxilary Gym	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Pool	School	1.0
(NEW) Adams City High School	Auditorium	School	1.0
Adams City High School	1-PARCEL	School	
Adams City High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Track And Field	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Football Stadium/Field	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Tennis	School	3.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Adams City High School	1-INDOOR	School	
Adams City High School	Auditorium	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Gymnasium	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Auxilary Gym	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Swimming Pool	School	1.0
Adams City High School	Multi-Purpose Wrestling Room	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	1-PARCEL	School	
Adams City Middle School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	Basketball	School	3.0
Adams City Middle School	Tennis	School	3.0
Adams City Middle School	Track And Field	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	1-INDOOR	School	
Adams City Middle School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	Classroom	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	Gym/Auditorium	School	1.0
Adams City Middle School	Gym	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Alsup Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	Basketball	School	2.0
Alsup Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Alsup Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Alsup Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Central Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Basketball	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Central Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Central Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Central Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Dupont Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Basketball	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Dupont Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Dupont Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Hanson Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Basketball	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Basketball	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Hanson Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Hanson Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Hanson Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	1-PARCEL	School	
Kearney Middle School	Track And Field	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	Tennis	School	3.0
Kearney Middle School	1-INDOOR	School	
Kearney Middle School	Cafeteria/Auditorium	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	Classroom	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	Gym	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	Gym	School	1.0
Kearney Middle School	Gym	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Kemp Elementary School	Ballfield	School	2.0
Kemp Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	Basketball	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Kemp Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Kemp Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Lester Arnold High School	1-PARCEL	School	
Lester Arnold High School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Lester Arnold High School	Practice Backstop	School	1.0
Lester Arnold High School	1-INDOOR	School	
Lester Arnold High School	Gym	School	1.0
Lester Arnold High School	Classroom	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Monaco Elementary School	Practice Backstop	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Basketball	School	2.0
Monaco Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Monaco Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Tennis	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Monaco Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Monaco Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Prairie View High School	1-PARCEL	School	
Prairie View High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Prairie View High School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Prairie View High School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Prairie View High School	Football Stadium	School	1.0
Prairie View High School	1-INDOOR	School	
Prairie View High School	Gym	School	1.0
Prairie View High School	Auditorium	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Rose Hill Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Ballfield	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Multi-Purpose Field	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Rose Hill Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Rose Hill Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Second Creek Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Second Creek Elementary School	Practice Backstop	School	1.0

Park or Facility Name	Component	Owner	Quantity
Second Creek Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Second Creek Elementary School	Basketball	School	1.0
Second Creek Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Second Creek Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Second Creek Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Second Creek Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Second Creek Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	1-PARCEL	School	
Thimmig Elementary School	Basketball	School	2.0
Thimmig Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	Playground	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	Play Pad	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	1-INDOOR	School	
Thimmig Elementary School	Cafeteria	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	Gym	School	1.0
Thimmig Elementary School	Classroom	School	1.0

Appendix D: Outdoor Component Definitions

Outdoor Pool (Aquatic feature, Medium) – Consists of a single lap pool and has restricted access and lifeguards.

Aquatic Park (Aquatic feature, Large) – A facility that has at least one lap pool and one separate spray ground or water feature.

Ballfields – Describes softball and baseball fields of all kinds that have backstops and non-grass infields. Not specific to size or age-appropriateness.

Dog Park – Also known as a park for people with dogs or canine off-leash area. An area designed specifically as an off-leash area for dogs and their guardians.

Golf – Counted per 18 holes (18 hole course = 1 and 9 hole course = 0.5).

Hockey, In-line – Regulation size outdoor rink built specifically for league in-line hockey games and practice.

Multi-use field, Large – Describes a specific field large enough to host at least one adult field sport game. Minimum field size is 180' x 300' (60 x 100 yards). Possible sports may include, but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey. Field may have goals and lining specific to a certain sport that may change with permitted use. Neighborhood or community component.

Picnic Shelter – Large/Group – A shade shelter with picnic tables, large enough to accommodate a group picnic or other event for at least 25 persons with seating for a minimum of twelve. May include restrooms.

Playground, Destination – Playground that serves as a destination for families from the entire community, has restrooms and parking on-site. May include special features like a climbing wall, spray feature, or adventure play area.

Skate Park – An area set aside specifically for skateboarding, in-line skating, or free-style biking. May accommodate multiple users of varying abilities. Usually has a variety of concrete features and has a community draw.

Tennis Complex – Regulation courts that are fenced and have nets and placed in a group of six or more courts.

Appendix E: GRASP® LOS Summary Sub-Area Analysis

Commerce City, Colorado
This table is based on the GRASP® Map C - Access to All Outdoor/Indoor Components & Trail Network GRASP® Analysis Map

Analysis Area	% of Commerce City	Total Acres	Acres. w/LOS	% of Total w/LOS	Avg. LOS Score per Acre Served	Acres with Score = 0	Percent Total Area with Score = 0	Percent Total LOS Area with Score = 0	Acres with Score > 0 and < 9.6	Percent Total Area with Score > 0 and < 9.6	Percent Total LOS Area with Score > 0 and < 9.6	Acres with Score>= 9.6 and < 19.2	Percent Total Area with Score>= 9.6 and < 19.2	Percent Total LOS Area with Score>= 9.6 and < 19.2	Acre with Score >= 19.2 and < 38.4	Percent Total Area with Score >= 19.2 and < 38.4	Percent Total LOS Area with Score >= 19.2 and < 38.4	Acre with Score >= 38.4 and < 112	Percent Total Area with Score >= 38.4 and < 112	Percent Total LOS Area with Score >= 38.4 and < 112	Acre with Score >= 112 and < 172.8	Percent Total Area with Score >= 112 and < 172.8	Percent Total LOS Area with Score >= 112 and < 172.8	Acre with Score > 172.8	Percent Total Area with Score > 172.8	Percent Total LOS Area with Score > 172.8
South Of 88th	32.0%	8402.0	7105.7	84.6%	148.6	1296.4	15.4%	18.2%	305.9	3.6%	4.3%	632.9	7.5%	8.9%	670.6	8.0%	9.4%	1874.7	22.3%	26.4%	1285.7	15.3%	18.1%	2274.4	27.1%	32.0%
North Of 88th	68.0%	17867.5	12158.7	68.0%	91.9	5708.8	32.0%	47.0%	516.2	2.9%	4.2%	468.7	2.6%	3.9%	2415.2	13.5%	19.9%	6135.8	34.3%	50.5%	801.4	4.5%	6.6%	1720.0	9.6%	14.1%
Commerce City	100.0%	26269.6	19264.4	73.3%	112.8	7005.2	26.7%	36.4%	822.1	3.1%	4.3%	1101.6	4.2%	5.7%	3085.8	11.7%	16.0%	8010.5	30.5%	41.6%	2087.1	7.9%	10.8%	3994.4	15.2%	20.7%

Definitions
Total Acres: Total area within the designated analysis area as calculated from the GIS
Acres With LOS: Area within each analysis area that has some service (LOS = 1 or Greater).
Percent of Total with LOS: Percentage of the designated analysis area that has some service (LOS = 1 or Greater).
Average LOS per Acre Served: The average GRASP® score for any given acre within the designated analysis area.

Appendix F: GRASP® Level of Service Maps

Map A: Inventory

Perspective B: Analysis Sub-Areas and Pedestrian Barriers

Perspective C: Access to All Outdoor and Indoor Components and Trails Network

Perspective D: Walkable Access to All Outdoor/Indoor Components

Perspective E: Access to All Active Outdoor Components & Trails Network

Perspective F: Access to All Passive Outdoor Components & Trails Network

Perspective G: Access to All Indoor Components

Perspective H: Access to Trail Network

Perspective I: Access to Dedicated Open Space Area & Trail Network

Map J: Recommendations

Remove this page and replace with the ten (10) *.pdf GRASP® Maps A-J printed on 11″x17″ paper.

Appendix G: Alternative Funding Methods

The following subsections summarize research findings on potential funding sources and opportunities that could enhance capital expenditures for construction and operating budgets for the City. This report does not represent any particular funding strategy over another. The economic conditions within the community vary with time and the City should explore the best means of achieving its goals towards the operations of the programs and facilities on an ongoing basis.

Grants
Grants are used primarily as a way to supplement funding already received. For example, grants can be used for program purposes, planning, design, and seed money.
Due to their infrequent nature, grants are normally looked at as a way to fund a specific venture and should not be used as a continuous source of funding.

Federal Sources
Information on current and archived Federal Register Grant Announcements can be accessed on the Internet at: www.tgci.com/funding/fedTodayAR.asp. For information on government product news and procurement visit GovPro at www.govpro.com. Another resource is the Foundation Center's RFP Bulletin Grants Page on Health at: www.fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/index.jhtml. Also try www.fedgrants.gov for a listing of federal grant opportunities.

- Next Generation of Service Grants
- Cooperative Agreements for the Comprehensive Community
- Mental Health Services Program for Children and their Families
- Adolescent Family Life Grants
- AmeriCorps Resources
- Governors' Grants for Drug and Violence Prevention
- Community Services Block Grant Program
- Urban and Community Forestry for and with Minority and Underserved Populations

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) www.nps.gov/lwcf
The Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (towns, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.

Proposed funding for LWCF is determined by Congress. The federal government provides up to 50 % reimbursement for a public outdoor recreation project through each LWCF grant, while the local agency is responsible for the remainder. Federal funds supporting the LWCF program are derived from offshore oil lease revenues and other non-tax sources.

The allocation for each State and Territory is determined by formula based on law and subsequent approval of a "certificate of apportionment" by the Secretary of the Interior. The

FY 2006 certificate was approved and each State and Territory will be formally notified of its annual share.

Funding is issued to the state and it is at the state's discretion how much of that funding will be made available for local government.

Federal Government Grant Opportunities:

United States Authority of Agriculture

Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program

National Endowment of the Humanities

Office of Challenge Grants

United States Authority of Commerce

Public Works Development Facilities Program
Short Term Planning Grants
Local Technical Assistance

United States Authority of Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative (EDI)

Corporation for National and Community Service
www.fedgrants.gov/Applicants/CNCS/activity_1.html

Community Development:
Office:Office of Grants Management
Location:Washington, DC

Health
Office:Office of Grants Management
Location:Washington, DC

State and Local Government Grant Opportunities

Colorado Lottery Funded Programs

50% of lottery proceeds is divided between the Conservation Trust Fund and Colorado State Parks. The other 50% goes to GOCO.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

In 1992, Coloradoans took a major step toward preserving their state's outdoor heritage by voting to create the GOCO Trust Fund, which now forms Article XXVII of the Colorado Constitution. GOCO receives 50% of the proceeds from the Colorado Lottery, its only source of funding. The funding is capped at $35 million a year adjusted for inflation. If GOCO's share exceeds that amount, the remainder goes into the State Public School fund. The amendment dedicates a portion of state lottery proceeds to projects that preserve, protect and enhance Colorado's wildlife, parks, rivers, trails and open spaces. GOCO is required to allocate its proceeds to four areas in substantially equal portions over time:

- Investments in the wildlife resources of Colorado through the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW), including the protection and restoration of crucial wildlife habitats,

appropriate programs for maintaining Colorado's diverse wildlife heritage, wildlife watching, and educational programs about wildlife and wildlife environments. *Seek partnership with the Colorado DOW to provide educational programs and environmental enhancements.*

- Investments in the outdoor recreation resources of Colorado through the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Colorado State Parks), including the State Parks system, trails, public information and environmental education resources and water for recreational facilities. *Seek partnership with the Colorado State Parks to provide educational programs and environmental enhancements.*
- Competitive grants to the Colorado Divisions of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Colorado State Parks) and Wildlife, and to counties, municipalities, or other political subdivisions of the state, or non-profit land conservation organizations to identify, acquire and manage open space and natural areas of statewide significance. *Seek partnership with the Colorado State Parks and DOW to provide educational programs and environmental enhancements.*
- Competitive matching grants to local governments or other entities which are eligible for distributions from the Conservation Trust Fund, to acquire, develop or manage open lands and parks. *Apply for GOCO grants to fund development projects.*
- Several grant programs have been developed:
    - Legacy initiative
    - Open space land conservation grant program
    - Local government park, outdoor recreation and environmental education facilities grant program
    - Outdoor recreation grants through Colorado State Parks
    - Wildlife grants through the Colorado Division of Wildlife
    - Trail grant program
    - Planning and capacity building grant program

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Safe Routes to School
This federally funded grant program, managed by CDOT, promotes the planning, development and implementation of projects that will improve safety, and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. *The Commerce City Parks and Recreation Department could use this grant to help support the development of off-street bicycle and pedestrian trails and routes to schools, such as the Second Creek trail.* Minimum funding is set at $50,000 with maximum project funding set at $250,000. For grant applications go to the CDOT Safe Routes web site at www.dot.state.co.us/bikeped/saferoutestoschool.htm.

Adams County Open Space Grant
An Open Space Sales Tax was passed by Adams County voters in 1999. Commerce City has received Adams County Open Space Grants ranging from $80,000 to $750,000 in the past for projects including: First Creek Community Park (acquisition of 80 acres for both passive and active uses), Second Creek Community Park (acquisition of 35 acres), Pioneer Park, Sand Creek Regional Greenway Trail and River Run Park and Playgrounds. Commerce City should continue to pursue funding to support its capital development priorities.

Private Grant and Philanthropic Agencies

The Trust for Public Lands

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. If possible, the TPL prefers to get paid for their services.

The City should conduct a more thorough investigation and further research of grant opportunities. A complete listing of grants can be found on the web-site of AGS Publishing: A-Z Grants - AGS Funding Center at www.agsnet.com/grants.

Grant Opportunities for the City

The seeking of philanthropic dollars to augment funding for the development of a facility would be a large task. But seeking grants to fund programs, to act as seed money, or to provide matching funds is a better time investment. Grants should not be a priority goal when seeking dollars to initially develop facilities. Most grants that could contribute substantial dollars towards parks and recreation ventures are normally tied to land acquisition and preservation ventures (EPA, Land Water Conservation Fund, etc.).

Many communities have had success in seeking grants for programs and community quality of life. It is recommended that the City evaluate what types of grant programs would best match the opportunities to be provided by future facilities and seek funds either internally or through an associated non-profit.

The City utilizes a number of strategic alliances with Belle Creek, Reunion, Brighton School District 27J, etc. It is encouraged that these partnerships be reviewed and perhaps the City can utilize the provided sample Partnership Agreement.

Philanthropic

Defined as the concept of voluntary giving by an individual or group to promote the common good and improve the quality of life. Philanthropy generally takes the form of donor programs, capital campaigns, and volunteers/in-kind services.

The time commitment to initiate a philanthropic campaign can be significant. Current City resources that could be dedicated to such a venture are limited. If this option is deemed possible by City decision-makers, it is recommended that the City outsource most of this task to a non-profit or private agency experienced in seeking funding of this type.

To manage a volunteer program, typically an agency dedicates a staff member to oversee the program for the entire City. This staff member would then work closely with the Human Resources as volunteers are another form of staffing a program, facility or event. Relevant methods are discussed below:

Friends Associations

These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and its special interest.

Volunteers/In-Kind Services
This revenue source is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to assist the department in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the City's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy for the system.

Corporate Sponsorships, Naming Rights and Advertising Sales
This revenue-funding source allows corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in a park and recreation system. Sponsorships are also highly used for programs and events.

Corporate Sponsorships
The following web sites were explored for fees and charges are provided and were explored for an analysis of various fees and charges:

www.sportsplexwest.com/Sponsorship_Real_Estate.htms
www.plexindoorsports.com/pdfs/plexx-misc-PlexSponsorshipProspectus.pdf
www.rexplex.com/sponsors/

Naming Rights
Many cities, towns and counties throughout the country have successfully sold the naming rights for newly constructed facilities or when renovating existing buildings. Additionally, newly developed and renovated parks have also been successfully funded through the sales of naming rights. Generally the cost for naming rights offsets the development costs associated with the improvement. People incorrectly assume that selling the naming rights for facilities is reserved for professional stadiums and other high profile team sport venues. This trend has expanded in the recent years to include public recreation centers and facilities as viable naming rights sales opportunities.

Naming rights can be a one-time payment or spread out with a fixed payment schedule over a defined period of time. During this time the sponsor retains the "rights" to have the building named for them. Also during this time, all publications, advertisements, events, and activities could have the sponsoring group's name as the venue. Naming rights negotiations need to be developed by professionals so as to ensure a proper agreement that benefits all agents in the contractual obligation and provides remedies to change or cancel the arrangements at any time during the agreement period.

Advertising Sales
Advertising sales is a viable opportunity for revenue through the sale of tasteful and appropriate advertising on park and recreation related items such as in the program guides, on scoreboards, dasher boards and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent that exposes the product or service to many people.

Sponsorship Opportunities for the City
The City could create and adopt a sponsorship policy that would allow the agency to target individuals, groups, and companies that may have an interest in having naming rights on a portion of, or the entire facility or park. The policy would stipulate all types of sponsorship

opportunities and could be structured to provide remedy for the City to cancel agreements if they were deemed unsuitable for the agency.

The use of securing a named sponsor for the entire facility or naming portions of the facility, and advertising sales is a valid consideration.

Fees and Contractual Services

Recreation Service Fee

The Recreation Service Fee is a dedicated user fee that can be established by a local ordinance or other government procedures for the purpose of constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. The fee can apply to all organized activities, which require a reservation of some type, or other purposes as defined by the governing agency. Examples of such generally accepted activities that are assigned a service fee include adult basketball, volleyball, and softball leagues, youth baseball, soccer, and softball leagues and special interest classes. The fee allows participants an opportunity to contribute toward the maintenance of the facilities being used.

Capital Improvement Fees

These fees are on top of the set user rate for accessing facilities such as golf, recreation centers and pools to support capital improvements that benefit the user of the facility.

Contractual Services

Private Concessionaires

Contracts can be developed with private businesses to provide and operate desirable recreational activities financed, constructed, and operated by the private sector with additional compensation paid to the City.

Concession Management

Concession management is the retail sales or rental of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. The City can either contract for the service or receives a percentage of the gross sales or the net revenue dollars from the profits after expenses are paid.

Merchandising Sales or Services

This revenue source comes from the public or private sector on resale items from gift shops and pro shops for either all of the sales or a defined percentage of the gross sales.

Cell Towers and Wi-Fi

Cell towers attached to existing or new light poles in game field complexes is another source of revenue the City could seek in helping support the system.

Another type of revenue for a facility or complex can come from providing sites for supporting Wi-Fi technology. Wi-Fi, or Wireless Fidelity, allows individuals to connect to the Internet without wires, similar to cell phone technology. In California the State Park System is providing wireless internet access and are charging $7.95 for 24 hours of connectivity (approximately $.33 per hour) within their service area. They are connecting 85 state parks with SBC Communications. For more information contact California State Parks at www.parks.ca.gov.

Permitting

Permits (Special Use Permits)

These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The City either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross service that is being provided.

Catering Permits and Services

This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or percentage of food sales returning to the City.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a government department, or a private business and a government agency. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Partnerships can also be an excellent resource to support the addition of facilities or amenities to parks that are not part of the master plan priorities. When unique, unforeseen opportunities arise relative to development opportunities and community interest, rather than rejecting the project, the City can consider it as a potential partnership opportunity.

Partnerships can be made between recreation agencies and other organizations in both the public and private sectors. Before these partnerships can be formed, however, a favorable supportive environment for such relationships has to be present. The first challenge is for the potential partners to recognize and accept as legitimate their different value systems and missions.

There must be reciprocal benefits accruing to all parties in a partnership arrangement if it is to be successful. In addition to financial considerations, benefits may include efficiencies from removal of service duplication or use of complementary assets, and enhanced stability for the service. Ultimately, the personalities of individuals involved in a partnership and the personal relationships that they forge determine its effectiveness.

Partnerships with Schools

The economic case for the City and school districts cooperating to provide recreation facilities is compelling. Both users provide facilities that could be used by either party. Currently there is some partnering with the school districts. There appears to be a tremendous opportunity for this partnership to be explored.

Taxpayers fund the facilities that both entities develop, and joint provision is likely to result in savings from reduced land acquisition costs, capital development costs, and operating expenses. Additionally, the times at which school and community clienteles use recreational facilities are reasonably complementary.

Partnerships with Hospitals and Health Care Clinics
As hospitals and health care clinics move into the wellness business, a growing number of parks and recreation agencies are forging relationships with them to jointly develop facilities and programs. This joint development avoids the expense of duplicating efforts by institutions that are located in close proximity to each other. Additionally, hospitals often have substantial budgets they can use to promote joint programs. These cooperative programs can also provide the agency with a feeder source for new members.

Partnerships with the YMCA/YWCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs and Others
Partnerships between parks and recreation agencies and private youth organizations are becoming more common. There are different forms that this type of public/private partnership can take. In some cases, the public agency provides a long-term lease that enables the private agency to build and operate the building and services. Commerce City has initiated discussions with the Boys and Girls Club regarding a potential partnership.

Multi-party Partnerships
In these partnerships, a recreation agency takes the lead in conceptualizing and subsequently implementing ventures that involve several financial partners from both the public and commercial sectors. These types of relationships can be extremely beneficial, but they are also highly complex. The agency acts in an imaginative and entrepreneurial fashion with a variety of different organizations, but can be constrained by public sector rules and procedures.

Cooperative Marketing Partnerships
Many park and recreation agencies use event sponsorship, defined as corporate support, for specific events or programs in return for tangible benefits to the company. Some communities don't pursue these funding opportunities because they are concerned that if they enter into sponsorship agreements, they will be required to erect giant billboards throughout their parks and facilities. Fortunately, this type of signage is not necessary. In fact, more companies put less value on signage preferring less intrusive opportunities where they can develop good relationships with citizens in the community. Consequently, fewer companies are looking for signage sponsorship alone. Even without the need to erect large corporate placards, event sponsorship can be time consuming and often doesn't generate the amount of revenue as cooperative marketing partnerships can. It is best strategically used for appropriate venues like sports complexes and field houses or target programs like large special events.

Cooperative marketing partnerships are one of the fastest growing alternative funding methods being used by park and recreation agencies. It is defined as partnering your entire Agency with a company that does business in your area. The negotiating leverage your agency creates by bundling all of your facilities and events together into one exclusive package makes the opportunity much more attractive to members of the corporate community. It is for this reason that the revenue sum of marketing partnerships is often much greater than all of your event sponsorships combined. Companies want to be "exclusively" associated with your entire Agency, and are willing to pay a premium for it. This is also the reason why large, non-profit athletic organizations, such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), bundle their own sponsorship opportunities.

A few of the advantages that marketing partnerships have over traditional event sponsorships include the following:

- **Less Work –** Instead of looking for sponsors for each of your events or programs on an individual basis, a single marketing partnership can provide financial support for all of your events. This lightening of your workload allows you to re-direct your staff to handle other responsibilities.
- **Less Commercialization –** Because this comprehensive relationship is more of a partnership instead of a sponsorship, many companies are less interested in placing huge, permanent signs on your grounds. They would rather develop good relationships with citizens who frequent your facilities and events. For example, this can be done through temporary information booths that can be removed after the completion of various events or programs.
- **More Cash, Less Product –** In many small sponsorship arrangements in parks and recreation departments, much of the corporate investment is given as in-kind or trade, such as advertising or product. Although providing these benefits is a nice gesture, your budget needs more cash. By working with a company in a Department-wide partnership, you can insist and will receive cash instead of trade.
- **More Revenue –** Combine all of the revenue and trade you receive through your current sponsorships and multiply that by four. On average, that is the minimum you can expect your revenue to increase if you change your strategy from using event sponsorships to developing marketing partnerships. Again, this is due to the premium that companies will pay to be one of the recognized exclusive marketing partners for your entire agency. However, if your agency does not have ample background in marketing and sponsorship, you may undervalue your inventory. A company's initial offer may be far below its actual worth in the market. Outside expertise can often be helpful during the procurement and negotiation stages to ensure you receive fair market value. These services can often be obtained for little or no cost to the Department.

Regardless of whether the Agency utilizes event sponsorships or marketing partnerships, it is important to create a policy that details the types of relationships that will be pursued and the benefits that will be provided or excluded. More importantly, the process of creating this policy ensures that everyone, from Board members to staff, is on the same page so misunderstandings do not occur later. The most important part of developing this policy is determining whether the citizens in your community will favor corporate involvement and to what degree.

It is also important to note that a marketing partnership does not mean that the agency would be required to use the product or service of the partner. If desired, this exclusive relationship can only be for marketing benefits and does not have to involve purchasing. It does not have to provide a benefit with which the Agency does not feel comfortable. Most companies would like marketing exclusivity in their product or service category, and are comfortable working with the Agency to determine what other benefits can be provided. The more benefits that can be provided, the more funding will be received.

The issue of exclusivity is a sensitive one for public agencies. However, research indicates that if an agency advertises that they are accepting bids from companies that would like to

"negotiate" with the agency to become the "exclusive sponsor in (product category)," then the need for an open forum has been fulfilled.

Sponsorship Opportunities for the City
A limited number of opportunities for capital construction partnerships exist. It is suggested that the City actively research partnership opportunities with organizations that have complimentary missions and are based in or around Commerce City like the School Districts, future hospitals, therapeutic and wellness organizations, any private and charter schools, local non-profit agencies and local businesses.

Another opportunity is for Commerce City to expand collaborations with the surrounding communities of Brighton, Thornton and Denver. All of these communities have Park and Recreation Departments.