



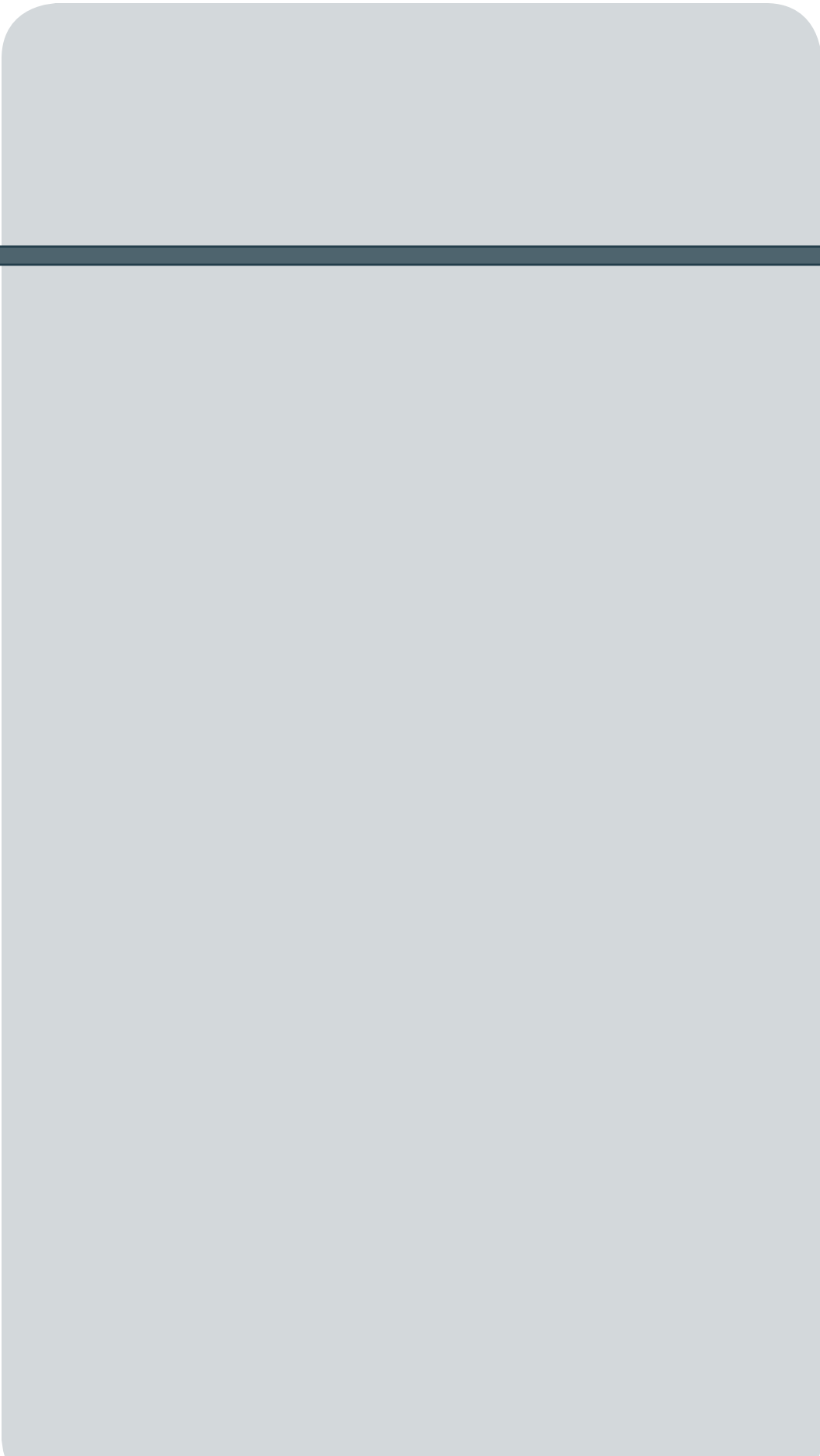
# City of Fruita

## PARKS, OPEN SPACE TRAILS MASTER

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"Honor the Past, Envision the Future"

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# 01 PLAN FOUNDATION

## 1.1 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

As one of Colorado's small town gems, Fruita's history has been rooted in agriculture. Yet, it has also maintained an identity as both a gateway community of the state as well as a base from which to explore the majestic surrounding natural resources, including Colorado National Monument. Over the years, the community has been successful in maintaining its small town agricultural character, while at the same time promoting and celebrating its great access to a wide variety of recreational resources. This celebration of recreation has helped create an identity for Fruita that has become known worldwide – a community that welcomes visitors and new residents alike who wish to share its small town values and enjoy its tremendous recreational opportunities.

Due to the strong attraction of the community, Fruita has experienced rapid growth over the last decade. As the recently completed 2008 Fruita Community Plan indicates, there has been a nearly 60% increase in population since the year 2000. This rapid population growth, combined with the ever-increasing awareness of Fruita as an internationally known recreation destination, particularly for mountain biking, has challenged the community to address these pressures. As such, community leaders have elected to assess and address both current and future park, recreation, and trail needs.

## 1.2 WHY PLAN?

Fruita is growing, and with it, so is the need for parks, trails and recreation facilities. Abundant federal and state lands abut and surround the greater Fruita area, providing nearby access to world-class outdoor recreation for both visitors and resident alike. Yet, parks, trails, and recreation facilities must be provided in the urban area as well. The City of Fruita has retained EDAAW to develop a Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan (POST), which defines a long-term vision for parks, trails, and recreation facilities as the community continues to grow. This master plan is intended to guide the community's efforts to respond to ongoing growth, addressing existing and newly created needs for parks and recreation facilities and linking the community together through an interconnected trail system. As an official document for use by public officials, developers, and citizens, the specific focus of this plan was to:

- Develop a detailed inventory of all parklands and quantify the level of service for existing and future residents.
- Assess the current condition of the community's parks, trails, and recreation facilities.
- Analyze and determine community needs through discussions with user groups; national, state, and local trends; benchmarking with similar communities in the Rocky Mountain region; and public outreach.
- Identify existing underserved residential areas in need of additional parkland.
- Define level-of-service standards, a classification system, and general design criteria for parks and trails.

- Identify potential future growth areas to determine future parkland needs and locations.
- Identify conceptual trail corridors that connect destinations both within the city and beyond.
- Identify potential funding sources, acquisition strategies, and partnership opportunities.
- Create a vision, objectives, and policies to help achieve plan goals.
- Develop a list of priority projects and an action plan for implementation of the plan.

The emphasis of this plan focuses on how Fruita can upgrade and enhance its existing parks, trails, and recreation system to better meet the needs of current and future residents. As part of this, the plan identifies opportunities for Fruita to increase its total parkland through the enlargement of existing parks, the construction of new parks where feasible, and joint-use agreements with outside partners.

The POST Master Plan should be revisited and updated periodically to ensure that it accurately reflects current/future needs and changing conditions, and to adjust priorities within the community as appropriate.

### 1.3 CREATING THE PLAN

The citizens of Fruita are well informed and knowledgeable about the planning process, having recently undertaken other planning efforts. The POST Master Plan is intended to complement and build upon the 2008 Fruita Community Plan, seeking to refine and elaborate the principles and objectives that were created, and identify specific projects that realize the overall vision of the community. The planning process was structured with a series of tasks that build upon each other and ensure consistent and timely development of the plan.

**Insert Seattle PROS process chart here – Have LA revise it**

The tasks and chapters in which they are described are as follows:

#### CHAPTER ONE – PLAN FOUNDATION

Establish the purpose of the plan and planning process. Document citizen input in the planning process. Describe history of Fruita and the current community profile.

#### CHAPTER TWO – PLANNING CONTEXT

Conduct an inventory and develop a detailed database and maps of existing parklands, trails, and recreation facilities owned and operated by the City of Fruita. Identify the service areas associated with various types of parks. Develop classifications for various types of parks and trails, and standards for their locations, sizes, and other characteristics. Describe the surrounding recreational resources provided by other agencies. Identify issues and determine needs based on the results of the inventory; interviews with interest groups, recreation providers, and park and recreation staff; and input from the public and TAC and Steering Committee. Analyze recreation trends, population growth and distribution projections, and comparisons with other communities.

#### CHAPTER THREE – VISION, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Define the vision for the plan, and describe the specific objectives and policies to support the vision, including the standards for acreage of parkland provisions based on total population.

#### CHAPTER FOUR – MASTER PLAN

Develop recommendations and actions for the POST Master Plan. Identify specific park, trail, and recreation enhancement and upgrade projects and potential locations for additional parkland, trails, and facilities.

#### CHAPTER FIVE – IMPLEMENTATION

Identify existing and potential tools for implementation (including regulations, funding sources, and partnerships) and specific actions with identified responsibilities and costs. Develop a list of priority projects and an action plan.

##### 1.4 CITIZEN INPUT

This POST Master Plan was developed through a series of meetings with several groups, all of which provided insight, guidance, and advice. Citizen involvement is described by explaining the process of meetings, open houses, and outreach efforts that took place throughout development of the POST Master Plan.

##### MEETINGS

Several project status **staff** meetings were held with City of Fruita staff throughout the planning process to ensure consistent development of the plan. Staff included representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department, the City Manager’s office, Community Development Department, and Public Works.

Four meetings were held with the **Steering Committee**, which was composed of community members representing diverse interests, including the local business community, recreation and trail interests, environmental groups, and representatives from other community boards and commissions. The Steering Committee’s role was to act as a sounding board and provide feedback and advice on various elements of the planning process. The role of the Steering Committee was significant and the meetings were instrumental in helping to determine the direction and priorities for the future of Fruita with respect to parks, trails, and recreation.

The **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**, which consisted of staff from the City of Fruita, Colorado

State Parks, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service, Mesa County, Mesa County Valley School District 51, and the Colorado River-front Commission, served as the primary advisory group on technical issues; the group met twice during the process.

In addition to regular meetings, the project team periodically provided updates and solicited input from City Council.

## OUTREACH

Two public open houses were conducted throughout the planning process to gather input from the general public. The first open house was held on January 15, 2009, and was intended to provide information on why the plan was being produced and how the planning process was being conducted. It was also intended to describe the current inventory and level of service for parks and recreation facilities in Fruita, and discuss some of the preliminary needs that were identified. Lastly, it was intended to solicit input from the public regarding what types of parks, trails, and recreation facilities are needed for the community in the future. The second open house was held on June 4, 2009. The purpose and intent of this meeting was to present the draft POST Master Plan to the public and solicit their input on the proposed projects included in the plan.

Another component of the public outreach effort was to interview special interest groups. These groups were identified by City of Fruita staff and represented a diverse cross-section of the recreation community in Fruita. More than 20 groups were interviewed and included such organizations as youth sports leagues, local businesses, historical associations, organized outdoor recreation associations, government agencies, outfitters, and land conservation groups. Results of these interviews are described in more detail in Chapter Two, Planning Context.

The City of Fruita also made efforts to keep the public informed of the progress of the planning effort and upcoming meetings and open houses through notices in the community's newsletter, *City Link*, as well as posting information on the Parks and Recreation Department's website.

## 1.5 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Fruita is located in western Colorado, in Mesa County, approximately 12 miles west of Grand Junction, Colorado and approximately 20 miles east of the Utah state line. Map 1, Regional Context, shows Fruita's location relative to neighboring communities, public lands, and other significant natural features. Fruita was established in 1884 by William E. Pabor, who formed the Fruita Town and Land Company for the purpose of selling town lots. Pabor understood the high quality agricultural value of the area and specifically recognized its fruit producing potential, hence the name he gave the community. The city's agricultural heritage remains strong today. I70 transects the community from east to west, as does the Colorado River, running through the southern portion of the community. Fruita is graced with an abundance of high quality natural and recreational resources surrounding the community, including the Colorado National Monument to the south, BLM lands to the north and south of the city, and United State Forest Service Lands to the south. Specific recreational resources include the Colorado River, the James R. Robb Colorado State Park, and hundreds of miles of multiple-use trails on federal lands, including the world class Kokopelli Trail.

Fruita has experienced tremendous growth over the last decade. There has been nearly a 70% increase in population since the year 2000, growing from 6,478 residents to approximately 10,947<sup>1</sup> residents in 2008. As the 2008 Fruita Community Plan detailed, the average growth rate between the years 2000 and 2006 was 8.1%, with the highest growth rates

<sup>1</sup> Colorado State Demography office, 2008.



in history occurring in 2004 (10.1%), 2005 (10.4%), and 2006 (10.2%). The community plan also indicates that the average growth rate over the last four decades has been approximately 5%, which may be more indicative of the future. Projecting that growth rate forward, it can be expected that Fruita's population will reach 25,735<sup>2</sup> by the year 2025.

The median age of the population in Fruita is 36.5 years, slightly higher than the median age for the State of Colorado of 34.3 years. Approximately 15% of the population is age 10-19 – the predominant age of children who are most active in programmed recreational sports leagues. Approximately 16.1% of the population is over age 65. Table 1.1 illustrates these numbers in greater detail.

Table 1.1. Fruita Age Distribution.

| LOCATION | MEDIAN AGE | UNDER 5 YEARS | 5 TO 14 YEARS | 15 TO 19 YEARS | 20 TO 34 YEARS | 35 TO 54 YEARS | 55 TO 64 YEARS | AGES 65+ |
|----------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Fruita   | 36.5       | 7.1%          | 16.0%         | 7.0%           | 17.8%          | 27.8%          | 8.2%           | 16.1%    |
| Colorado | 34.3       | 6.9%          | 14.1%         | 7.1%           | 22.5%          | 31.4%          | 7.9%           | 9.7%     |

The population of Fruita is aging, as are many areas of Colorado and the U.S. By the year 2030, there will be more Americans over age 65 (20% of the total population) than under age 18<sup>3</sup>. Parkland will continue to be an important element to neighborhoods and communities regardless of the age of residents, but the programs and facilities may need to adjust in the near term to meet the needs of an active, yet somewhat less mobile and athletic clientele. Being physically active is key in maintaining independence and a high quality of life, and our society and media are certainly emphasizing this in recent years. In general, people become less physically active as they get older; nearly 40% of people over the age of 55 report no leisure-time physical activity. Challenging exercises and physical activities, done regularly, can help many older adults improve their health, even

<sup>2</sup> 2008 Fruita Community Plan

<sup>3</sup> US Administration on Aging, website accessed January 2006.

when done at a moderate level<sup>4</sup>. It should be recognized, however, that the demographic characteristics of the community will continue to shift over time.

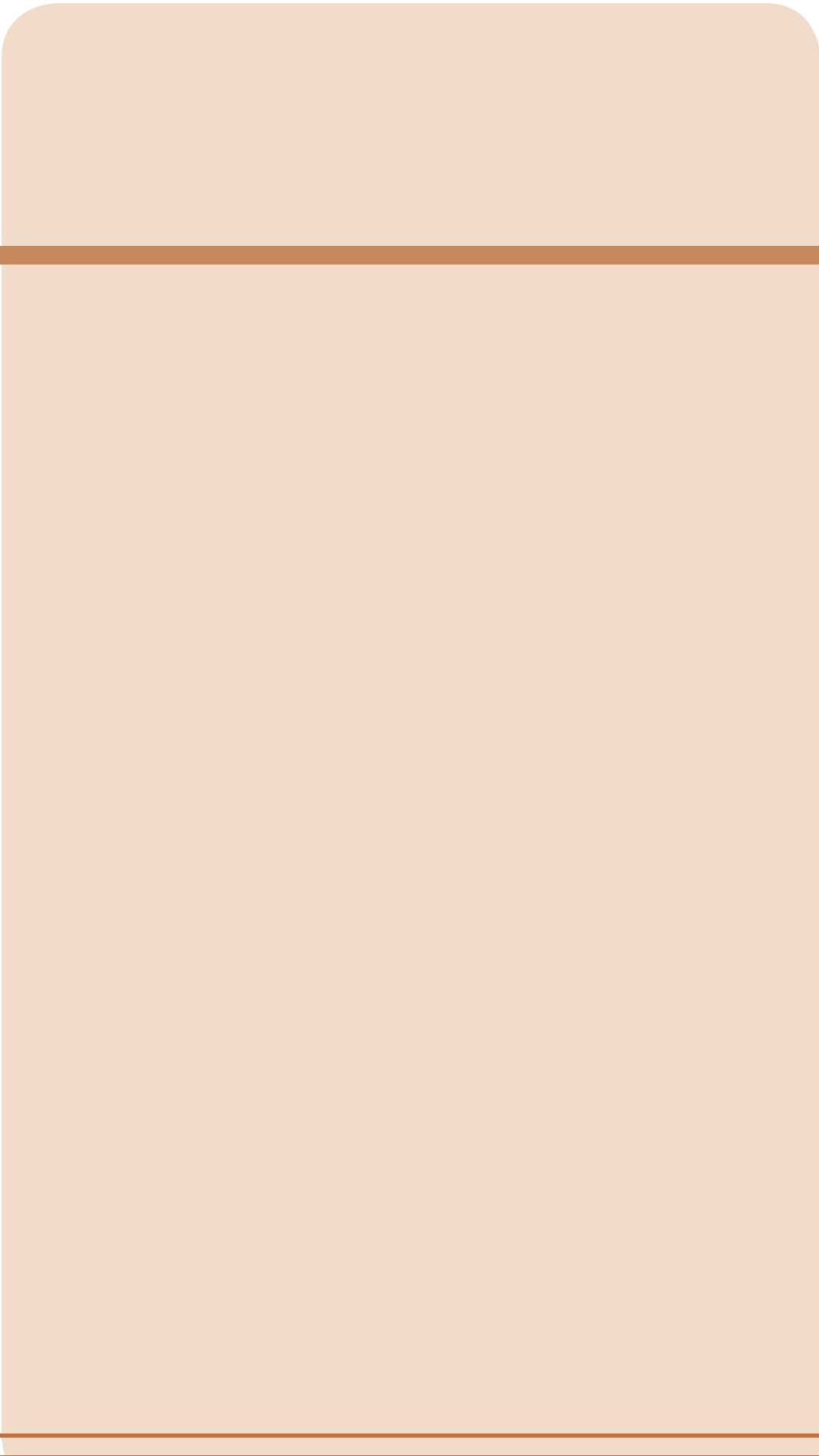
## 1.6 UPDATES TO THE POST MASTER PLAN

The Fruita POST Master Plan, much like the 2008 Community Plan, is built on a set of enduring values and goals. While these values are expected to represent the heart and character of the community for many years to come, the planning process is one that is ongoing and should adapt as the community evolves.

This plan is intended to be a living document, one that is flexible and fluid, so that as opportunities for land acquisition or easements and park and trail

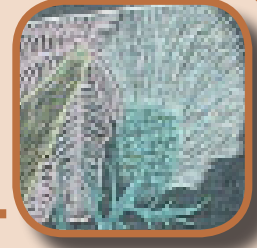
development become available, the city can immediately capitalize on these opportunities. This POST Master Plan will be reviewed and comprehensively updated periodically, as necessary. The purpose of periodic updates is to re-evaluate and modify the vision, objectives and policies, and proposed projects. Communities evolve and change over time, and an effective public parks, recreation, and trails plan should be modified to accurately reflect these changes as they occur.

<sup>4</sup> National Institute on Aging – Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging, 2001.





# 02 PLANNING CONTEXT



## INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, people view parks and recreation as fundamental elements of what makes a city a great place to be. Urban parks enrich lives. They educate, protect, and enrich young people. They provide places to play after school and during summer vacations, and give individuals and families countless hours of recreation and relaxation. Parks produce clean air and protect cities from floodwaters.

As the 2008 Community Plan described, Fruita has become a highly desirable place to live, work, and play. Each year, increasing numbers of tourists, recreationists, retirees, and young families seek out Fruita as a place to either visit and recreate in, or to establish a permanent residence. The wealth of amenities in this small town has a particular charm and draw that few other small towns in the country can offer. Of these amenities, Fruita's commitment to high quality parks, trails, and recreation facilities are an invaluable resource for both residents and visitors alike.

## CHAPTER ELEMENTS

This chapter has three primary elements: Existing Resources; Park Standards and Levels of Service; and the Issues and Needs Analysis. The Existing Resources element documents the parks, trails, and recreation resources owned and operated by the City of Fruita. It also describes recreational resources not owned or provided by the City of Fruita, but available for use by the city, its residents, and visitors. In the Park Standards and Levels of Service element, definitions of each park type are included, as well as

standards for the desired level of service and types of facilities that should be included within the parks. An analysis is also included that identifies the availability of parks in relation to neighborhoods, as well as how accessible these parks are to residents.

The Issues and Needs element documents the issues and needs that influence the types and number of parks, trails, and recreation facilities needed in the community. This section documents the estimated demand for services from current and future residents and, in association with the inventory of existing facilities, highlights potential areas of shortfall or oversupply. In turn, this will give direction to future master plan recommendations. Identifying the user public's satisfaction, perceptions, use patterns, and priorities for recreation facilities and trails is an important part of this process. Accurately assessing the needs of current and future residents requires a diverse approach, using many different techniques to gather information. Collectively, the data from these various sources creates a picture of what is needed within Fruita, and serves as the basis from which to develop a list of projects, priorities, and actions (detailed later in the Implementation chapter of this plan). Each technique used in this process provides valuable information, but the data from any one technique should not be viewed in isolation and without assessing it to the established vision, objectives, and policies of the community.

The Issues and Needs element synthesizes the analysis conducted on accessibility to parks; the population and growth projections and demographic characteristics described in Chapter One; and areas

of planned residential growth, which may affect the locations and quantities of additional parklands, trails, and facilities. Communities in the Rocky Mountain region, similar to Fruita, were also surveyed to determine the levels of service they provide for parkland and common recreation facilities. This database serves as a benchmark when determining the levels of service that are appropriate for Fruita.

Recreational preferences and the level of demand for additional parks and recreational opportunities are also addressed in the Issues and Needs element. Pertinent information from national databases on recreation participation levels and data from the 2007 Colorado SCORP have been considered. Stakeholder interviews were also conducted with representatives of other public and nonprofit recreation providers in Fruita to assess any specific needs their organizations may have.

## EXISTING RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS

The City of Fruita has a proud history of parks and trails. Abundant parkland and trails in the city and its vicinity are key elements to the quality of life enjoyed by residents. However in Fruita, parks not only provide recreational opportunities for residents, but are also central to the city's character and image and an international draw for recreationists from around the world. The City of Fruita recognizes the critical role that parks, trails, and recreation play in the overall public realm of the community.

### PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAIL INVENTORY

The City of Fruita owns, operates, and maintains a variety of types of parks within the community. The classification and a brief description of each are listed below. Detailed definitions of each classification and their subsequent standards follow this section.

## Neighborhood Parks

- *Neighborhood Parks* – Neighborhood scale parks are intended to serve residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the park. These parks are typically designed primarily for unsupervised activities. They are generally small in size at 3-8 acres of usable area. While it is not the rule, neighborhood parks sometimes provide space for programmed activities, such as organized athletics.
- *Pocket Parks* – Pocket parks are smaller versions of neighborhood parks with fewer amenities, and serve a smaller radius of homes. These parks are often found in high density developments, apartments or townhouse complexes, and residential areas with mixed housing types. They are usually 1 or less acre in size. In Fruita, pocket parks have historically been privately developed and maintained; however, there are a few that are owned and maintained by the city.

## Community Parks

- *Community Parks* – Community parks are larger, multi-purpose parks that serve the entire community. These parks are generally designed to provide active play opportunities for all ages. Community parks can also provide indoor facilities to meet a wider range of recreation and interests. These parks should be designed to meet the active community, while providing a sanctuary for those individuals who also enjoy more leisure oriented activities.
- *Sports Complexes* – Sports complexes are dedicated to specialized sports that serve the entire community. They are often associated with community parks or school facilities.

## Other Parks

- *Special Purpose Parks and Facilities* – These are parks and facilities that serve a single or focused community need, such as a historical park, environmental education center, or land occupied by major structures such as swimming pools, community centers, skate parks, etc.

- *Undeveloped Parkland* – Land that is owned by the city and reserved for future park development.

### **Open Space and Trails**

- *Regional Open Space* – Lands that protect large areas with natural resource values of communitywide significance, and provide opportunities for nature-oriented outdoor recreation.
- *Natural Areas/Corridors* – Lands that place emphasis on the protection of natural values. These are often, but not always, located along drainageways that provide opportunities for linear natural habitats and trails.
- *Primary Multi-Use Trails* - Trails that form the major trail spines throughout communities. They are intended to accommodate all types of trail users within the same trail corridor.
- *Neighborhood Trails* - Trails that function to promote connectivity within residential or commercial developments, or parks and open space. They are typically paved and undivided trails, and are most often provided by residential developers.

Parks are classified based on their existing amenities, location within the community, size, and proximity to residential areas. Each classification of parkland is accompanied by standards that describe their characteristics and desired level of service. These classifications and standards provide guidance in the development of a parkland system that offers consistent service to city residents. Only parks and recreation facilities provided by the City of Fruita are considered in calculating and setting the level of service for each classification. Mesa County School District, Colorado State Parks, BLM, and other public lands and facilities, while recognized, are limited in their accessibility to the general public and are not, therefore, factored into neighborhood and community parkland inventory and level of service calculations. Map 2.1, Existing Resources, shows the location of various parklands, open space, recreation facilities, and primary trails within the City of Fruita. A detailed inventory of those lands and the facilities

and amenities they contain is provided in Appendix A. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the types of parks within Fruita.

Table 2.1. City of Fruita Parks Inventory Summary

| CLASSIFICATION                       | TOTAL ACRES  | DEVELOPED PARK SITES |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Neighborhood Park                    | 16.2         | 4                    |
| Public Pocket Park                   | 2.6          | 3                    |
| Private Pocket Park                  | 23.2         | 23                   |
| Community Park                       | 22.8         | 1                    |
| Sports Complexes                     | N/A          | 1                    |
| Special Purpose Parks                | 6.3          | 2                    |
| Natural Areas/Corridors              | 365.2        | 5                    |
| <b>Total Parkland and Open Space</b> | <b>436.3</b> | <b>39</b>            |

Within the City of Fruita, there are a total of 39 individual sites that are public parks, private parks, or natural areas, totaling approximately 436.3 acres. Of this, 1 site is a community park (22.8 acres), 4 sites are neighborhood parks (16.2 acres), 3 sites are public pocket parks (2.6 acres), and 23 sites are private pocket parks (23.2 acres). The community park also serves as the neighborhood park for residents living nearby, which is generally considered within a 0.5-mile radius. Other park and recreation resources include 1 sports complex at the Mesa County 8/9 School, 2 special purpose parks (6.3 acres), and 5 natural areas/corridors (365.2 acres).

There are also several other sites that provide recreation resources for residents and visitors, including Mesa County Valley School District 51, which provides use of tennis courts and occasional use of gym space for recreational programming; the Colorado Department of Transportation Welcome Center, which provides information to visitors on local resources and recreational opportunities; the Museum of Western Colorado's Dinosaur Journey, which provides entertainment and education on the history of dinosaurs in the Fruita area; and Adobe Creek National Golf Course, a public 27-hole golf course.

In addition to the recreational resources listed above, there are also numerous other public recreational resources available to residents and visitors, which have helped give Fruita the natural resource recreation playground reputation it has today. These resources include the James R. Robb Colorado River State Park; the Colorado National Monument; the BLM McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA); and the BLM North Fruita Desert.

There are also numerous private organizations that offer recreation services and facilities to the community. These include local Little League and youth sports organizations, health clubs, outfitters, and cycling shops, among others. While these organizations provide valuable resources to the community, they are not always accessible and available to the general public; therefore, they have not been included in the neighborhood or community parkland inventory and overall level of service calculations. The larger role of these organizations and groups within the Fruita community will be further addressed later in this document.

### ***Neighborhood Parks***

Neighborhood parks serve a residential neighborhood. They may be either full-size neighborhood parks or smaller public pocket parks. Full-size neighborhood parks are typically the backbone of a parks system, and serve as critical elements of healthy neighborhoods and places that provide relief from the built environment. They are primarily located in developed residential areas, and typically have landscaping and walking surfaces that can withstand high levels of use. They are spaces where neighbors can gather, children can play, and people can socialize as well as engage in recreational activities. Generally, neighborhood parks provided by the City of Fruita are in good condition; however, some may require minor improvements, such as additional amenities, updated facilities, and landscaping enhancements when resources become

available. Both public and private pocket parks are provided within the City of Fruita. Only those that are publicly provided are described in detail in this plan. While private pocket parks provide a valuable resource for the community, and most within the City of Fruita are open to the general public, they are not developed and maintained to the same standards as those cared for by the Park and Recreation Department.

### ***Heritage Park***

Heritage Park is located in south-central Fruita on Frontage Road, between South Mesa Street and 17½ Road. Heritage Park is 3.5 acres in size and contains a basketball court, playground, picnic tables, restrooms, and an off-street parking lot. Heritage Park could benefit from some improvements and reconfiguration to better serve residents. The existing play equipment is located in a remote area of the park and should be moved to a newly designed core area to improve its function within the park and safety. The park also lacks a picnic shelter and vegetative screening for noise and aesthetics from fast-moving vehicles on the adjacent roadway and interstate. Other opportunities for this park include the addition of skate elements for residents on the south side of the city, and establishment of future trailhead amenities.

### ***Olga Anson Park***

Olga Anson Park is located in east-central Fruita along Ottley Avenue, between 18 Road and 18½ Road. Olga Anson Park is 7 acres in size with limited amenities (a walking path and playground). Olga Anson has a linear shape with varying topography, preventing it from accommodating a full-size multi-use field. However, there is room for other limited amenities, such as a picnic shelter or possibly a half basketball court.

### ***Prospect Park***

Insert Map 2.1: Existing Resources here





Prospect Park is located in northwest Fruita along Pioneer Drive, between Comstock Drive and Sliver Plume Drive. Prospect Park is 2.4 acres in size and contains a multi-use field, playground, and paved walking path. Prospect Park would benefit from the addition of a picnic shelter and seating benches.

#### *Reed Park*

Reed Park is located in central Fruita at the corner of Maple Street and McCune Avenue. Reed Park is 3.3 acres in size and contains the most amenities of all the city's neighborhood parks. It hosts a multi-use field, basketball court, playground, tot lot playground, picnic tables, picnic shelter, drinking fountains, barbeques, horseshoe pits, restrooms, and an off-street parking lot. Overall, Reed Park is in good condition; however, it could benefit from some minor landscaping improvements.

### **Public Pocket Parks**

#### *Circle Park*

Circle Park is located in downtown Fruita at the intersection of Mesa Street and Aspen Avenue. Circle Park is approximately 0.84 acre in size and contains picnic tables, a shelter, and public art. It also has a gazebo located in the center of the park. Circle Park is the center of the roundabout, which loops through downtown Fruita and helps to define its unique character. Circle Park is in good condition and is well used by residents and visitors alike.

#### *Triangle Park*

Triangle Park is located just west of downtown along SH6/50, between Aspen Avenue and Coulson Street. There are limited amenities at Triangle Park, including a few picnic tables, barbeques, and a piece of public art. Several trees also provide ample shade in this small park.

#### *Danny Williams Park*

Danny Williams Park is located north of downtown near Little Salt Wash, at the corner of 17 Road and Roberson Avenue. Danny Williams Park is 1.33 acres in size and contains limited amenities, including picnic tables and horseshoe pits. Overall, Danny Williams Park is in good condition.

### **Community Parks**

Community parks are larger parks that serve the entire community. They should be equitably distributed throughout the city and easily accessible by all residents. Ideally, they should also be connected via the core commuter off-street trail system to reduce the need to drive to the park. Sports complexes are also often associated with community parks. These are typically parks or areas of community parks that have dedicated sport facilities available for use by the entire community. While many community parks contain sports complexes, not all sports complexes are part of a community park or contain park-like facilities.

#### *Little Salt Wash Park*

Little Salt Wash Park is currently the only community park within the City of Fruita. Little Salt Wash Park is located in north-central Fruita along Little Salt Wash. Access to the park is provided from 18 Road, north of Ottley Avenue. Little Salt Wash Park is the newest park in the city and is being developed in phases. When complete, the park will be a total of 22.8 acres. Currently amenities in the park include 1 full-size baseball field; 3 full-size softball fields; 2 multi-use turf fields; 2 other turf areas in the outfields, which can be configured for multiple-use activities; paved walking path; playground; a 9-hole disc golf course; and off-street parking. In the spring/summer of 2009, a restroom will be installed next to field #4, and remaining landscaping, irrigation, and seeding will be completed in the park.

Another playground will also be installed next to field #4 in 2009.

Phases in future years include the installation of restrooms and concessions in the core area; installation of picnic benches and a shelter in the core area; installation of parking lot lighting; completion of the core area (paving of central core area around restrooms, concessions, and shelters); installation of a maintenance building for the park; and installation of scoreboards and field lighting.

#### *Fruita 8/9 School Tennis Courts*

The City of Fruita has an arrangement with the Fruita 8/9 School for use of their tennis courts. The city maintains the courts and has use of the facility when the school does not have them scheduled. In addition to 2 courts, there is also a drinking fountain and an off-street parking lot.

### ***Special Purpose Parks***

#### *Civic Center Park*

Civic Center Park is located downtown along Aspen Avenue and Peach Street, and is the site of the Fruita City Hall. Not including City Hall, Civic Center Park is approximately 1.9 acres in size and includes an amphitheater, public art, and an off-street parking lot. Drinking fountains and restrooms are located inside City Hall. Civic Center Park is used primarily to host community-wide events, such as Mike the Headless Chicken Festival and the Fruita Fat Tire Festival.

#### *Ore Park*

Ore Park is located just north of downtown along Cherry Street, south of Ottley Avenue. Ore Park has a total of approximately 2.4 developed acres out of a total footprint of 4.5 acres. Ore Park is the location of the new community recreation center that will be constructed in the near future. Currently, Ore Park contains the city's outdoor pool, skate park, a few picnic tables, and an off-street parking lot. Construc-

tion of the new community recreation center will occupy much of this site; however, it is intended that the outdoor pool, skate park, and some passive space will remain at this location after construction.

### ***Undeveloped Parkland***

#### *Red Cliffs*

The site of the proposed Red Cliffs Park is located in south-central Fruita along SH340 at Red Cliffs Drive. The site is approximately 2.4 acres in size. It is intended that this site will be developed as a neighborhood park.

#### *16 Road and L Roads*

The City of Fruita and Mesa County recently purchased a 40-acre parcel of land located at the intersection of 16 Road and L Road. It is intended that 13 acres of this site will be developed for a future elementary school and 27 acres are set aside for a future community park.

### ***Natural Areas and Corridors***

#### *Snooks Bottom Open Space*

Snooks Bottom Open Space is located along the Colorado River in south-central Fruita at the end of Kingsview Road, and provides a tremendous open space resource for the community. The property is approximately 113 acres in size and currently contains minimal improvements, including a short section of a paved walking path; a small fishing pier in the pond on the property; and a portable toilet. The property was acquired in 2003 with the cooperation of Mesa County Land Trust and Colorado GOCO funds. There is a conservation easement on the property, which stipulates how the property is to be managed. Generally speaking, the property shall be maintained in a natural state and managed as important riparian wildlife habitat, and for nonmotorized, natural recreation uses, such as hiking and fishing. Only limited improvements are allowed, such as a paved trail and a parking lot.

### *Kingsview Open Space*

Kingsview Open Space is located adjacent to Snooks Bottom along the Colorado River and SH340. Kingsview is approximately 48 acres in size. Approximately 26 acres compose the mainland portion along the river; the remaining 18 acres exist as an island in the river. Kingsview provides another high quality open space resource for the Fruita community and an ideal riparian location. While Kingsview is open to the public, there are no developed facilities and no formal parking, although a small pull-off exists that can accommodate a couple of cars. Unlike Snooks Bottom, no conservation agreement exists on the property, allowing for some level of development to occur if so desired.

### *Little Salt Wash Greenway*

Little Salt Wash Greenway is a linear natural area located along Little Salt Wash and consists of approximately 11.5 total acres. Little Salt Wash Greenway exists in several separate pieces, generally between 17 Road on the west and 18½ Road on the east. While there are no developed facilities associated with Little Salt Wash Greenway, three sections of paved, multi-use trail traverse along it, totaling 0.85 mile. The longest section of this trail exists in Little Salt Wash Park.

### *Big Salt Wash Greenway*

Big Salt Wash Greenway is a linear natural area located along Big Salt Wash and consists of approximately 19.7 total acres. Big Salt Wash Greenway exists in several pieces, generally between SH6/50 on the south and Celestite Drive on the north. A paved multi-use trail runs the length of the greenway totaling approximately 0.83 mile. There is a developed trailhead on the southern terminus of the trail at SH6/50, which can accommodate a few cars. There are no other developed facilities along the trail.

## **Regional Open Space**

### *Fruita Mountain Lakes Properties*

The City of Fruita owns and maintains approximately 173 acres of land surrounding its water storage reservoirs in Grand Mesa National Forest, roughly 15 miles south of the City. The city has an arrangement with the USFS whereby they share management and maintenance of the lands. Current recreational opportunities at the Mountain Lakes include mountain biking, hiking, fishing, and camping. Some ATV use and sporadic hunting also occur at the area. Recreational amenities include pit toilets, picnic tables, dispersed campsites, and fire rings. There are also informal trails in the area that cross between City of Fruita lands and USFS lands. Use of the Mountain Lakes properties occurs primarily in the spring, summer and fall, and is heaviest on weekends.

### **Trails**

The City of Fruita has been slowly establishing and expanding its trail system. The city maintains approximately 6.5 miles of primary, paved, off-street multi-purpose trails. Primary multi-purpose trails often form the major trail spines throughout cities, counties, and neighboring communities and are intended to accommodate all trail users, including walkers, joggers, wheelchair cruisers, in-line skaters, recreational and commute bikers, and equestrian users within the same trail corridor on separated trails. Currently, most of these exist as separate segments and the trail system is not fully connected. The primary trail segments are Big Salt Wash (0.83 mile); Little Salt Wash (3 segments - 0.85 mile); SH6/50 (2.2 miles); SH340 (0.55 mile); Snooks Bottom (0.3 mile); Little Salt Wash Park (1.36 miles); Sycamore St. (0.12 mile); and Carolina Ave. (0.44 mile). There are also numerous trails throughout the city that serve as neighborhood connections. Neighborhood trails function as off-street sidewalks to promote connectivity within residential or commercial

developments, or parks and open space. These are often provided privately as residential housing is developed throughout the city. They are not necessarily built to the same standards as the primary off-street trails, but provide essential connections between neighborhoods and to parks and primary trails. In total there are approximately 4 miles of paved neighborhood trails.

### ***Other Park and Recreation Resources***

#### *James M. Robb Colorado River State Park*

The James M. Robb Colorado River State Park is one park split into five sections. The Fruita section lies on the west end, followed by Connected Lakes, the Colorado River Wildlife Area, Corn Lake, and Island Acres sections moving east. The Fruita section (the only section within the City of Fruita) is open year-round for camping and day-use activities. The Fruita section is enjoyed by Grand Valley residents and tourists alike, as it is the first state park travelers can visit coming from the west into Colorado on I70. With magnificent views of both the Colorado National Monument and the Book Cliffs area, the Fruita section provides camping facilities, lake fishing, swimming and boating, picnic sites, seasonal birding, a multi-use off-street trail along the Colorado River, boat launch, and a large visitor center. The proposed Colorado Riverfront Trail will also eventually tie into the existing trail in the park.

#### *Colorado National Monument*

Colorado National Monument is located between the communities of Fruita and Grand Junction, lying almost parallel to I70. The monument preserves 32 square miles of canyons and mesas and provides a variety of activities for a wide range of people. Facilities include a visitor center, day use areas, campgrounds, and numerous trails. Common activities in the park include scenic driving, nature/wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, road cycling, and climbing. The park also

hosts a variety of interpretive activities for families and kids.

#### *BLM McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA)*

The BLM manages the McInnis Canyon NCA, which is located adjacent to the southwest part of the city. McInnis Canyon contains many nationally significant resources, including outstanding scenery, cultural and paleontological values, naturalness, recreation values, wildlife, and geologic and scientific values. McInnis Canyon encompasses a diverse landscape ranging from salt bush desert to the deep canyons of the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness. This landscape supports an equally diverse range of uses, including activities such as boating on the Colorado River, big-game hunting for mule deer, elk, mountain lion and waterfowl, off-highway vehicle use in Rabbit Valley, domestic livestock grazing, fossil viewing, sightseeing, wildlife photography, hiking, horseback riding, dispersed camping as well as internationally known, including Mary's Loop Trail and the Kokopelli Trail.

#### *BLM North Fruita Desert*

The North Fruita Desert is located approximately 8 miles north of the City of Fruita. North Fruita Desert offers a wide range of recreational opportunities, including a large and diverse trail system that is a popular destination for mountain biking and OHV use. The area's close proximity to the communities of Grand Junction and Fruita makes the North Fruita Desert an increasingly valuable resource for dispersed recreational opportunities. The area has traditionally been used by residents of Mesa County, but is experiencing increased visitation from throughout the region and out of state as recreational opportunities in the region are becoming increasingly popular. Recreational opportunities in the area include off-highway vehicle use, vehicle driving for pleasure, mountain biking, horseback



riding, camping, hiking, hunting, shooting, and viewing scenery and natural features.

#### PARK, TRAIL, AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION, STANDARDS, AND EXISTING LEVELS OF SERVICE

##### *Neighborhood Park Standards, Classifications and Level of Service*

Neighborhood parks should be adequately sized to provide space for a variety of activities, and are ideally a minimum of 3 usable acres when complete. They should be centrally located within the residential area they serve and are often located adjacent to an elementary or middle school. Neighborhood parks can be active or passive in nature, but most commonly provide a combination of both. Sports activities in neighborhood parks should normally be limited to practices, as the need to be compatible with surrounding residential land uses limits the intensity of use. Exceptions may be necessary if no other facilities exist or if the use is not detrimental to the neighborhood. Table 2.2 describes the standards, site characteristics, and typical level of service for neighborhood and pocket parks.

While both public and private pocket parks supplement the neighborhood park system and provide places for children and families to gather near their homes, they are not substitutes for adequately sized neighborhood parks. They are typically smaller than neighborhood parks and may offer only a few neighborhood park amenities due to their limited size. In Fruita, pocket parks are typically approximately 1 acre in size and are distributed throughout the community; however, most are found in association with individual residential housing developments.

The City of Fruita has an established standard of 2.0 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. As this report will show, this standard appears to be adequate to serve the population of Fruita; however over time, without acquisition and development of additional neighborhood park properties, the level

of service for neighborhood parks will drop below this standard.

The City of Fruita owns and maintains a total of 7 neighborhood parks, 3 of which are pocket parks. The current population within Fruita boundaries is 10,947. Combined, the parks total approximately 18.8 acres, providing a level of service of 1.72 acre per 1,000 people (Table 2.3). The calculated level of service includes only parkland that is officially classified as neighborhood park acreage, and does not include school properties. The acres of neighborhood parkland is slightly below the existing standard provided in the 2008 Community Plan, and approximately 0.5 acre less than the average when compared to the level of service that other communities are providing (*discussed in the following section*).

For analysis purposes, 5 acres from Little Salt Wash Park could also be included in the neighborhood park level of service analysis. Little Salt Wash Park serves as the local neighborhood park to those residents living within 0.5 mile. Five acres is roughly equivalent to the size of one typical neighborhood parks as defined above. If the acreage for Little Salt Wash Park is factored in, the overall level of service for neighborhood parkland in Fruita would increase to 2.17 acre per 1,000 people, compared to 1.72 acres if it were not included. Then inclusion of this additional acreage raises Fruita's neighborhood park level of service to approximately that of the established standard, as well as that of communities in the comparison.

##### *Community Park Standards, Classifications and Level of Service*

Community parks should be adequately sized to accommodate a variety of diverse activities, including passive uses. Table 2.4 lists the specific standards for community parks. Community parks are ideally 20 to 40+ acres in size, and often combine developed parkland for self-directed or pro-

Table 2.2 Neighborhood Park Standards

| CLASSIFICATION    | DESIRABLE ACREAGE   | PURPOSE/FUNCTION   | SITE CHARACTERISTICS   | LEVEL OF SERVICE         |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| Neighborhood Park | 3-8 acres; slightly smaller size may be acceptable if adjacent to other parkland/natural areas or greenway parks, while also accommodating larger neighborhood park purposes/ functions | <p>Provides nearby recreation and leisure opportunities within walking distance (0.5 mile) of residential areas. Should serve as a common area for neighbors of all ages to gather, socialize, and play.</p> <p>Typically would include a paved, multi-purpose area for court games/in-line skating or tennis courts, a multi-purpose play field with backstop, play equipment, ADA accessible trails, and shaded areas for picnics and sitting within a landscaped setting that is a blend of full irrigation for active uses and xeriscape. Features such as interpretive signs, water bodies, and areas of natural vegetation may also be included where appropriate. In most cases, programmed sports activities should be limited to practices. On-street parking is typically adequate, and separate parking areas are not necessary. School/park facilities include many of the same neighborhood standards, except that school/parks should include game fields (preferably 2), off-street parking that is situated for school and park purposes, and a playground designed for age groups not served by school playgrounds.</p> | <p>Locate adjacent to greenway, open space, elementary or junior high schools when possible. Centrally locate within area served.</p> <p>Accessible via walkway or urban trail.</p> <p>Portions of the site should be relatively flat to accommodate fields and facility development. Size, slope, and soil conditions should be considered for optimum development.</p> <p>At least half of the park (2 sides) should be bordered by a street to provide easy public access, visual surveillance, and parking. Surrounding the site with the back property lines of houses is strongly discouraged.</p> <p>Site should not be encumbered with constraints that preclude development of the site for desired uses.</p> | 2.0 acres/<br>1,000 pop. |
| Pocket Park       | 2 acres or less   | <p>From a communitywide standpoint, serves a neighborhood where opportunities for a larger park site are unavailable. Typically considered to serve residents within 0.25 mile of the park. Due to limited size, may only contain a few of the elements typical of a standard neighborhood park. Not a substitute for adequately sized neighborhood park. Developments may include pocket parks as amenities to residents, but they do not fulfill the requirements for providing neighborhood parks.</p>  | Same as those required for neighborhood park.  | N/A                      |



Table 2.3. Existing Parkland Level of Service

| PARKS                        | NEIGHBORHOOD PARK<br>LEVEL OF SERVICE<br>2008 | COMMUNITY PARK<br>LEVEL OF SERVICE<br>2008 |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Population*                  | 10,947  | 10,947                                     |
| Existing Parkland (acres)    | 18.8  | 22.7                                       |
| Level of Service             | 1.72 acres/<br>1,000 population               | 2.07 acres/<br>1,000 population            |
| Effective Level of Service** | 2.17 acres/<br>1,000 population               | N/A  |

\*2008 population 10,947; CO State Demography Office.

\*\*Effective level of service is calculated by factoring in 5 acres parkland for Little Salt Wash Park, which serves neighborhood park functions to residents within 0.5-mile radius. Actual neighborhood park acreage does not increase and acreage is not double counted between neighborhood and community parks.

Table 2.4. Community Park Standards

| CLASSIFICATION       | DESIRABLE<br>ACREAGE | PURPOSE/FUNCTION   | SITE CHARACTERISTICS  | LEVEL OF SERVICE  |
|----------------------|----------------------|--|---|---|
| Community Park       | 20-40+<br>acres      | Provides opportunities for communitywide activities and facilities. Should maintain a balance between programmed sports facilities and other community activity areas, such as urban forests, gardens, historic features, water features, performance areas, festival spaces, plazas, etc., and have features that appeal to the broader community. Sports complexes are not complete community parks as they are very special purpose. However, they contribute to the overall level of service for community parks. See definition below. Community parks should generally be located to provide all residents access to a community park within 1-2 miles of their home. Community parks may also serve as the local neighborhood park for residential areas within 0.5 mile. | Portions of the site should be relatively flat to accommodate fields and facility development. Special site features, such as streams, lakes, forests, rock outcrops, historic or archeological sites, and other interesting elements may add to the unique character of the park. Sites should be centrally located to geographical locations. Ideally, will have good access from a collector or arterial street. Direct access to primary community trail system desirable. Site should not be encumbered with constraints that preclude development of the site for desired uses. | 4.0 acres/ 1,000 pop.   |
| Sports Complex       | Varies               | Provides opportunities for communitywide programmed and self-directed sports, such as baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, roller hockey, and skateboarding in higher intensity use facilities. Limited areas for passive recreation uses and other features that appeal to the broader community. Strategically locate to fill service gaps for specialized sports facilities.   | Majority of site should be relatively flat to accommodate sports fields. Locate away from residential areas to avoid traffic, light, and noise conflicts.   | May be part of community park level of service standard.  |
| Special Purpose Park | Varies               | Serves a singular or much focused community need, such as a horticulture center, environmental education center, working farm, performance area, festival area, fairgrounds, urban plaza, equestrian center, civic park, and children's theme parks.   | Varies  | N/A. Part of neighborhood or community park level of service if site contributes to these types of needs. |

grammed activities (festivals, performances, fitness trails, sports fields and courts, picnic shelters, etc.) with natural areas or other interesting elements (water features, forests or gardens). They should be centrally located to geographical locations and accessible to everyone in the service area. An off-street trail system should also be connected to community parks, allowing for access not reliant on automobiles.

Fruita has one community park, Little Salt Wash Park. Little Salt Wash Park meets the 20-acre desirable minimum standard discussed above. Little Salt Wash Park is approximately 22.7 acres in size and provides a level of service of 2.07 acres per 1,000 people based on a current population of 10,947 (Table 2.3 above). This level of service is significantly below the established standard of 4.0 acres per 1,000 people, as defined in the 2008 Community Plan. It is also significantly below the average of the communities in the comparison, of 4.4 acres per 1,000 people. The established standard of the communities in the analysis is 4.7 acres per 1,000 people.

### ***Trail Standards, Classifications and Design Considerations***

Primary multi-purpose trails often form the major trail spines throughout cities, counties, and neighboring communities. They accommodate all trail users, including walkers, joggers, wheelchair cruisers, in-line skaters, recreational and commute bikers, and equestrian users within the same trail corridor on separated trails. Table 2.5 lists specific standards for primary multi-purpose trail and neighborhood trails. The preferable location of these trails should be along drainageways, utility easements, or other linear features to connect parks, open space areas, recreation facilities, and major destination nodes. Trails that must be located adjacent to roadways should incorporate a 30-foot easement where feasible and appropriate. A 3-foot wide, soft surface shoulder on one side of the trail should be provided

for joggers and walkers who prefer a softer surface. Figure 2.1 provides a cross-section illustration of what a typical primary multi-purpose trail might look like.

As these trails form key components of an interconnected regional trail system that provides an alternative mode of transportation, funding can often be acquired through regional, state, and federal agencies. Coordination with adjacent municipalities and land management agencies is critical to ensure trail connectivity.

Trail corridor width greatly influences the user experience, especially when enclosed on both sides by development. Ideally, the trail corridor for trails should be a minimum of 30 feet in width, built on existing powerline easements, railroad or abandoned rights-of-way, gas pipeline corridors, and floodplains to create wider trail corridors. It should include a main bi-directional trail with a tread width of 10 feet at a minimum. A separate but parallel soft-surface trail (approximately 3 feet wide) should be provided where equestrian use is anticipated, which separates equestrian users from bicyclists. The distance between each trail type can vary, but a minimum of 6 feet from tread to tread should be provided. A far line of sight and turning radius is necessary for commuter speeds. Center lane striping delineates direction of travel on the paved trail to accommodate high volumes of use.

The trail should take precedent as a main transportation feature just like any road system, and pedestrian underpasses should be incorporated into any planned roadway or bridge improvements. Strong connections to community destination points encourage nonvehicular travel to events, and trailheads should be conveniently located at activity centers. Trailheads should also have adequate parking and may contain certain facilities, such as information kiosks and restrooms. Intersections and other areas where users must stop or dismount should be

Table 2.5. Trail Standards

|                          | PRIMARY TRAILS   | NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Uses                     | Connects community destinations, parks, and open space<br>Recreation destination for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized users<br>Commuting                                    | Internal connection within neighborhoods<br>Connects neighborhoods to Primary Trails   |
| Preferred Location       | Transit, open space, greenway, or drainage corridors   | Roadway corridors<br>Detached or attached sidewalks                                    |
| Preferred Corridor Width | 30 feet  | Per development code   |
| Trail Width              | 12 feet ideal; 10 feet minimum<br>Parallel 3-foot jogging path   | 8 feet minimum   |
| Trail Surface            | Asphalt (preferred) or concrete<br>Crushed gravel jogging path   | Concrete   |
| Vertical Clearance       | 8 feet   | 8 feet   |
| Horizontal Clearance     | Minimum bridge width 10 feet<br>Minimum 3 feet both sides  | NA   |
| Lighting                 | At trailheads and access points<br>At underpasses<br>At crosswalks and intersections   | Utilize adjacent roadway lighting where possible<br>At intersections with other trails |
| Trail Waysides           | Major waysides 1 per mile or as utilities are available<br>Minor waysides every 0.5 mile<br>Combine with trailheads where possible   | NA   |
| Grade                    | 5% max.  | 5% max. or per adjacent roadway  |
| Trailheads               | At major access points<br>Use parks and open space parking areas and facilities where possible<br>Restroom, shaded seating, and picnic areas<br>Regulatory, informational, and entry signs | NA   |

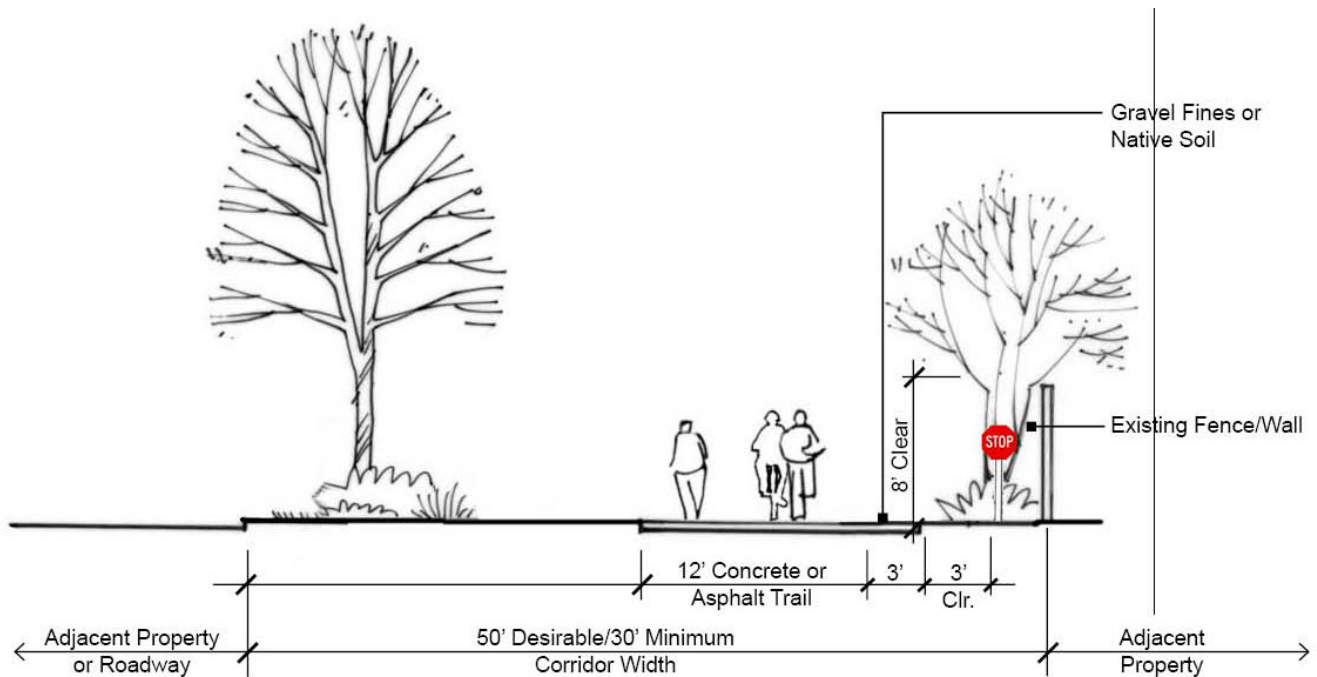


FIGURE 2.1. CROSS SECTION OF TYPICAL MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL

minimized. Below-grade crossings should be used as much as possible, especially at arterial streets, to minimize pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Benches, overlooks, and interpretive areas at activity centers and other strategic locations should be provided throughout the corridor.

Neighborhood trails function as off-street sidewalks to promote connectivity within residential or commercial developments, or parks and open space. These paved, undivided trails should be provided by the project developer and be an integral part of the circulation and open space system of the development. These paths should be a minimum of 8 feet wide, with paved concrete. Figure 2.2 provides a cross-section illustration of what a typical neighborhood trail might look like.

### *Open Space Standards and Classifications*

Table 2.6 lists classifications and characteristics of two different types of open space.

Regional open spaces are typically 100 acres or greater in size and protect large areas containing natural resource values of communitywide significance. Regional open spaces also provide opportunities for nature-oriented outdoor recreation. They typically place an emphasis on achieving an appro-

priate balance between resource protection and public use. As regional open space never has identical characteristics in two locations, there are no set standards for level of service.

Natural areas and corridors are other types of open space, typically on a somewhat smaller scale. There are no set site characteristics of natural areas and corridors; however, limited areas of the site can be dedicated to leisure and outdoor-oriented recreation uses and contain recreation amenities such as trails, benches, picnic sites, and environmental interpretation and education areas. As natural areas and corridors are usually provided when available and do not specifically serve park functions, there is no set level of service.

Table 2.6. Open Space Standards and Classifications

| CLASSIFICATION                    | DESIRABLE ACREAGE                        | PURPOSE/FUNCTION  | SITE CHARACTERISTICS   | LEVEL OF SERVICE |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|------------------|
| Regional Open Space/Park          | 100 acres or greater                     | Protects large areas with natural resource values of communitywide significance. Provides opportunities for nature-oriented outdoor recreation.   | Emphasis on achieving an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use.   | No LOS standard  |
| Natural Area/<br>Natural Corridor | Varies, but typically 8 acres or greater | Protects natural values on smaller parcels. Often located along stream corridors. Provides opportunities for nature-oriented, outdoor recreation, which may include multi-purpose trails. | Emphasis on resource protection or preservation with some public access provided. Limited site area can be dedicated to leisure and nature-oriented recreation uses, such as roads, parking areas, trails, environmental education/interpretive areas, picnic sites, and visitor support facilities. | No LOS standard  |

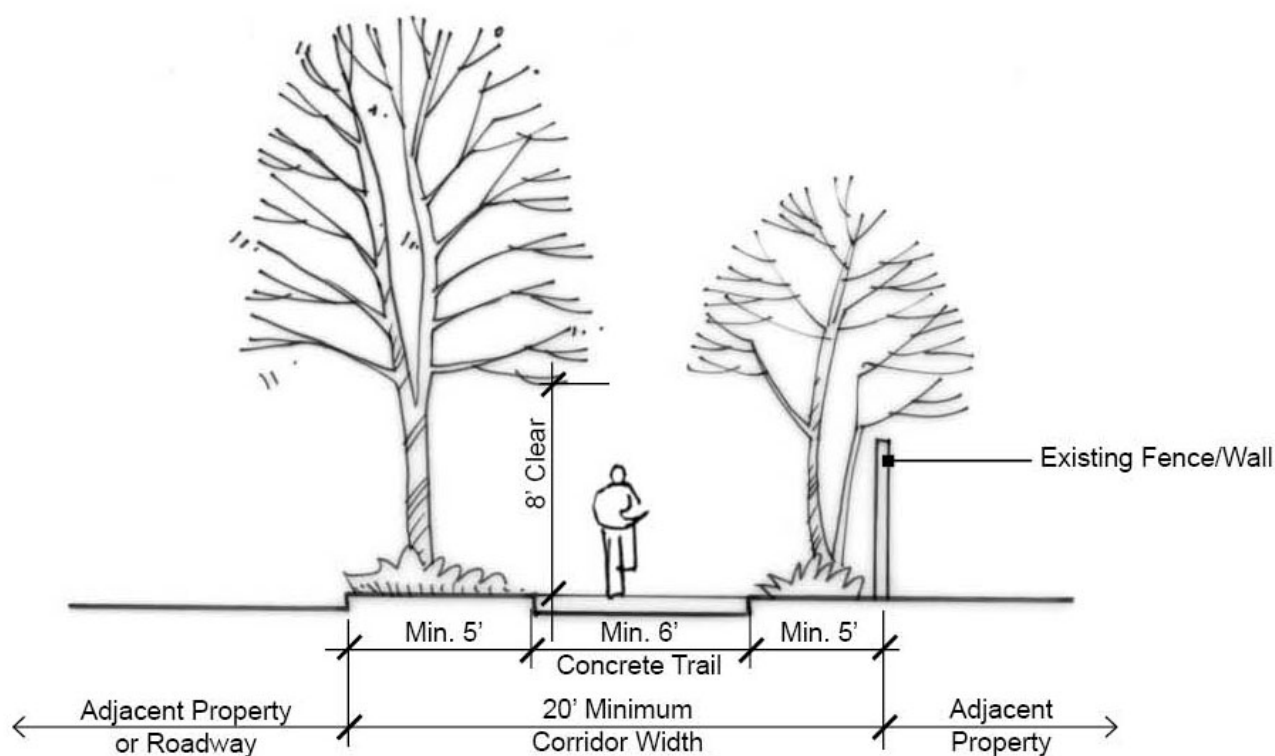


FIGURE 2.2. CROSS SECTION OF TYPICAL NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL

### ISSUES AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

This assessment documents the issues and needs that influence the specific types and number of parks, trails, and recreation facilities needed in the community. The needs assessment phase of a parks and recreation master plan documents the demand (and potential demand) for services from current and future residents and, in association with the inventory of existing facilities, highlights potential areas of shortfall or oversupply. Identifying levels of satisfaction, perceptions, use patterns, and priorities for recreational programs and facilities through contact with the user public is an important part of this process. Accurately assessing the current and future needs of residents requires a diverse approach, using many different techniques to gather information. Collectively, the data from these various sources creates a picture of what is needed within the City of Fruita, and can serve as the basis from which to develop a list of projects, priorities and actions, which will be the next step in this planning process.

Each technique used in this process provides valuable information, but the data from any one technique should not be viewed in isolation and without comparing the needs to overall vision, goals, and objectives of the community.

As illustrated in the previous section, current level of service standards and park system classifications have been applied to the existing system, and in conjunction with growth projections, can help to further project future park and recreation needs. Peer communities were also surveyed to determine the levels of service they provide for parkland and common recreation facilities. This database serves as a benchmark when determining the levels of service that are appropriate for Fruita. Recreational preferences and the level of demand for additional parks and recreational opportunities are addressed in this chapter as well. Pertinent information from national databases on recreation participation levels and data from the Colorado SCORP have been considered. In addition, the consulting team is conducting a review



of participation trends in recreational programs provided by the city's recreation staff and nonprofit organizations (e.g., sports clubs).

The results of the various analyses, as well as through citizen input, lead to the identification of key issues and needs, and choices that the City of Fruita need to make regarding how it plans to address these needs and move forward in the future.

#### UNDERSERVED AREAS

A walkability analysis was conducted to identify areas of the community that are underserved by neighborhood parks. As per the standards identified earlier in this plan, neighborhood parks are typically intended to serve a population within a 0.5 mile walking distance. Community parks can also serve as the neighborhood park for those residents within 0.5 mile. To conduct the analysis, a 0.5-mile buffer "as the crow flies" was placed around neighborhood and community parks. To further identify underserved areas, a route analysis was conducted that represents a 0.5-mile distance on the ground from each park. This analysis more accurately represents the true distance a person would have to walk to reach any given park. Typically, the walking distance on the ground is not equal to that of "as the crow flies" because people must walk on sidewalks along roads. Modern neighborhood design, with cul-de-sacs and other features, has made more direct access to parks challenging.

Map 2.2, Walkability Analysis, reveals that only a few small residential areas of the city are underserved by neighborhood parkland. The walkability analysis shows the actual 0.5-mile distance one might have to walk on the ground to reach a neighborhood park from residential areas. The only slightly underserved areas include:

- A small area north of K Road and east of Juniper Street – Santa Fe Ranch and Evening Breeze developments

- A small area between 17½ Road and 17¼ Road, south of K 6/10 Road – Elmwood Heights and Elmwood Estates developments
- A small area west of 18 Road, north of K 6/10 Road – Echo Canyon development
- A small area between 18 Road and 18½ Road, north of J 2/10 Road – Cotton Woods development
- A small area west of 18 Road and south of East Kiefer Avenue – Cedar Park development
- A small area between 17 Road and 17½ Road, south of Kaley Street - Liberty Glen and Red Cliffs developments (this is the area of the proposed undeveloped Redcliffs Neighborhood Park)

It should be noted that in many of these slightly underserved areas, some private pocket parks do exist that help to offer some parkland to area residents, although they may not have access to a city-owned neighborhood park.



Insert Map 2.2 Walkability Analysis



## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

*Existing and Future Parkland Levels of Service*

As described in the previous section, there is an existing deficit for both neighborhood and community parkland in Fruita. Based on the parkland standards set in the 2008 Community Plan, there is currently a deficit of approximately 3.2 acres of neighborhood parkland and a deficit of approximately 21.3 acres of community parkland. This is illustrated in Table 2.7 below. The population of Fruita is also anticipated to steadily grow over the next 15 years, to a total population of 14,788 residents. To meet this additional population and maintain the neighborhood and community parkland level of service as defined in the 2008 Community Plan, the city will need to acquire an additional 60 acres of community parkland and an additional 30 acres of neighborhood parkland beyond current deficits. Combined with current parkland deficits, current parkland needs and future parkland needs equal a total of 33.2 acres of neighborhood parkland and 81.3 acres of community parkland. This is illustrated in Table

2.8 below. The classifications and standards defined earlier in the plan indicate an ideal size for neighborhood parks of between 3 to 8 acres, and community parks of between 20 to 40 acres. This equals a total need of 4 to 12 neighborhood parks and 2 to 4 community parks by the projected buildout population of 25,735 residents.

*Future Development Areas*

The 2008 Fruita Community Plan provided a Framework Plan, which outlined desired future development patterns in the community, including residential and mixed-use developments. These development areas were considered in identifying future spatial gaps in service for neighborhood parks. This gap analysis provides direction in locating future neighborhood parks as part of the POST Master Plan. The primary residential development areas identified in the Framework Plan, including community mixed-use and community residential are:

- Between 19½ Road and 18½ Road, north of I-70 to J Road
- Between 19 Road and 18½ Road, north to

Table 2.7. Current Parkland Needs: 2008

| PARKS              | 2008 TOTAL PARKLAND | CURRENT PARKLAND STANDARD (ACRES/ 1,000 POP) | 2008 LEVEL OF SERVICE (ACRES/ 1,000 POP)* | ACREAGE NEEDED TO MEET CURRENT PARKLAND STANDARD | 2008 PARKLAND DEFICIT* |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|---|--|------------------------|
| Community Parks    | 22.7                | 4.0  | 2.07                                      | 44   | <21.3>                 |
| Neighborhood Parks | 18.8                | 2.0  | 1.72                                      | 22   | <3.2>                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>41.5</b>         | <b>6.0</b>                                   | <b>3.64</b>                               | <b>66</b>  | <b>&lt;24.5&gt;</b>    |

\*2008 population 10,947; CO State Demography Office.

Table 2.8. Future Parkland Needs: 2025. Projected Population Increase by 2025: 14,788 additional residents

| PARKS              | CURRENT PARKLAND STANDARD (ACRES/ 1,000 POP)** | ADDITIONAL ACREAGE NEEDED BY 2025 TO MEET CURRENT PARKLAND STANDARD | 025 PROJECTED DEFICIT TOTAL |
|--------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Community Parks    | 4.0  | 60  | <81.3>                      |
| Neighborhood Parks | 2.0  | 30  | <33.2>                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>6.0</b>                                     | <b>90</b>   | <b>&lt;114.5&gt;</b>        |

\*\*2025 projected population 25,735; 2008 Community Plan.

approximately 0.5 mile north of K Road

- Central Fruita north of L Road, and between 17 Road and 18 Road
- North of I-70 to M Road, from 15 Road west to Reed Wash
- North of I-70 to approximately 0.5 mile north of L Road, from Big Salt Wash west to 15 Road

Within these community mixed-use and community residential areas, and based on the deficits and standards listed above, there is a need for a minimum of 6 new neighborhood parks (at an average size of 5.5 acres each) to accommodate future residential growth. These parks can be strategically located to address areas of the community that are currently underserved, as well as future development areas. In addition to neighborhood parks in future developments areas, it is also recommended that the city complete development of Red Cliffs Park to provide parkland in an existing underserved area.

#### BENCHMARKING

A detailed benchmarking study was conducted that examined the parkland and facility provisions of other similar communities in Colorado, and the average of those communities was calculated. The communities in the comparison analysis were suggested by the POST Steering Committee and included Grand Junction, Palisade, Windsor, Louisville, Golden, Fort Lupton, Wheat Ridge, and Castle Rock. The communities of Montrose, Colorado and Lander, Wyoming were also contacted to participate in the analysis, but they declined to respond.

Table 2.9 provides a summary of the average number of facilities provided by the communities in the comparison. This table also indicates the amount of developed parkland they provide. The level of service for neighborhood parkland in the City of Fruita is 1.72 acres per 1,000 people, which is somewhat below the established standard of 2.0 acres per 1,000 people. Compared with the communities in the comparison, this is also somewhat below the

Table 2.9. Community Comparison Analysis

|   | FACILITY OR ACRES PER POPULATION                  | FACILITY, ACRES OR MILES PER POPULATION |
|---|---|---|
|   | AVERAGE OF OTHER COMMUNITIES PROVIDING FACILITIES | CITY OF FRUITA, CO                      |
| Recreational Facility                   | Avg. Population 23,811                            | Population 10,947                       |
| Population per Multi-Use Field          | 2,226   | 3,649                                   |
| Population per Softball/Baseball Field  | 2,560   | 2,737                                   |
| Population per Outdoor Basketball Court | 3,826   | 5,474                                   |
| Population per Tennis Court             | 2,901   | 5,474                                   |
| Population per Skate Park               | 19,265  | 10,947                                  |
| Population per Inline Hockey Rink       | 17,273  | 0                                       |
| Population per Swimming Pool            | 12,587  | 10,947                                  |
| Population per Gymnasium                | 18,220  | 0                                       |
| Community Parks                         |   |   |
| Developed Acres                         | 107   | 22.7                                    |
| Developed Park/Population (acres/1000)  | 4.4   | 2.07                                    |
| Parkland Standard (acres/1000 pop)      | 4.7   | 4                                       |
| Neighborhood Parks                      |   |   |
| Developed Acres                         | 54  | 18.8                                    |
| Developed Park/Population (acres/1000)  | 2.2   | 1.72                                    |
| Parkland Standard (acres/1000)          | 3.8   | 2.0                                     |

average of 2.2 acres per 1,000 people. The provision of neighborhood parkland in Fruita should also be taken in context with the overall distribution of neighborhood parks. Any deficit in neighborhood parkland compared to other communities can be addressed through the provision of additional neighborhood parks in a few key underserved areas and/or improved connectivity.

The level of service for community parks in the City of Fruita of 2.07 acres per 1,000 people is significantly below the established standard of 4.0 acres per 1,000 people. It is also significantly below the average of the communities in the comparison of 4.4 acres per 1,000 people. The established standard of the communities in the analysis is 4.7 acres per 1,000 people. Interestingly, most of these communities have not yet achieved their standards and are providing a level of service slightly lower than what they have adopted. This is very typical of communities across the U.S., as they are often in a catch-up mode and invariably struggle with implementation tools that allow them to achieve their targets.

The level of service for certain recreational amenities in Fruita is slightly lower than that of the average of other communities. Fruita is currently providing approximately 2/3 of the number of multi-use fields, outdoor basketball courts, and tennis courts per 1,000 people compared to other communities. Fruita also currently does not provide an in-line hockey rink nor a gymnasium, popular facilities in many communities. It should be noted, however, that Fruita recently passed a bond initiative for the construction of a new community recreation center, which will include a full-size gymnasium.

## NATIONAL AND STATE TRENDS

### *National Recreation Participation Trends*

The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) has commissioned an annual mail survey

of American households to determine what activities they participate in at least one time per year. Approximately 15,000 completed mail surveys are received and responses are balanced to reflect U.S. Census parameters for age, gender, race, household income, and geographic region. The responses reflect people age 6 and above. The last few SGMA surveys have been more comprehensive than previous years; therefore, benchmark data is not available for many of the categories.

As shown in Table 2.10, the most popular activity is recreational swimming, followed by walking, free weights, biking, fishing, hiking, and running/jogging. Many activities have seen a decline in total numbers over the past 12 years, including many of the organized team sports. However, three relatively new activities have made large gains in popularity – inline roller skating, free weight use, and mountain biking. Data was not available by region, but it is highly likely that mountain biking involves a larger percentage of the population in this region than nationally.

According to a 1997 SGMA report (Table 2.11), the most popular sports for youth based on “frequent” participation are:

Seven of the 10 most popular activities are team oriented; 8 of the 10 require specialized outdoor facilities. More recent data is not publicly available from this organization; but since 1997 when this study was conducted, it is well known in the parks and recreation industry that interest in in-line skating, skateboarding, disc golf, and rock climbing has increased dramatically, and lacrosse and BMX/hill jump biking are emerging in popularity.

### STATE OF COLORADO RECREATION TRENDS AND ISSUES

According to the Colorado SCORP 2008-2012, more than 75% of Coloradoans participate in outdoor

<sup>1</sup> Sporting Goods Manufacturer’s Association, study conducted annually by American Sports Data, Inc. 1997.

Table 2.10 Total National Participants by Activity – All Ages

| ACTIVITY                 | PERCENT CHANGE SINCE 1987 | 2004 PARTICIPANTS (IN 1,000s) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Recreational Swimming    | Na                        | 95,268                        |
| Recreational Walking     | Na                        | 92,677                        |
| Free Weights             | + 131%                    | 52,056                        |
| Recreational Bicycling   | Na                        | 52,021                        |
| Fishing                  | - 18%                     | 47,906                        |
| Fitness Walking          | + 48%                     | 40,299                        |
| Day Hiking               | Na                        | 39,334                        |
| Running/Jogging          | 0%                        | 37,310                        |
| Basketball               | - 4%                      | 34,223                        |
| Golf                     | - 2%                      | 25,723                        |
| Volleyball               | - 38%                     | 22,216                        |
| Tennis                   | - 13%                     | 18,346                        |
| In-Line Roller Skating   | + 270%                    | 17,348                        |
| Football                 | Na                        | 16,436                        |
| Softball                 | - 24%                     | 16,324                        |
| Soccer                   | + 3%                      | 15,900                        |
| Horseback Riding         | Na                        | 14,695                        |
| Yoga                     | Na                        | 12,414                        |
| Skateboarding            | - 3%                      | 10,592                        |
| Baseball                 | - 36%                     | 9,694                         |
| Artificial Wall Climbing | Na                        | 7,659                         |
| Mountain Biking          | + 253%                    | 5,334                         |

Sports Participation Trends 2004, Sports Research Partnership, April 2005.

activities on a weekly basis. Furthermore, more than 45% travel fewer than 4 miles to recreate outdoor on Monday through Thursday. Figure 2.1 shows both the percentage and actual numbers of participants for the 30 most popular outdoor recreation activities among Colorado residents from 1995 through 2006. Figure 2.2 illustrates Colorado’s ten most popular activities as a percentage of the population. As indicated in both graphics, several activities have a

Table 2.11 Total National “Frequent” Youth Participants

| ACTIVITY                            | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN U.S. (IN 1,000s) |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Basketball (25+ days/year)          | 12,803                                     |
| Soccer (25+ days/year)              | 6,971                                      |
| Baseball (25+ days/year)            | 5,229                                      |
| In-Line Skating (52+ days/year)     | 3,591                                      |
| Touch Football (25+ days/year)      | 3,590                                      |
| Volleyball (25+ days/year)          | 3,022                                      |
| Running/Jogging (100+ days/year)    | 2,824                                      |
| Slow-Pitch Softball (25+ days/year) | 2,717                                      |
| Tackle Football (52+ days/year)     | 2,079                                      |
| Fishing                             | 2,021                                      |

seen a drastic increase in participation over the last 10 years, including wildlife viewing, nature viewing/ photography, walking, picnicking, family gatherings, attending outdoor sporting events, and sight-seeing. It is apparent that many of these activities are more passive in nature, and participants would be seeking out places in which they can participate in these activities. The more active recreation activities that have seen an increase in popularity include bicycling, day hiking, swimming, running, camping, and fishing.

The SCORP also states that “Colorado’s proactive open space protection efforts provide the venues where the full range of Colorado’s outdoor recreation attractions are enabled to flourish for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. Yet today, Colorado faces a substantial challenge in satisfying the outdoor recreation demands of a rapidly expanding population, while meeting the responsibility to conserve the world class outdoor resources for which Colorado is renowned. Millions of visitors to Colorado continue to enjoy a wide diversity of



| Activity                         | Millions of Participants (1995) | Millions of Participants (2003) | Millions of Participants (2006) | Percent Change in Participants (1995-2006) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Walk for pleasure                | 2.04                            | 2.74                            | 3.08                            | 51%  |
| Family gathering outdoors        | 1.81                            | 2.54                            | 2.79                            | 54%  |
| Visit nature centers             | 1.75                            | 2.26                            | 2.50                            | 43%  |
| Picnicking                       | 1.68                            | 2.14                            | 2.35                            | 40%  |
| Attend outdoor sports events     | 1.59                            | 2.09                            | 2.28                            | 43%  |
| View wildlife (besides birds)    | 1.19                            | 1.87                            | 2.17                            | 83%  |
| Sightseeing                      | 1.85                            | 1.93                            | 2.17                            | 17%  |
| Day hiking                       | 1.28                            | 1.59                            | 1.85                            | 45%  |
| Visit historic sites             | 1.37                            | 1.59                            | 1.80                            | 32%  |
| Attend outdoor concerts, etc.    | 1.22                            | 1.56                            | 1.69                            | 39%  |
| Bicycling                        | 0.96                            | 1.51                            | 1.67                            | 75%  |
| Yard games, e.g., croquet        | 1.09                            | 1.45                            | 1.59                            | 46%  |
| Pool swimming                    | 1.12                            | 1.17                            | 1.33                            | 19%  |
| Swimming in lakes, streams, etc. | 0.82                            | 1.11                            | 1.29                            | 56%  |
| Running or jogging               | 0.82                            | 1.24                            | 1.28                            | 56%  |
| Developed camping                | 0.81                            | 1.14                            | 1.27                            | 58%  |
| Coldwater fishing                | 0.77                            | 1.00                            | 1.15                            | 50%  |
| View birds                       | 0.85                            | 0.97                            | 1.14                            | 34%  |
| Primitive camping                | 0.84                            | 0.89                            | 1.08                            | 29%  |
| Visit archeological sites        | 0.93                            | 0.89                            | 1.08                            | 16%  |
| Drive off-road                   | 0.65                            | 0.83                            | 1.04                            | 58%  |
| Backpacking                      | 0.48                            | 0.69                            | 0.80                            | 68%  |
| Golfing                          | 0.45                            | 0.66                            | 0.80                            | 76%  |
| Motorboating                     | 0.52                            | 0.67                            | 0.79                            | 53%  |
| Downhill skiing                  | 0.53                            | 0.66                            | 0.72                            | 37%  |
| Sledding                         | 0.33                            | 0.59                            | 0.63                            | 90%  |
| Warmwater fishing                | 0.34                            | 0.55                            | 0.62                            | 81%  |
| Softball                         | 0.42                            | 0.56                            | 0.57                            | 37%  |
| Horseback riding                 | 0.33                            | 0.43                            | 0.54                            | 64%  |
| Volleyball outdoors              | 0.44                            | 0.48                            | 0.52                            | 18%  |

FIGURE 2.1. 30 MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES IN COLORADO BY NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (1995-2006)

Source: National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), 2007.

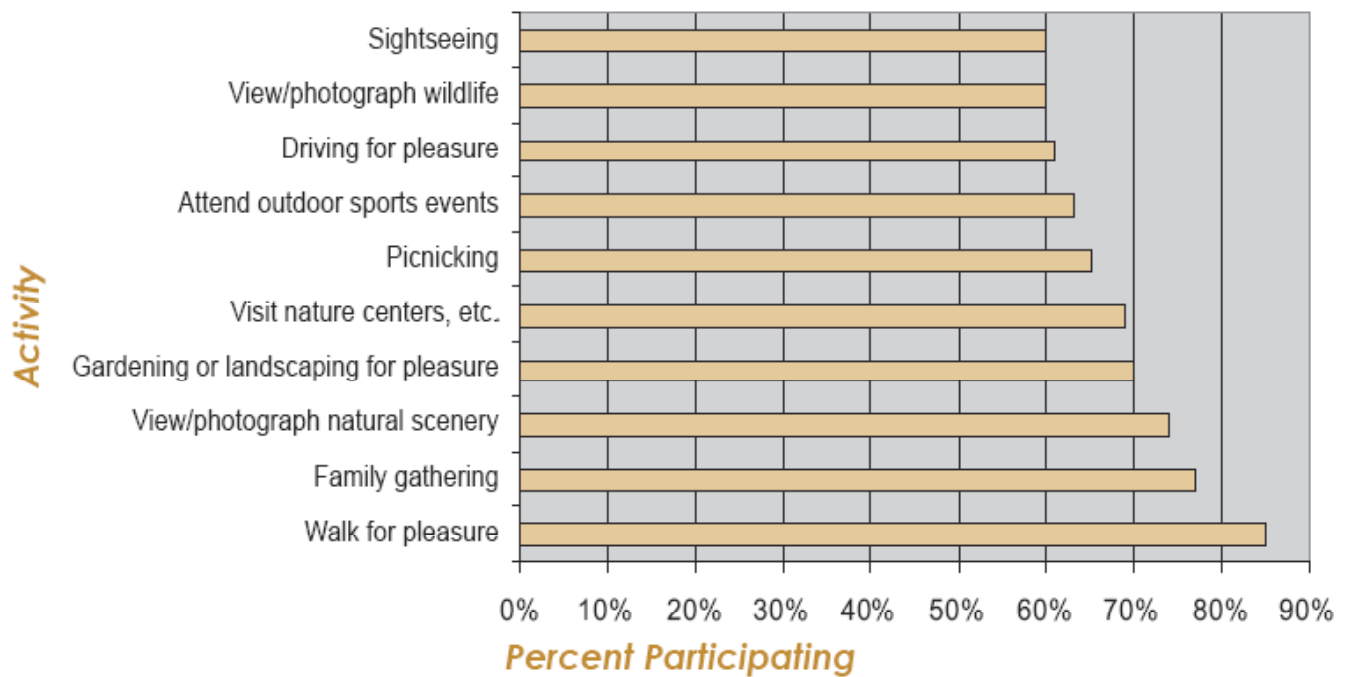


FIGURE 2.2. COLORADO'S TEN MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES IN 2006 (AS A PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION)  
 Source: National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), 2007.

outdoor recreation activities, yet recreation management agencies across the community, state, and federal spectrum report difficulty keeping up with public expectations for quality outdoors experiences.”

As such, there are several social, economic, and environmental trends and influences that have shaped the strategic action elements of the SCORP and should be considered, many of which are relevant in Fruita. These include trends in the way Coloradans choose to recreate, demographic trends of population growth, strong statewide open space protection efforts, recreation access, and unprecedented environmental conditions and stresses. The SCORP has identified five key issues affecting Colorado outdoor recreation that must be addressed to most effectively meet the challenge of satisfying the outdoor recreation demands of a rapidly expanding population, while meeting the responsibility to conserve the special outdoors resources for which Colorado is renowned. The following five issues and influences are considered the highest priorities:

- Issue #1: Effects of **Environmental Change** on Recreation and Tourism
- Issue #2: **Population and Demographic Change** and Related Recreation-Tourism Market Demands
- Issue #3: **Connection Between Public Health and Recreation**
- Issue #4: **Funding Shortfalls** for Recreation Management
- Issue #5: **Improved Integration of Recreation Interests and Needs** in land use and other relevant planning efforts

The 2008 SCORP provides a five-year framework for addressing priority outdoor recreation issues. The plan includes implementation recommendations, prioritized goals, objectives, and supporting actions that, when executed, will address the critical issues outdoor recreation interests face in Colorado. The specific goals and objectives to address the above issues are listed below.

**Goal 1: Address and/or minimize the potential negative effects of environmental change on recreation and tourism.**

- Objective 1.1. Develop a better understanding of how climate change may impact recreation and tourism in Colorado.
- Objective 1.2. Lessen the impact of future climate change on Colorado's recreation and tourism economy, while dealing with some of the impacts that are likely to occur.
- Objective 1.3. Support efforts to mitigate and manage wildfire and infestations (e.g., bark beetle and nonnative invasive species) that will impact the overall quality of Colorado's recreational opportunities.

**Goal 2: Assess, understand, and adapt to the growing demands and changing recreation and tourism preferences of residents and visitors.**

- Objective 2.1. Understand the recreation and tourism preferences associated with growing market segments.
- Objective 2.2. Identify and coordinate strategies to evaluate appropriate levels and types of service for expanding user groups.
- Objective 2.3. Implement the steps necessary to meet changing recreation user demands.

**Goal 3: Promote outdoor recreation as a means of improving public health among Coloradans, particularly youth.**

- Objective 3.1. Integrate efforts committed to fostering the connection between public health and outdoor recreation.
- Objective 3.2. Develop new policies and initiatives to increase participation in outdoor recreation.
- Objective 3.3. Implement a statewide educational and awareness campaign to encourage people to be more active by enjoying Colorado's outdoors.

**Goal 4: Address funding challenges associated with maintaining and managing Colorado's outdoor recreation resources.**

- Objective 4.1. Determine specific funding shortfalls for recreation management partners and identify potential solutions.
- Objective 4.2. Educate the public and decision-makers about funding needs and benefits of outdoor recreation to generate support for implementing strategies.
- Objective 4.3. Improve the tracking of local, regional, and statewide recreation demands, economic impact, and current funding initiatives and needs.

**Goal 5: Sufficiently account for outdoor recreation needs in local, regional, and state-wide planning efforts.**

- Objective 5.1. Further integrate outdoor recreation and public land interests within community and regional land use planning.
- Objective 5.2. Incorporate outdoor recreation and public lands into local, regional, and state planning processes.
- Objective 5.3. Ensure that recreation interests are represented in future planning and permitting processes relevant to major land use decisions.

### ***Recreation Programs Participation and Facility Usage***

Many of the large, intensively used facilities in a parks and recreation system are used by participants or organized programs. Understanding how these programs use the parks allows a community to identify specific activities that may be underserved by facilities. Programs that are seeing an increase in participation may indicate a need for more facilities. In addition, different age groups, abilities, and skills often require different types and sizes of facilities. Understanding the differences in these user groups

will help Fruita more specifically determine what needs to be provided in the system.

To determine facility usage, City of Fruita Parks and Recreation personnel, as well as local interest groups who provide recreational activities, were interviewed to determine how their organization and programs utilize Fruita facilities. The interest groups interviewed were also asked for information regarding the quality of facilities they use, the need for additional facilities, the size of their organization, and how it functions within the community. The City of Fruita offers a variety of organized sports to the community, and a number of other programmed sports are available from nonprofit and private organizations in Fruita and the Grand Valley, including the Fruita Little League Association, the Grand Valley Lacrosse Association, Grand Mesa Youth Soccer, Grand Valley Disc Golf Association, Western Flyers Youth Project, Mesa County Junior Football Association, and the Dolphins Swim Club. Other private and nonprofit organizations and interest groups providing unique recreational opportunities and civic functions were interviewed as well, and include Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), Mesa Land Trust, Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), United States Forest Service (USFS), Fruita Historical Board, Colorado Welcome Center, private equestrian users, and local businesses including Rimrock Adventures among others.

### ***Organized Sports Programs***

Providers report that there has been steady participation in youth baseball over the last few years in Fruita. Youth baseball, softball, and T-ball in Fruita are provided primarily through the Fruita Little League Association. Fruita Little League primarily utilizes the fields at Little Salt Wash Park, and reports the facilities to be in excellent condition. They do report the need for additional netting to catch fly balls however. Over the last 3 years, Fruita

Little League reports total participation of more than 500 players for all of their programs.

Youth football in Fruita is provided through the Mesa County Junior Football Association and youth flag football is provided by the City of Fruita Parks and Recreation Department. Participation in flag football has remained steady over the last few years. Fields at Little Salt Wash Park are primarily used to host practices and games.

Youth soccer in Fruita is provided through the Grand Mesa Youth Soccer program and Peewee soccer is provided primarily through the City of Fruita Parks and Recreation Department. Participation in flag football has remained steady over the last few years. Fields at Little Salt Wash Park are primarily used to host practices and games.

Youth swimming in Fruita is provided through the Dolphins Swim Club; members swim in the summer season and utilize the outdoor pool at Ore Park. Swimming lessons are provided through the City of Fruita Parks and Recreation Department. Participation has been steady over the last few years.

Organized youth basketball in Fruita is provided through the City of Fruita Parks and Recreation Department. Currently basketball is offered for boys age 3 through 10, as well developmental basketball. Programs are also offered for girls in grades 3 through 6. Participation in all programs has been steady over the last few years. All basketball programs utilize gymnasiums at local elementary, middle schools, as well as the high school.

Youth lacrosse in Fruita is provided through Grand Valley Lacrosse Program. Currently, all games are held on fields in City of Grand Parks. However, providers report that having a field available in Fruita to accommodate practice and occasional games would be desirable.



### ***Other Recreation Programs and Activities***

There are several other organized and informal recreation programs and activities that occur with frequency in Fruita and the region. One of the more popular activities is organized disc golf. Organized disc golf is provided through the Grand Valley Disc Golf Association (GVDGA), who host week leagues as well as yearly tournaments, skills clinics, and charity events. The GVDGA utilizes courses throughout the Grand Valley, including the 9-hole course at Little Salt Wash Park. Representatives from the GVDGA report that having more courses near the Colorado River or other bodies of water, as well as course that play through wooded areas would be ideal. They suggest that the construction and maintenance of courses is low cost, and that local clubs are very good about keeping them clean and willing to perform maintenance in exchange for usage of the course for tournaments and other events. They also suggest that courses can often be designed into the underutilized areas of current parks.

Equestrian use is also a highly popular activity in Fruita and the surrounding areas. Organized trail rides are offered through Rimrock Adventures, as well as a weekly rodeo. There are also loosely organized citizen groups advocating more equestrian trails and improved access to surrounding trail networks. The majority of equestrian use occurs on public lands surrounding the City of Fruita, such as McInnis Canyon NCA. Interviews with local equestrian users suggest there is a lack of accessibility to trails in town and the ability to get to trails outside of town from within town. In general, they would like to see soft surface shoulders for equestrians along some of the paved trails in town (i.e., Big Salt Wash, Little Salt Wash), and would like to see the community support trails for all uses.

Arguably, the most popular and well known activity in Fruita is mountain biking. Over the last 20 years, Fruita and the surrounding region have become one

of the premier mountain biking destinations in the U.S., and people come from all over the world to participate in this activity. A number of private businesses, as well as the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), were contacted regarding mountain biking in Fruita. COPMOBA indicated it is likely there are more than 100,000 people per year who utilize the Kokopelli Trail as well as other trails on surrounding lands (primarily BLM lands), with spring and fall being the busiest times of year. From their perspective, they would like to see trail access to Loma from Fruita, which they consider to be a high priority. They indicate it is difficult to ride from Fruita to outlying trailheads. Improved access to the Colorado River would also be a great benefit.

Other activities popular in the area include rafting on the Colorado River; hiking; nature and wildlife viewing; scenic driving; and fishing and hunting for waterfowl along the Colorado River. Rimrock Adventures, in addition to equestrian rides and rodeo, also offers guided raft trips, equipment rental, and a shuttle service for white water and mountain biking. Critical issues for Rimrock include the placement of a signalized crossing along SH340 for safer access to BLM trails on the west side of the highway; formalized parking along SH340; connection of the future Colorado Riverfront Trail to McInnis Canyon NCA; and repairing and opening the historical bridge, as it is critical to trail connectivity north and south of the river and to surrounding public lands.

### SUMMARY OF NEEDS

#### ***Existing and Future Recreation Facilities Needs***

Table 2.12 lists the current level of service for various recreation facilities that groups and individuals use in Fruita, as well as the average level of service for communities in the benchmarking exercise.

Table 2.12 Recreational Facility Needs

| Recreation Facility                     | Current (2008) # of Facilities in Fruita | FACILITIES PER POPULATION*          |  | 2008 NEEDS (POP. 10,947)                                  |              | 2025 NEEDS (POP. 25,735)                                  |              |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------------|---|--------------|
|   |  | Average Level of Service for Fruita | Average Level of Service for Benchmark Communities | # of Facilities Needed to Meet Average Level of Service** | 2008 Deficit | # of Facilities Needed to Meet Average Level of Service** | 2008 Deficit |
| Population per Multi-Use Field          | 3  | 3,649                               | 2,226  | 5   | 2            | 11  | 8            |
| Population per Softball/Baseball Field  | 4  | 2,737                               | 2,560  | 4   | 0            | 10  | 6            |
| Population per Outdoor Basketball Court | 2  | 5,474                               | 3,826  | 3   | 1            | 7   | 5            |
| Population per Tennis Court             | 2  | 5,474                               | 2,901  | 4   | 2            | 9   | 7            |
| Population per Skate Park               | 1  | 10,947                              | 19,265   | 1   | 0            | 1   | 0            |
| Population per In-line Hockey Rink      | 0  | 0                                   | 17,273   | 1   | 1            | 1   | 1            |
| Population per Swimming Pool            | 1  | 10,947                              | 12,587   | 1   | 0            | 2   | 1            |
| Population per Gymnasium                | 0  | 0                                   | 18,220   | 1   | 1            | 1   | 1            |

Based on these levels of service, current and future recreation facility needs and deficits are shown.

According to this analysis, which uses a standard based on the average of communities in the benchmark analysis, there is a need for 2 additional multi-use fields, 2 additional tennis courts, 1 additional outdoor basketball court, an in-line hockey rink, and a gymnasium. The need for specific facilities to accommodate future growth should also be considered. As Fruita continues to grow, there will be continuing pressure to provide additional recreation facilities to meet new demands.

It should be noted that the analysis above is only one tool in determining recreation facility needs. Other factors should be considered

as well, including differences in the age, quality, accessibility, or other design characteristics of the facilities, as well as the needs expressed by Park and Recreation Department staff and local user groups.

Sports such as tennis, soccer, softball, baseball, football, and lacrosse are typically enjoyed by a significant percentage of the population, especially families with children. These facilities in developed parks are in demand by both city programs and nonprofit sports organizations.

When comparing the number of courts, gyms, and fields that the City of Chico provides with the numbers provided by other similar communities, Fruita's



level of service is only slightly lower. The number of tennis and basketball courts is half, and multi-use fields, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts is approximately 2/3 of the communities in the benchmark exercise. Additionally, Fruita is lacking an in-line hockey rink and a gymnasium. However, a new gymnasium will be provided as part of the new community recreation center to be built.

When looking to the future and to accommodate growth, Fruita will have a need for all facilities, except a skate park. Currently, communities in the benchmark analysis are providing skate parks at 1 per approximately 19,265 residents. However, due to the growing popularity of these amenities, Fruita may want to consider the addition of smaller skate elements in other parks. Also, due to the dated nature of the existing skate park and the fact that its current location (Ore Park) will be undergoing a large disturbance during construction of the future community recreation center, now would be an ideal time to enhance and upgrade the skate park. Redesigning Ore Park and upgrading the skate park in conjunction with construction of the community recreation center would allow the city to establish a “new” park and place modern amenities in concert with the newly constructed building.

Comments from the public, staff, and Park and Recreation Advisory Board members have indicated a need for additional recreation facilities to identify Fruita as a unique place to live, work, and play. These types of amenities will not only provide variety for residents, but will also serve to attract visitors and capitalize on the tourist economy. Some of the demand has been for different types of facilities that are growing in popularity across the country, as well as in Fruita, including disc golf facilities and bicycle terrain parks. Disc golf is rapidly gaining popularity throughout the country, as well as in Colorado and the Grand Valley more specifically. Organized disc golf is very popular and the existing courses in

throughout the Grand Valley, including the 9-hole course at Little Salt Wash Park, receive heavy use. The Grand Valley Disc Golf Association reports the demand and need for an additional course in Fruita, preferably one that is near water and would play through wooded areas.

There is also a strong desire within the community for a bicycle terrain park. These types of facilities are rapidly gaining popularity around the country as a unique amenity provided by parks and recreation departments. With the huge popularity of mountain biking and cycling, in general, in Fruita, the addition of such a facility would provide residents and visitors with an additional unique recreation destination in the community. Such a facility would blend well with Fruita’s cycling image, and provide additional recreational opportunities not currently found here. This facility should be centrally located, preferably near the primary trail system, and with access to surrounding trail systems.

Another unique idea that could be incorporated into the park and recreation system in Fruita, which is not found in many places, is an “exurban” park. The city currently owns and maintains the Mountain Lakes properties south of town, surrounded by the Grand Mesa National Forest. Representatives of the USFS have expressed a strong interest in continuing to partner with the city in development of these lands as an extension of the municipal park and recreation system. There are currently limited facilities at these properties, including an informal trail network, pit toilets, dispersed campsites, and picnic facilities. The city should consider improving these facilities and incorporating other amenities to include a high ropes course, more campsites, and possibly an outdoor environmental education/interpretive facility.

### *Existing and Future Parkland Needs*

As described earlier in section C, there is an existing deficit for both neighborhood and community parkland in Fruita. Based on the parkland standards set in the 2008 Community Plan, there is currently a need for approximately 3.2 acres of neighborhood parkland and approximately 21.3 acres of community parkland. Due to projected population growth, there is a need for additional parkland. To accommodate this additional population and maintain the neighborhood and community parkland level of service as defined in the 2008 Community Plan, the city will need to acquire an additional 60 acres of community parkland and an additional 30 acres of neighborhood parkland beyond what is currently needed today. As such, there is a total need (both today and by 2025) for 33.2 acres of neighborhood parkland and 81.3 acres of community parkland. This translates to a total need 4 to 12 neighborhood parks and 2 to 4 community parks by the projected buildout population of 25,735 residents.

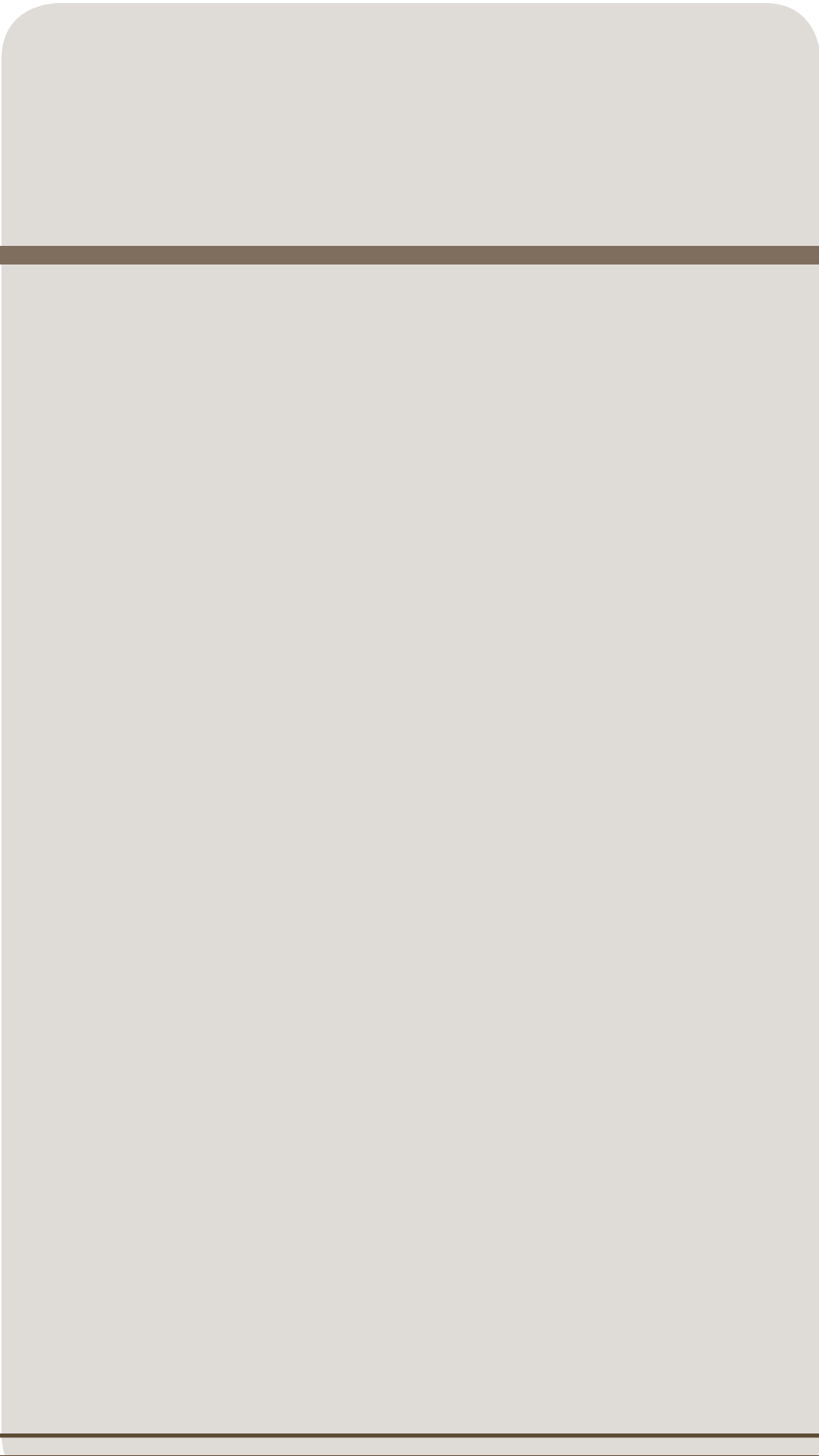
### *Trail Needs*

Time and again, Colorado residents indicate in surveys that the most frequent activities in city parks, trails, and open space systems are walking, nature observation, bicycling, picnicking, and jogging. This is also true in Fruita. Based on discussions with Fruita staff and with input from the Steering Committee, stakeholder groups, and citizens at public open houses, there is a strong need and desire for additional primary-level trails and trail connections within the city. Currently, there is somewhat limited opportunity for residents to easily and safely travel or commute throughout Fruita via alternative transportation. While the city has taken steps to begin construction of individual segments of primary trails, many of these sections do not currently connect with each other, nor do they connect with key destinations, such as parks, schools, downtown, or the Colorado River. Many existing segments have

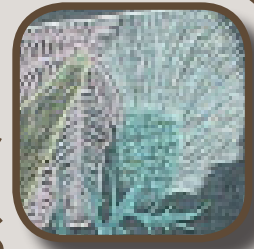
taken advantage of existing corridors (such as along drainages), including Big and Little Salt Washes. This practice should continue, by aligning trails as much as possible along these drainages. Other ideal locations would include canal and ditch corridors. Canals and ditches represent existing corridors, which make ideal locations for trails and often have the width necessary to accommodate them. The city should make every attempt to secure agreements with local canal and ditch companies to allow placement of trails along these corridors, as long as it would not interfere with their ability to operate and maintain them for water delivery. Establishment of primary multi-purpose trails, based on the standards set forth earlier in this chapter, would also allow canal and ditch companies access for full-size vehicles on paved surfaces.

Another critical trail alignment necessary in Fruita is the Colorado Riverfront Trail. The Colorado Riverfront Trail Commission, in conjunction with Mesa County and Colorado State Parks, has been working over the last several years to plan this trail and secure the necessary fee title properties and easements for its placement and construction. This practice should continue, with full involvement by the City of Fruita for establishment of the trail within city limits. When complete, the construction of this trail would provide a truly unique recreational experience along the Colorado River, connecting the communities of Loma, Fruita, and Grand Junction. It would allow for uninterrupted travel between the communities and serve as a major destination for visitors to the area.





# 03 VISION, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES



As part of the process of developing the POST Master Plan, specific principles and policies were developed to guide the future development of parks, trails, and recreation within the city. The mission, vision, principles, and policies directly support those of the city as defined in the 2008 Community Plan. The vision defines the desired outcome of the community in its provision of parks and recreation. The mission defines how the Parks and Recreation Department will achieve that vision. Principles and policies then provide specific direction to the community and its governing body in support of the vision, and provide the policy basis from which decisions can be made. Through these principles and policies, the City of Fruita is making the statement that its commitment to parks, recreation, and trails in the community is one that will make the city's parks and recreation the best possible.

## *Vision*

*“Provide a comprehensive system of open space, parks, recreation facilities, and trails.”*

## *Mission*

*Principle OPR 1. The City of Fruita, in cooperation with partners, shall work to preserve the natural character of the washes, creeks, and other environmental features in the planning area.*

*Policy OPR 1.1 - Natural Resources.* Conserve water quality, natural hydrology and habitat, and preserve biodiversity through conservation of the Colorado River, major stream corridors and washes, as well as associated wetlands, floodplains, drains, and riparian areas as important green spaces, wildlife habitat, waterway corridors, and trail linkages.

Key corridors include:

- Adobe Creek
- Reed Wash
- Little Salt Wash
- Big Salt Wash
- Colorado River

*OPR 1.1.1* Place greater emphasis on the use of nonirrigated landscapes, native species, and low water requiring plant materials.

*OPR 1.1.2* Implement area-specific resource management plans for open spaces that define the appropriate level of public use and ecosystem management strategies.

*OPR 1.1.3* Provide for integrated pest management when/where necessary.

*Policy OPR 1.2 - Buffer Criteria.* Protect sensitive resources by preserving natural buffers from

the edge of natural features or 100-year floodplain (whichever is greater).

Recommended buffers include:

- Ponds, creeks, streams, drainages, canals, and wetlands: 50 feet
- Adobe Creek, Reed Wash, Little Salt Wash, Big Salt Wash, rare, threatened or endangered wildlife habitat: 100 feet
- Colorado River: 300 feet

***Policy OPR 1.3 - Buffer Agreements.*** Protect buffer and setbacks in perpetuity through development agreements by donating or selling the land, or a conservation easement on the land, to an accredited land trust or relevant public agency.

***Policy OPR 1.4 - Sensitive Areas.*** Protect sensitive areas and other important resource values within Fruita's GMA. These may include:

- Lands that are constrained due to environmental sensitivity or geologic hazards
- 100-year floodplains designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Lands with important scenic values or that contribute to the visual quality of Fruita
- Lands with important cultural values
- Rare vegetation
- Wetlands
- Severe slopes
- Lands with important wildlife habitat or other natural value, such as nesting and production areas
- Winter ranges, feeding areas, and concentration areas for threatened and endangered species, species of special concern, or indicator species

- Wildlife movement corridors
- Lands that have important recreational values
- Lands with important cultural or historic values

***OPR 1.4.1*** Where practical, avoid construction of active developed recreation areas and facilities in environmentally sensitive areas.

***OPR 1.4.2*** Seasonally close areas and trails as warranted to protect sensitive resources, such as wildlife habitat areas, if necessary.

***Policy OPR 1.5 - Floodplain.*** Discourage development within the 100-year floodplain as defined and mapped by FEMA or state or local floodplain management entity, whichever has been done most recently.

***Policy OPR 1.6 - Wetlands.*** If sensitive resources are disturbed, such as wetlands, compensate by on-site or off-site wetland restoration of equal or greater amounts.

***Policy OPR 1.7 - Visual Resources.*** Maintain the visual integrity of Fruita's landscape by identifying distinctive scenic or topographic features, such as ridgelines or unique vegetation, and either avoiding them or using innovative design techniques to integrate them cohesively into new development.

***Principle OPR 2. Protect the citizens of Fruita from the effects of man-made or natural hazards (geologic, soils, stormwater, air pollution, odor, noise, and wildfire).***

***Policy OPR 2.1 - Hazard Identification.*** Any proposed land use or development must identify hazardous areas, i.e., floodplains, drainage areas, steep slope areas, geological fault areas, and other areas hazardous to life or property.



**Policy OPR 2.2 - Restricted Development.** Development will not be allowed in hazardous areas, to minimize the risk of injury to persons and loss of property, unless appropriate mitigation measures are taken. Recreational uses may be appropriate depending on the hazard, and will be evaluated by the city on a case-by-case basis.

**Policy OPR 2.3 - Design.** Proposed land uses will address soil, erosion, and surface geologic characteristics of the development site through proper design, engineering, and construction.

*OPR 2.3.1* Use permeable pavements, recycled materials, locally manufactured products, locally available materials, and low energy requiring facilities and technologies to the greatest extent practicable.

*OPR 2.3.2* Protect water quality through implementation of “Best Management Practices” in the design of stormwater conveyance and detention facilities.

***Principle OPR 3. Working collaboratively with landowners and public and private agencies, such as the Grand Valley Irrigation Company, the City of Fruita shall take the initiative in expanding its off-street trail system.***

**Policy OPR 3.1 - Regional Connectivity.** Further connect the City of Fruita with adjacent recreational amenities, including the Colorado River and nearby public lands, through the development of a regional trail system. Integrate off-street trails with on-street trails and bike routes, in accordance with Principle MT-5 of the 2008 Community Plan.

**Policy OPR 3.2 - Washes and Drainages.** Link the major wash trails and drainageways from the Colorado River and BLM lands to the south to the

new community separators to the north. These washes include Reed Wash, Big Salt Wash, Little Salt Wash, and Adobe Creek.

**Policy OPR 3.3 – Canals and Ditches.** In cooperation with local canal and ditch companies, locate trails along canals and ditches where possible.

**Policy OPR 3.3 - Regional Cooperation.** Continue to cooperate with other agencies and organizations in implementing the Colorado River Greenway and Trail system.

**Policy OPR 3.4 - Advocacy.** Continue to advocate for an expanded trail system in coordination with the Riverfront Commission, the Urban Trails Committee, GOCO, the local canal and ditch companies, and other agencies.

**Policy OPR 3.5 - Trailhead, Parking, and Linkage Design.** Provide carefully planned and attractively developed parking areas at trailheads and trail linkages to facilitate trail usage.

**Policy OPR 3.6 - Trail Promotion.** Promote trail connections between schools, parks, recreational areas, tourist areas, neighborhoods, centers, and downtown. Create a secondary nonmotorized, on-street trail system to enhance trail choices.

*OPR 3.6.1* Locate trails to provide pleasant and safe user experiences.

*OPR 3.6.2* Provide opportunities for trail loops with areas of interest along the routes.

*OPR 3.6.3* Provide both paved and nonpaved trails to accommodate a variety of users.

**Policy OPR 3.7 – Multi-functional Design.** Encourage multi-functional, “grade-separated crossings” (bridges, roadway underpasses, and other means) at selected locations (such as I-70) for the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

**Policy OPR 3.8 – Multi-use Design.** Design and develop the primary off-street trail system for a

diversity of nonmotorized uses, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.

*Principle OPR 4. The City of Fruita will create a system of parks, which will include neighborhood parks, community parks, and recreation facilities, to provide a high level of access and amenities.*

**Policy OPR 4.1 - Neighborhood and Community Parks.** Residents should have convenient and safe access to a system of parks that includes neighborhood and community parks.

*OPR 4.1.1* Promote a balanced system of different sized parks; developed properties and natural conservation lands; specialized recreation, cultural, and arts facilities; and varied recreational programming.

*OPR 4.1.2* Design parks to provide for a variety of experiences that appeal to a broad range of interests, abilities, and ages.

*OPR 4.1.3* Provide accessible facilities and rehabilitate existing facilities to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Policy OPR 4.2 - Pocket Parks.** If constructed as part of a new development, pocket parks should be maintained and owned by a homeowners association. They should be of sufficient size to provide an appropriate neighborhood amenity. They should provide public access; however, pocket parks do not replace the need for the provision of neighborhood or community parks.

**Policy OPR 4.3 - Park Dedication.** Continue to require park dedication or fees to maintain a high level of service. The city should continue to build new neighborhood and community parks in a manner that minimizes overuse and ensures easy access. Parks should be constructed at adequate sizes (excluding unusable land such as drainage corridors, floodplains, steep slopes etc.) that

provide amenities to serve the needs of a diverse population.

*OPR 4.3.1* Provide 2.0 acres of Neighborhood Parkland and 4.0 acres of Community Parkland for every 1,000 residents.

*OPR 4.4* Programs. Establish a range of recreation facilities and programs that serve all age groups, from the very young to the very old.

*OPR 4.4.1* Keep abreast of current trends and changing demands for recreational activities by periodically conducting surveys and updating the POST Master Plan as needed.

**Policy OPR 4.5 - Cooperation.** Fruita, in cooperation with other entities, including the school district and State Parks, continues to provide a variety of park facilities and programs to enhance recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.

*OPR 4.5.1.* Fruita will pursue the use of inter-governmental and joint-use agreements with other agencies and entities, such as Mesa County School District and Grand Valley Irrigation Company, wherever possible to promote the development of parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities.

**Policy OPR 4.6 - Multi-use Facilities.** When possible, the city should construct multi-use recreation facilities (e.g., school/ recreation facilities etc.), especially within designated centers. The City of Fruita will strive to locate schools and parks adjacent to each other wherever possible.

**Policy OPR 4.7 - Land Acquisition.** Acquire land for future parks and schools before development occurs and land costs make it more difficult to acquire adequate sites.

**Policy OPR 4.8 - School and Trail Accessibility.** The City of Fruita will promote future schools and parks to be located where they are accessible from the trail system.

**Policy OPR 4.9 - Locations Along Washes.** Since planned trails are primarily located along drains

and washes, land for future schools and parks should be acquired along washes and ditch and canal alignments wherever possible. This will allow not only safe access, but will provide nearby “outdoor classrooms” for study and exploration.

*Principle OPR 5. Develop and maintain parks, trails, recreation facilities, and open lands at a high level of quality that is appropriate for the location, the type of use, and nature of the facility.*

*Policy OPR 5.1 – Historic and Cultural Resources.* Incorporate historic and cultural resources and art into park designs to celebrate the unique aspects of the community of Fruita and provide distinctiveness between parks.

*Policy OPR 5.2 – Maintenance and Design Standards.* Establish maintenance and design standards and management plans for the various types of parks and other properties the city maintains.

*Policy OPR 5.3 – Maintenance Assessment.* Annually assess needed maintenance and renovation projects systemwide, including bringing existing facilities up to ADA standards.

*Policy OPR 5.4 – Manage Use.* Manage fields to prevent overuse and irreparable damage to playing surfaces.

*Policy OPR 5.5 – Maintenance Funding.* Adequately staff and fund maintenance and operations to increase the level of maintenance to acceptable standards, and adjust staffing levels to keep pace with the addition of properties to the system.

*Principle OPR 6. Develop adequate land acquisition, development, operations and*

*maintenance funding sources, and tools to realize the POST Master Plan vision.*

*Policy OPR 6.1 – Fair Share Funding.* Ensure that new residential development contributes its fair share for parks and recreation facilities to the extent allowed by state law. Clearly define developer responsibilities.

*Policy OPR 6.2 – Partnerships and Grants.* Seek public-private partnerships where mutually beneficial and appropriate, coordinate with other agencies, and seek partnerships with these agencies to leverage available funding. Aggressively seek grants from available sources where possible.

*Policy OPR 6.3.* – Fund Departmental Growth. Support funding for additional park and recreation staff positions as the open lands, recreation, parks, and trails system grows.

*Policy OPR 6.4.* – Update Standards as Necessary. Periodically update park design standards in subdivision, zoning, and other land use and development regulations to incorporate the POST Master Plan recommendations.

*Policy OPR 6.5.* – Special Improvement Districts. Use residential special improvement districts or other special districts for park acquisition, development and/or maintenance where others means do not exist.

*Principle OPR 7. Monitor, assess, and adjust existing intergovernmental and joint-use agreements, tools, goals, policies, action plan, and priorities to meet changing or unforeseen conditions and/or needs in Fruita.*

*Policy OPR 7.1.* – Monitor Effectiveness. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of past and current tools for providing parks, recreation programs, trails, conservation lands, and recreation facilities.

*Policy OPR 7.2.* – Periodically Review and Update. Review and, if needed, update the POST Master Plan for Fruita every 5 years in concert with City Council, and updates to the Community Plan, transportation plans, sub-area plans, and state statutes to reflect changing needs and opportunities.

*Policy OPR 7.3.* – Monitor Progress. Monitor annual progress towards achieving the goals.

*Principle OPR 8. The city’s parks, trails, and open space system will promote tourism and economic development, serving to attract visitors to the community through the provision of recreational opportunities that are unique to Fruita and the surrounding environment.*

*Policy OPR 8.1.* - Integrated Planning. Integrate parks, recreation, and trail planning with other city planning efforts.

*Policy OPR 8.2.* – Festival Space. Provide festival and performance spaces, as part of the parks system, that are capable of hosting the unique national and international events Fruita has become famous for.

*Policy OPR 8.3.* - Connections with Surrounding Resources. Strengthen connections between the Colorado River corridor, surrounding public lands, and downtown.

*Principle OPR 9. The Colorado River will be celebrated as one of the community’s most important assets. The river corridor is a healthy aquatic resource that serves a variety of ecological functions, while also serving to attract visitors to the city, contributing to the overall economic vitality of the*

*community and providing a variety of recreational opportunities for Fruita residents and visitors.*

*Policy OPR 9.1.* - Riverfront Park. Fruita will begin to plan for the eventual development of a riverfront park between the Old Historic Fruita Bridge and SH340. This park would be an important component of the overall Riverfront open space, trails, and park system in this area, and could contain a wide variety of amenities, including community festival areas, boat put-ins/take-outs, fishing areas, picnic and playground areas, turf grass for various field sports, environmental education center, and other public uses compatible with the environment of the Colorado River.

*OPR 9.1.1.* A future riverfront park would serve as an amenity that encourages economic development and vitality within the community, serving to attract residents and visitors alike.

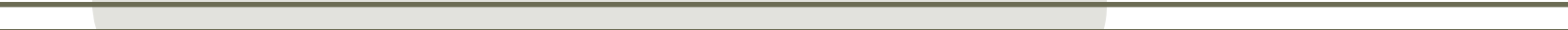
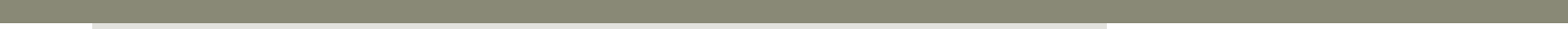
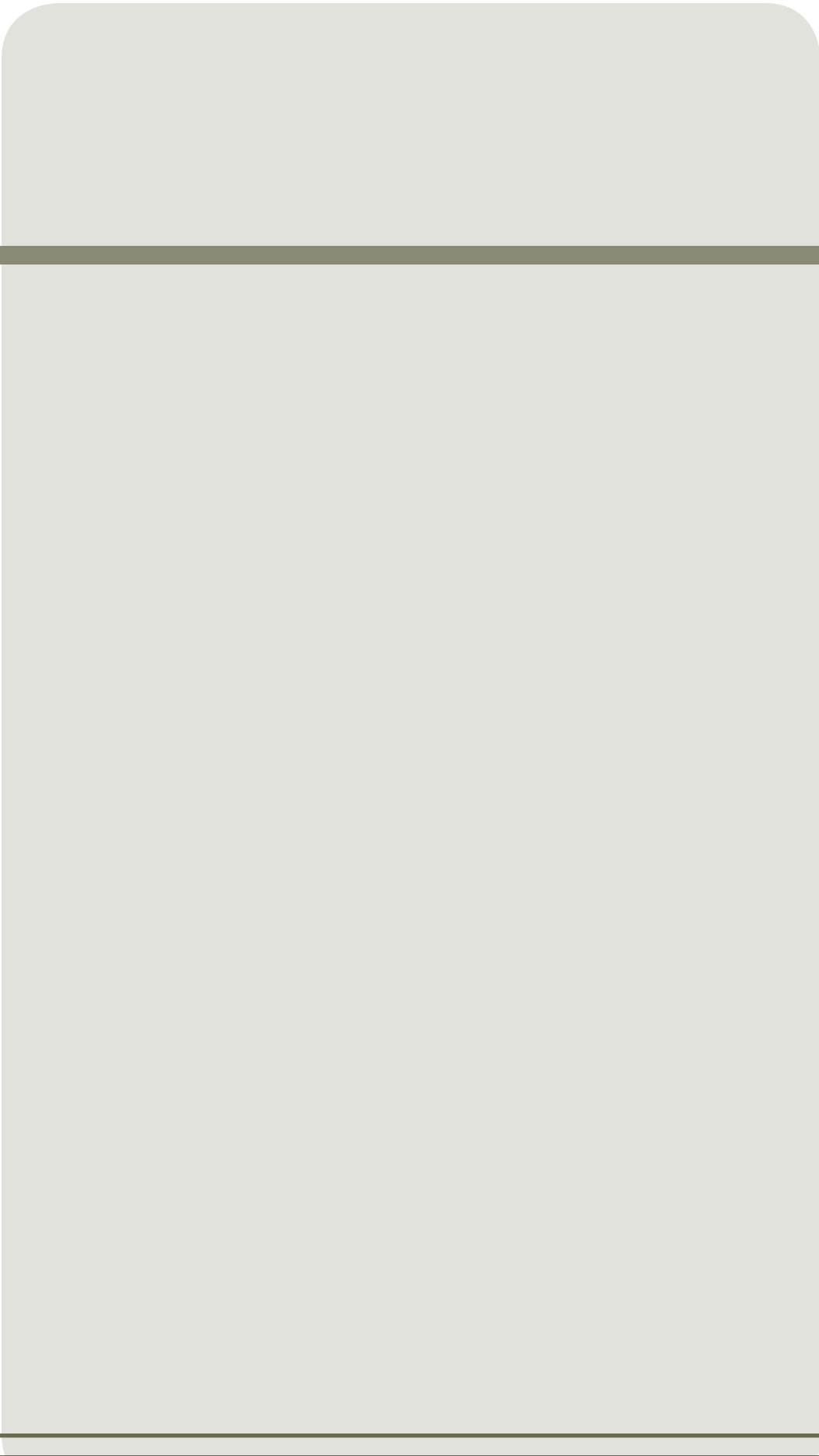
*OPR 9.1.2.* Complementary private redevelopment, and development adjacent to or near the Colorado River, would be encouraged to help define a unique sense of place for Fruita. However, any future development will be complementary to, and shall not compromise the natural values, integrity, character, and recreational experience of the area.

*Policy OPR 9.2.* Trail Nexus. The area along the Colorado River, in the vicinity of the proposed Riverfront Park, will be encouraged and celebrated as a central trail nexus. This area will serve as a hub for the city’s primary off-street trail system, a central point of entry for the future Riverfront Trail, and an important connection to the surrounding soft surface trail network.

*Principle OPR 10. Fruita will begin to plan for the development of the Fruita Reservoirs mountain parkland properties, an “exurban” park experience. Similar to former Denver*

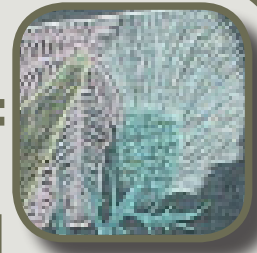
*Mayor Robert Speer, who founded the Denver Mountain Parks System, community leaders in Fruita believe that mountain parks are as key to quality of life and economic advantage as urban neighborhood and community parks. Having these lands as municipal parkland makes living in Fruita a priceless privilege, which can be attained in few communities throughout the country.*

**Policy OPR 10.1.** – Mountain Park. Fruita will develop its reservoir mountain parklands to provide unique outdoor recreational opportunities for Fruita residents. A site-specific master plan will be developed to determine the exact type and size of facilities needed; however, facilities to consider include a campground, high ropes course, environmental education facility, archery course, and interconnection to the surrounding trail system on USFS lands.





# 04 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MASTER PLAN



This chapter includes specific project recommendations that are needed to meet existing and future parks, open space, and trail needs in the City of Fruita. A master plan map is also included that graphically depicts the locations of specific project recommendations. These recommendations include ways to address existing deficiencies, projected needs, changes in recreational habits, and other issues identified through the inventory and needs assessment. The recommendations are grouped into categories: trails, parks, and open space.

## A. TRAILS

As described in previous chapters, the community would like to complete the trail along Little Salt Wash, and desires to continue to develop an extensive multi-purpose trail system throughout the community. Ideally, this should be addressed through both a network of off-street trails as well as on-street bike lanes and street crossing enhancements, which allow people to walk and bicycle throughout the community. This master plan addresses the off-street trail system. Future on-street bike routes and pedestrian connections should be addressed through a more thorough, community-wide plan that is integrated with the overall transportation plan for the city, and which includes specific design standards for on-street bike lanes and pedestrian walks. Map 4, Master Plan, shows the location of new proposed off-street trail connections. The following is a description of these proposed trail projects.

## PRIMARY MULTI-PURPOSE TRAILS

### *Riverfront Trail*

A primary multi-purpose trail is proposed to run adjacent to the Colorado River through the City of Fruita, connecting to Loma and the Kokopelli Trailhead to the west and connecting to Grand Junction to the east. This concept has been evolving over the years, with active participation by the nonprofit Colorado Riverfront Commission, Mesa County, and Colorado State Parks, among others. An illustrative Fruita-Kokopelli Greenway Link Colorado River Management Plan was created in 1996. The plan shows suggested alternative routes for a riverfront trail on either side of the river. Mesa County has also created a map with a general proposed alignment on the north side of the river.

The proposed alignment in this POST plan was created in consultation with the POST Master Plan Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee, as well as Fruita City staff. The proposed alignment incorporates ongoing efforts to secure the right-of-way for the trail corridor. Colorado State Parks has been diligently working to acquire both easements and properties along the river that would allow for eventual construction of the trail. Aerial photography and land use maps were also referenced to assess specific resources, such as proximity to existing and proposed recreational resources (i.e., parks) as well as connections to existing and proposed trail alignments. Generally, the alignment is intended to minimize the number of road and river

crossings and maximize the potential use of other crossings, such as existing culverts, where necessary.

The Riverfront Trail corridor is proposed to be at least 150 feet in width where possible. In areas where urban development is adjacent to the corridor, the trail may run adjacent to this development, providing recreational users convenient access to services and amenities.

#### **Insert Map 4: Master Plan**

To complete the regional trail along the north side of the Colorado River through the Fruita Growth Management Area requires approximately 6 miles of trail construction, to 20 Road to the east and to 14 Road to the west of James Robb State Park.

The crossing of the Riverfront Trail on the north side of the Colorado River at SH340 requires future evaluation. Ideally, the trail would cross under the road. However, it may be more feasible to install an at-grade crossing with flashers to alert motorists of the trail crossing. This approach has been successful in many other locations across state highways throughout Colorado, including SH257 in Windsor, and in downtowns such as Longmont and Boulder.

### ***Fruita Riverfront Recreation Area Trail***

#### ***Loops***

The opportunity exists to create a unique Riverfront Recreation Area that is linked by a trail system. The amenities that would be connected include the proposed Riverfront Park, Old Fruita Bridge, Dinosaur Hill, Kingsview and Snooks Bottom Open Space, James Robb State Park, and Red Cliffs Neighborhood Park. This loop would ultimately include two new river crossings: Old Fruita Bridge, and a new pedestrian bridge from Snooks Bottom to the state park. It would also include a grade-separated crossing under SH340 on the south side of the river, either in a new underpass or under the existing bridge. The trail on the south side of the Colorado River

would be approximately 1 mile in length, which when combined with the Riverfront Trail segments, would provide 1 or 2-mile trail loops to a variety of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This trail loop and river crossings would also provide links to existing BLM hiking trails and the Dugway Trail to Colorado National Monument. A hiking trail could also be provided along the water line easement that runs from the Old Fruita Bridge area, around Dinosaur Hill, to the Dugway Trail (*is this described accurately??*)

Construction of the new pedestrian bridge between the state park and Snooks Bottom would require the greatest amount of coordination between several governmental agencies, and likely be the highest cost. A similar bridge exists in Grand Junction, south of downtown at the future Las Colonias Park site. (*insert photo from Las Colonias park archives*) The benefits of placing a crossing at this location are numerous. This crossing would provide a pleasant trail experience for users, free of traffic and noise. It would provide a direct connection between the state park and Snooks Bottom, which also allows for easy access to the BLM McInnis Canyon trail system. Additionally, it offers a logical river crossing for users of the proposed Big and Little Salt Wash Trails, coming from central Fruita on the north side of I-70.

A trail on the historical Old Fruita Bridge would require special design consideration and renovation of the bridge itself. The recommendations also include adding a trail across the SH340 bridge to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians who wish to go directly south from the Welcome Center along the highway right-of-way. Construction of this would require coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). CDOT should also consider widening shoulders on SH340, south of the bridge to Colorado National Monument, for road bicyclists and race events. Combined, these three river crossings and trails would create

a comprehensive trail system in the community, providing loops for a diversity of users and a wide range of experiences.

### ***Little Salt Wash Trail***

Segments of trail exist along Little Salt Wash, north of Uttley Avenue between Mesa and 18½ Road, and through Little Salt Wash Park. These trail segments should be connected to complete the system and extended through the community, from the Grand Valley Canal Trail to the Colorado Riverfront Trail. Near the Recreation Center, the trail may need to be accommodated by a widened sidewalk along 17 Road. Road crossings should be clearly delineated, with special paving at crosswalks and warning flashers with signs. Drainage culverts exist under US6/50, the railroad and I-70, which can accommodate the trail connection to the Colorado River.

### ***Big Salt Wash Trail***

A segment of the Big Salt Wash Trail has already been constructed, from a trailhead near US6/50 on Uttley Avenue to Celestite Drive. A connection from this trailhead south to the Riverfront Trail should be constructed. **(Ture / Clint can the culvert under US6/50 accommodate a trail now without total reconstruction?)** An existing box culvert underneath the railroad would provide an ideal location for this connection. The trail should also be constructed north along Big Salt Wash to a point where it would connect with a proposed trail along the Grand Valley Canal near 17½ Road, north of L Road. A trail could also eventually be extended north along the wash with the intent of connecting to the North Fruita Desert BLM lands, a popular mountain biking destination. Extension of the trail past the Grand Valley Canal should be coordinated with Mesa County, as it would be outside the city's urban growth area. The most feasible connection to the BLM trails may be via widened shoulders on the county roads to the north.

### ***Ranchman's Ditch Canal Trail***

This canal runs diagonally southeast through Fruita, from Little Salt Wash to Adobe Creek. The maintenance road adjacent to this canal provides a perfect opportunity for a trail that would connect to the 8/9 School, high school, and proposed trail along Adobe Creek. This trail would be approximately 2.75 miles in length. Road crossings should be clearly delineated, with special paving at crosswalks and warning flashers with signs.

### ***Grand Valley Canal Trail***

This canal runs across the northern portion of Fruita, from Big Salt Wash, through Little Salt Wash to Adobe Creek. The maintenance road adjacent to this canal provides a great opportunity for a 4-mile trail that would connect to a proposed neighborhood park and the proposed trail along Adobe Creek. Road crossings should be clearly delineated, with special paving at crosswalks and warning flashers with signs.

### ***High School to Riverfront Trail***

An overpass across I-70 near the high school is a high priority for the community. This bridge would allow students on the south side of I-70 to have direct access to the schools, as well as allow for a recreational trail connection to the Colorado River for residents in the northeastern portion of the community. A large drainage channel exists south of the frontage road to the river, providing a logical route for this trail. Design and construction of the I-70 pedestrian overpass should include provisions for bicyclists, and would require detailed design studies for its placement. Fruita will need to coordinate with CDOT for design, construction, maintenance, and funding for this bridge. An example of a similar bridge is located in Colorado Springs, across I-25 near the downtown. **(photo of this bridge available on city, CDOT or Wilson Engineering website? Near monument park).**

### ***I-70 South Frontage Road Trail***

This 2.75-mile trail will start at the Welcome Center and travel east along the south I-70 Frontage Road to the Riverfront Trail near 19½ Road. The trail will be located in the right-of-way adjacent to the south side of the frontage road, and be detached from the roadway where feasible. The trail will provide access to Heritage Park and the proposed I-70 pedestrian bridge, and will create opportunities for trail loops of various lengths in the southern portion of Fruita.

### ***Adobe Creek Trail***

This 2.5-mile trail is proposed to follow Adobe Creek, a major drainage in the eastern planning area of Fruita. The trail would start upstream at the Grand Valley Canal, pass under US6/50, the railroad and I-70, and join the Riverfront Trail near Adobe Creek Golf Course. It is recommended that Mesa County consider extending this trail further to the northeast (beyond the Fruita planning area) to provide additional trail opportunities for Mesa County residents and visitors to the region.

### ***Additional Primary Trail Links***

- Big Salt Wash to 16th and L Community Park and northwest neighborhood parks (2.5 miles)
- Riverfront Trail to 16th and L Community Park (1 mile)
- Rimrock Elementary to Grand Valley Canal (1.75 miles)
- North end of James Robb State Park to the Welcome Center (on-street provisions for 0.25 mile)

### **OTHER TRAILS**

### ***Kingsview Road to Kokopelli Trail***

A county road exists from the entrance to Snooks Bottom Open Space, approximately 5 miles to the west where it ends near Loma. This road could be used as an unpaved trail because vehicular traffic is very low. To connect to the Kokopelli Trail, a bridge

would need to be constructed across the Colorado River at its west end.

### ***Railroad Commuter Trail***

An abandoned county road runs between the railroad and I-70 from the CoOp to 20 Road. This 2.5-mile old road bed can be regraded and paved fairly easily for use as a commuter or higher speed recreational trail. It would provide faster access for bicyclists towards Grand Junction than the Riverfront Trail, and could be extended by Mesa County beyond 20 Road.

## **B. PARK PROJECTS**

Chapter 2 outlines Fruita's current deficit in community parkland, as well as areas of the city that do not have walkable access to neighborhood parks for existing residents. Also, to meet the needs of a population of approximately 25,735 (as projected in 2025), a total of 33 acres of neighborhood parkland and 81 acres of community parkland will need to be developed.

To meet the needs of existing and future residents, several proactive steps will need to be taken by the city. These actions include developing an existing park site (Red Cliff), acquiring and developing 6 new neighborhood parks, completing development of existing parks (such as Little Salt Wash), providing improvements to existing parks, and acquiring and developing 2 larger community-scaled parks.

### ***Improvements to Existing Parks***

Most of the parks in Fruita are in good condition; however, some may need minor improvements to modernize or upgrade them. Following is a description of suggested park improvements that are more extensive than minor landscaping, adding a few site furnishings, and basic facility upgrades and repair.



### *Little Salt Wash Park*

The first phase of this park was recently constructed, and this plan recommends that the park be completed according to its approved master plan. The unfinished elements include:

- Pedestrian pavements, restrooms, concessions, picnic shelter, and benches in the core area
- Parking lot lighting
- Maintenance facility
- Scoreboards and field lighting

### *Heritage Park*

The current configuration of Heritage Park does not provide an ideal park experience and presents some safety and vehicular circulation concerns. The City of Fruita is making some upgrades and redesigning the park's layout to improve the parking area. Due to the park's vicinity to I-70, there are also some visual and acoustic issues that affect the overall park experience. The addition of other park amenities would also improve its overall appeal, such as a picnic shelter, skate elements, sitting areas, and trail-head amenities for bicyclists and pedestrians who wish to use the proposed I-70 South Frontage Road Trail. Providing tree masses in select locations would help buffer the visual intrusions of fast-moving vehicles on I-70, and a low berm should be considered along the road between the proposed trail and the travel lanes. This berm should not be too tall in order to allow for visibility into the park. CDOT should be contacted to determine the feasibility of planting trees in the area between the frontage road and the interstate highway.

### *Ore Park*

The city is in the process of constructing a community recreation center that will occupy a large portion of the current Ore Park. However, the existing skate park and a small area of passive space remain. The current skate park appears outdated; many of the existing structures are not challenging



### *Las Colonias Park*

and diverse compared to what is now available. It is recommended that as part of the community recreation center project, a new skate park be designed and constructed, generally in the same location. A new skate park that is appropriately sized for a city the size of Fruita could be constructed on this site. A new facility does not necessarily need to be large or complex, but should include a diversity of skate elements. A site-specific design for the skate park should be completed to determine the most suitable type of skate elements and amenities that are appropriate for Fruita skaters.

### *Circle Park*

Circle Park is one of the most visible public spaces in Fruita because of its location in the center of a large roundabout in downtown. Access and usability of this park would be enhanced by the installation of crosswalks with special paving, landscaped islands that direct traffic, and the conversion of excessive pavement in the surrounding roadway to outdoor public spaces. Alternatively, the roadway could follow a more square route around the park, resulting in a larger park and clarifying the circulation, which is currently confusing. The roadway around the park would be more attractive and "park-like" with special paving, making drivers feel like they are intruding into a pedestrian space.

## Community Parks

The needs assessment revealed that the City of Fruita is behind in the development of community parkland. Based on the current population of 10,947 and a parkland standard of 4 acres per 1,000 population, the city needs an additional 21 acres today. In the year 2025 when the population reaches approximately 25,735, the city will need 60 acres more, for a total of 81 acres. This equates to 2 larger or 3 smaller community parks in this time frame. The city owns 2 community park sites: a 27-acre parcel west of town at the southeast corner of 16th and L, and approximately 85 acres (Ture/Clint, Please confirm size-85 is total site size-what is developable?) of land on the wastewater treatment site further west and close to the Colorado River. Map 4 shows the locations of these sites, as well as a proposed Riverfront Park near the Old Fruita Bridge. Each is described below.

### *16th and L Park*

The City of Fruita and Mesa County School District #51 own a parcel of land at the corner of 16th and L Roads. This parcel has been earmarked as a site for both a future school and future parkland. The total acreage dedicated for parkland is 27 acres. Based on the existing and projected community parkland deficits and needs (as described in Chapter 2), as well as future anticipated residential growth patterns, development of this site as a community park is advised.

This 27-acre site is large enough to accommodate a diverse array of programmed and self-directed recreational activities. Overall, the site has gentle topography, making it suitable for sports fields as well as many other recreational amenities. The park should not be developed solely as a sports complex, but should include large areas for unstructured play. It is recommended that this park include a minimum of 2 ballfields in addition to multi-use fields, which could be programmed for games as well as practice. The park should also accommodate other recre-



Insert caption

ational amenities, including an outdoor performance area, accommodations for larger festivals, multi-use hard surface court, a large multi-age playground, group picnic shelters, outdoor climbing wall, and a spray pad. The city should also consider the inclusion of other recreational amenities, such as skate features and a dog play area. A primary multi-purpose trail should go through this park as described in previous sections.

### *Wastewater Treatment Plant Site*

The City of Fruita owns a large tract of land along the Colorado River, approximately 1 mile west of the city. This is the site of the current wastewater treatment facility, and will also be home to the future wastewater treatment facility the city will eventually construct. However, there is a large portion of the site that will remain undeveloped (approximately 85 acres). This site is ideally suited for construction of a future sports complex, which is a specialized Community Park with a sports focus. From a natural resource perspective, the site has already been highly disturbed, so new construction here would have less impact to natural systems than other locations with natural landscapes and ecosystems. It is also in an industrial oriented locale, so the presence of the necessary lighting for sports fields will not create visual disturbance issues to residential



areas. The site is also located adjacent to the interstate, allowing easy access – a benefit to hosting large sporting events, such as softball tournaments. A separate detailed master plan process should be conducted to determine the specific sports amenities and facilities that should be included in this park, and coordinated with the master plan for the park at 16th and L to determine the appropriate distribution of sports fields.

#### *Riverfront Park*

This POST plan recommends the establishment of a 20 to 40-acre community park situated along the Colorado River, ideally near the Old Fruita Bridge. Currently, there is no public land dedicated for this park and the land would have to be acquired. This park would be an important component of the overall Riverfront open space, trails, and park system in this area, and could contain community festival areas, an amphitheater, boat put-ins/take-outs, fishing areas, picnic and playground areas, turf grass for various field sports, an environmental education center, and other public uses that are compatible with the environment of the Colorado River. Lighted sports facilities are not recommended for this location. Accessing this park by vehicle would require extending 17½ Road south. Trail users could access the park via proposed trails: the Riverfront Trail, and the trail connection on the south side of the Colorado River that will connect the Riverfront Trail to Kingsview Open Space over the Historical Bridge.

It is recommended that the city encourage the development of a small commercial area near this park, which would ideally include a restaurant and other retail services that support the needs of park and river users. This mix of uses would create activity year-round and add to the vitality of the park.

### ***Neighborhood Parks***

Map 4 shows where existing public land should be developed as a neighborhood park, as well as the conceptual locations of new neighborhood parks. The locations of the new parks are not specific and can be moved somewhat from where they are shown. However, their distribution correlates to existing underserved areas and planned future residential areas as indicated in the 2008 Community Plan. Where feasible, neighborhood parks should be located next to an activity center or elementary school. Pocket parks, which are very small neighborhood parks of ½ to 2 acres, are desirable and should be included in neighborhood development plans, but they are not the city's responsibility to develop or maintain. The city needs adequately sized neighborhood parks to provide practice areas for youth sports groups, picnic areas, and other amenities described in the Neighborhood Park Standards in Chapter 2.

#### *Red Cliffs Park*

The City of Fruita currently owns a 2.4-acre parcel of land along SH340 near Red Cliffs Road. This parcel is tentatively reserved for future use as a public park. Given the need for an additional neighborhood park in this area of the city, it is recommended that the city pursue acquisition of an additional 2.5 to 5 acres of adjacent vacant property. This would bring the total park site size to approximately 5 to 8 acres, which would allow for development of the site as a full-scale neighborhood park with amenities, including a multi-use play field, playground, picnic shelter, restrooms, multi-use concrete court, and a small off-street parking lot. Inclusion of other unique park features could also be considered, such as skate elements or a spray pad.

#### *SH6/50 and 19 Road Area*

The Framework Plan from the 2008 Community Plan indicates that a major center of future mixed-use

development will occur near SH6/50 and 19 Road. It is anticipated that significant residential development will occur in this location as part of this overall development. This is also the general location of a proposed Regional Center in the Framework Plan. As such, the city considers acquisition of a 5 to 8-acre parcel that could be reserved for future neighborhood park development. Any park provided should contain all typical neighborhood amenities including, but not limited to, a playground, picnic shelter, optional restroom, shade, multi-use hard court surface, and a multi-purpose playfield.

#### *Rimrock Elementary Area*

Per the Framework Plan from the 2008 Community Plan, it is anticipated that a significant residential growth area will occur east of the 19 Road corridor. An optimal location for a needed future neighborhood park would be adjacent to or near Rimrock Elementary School. The city should pursue acquisition of an adequately sized parcel (ideally 5 to 8 acres) in this vicinity for the development of a needed future neighborhood park. This park should contain all typical neighborhood park amenities, including, but not limited to, a playground, picnic shelter, optional restroom, shade, multi-purpose hard court surface, and a multi-purpose playfield.

#### *North Grand Valley Canal Area*

The Framework Plan from the 2008 Community Plan indicates that future mixed-use development, including significant residential development, will occur along 19 Road north to approximately the area of the Grand Valley Canal. Based on future population projections and the ideal distribution of neighborhood parks at approximately 1 per every 0.5 mile, there will be a need for another future neighborhood park in this vicinity. This is also the general location of a proposed Neighborhood Center in the Framework Plan. The city should pursue acquisition of an adequately sized parcel (ideally 5 to 8 acres) along

the Grand Valley Canal between 18½ Road and 19 Road for the development of a needed future neighborhood park. This location is well situated in that it would be adjacent to a proposed primary multi-purpose trail that would connect to the larger trail system within Fruita. This park should contain all typical neighborhood park amenities, including, but not limited to, a playground, picnic shelter, optional restroom, shade, multi-purpose hard court surface, and a multi-purpose playfield.

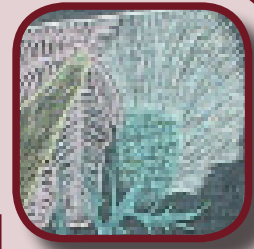
#### *17½ Road and L Road Area*

This chapter includes specific project recommendations that are needed to meet existing and future parks, open space, and trail needs in the City of Fruita. A master plan map is also included that graphically depicts the locations of specific project recommendations. These recommendations include ways to address existing deficiencies, projected needs, changes in recreational habits, and other issues identified through the inventory and needs assessment. The recommendations are grouped into categories: trails, parks, and open space.





# 05 IMPLEMENTATION



This chapter lists prioritization considerations, costs, and implementation actions that will help achieve the vision of the Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan.

## PROJECT PRIORITIZATION CONSIDERATIONS

Since future park, recreation, and trail projects will compete for funding, it is helpful to define criteria that can guide the identification of highest priority actions. Chapter Four identified specific projects based on the outcome of the inventory and needs assessment process, and the community survey revealed that citizens of Fruita have interests and needs ranging from neighborhood to community scale. Large, high profile projects that affect a large number of people and contribute to current goals of redevelopment may generate great public support, but should be carefully balanced with projects that provide connections and park amenities to currently underserved residents. Ongoing upgrades to existing facilities and the addition of smaller scale amenities to enhance existing parks should also be considered.

This plan is intended to be flexible and fluid, so that as opportunities for land acquisition or easements and park development become available, the city can immediately capitalize on these opportunities without being committed to a predetermined project that was identified in an action plan.

Through the public process and workshops with the Steering Committee, it is clear that the city's highest priorities involve finishing park projects that have already been started (e.g., Little Salt Wash, Ore Park and Heritage Park), completing the Riverfront Trail, and filling in the gaps between existing trail segments to improve connectivity of the trail system through the city. The pedestrian bridge over I-70 has been identified as a very high priority as well. In addition to these projects, there are some relatively low cost things the city can do to enhance recreational opportunities in Fruita in the near term, such as construct a small parking lot, disc golf course, and bike challenge course in Kingsview Open Space

The following list presents criteria that should be carefully considered when attempting to prioritize projects. There should not be a numeric weighting of these criteria, as the importance of each varies with each situation, available funding, need, and opportunity. Projects that address immediate issues of public health and safety should certainly take precedence over other choices.

### HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE, AND CODE COMPLIANCE

- Project involves upgrades to bring park in compliance with codes, and ensure the health, safety, and welfare of park users.

### EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Project capitalizes on opportunities to be easily implemented (i.e., low cost with large gains, ready implementers, available property, etc.).

#### COMMUNITY SIGNIFICANCE

- Project provides benefit to a large number of people within community.
- Project contributes to larger community vision and goals.
- Project provides benefits to visitors to Fruita.

#### COMMUNITY BALANCE

- Project contributes to the balance of needs across the community (i.e., neighborhood parks, community parks, trails, open space, underserved neighborhoods).

#### PARTNERSHIPS FOR FUNDING

- Project leverages partnerships for funding (i.e., Mesa County, federal partners, irrigation companies, private industry, adjacent cities, nonprofits, etc.).

#### SATISFIES URGENT NEED

- Project satisfies urgent park and recreation needs within the community.
- Project serves underserved neighborhoods.
- Project addresses recreation facility/amenity shortages.

#### COMPLETES PHASING OF CURRENT PROJECTS

- Project completes ongoing phases of current projects that are yet to be completed.

Although there are a myriad of large-scale projects that could be addressed, the Fruita Parks and Recreation Steering Committee has expressed a need and desire to see that a few select projects be addressed first. The greatest of these is...

Another large-scale project that was identified as important to the community is

In the near term, it is recommended that the city select a few small projects that can be easily implemented across the community, while funding the planning and design of larger-scale projects. Smaller projects may include upgrades to playground equipment, shelter additions, and signage replacements.

While progress is being made on smaller projects, site master planning can begin on select larger projects, which will require a greater investment of capital and take a longer, often multi-year timeframe to accomplish. This long-range planning may also involve establishing a perpetual fund or “land bank” to strategically acquire parcels for projects that may become available in the future.

## ESTIMATED COSTS FOR PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND TRAILS

The cost for trail and park construction varies widely, depending on the specific elements to be included in each project, the terrain, utilities, necessary road crossing, and other physical features that require more extensive design solutions. For the purposes of assigning an order of magnitude of cost to the master plan recommendations, general cost estimates have been assigned to each project. Costs have been assumed that are in order with the costs EDAW has experienced in designing and overseeing the construction of similar facilities along the Front Range and throughout the Rocky Mountain region. The cost estimates are approximate and intended to illustrate order of magnitude, not detail. Actual costs for land acquisition (if needed) and development should be developed more specifically. Costs for some of the typical park amenities are listed below to provide an understanding of the basis for the estimates. These costs are in 2009 dollars and must be escalated yearly to compensate for inflation.



Table 5.1 Typical Park Project Item Costs

| ITEM                            | UNIT COST           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Asphalt Basketball Court        | \$50,000 each       |
| Small Skate Park                | \$250,000 each      |
| Neighborhood-Scale Playground   | \$80,000 each       |
| Community-Scale Playground      | \$150,000 each      |
| Single Picnic Shelter (20'x20') | \$35,000 each       |
| Large Group Picnic Shelter      | \$180,000 each      |
| Small Restroom                  | \$120,000 each      |
| Large Restroom                  | \$200,000 each      |
| Parking Lot Light               | \$3,500 each        |
| Pedestrian Light                | \$4,200 each        |
| New Parking Lot                 | \$6.00 square foot  |
| Picnic Tables                   | \$1,500 each        |
| Bike Racks                      | \$650 each          |
| Benches                         | \$1,500 each        |
| Trash Containers                | \$750 each          |
| Irrigation System Replacement   | \$1.00 square foot  |
| 8' Concrete Multi-Purpose Trail | \$36.00 linear foot |
| 6' Gravel Trail                 | \$9.00 linear foot  |
| Native Landscape Restoration    | \$0.75 square foot  |
| Turf and Shrub Landscape        | \$3.50 square foot  |
| Deciduous Trees (2.5" caliper)  | \$500 each          |

Other items specific to certain projects are not listed above, but may include demolition, utility relocation, entry plazas, signs, historical restorations, special recreation facilities, maintenance facilities, crossing enhancements, ballfield construction and design, engineering, and contingency fees. It should also be noted that additional staff, resources, and maintenance will be needed as more parks and facilities are added to the system within Fruita. These costs should be accounted for and included into overall budgets for any new projects.

Table 5.2 summarizes initial projects proposed in this plan for inclusion in the city's park and recreation system, and provides estimated costs associated with each project. Costs are estimated in 2009 dollars and will need to be adjusted relative to inflation as time progresses. They are listed in the order

described in Chapter Four, which does not imply an order of priority.

Table 5.2 Master Plan Projects

| NAME  | SIZE       | TYPE                  |
|---|------------|-----------------------|
| Trails  |            |                       |
| Riverfront Trail  | 150' wide  | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Fruita Riverfront Recreation area Trail Loops             | 1 mile     | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Little Salt Wash Trail                                    |            | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Big Salt Wash Trail                                       |            | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Ranchman's Ditch Canal                                    | 2.75 miles | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Grand Valley Canal Trail                                  | 4 miles    | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| High School to Riverfront Trail                           |            | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| I-70 South Frontage Road Trail                            | 2.75 miles | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Adobe Creek Trail   | 2.5 miles  | Primary Multi-Purpose |
| Big Salt Wash to 16 <sup>th</sup> and L Community Park    | 2.5 miles  | Primary Trail Link    |
| Riverfront Trail to 16 <sup>th</sup> and L Community Park | 1 mile     | Primary Trail Link    |
| Rimrock Elementary to Grand Valley Canal                  | 1.75 miles | Primary Trail Link    |
| North end of James Robb State Park to Welcome Center      | 0.25 mile  | Primary Trail Link    |
| Kingsview Road to Kokopelli Trail                         |            | Other Trail           |
| Railroad Commuter Trail                                   | 2.5 miles  | Other Trail           |
| Enhancements to Existing Parks                            |            |                       |
| Little Salt Wash park                                     |            | Existing Park         |
| Heritage Park   |            | Existing Park         |
| Ore Park  |            | Existing Park         |
| Circle Park   |            | Existing Park         |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> and L Park                               | 27 acres   | Community Park        |
| Wastewater Treatment Plant Site                           |            | Community Park        |
| Riverfront Park   |            | Community Park        |
| Red Cliffs Park   | 2.4 acres  | Neighborhood Park     |

| NAME  | SIZE     | TYPE              |
|---|----------|-------------------|
| SH6/50 and 19 Road Area                     |          | Neighborhood Park |
| Rimrock Elementary Area                     |          | Neighborhood Park |
| North Grand Valley Canal Area               |          | Neighborhood Park |
| 17½ Road and L Road Area                    |          | Neighborhood Park |
| Northwest Fruita (15 Road, North of L Road) |          | Neighborhood Park |
| Open Space                                  |          |                   |
| Kingsview Open Space                        | 48 acres | Open Space        |
| Mountain Parks                              |          | Open Space        |
| Open Space Corridors                        |          | Open Space        |
| Colorado River Area                         |          | Open Space        |
| Open Space                                  |          |                   |

## IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following are specific actions that should be considered by the Fruita Parks and Recreation staff, which may assist in the implementation of the proposed projects. The actions are organized into planning, upgrades and maintenance, administrative and management, and funding categories, and are not listed in order of priority.

### MANAGEMENT/PLANNING ACTIONS

- Work with the Community Development Department and developers in the acquisition of parkland, and trail and open space corridors associated with any new development. Identify specific parcels that are key for the development of neighborhood parks in underserved areas.
- Develop a site master plan and construction documents for Red Cliffs Park, and investigate the feasibility of adding acreage to the park.
- Develop a site master plan for Kingsview Open Space that includes analysis and recommendations for the grade-separated trail crossing under SH340.
- Update and clarify land dedication ordinances and consider an impact fee to cover the cost of design and construction of parks, trails, and

recreational amenities for new residents, as well as to proactively secure land that is needed for neighborhood parks.

- Prepare an on-street bicycle/pedestrian master plan for the community that identifies on-street bike lanes, desired street cross-sections, areas in need of pedestrian walkways and enhanced pedestrian crossings, and ideal locations for trailheads for access to the primary trail system.
- Continue to work with the Riverfront Commission and other partners to implement the vision for the Riverfront Trail.

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- Prepare an annual report card on the progress toward achieving the POST plan.
- Regularly update the facility inventory and maps to reflect existing conditions.
- Establish clear mechanisms for interdepartmental and interagency coordination on planning and design issues, and to ensure consistency with the POST Master Plan.

### UPGRADES AND MAINTENANCE ACTIONS

- Rehabilitate or replace existing playgrounds, restrooms, and other park facilities, including bringing existing facilities up to ADA standards.
- Evaluate existing parks for additional needed upgrades.

### FUNDING ACTIONS

- Actively pursue granting and funding opportunities to provide underserved neighborhoods with parks.
- Explore the level of community support for additional funding sources, such as property or sales taxes, and development impact fees.

## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR PARK AND RECREATION PROJECTS

While the Fruita Parks and Recreation Department primarily receives funding through the City General Fund, describe the funding in general.... The fol-

lowing list of strategies and funding sources should be considered when developing a specific implementation plan for city projects and programs.

**SALES/PROPERTY TAX INCREASE**

Most of the parks and recreation budget comes from the City General Fund, which is supported primarily through city sales and property tax. Table 5.3 shows the breakdown of current tax rates within the city. In November 2008, city residents voted in favor of a \_\_\_\_% tax increase to support the construction of a Community Recreation Center. This tax will last for \_\_\_\_ years and is specifically dedicated (describe this tax).

The City of Fruita could consider an increase in either city sales or property tax for other programs. Tax increases of this nature are most often passed as bond issues, which allows for the city to go into debt to finance construction and repay the bonds as revenues are collected.

**Table 5.3. Current City of Fruita Tax Rates**

| RATE      | TAX          |
|-----------|--------------|
| 2.9%      | State        |
| 3.0%      | City         |
| .0%       | Other?       |
| <b>0%</b> | <b>Total</b> |

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

The city could consider the establishment of a Special Improvement District (SID) for specific park and recreation facility projects. City Council would have to amend the municipal code to include park and recreation facilities for this to occur, and would also have to establish the boundaries of the district as well as the levy to be assessed. Typically, SIDs contain a sunset clause stating that once all projects are completed, the SID and any associated taxes will be

abolished. While this might not be practical for the entire city, it may be useful for park and recreation improvements associated with sub-area plans (i.e., Orchard District).

**Downtown-Related Grants for Circle Park Improvements??**

**LODGING TAX**

Several communities have instituted taxes on lodging to pay for improvements, including Wheat Ridge, a suburb of Denver. This would require an amendment to the municipal code by City Council.

**SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Currently, the City of Fruita Municipal Code has two sections that address quantities of parks and open space/trail corridors that are required as part of the subdivision process. Chapter 19 states that there is an overall dedication requirement of 12 acres per 1,000 population. All or a portion of this is typically taken as fee-in-lieu by the city to purchase land or develop properties.

Chapter 29 requires that the subdivision be designed to provide for adequate amounts of neighborhood and pocket parkland, with a total of 3.26 acres per 1,000 population provided in each development. This chapter states that “developments shall provide at least three quarters (3/4) of an acre of land for a public site, park, open spaces and/or trail for each two hundred and thirty (230) residents.” Depending on the size of the development, the amount of land required to be included in the development plan may be adequate for providing neighborhood and pocket parks, but the challenge is to get adequately sized parcels for a larger, full-service neighborhood park and avoid developments that only have very small parks. The code language also includes trail /open space lands as satisfying the 3.26-acre standard, which may result in no parkland at all.

The city should continue to exercise its fee-in-lieu options when the land available is not in keeping with the intent of this plan.

The City of Fruita needs to consider revising its codes to reflect the best strategy for the city to implement the plan. Land dedication requirements should reflect the parkland level of service standards, desirable open space/trail corridors, and other recommendations in this POST plan.

The city's subdivision ordinance requires preservation of buffers from drainages, creeks, canals, and the Colorado River. The code should be amended to state that these buffers should be dedicated to the city as public land or for trail corridors (not as part of the parkland dedication requirement). Developments should also be required to provide local trail connections to the primary trails.

Alternatively, the city should switch to an impact fee for land purchase and development, rather than relying on land dedication through the subdivision process. This is described below.

#### DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES

In addition to dedication of land, or fee-in-lieu, the City of Fruita may want to consider a development impact fee for acquisition of land and/or construction of the amenities, which is a commonly used tool by communities in Colorado. Some communities abandon the parkland dedication approach and choose to implement their plans solely through impact fees, which include both land acquisition and development. In some communities, impact fees include all types of recreation facilities, including recreation centers, open space, and trails. The city could also consider imposing this fee on commercial development; however, this is rarely done in other communities.

The city could consider adopting a development impact fee to fully cover the cost of acquiring and

developing the parks, trails, and recreation facilities needed to serve new residential development. The city would then need to have a staff position that has responsibility for negotiating in advance for land purchases, and monitoring the expenditures to ensure equity of distribution according to the nexus requirements for impact fees. A development impact fee should reflect the adopted level of service standard and cover the cost of acquiring and developing future parkland.

Some communities are also including a full spectrum of leisure services in their development impact fees, which contain costs for recreation centers, trails and open space, in addition to parks. The city could also consider imposing this fee on commercial development; however, this is rarely done in other communities.

The city could consider increasing the current development impact fee to fully cover the cost of acquiring and developing the parks, trails, and recreation centers needed as a result of new or additional residential development. A development impact fee should reflect the adopted level of service standard and cover the cost of acquiring and developing future parkland.

An example of the calculation method for basing a fee on population-based standards is as follows:

The fee should reflect the adopted level of service standard (e.g., 2 acres/1,000 population for neighborhood parks and 4 acres/1,000 population for community parks)

Average household size in Fruita is 2.52 (2006 US Census Bureau's Colorado statewide average). Parkland share per household is the product of the average household size multiplied by the standard:

- $2.52 \times (2.0 / 1,000) = .005$  acres per household for neighborhood parks
- $2.52 \times (4.0 / 1,000) = .010$  acres per household for

community parks

This responsibility can be translated into a land acquisition and park development cost per residential unit as illustrated below:

- Acquisition cost of subdivided, development-ready land: \$125,000 per acre
- Neighborhood parkland development costs: \$125,000 per acre
- Community parkland development costs: \$140,000 per acre

Neighborhood parkland fee calculation

- .005 acres x \$250,000 = \$1,250 per household

Community parkland fee calculation

- .010 acres x \$265,000 = \$ 2,650 per household

Combined parkland fee = \$3,900 per household

The official calculation should be based on a community average land value (annually adjusted) and data on recent park construction costs in the region. The combined fee listed above is defensible and similar to what other communities in Colorado have adopted.

A trail impact fee is also an option based on the buildout level of service. Currently, there is no dedicated funding source for trail construction or requirements for development to provide these. This would only apply to new residential developments, as new citizens should not be burdened with the full cost of providing all trails that are needed in the community. The existing level of service for primary trails in Fruita is 0.6 miles per 1,000 population. If all the trails on the master plan are constructed, the level of service would be \_\_\_\_ (need to calculate total proposed primary trail length) miles per 1,000 population at buildout population of approximately 26,000 people.

CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

This is a revenue source from the Colorado lottery. Funds are distributed annually by the state, based on population. Many other communities dedicate their annual Colorado Lottery funds to trail corridor acquisition and trail construction projects. Currently, the city receives approximately \$280,000 annually, which has historically been used for new projects as well as maintenance projects to improve existing parks.

GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO (GOCO) GRANT PROGRAM

This is a statewide pool of revenue from Colorado Lottery proceeds. Funds are available on a competitive grant basis for park and open space land acquisition and development, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and capacity building. The city regularly applies for these funds for various projects, but cannot rely on grants as a steady funding stream.

STATE TRAILS PROGRAM

Established in 1971, this program is funded with revenue from GOCO, TEA-21 Section 1112 Recreation Trails Program, and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) registration fees. Funds are available for trails on a competitive basis. A 25 to 50% match is required. Since the state funding pool is relatively small, this resource is proposed for a small component of the trails system. The city regularly applies for these grants.

SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS (SAFE-TEA-LU)

This is the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Section 1202, "Enhancement Grants," is available from the federal government through the Denver Regional Council of Governments on a competitive basis to



fund bicycle transportation, wetlands improvements and historic preservation, among other things. These grants are a possible and supplemental source of revenue for some trail improvements. Specific funds have been allocated through SAFE-TEA-LU by the federal government for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program (CMAQ), which is jointly administered by the FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This program, in conjunction with its umbrella entity, are intended to realign the focus of transportation planning toward a more inclusive, environmentally-sensitive, and multi-modal approach to addressing transportation problems, and its funds are allocated to CDOT, MPOs, and transit agencies to invest in projects that reduce air pollutants generated from transportation-related sources. This program may be a good funding source for trail and the I-70 pedestrian overpass.

#### STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FUNDS

A portion of state gaming revenues are transferred to the State Historical Fund and administered by the State Historic Society. Grants are available for projects of historic significance.

#### SPORTS GROUPS OR COMPANY GRANTS

There are a myriad of sports association or specific company grants for projects that are related to their constituency or products. For example, skatepark.org provides grants for design and construction of new public skate parks.



