

# Chapter Three

## Community Profile

Laramie is located within Albany County in southeast Wyoming. Known as the “Gem City of the Plains”, the community is nestled in the Laramie Valley and surrounded by the Medicine Bow National Forest with the Snowy Range Mountains to the west and Laramie Mountains to the east. Laramie is considered a high plains steppe and has an elevation of 7,200 feet. The Laramie River flows through the community providing drinking water and abundant recreation opportunities.

Home to the University of Wyoming, the State’s only four-year higher-education institution, Laramie is renowned for its bustling school semesters and quiet mountain summers. The City is intersected by the Union Pacific



*Laramie Regional Map*



*The University of Wyoming Campus*

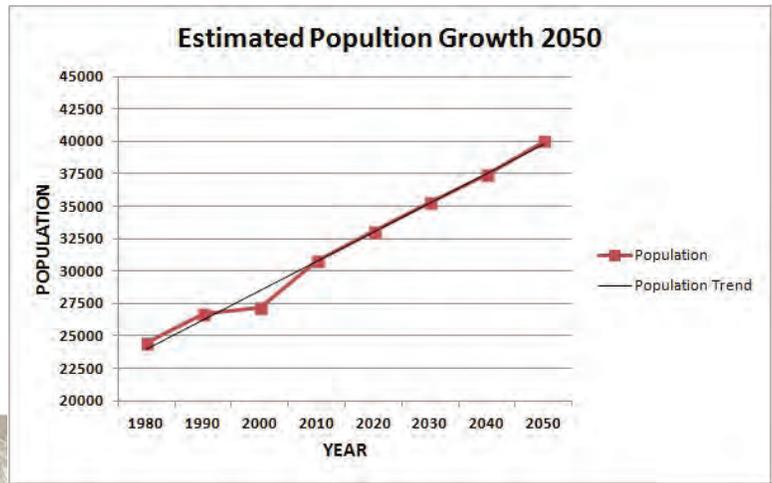
Railroad route and Interstate 80. Interstate 80 spans the southern half of the state providing access to Cheyenne, fifty miles east, and numerous Wyoming communities to the west. Laramie could be considered a northern anchor to Colorado’s Front Range with Denver located approximately two hours south.

Laramie is a quintessential western community that serves as a great example of Wyoming’s beauty. The community attracts outdoor enthusiasts as it is surrounded by recreation opportunities that include skiing, mountain biking, hiking, camping, fishing, nature/scenic viewing and photography. In addition, the Historic Downtown Laramie area attracts both a vibrant day and night life. Laramie has preserved its “western”

Wyoming feel while also attracting an eclectic mix of education and recreation interests and opportunities.

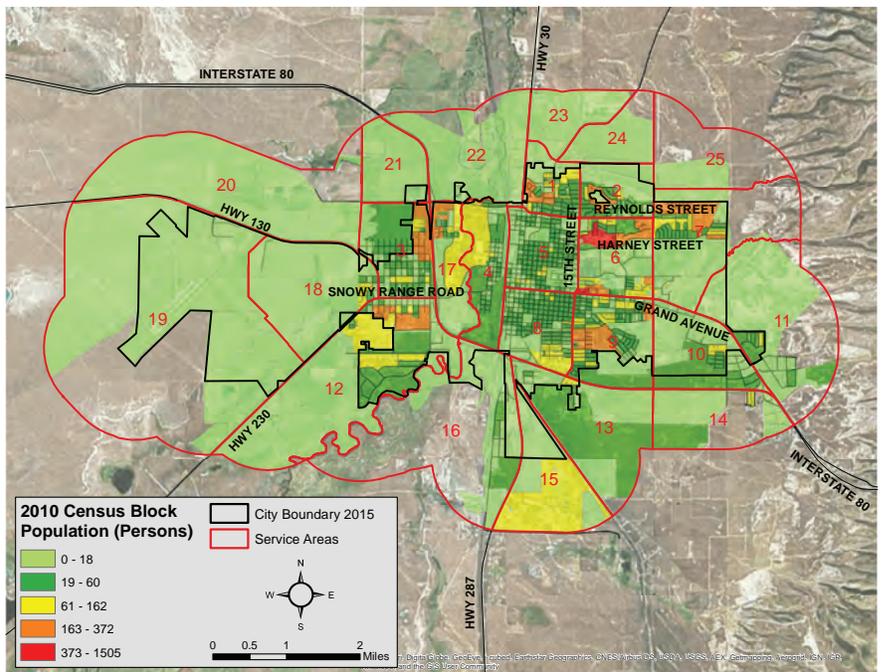
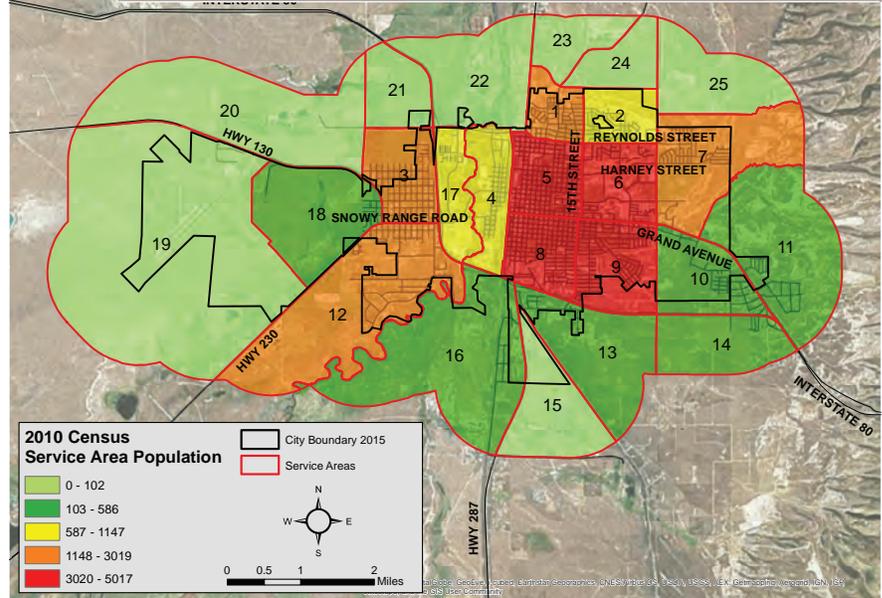
## Population & Demographics

According to the 2010 US Census, the population of Laramie is 30,816 people. Laramie's population has continued to grow at a steady linear rate since the 1930's. Based on this steady growth, the population is projected to increase by 6,629 people over the next thirty years, and 10,000 over the next forty years, bringing the Laramie population to a total of 37,445 people by 2040 and 40,000 by 2050.



Using 2010 US Census Data, staff analyzed the distribution of population across the community. When analyzing the community's Park Service Areas, the highest populations are clearly located in the core of the community; generally east of 1st Street, west of 30th Street, south of Reynolds Street and north of I-80, and situated centrally around the University of Wyoming Campus. The higher populations correspond to Service Areas 5, 6, 8 and 9; the core of the community centered around the University.

When looking at the census block data, a more detailed picture of population distribution can be seen. Higher population numbers can be found in mobile home communities, twin home developments, multi-family development and the college dorms, as well as higher density single-family developments within the older parts of the community.



## Future Growth Predictions

Laramie's future growth cannot be precisely predicted but can be reasonably estimated. Generally speaking, there are areas where residential development is more likely to occur than others. Factors such as the availability of infrastructure, topography, land availability, soils and geographic location all play a role in possible future residential development. Other factors impacting future growth are existing plats, development proposals, and future development plans. Estimating future growth areas is important because it can provide for long-term guidance in planning for parks and budget priorities based on projected population.

Based on the projected 10,000 person growth over the next 40 years, staff and the Ad Hoc

Committee has estimated where growth is likely to occur. Although this information is only an estimate, the information is helpful in guiding prioritization for acquisition of park land in and around the City.

Laramie's population is unique in that it is home to the University of Wyoming, the only four-year higher education institution in the state. Additionally, a branch of Laramie County Community College and Wyoming

Technical School (WyoTech) are also located in Laramie. These intuitions change the demographic makeup of the community in a manner that is not typical of most towns in Wyoming. Based on 2010 US Census data, a third of Wyoming's population is between the ages of 25-54 years old. In Laramie over half of the population is between the ages of 15 and 34 years old. Cohorts within this age range are more frequent users of parks, programming and recreation facilities, thus providing an even greater need for development of these amenities.

Service Area (SA)	Current Population (2010)	Staff's Estimate Population Increase per Service Area (in 2050)	Growth Description
1	3,019	200	Residential Development
2	1,147	200	Residential Development
3	1,749	1,000	Residential Development, Vacant Land
4	1,077	125	Residential Redevelopment, Some Vacant Property
5	4,549	100	Residential Redevelopment, Other Area Limited
6	5,017	2,000	Student Housing, Residential Development
7	1,915	400	Grove, Other Area Limited
8	4,371	500	Multi-Family Residential Development
9	4,442	400	Residential Development
10	371	1,500	Multi-Family Residential Development & Residential Development
11	586	50	Limited County Residential Development
12	1,961	500	Residential Development
13	302	500	Residential Development & County Residential Development
14	259	500	Residential Development & County Residential Development
15	102	100	Limited County Residential Development
16	252	50	Limited County Residential Development
17	725	100	Multi-Family Residential Development, Limited
18	379	100	Residential Development, Limited
19	25	150	Residential Development, Limited, County Commercial
20	18	500	Residential Development & County Residential Development
21	1	500	Residential Development
22	11	25	Limited County Residential Development
23	2	0	Technology and Office Development
24	1	0	Technology and Office Development
25	0	500	Residential Development
<b>Total Increase</b>		<b>10,000</b>	

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## Climate

Due to Laramie's high elevation of 7,200 feet the community experiences long winters and relatively cool summers. The average annual high temperature is 54°F and the average annual low is 25°F. The Laramie area receives an average of eleven inches of rain per year and has a short growing season lasting an average of ninety days. One persistent characteristic in Laramie is the presence of clean air and clear, sunny, blue sky days. The community records an average of 260 to 300 sunny and clear days per year.

## History

Laramie was established as a railroad town in the mid-1860s due in part to the abundance of water needed for steam engines. The Laramie River and a local aquifer provided this important resource which allowed the town to grow and prosper during the burgeoning days of the railroad. As the railroad's importance lessened through the years, Laramie continued to grow and transformed itself from a lawless railroad town into a more modern and progressive community. Laramie was not only the first Wyoming town to hold a municipal election, but was also the first place a woman cast a legal vote in the United States.

Laramie further forged its identity as a progressive community by establishing itself as the education center of Wyoming (and the west) with the founding of the University of Wyoming in 1886. As the educational aspect of the community grew, business also grew. Laramie was home to wood mills, tie treatment plants, a brickyard, icehouses, a brewery and a plaster mill. Many of these industries do not exist today but proved essential to the community's growth. Over the years Laramie has transitioned from a western railroad town to an education center home to 30,816 residents.

## History of Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas in Laramie

The City of Laramie has a solid and rooted history in parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. With the creation of Undine Park in the 1880's, the Laramie River Greenbelt corridor, and the recent Laramie Community Recreation Center, it is clear that the City and community have a commitment to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas as a high priority.



*1st Street Plaza in modern downtown Laramie*



*Union Pacific Construction Crews reach the Laramie Hotel in 1868, Credit: American Heritage Center, Miscellaneous Collections*

Undine Park was established in the 1880's when Laramie was part of the Dakota Territory. It was the community's first park and continued to be the only park in the area until 1929. The property was later sold to the City of Laramie for one hundred dollars by the original homesteaders of the property. The land was thought to be worthless because the Spring Creek channel flowed through the site making it a swampland. The University of Wyoming's "State Park" is located between 9th Street, Hoyt Hall, and Iverson Street. The City offered the site as an incentive to establish the University in Laramie, prior to Wyoming statehood. It has remained a park ever since. The park was officially set aside by the Wyoming Legislature from being developed at the same time a development restriction was put on Prexy's Pasture, also located on the university campus.



*Laramie River Greenbelt Trail*

Following Statehood in 1890, the City of Laramie acquired two additional parks, LaBonte Park and LaPrele Park in 1929. LaBonte Park is Laramie's largest Community park at 32 acres and now is comprised of a skate park, baseball fields, paved walking trail, and two playgrounds. LaPrele Park serves as green space and a natural area with a youth fishing pond, disc golf course and a playground. The Spring Creek channel cuts through the park often serving as a watering hole for antelope and other wildlife.

In 1947, Washington Park was established and now

serves as Laramie's most notable and heavily used parks. The 13 acre park has a nearly one-mile paved walking path around the perimeter of the park. Washington Park also contains many mature cottonwood trees in what Laramie residents call the "Tree Area".

In 1950, the City was able to obtain a section of land next to the Laramie River which is now the location of Optimist Park. The site was envisioned as an access point for a proposed trail system adjacent to the river. The Laramie Greenbelt corridor was acquired piece by piece and now extends over six miles in length containing a paved multi-use path which follows the Big Laramie River. The paved multi-use path is heavily used by a wide array of community members for a variety of recreational activities including walking, running, skating, and cycling. Additionally, the path plays host to numerous community fundraising 5K races. Acquisition of this land provided the community exceptional recreation and wildlife viewing activities near the Big Laramie River. During dawn or dusk it is common to see deer, fox, beaver, and otter. On occasions the stray moose or mountain lion wanders in for a visit. The paved multi-use path offers additional scenic views of the meandering river, Medicine Bow National Forest, and open prairie. Optimist Park is currently home to an off leash dog park which was redesigned, relocated and improved in 2013.



*Community Event in Washington Park*



*Historic Snow Train located in Depot Park*

As parks increased and recreation activities became more important to the community, the City of Laramie established the first Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in 1957. The board was tasked with establishing and planning proposed parks and recreation opportunities in the community. By 1960 this board had established the first year-round recreational event programming which was, at the time, on the cutting edge for any community this size.

In 1963, the City of Laramie leased the park areas surrounding the Union Pacific Railroad Depot and over the years has developed this downtown park into not just a recreation space but a living history of the railroad's influence on the development of Laramie.

Kiwanis Park, West Laramie's only park, was established in the 1980's. The park is comprised of nine acres of developed turf with soccer fields, a picnic shelter, and playground equipment. It also has a City of Laramie entrance sign along with a parking lot that welcomes travelers from Highway 130.

Throughout the years multiple outdoor sport fields have been created in Laramie including soccer fields, baseball/softball fields and many multi-purpose fields that accommodate multiple sporting events. In 2001,

the City acquired the indoor ice arena originally built by the Laramie Amateur Hockey Club; which later became the Laramie Community Ice and Events Center. The facility is used for a variety of recreation and spectator activities, including ice skating and roller derby. The City's most recently created facility is the Laramie Community Recreation Center that serves as a public place for indoor/outdoor swimming, basketball, weight lifting, running, child care, health fairs, sports competitions, and general health and recreation services not just for Laramie residents but for the region.

The rich history of Laramie's parks and recreation system demonstrates this community's commitment to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. From the establishment of Laramie's first park prior to Wyoming statehood and the continued dedication shown today; Laramie has made parks and recreation facilities a priority. The majority of Laramie's parks and recreation facilities have been developed with community input and citizen grass roots efforts, which should continue into the future through the development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

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# Chapter Four

## Parks, Trails, Recreation and Natural Areas Classifications, Standards and Services

A successful Parks and Recreation Master Plan requires a set of classifications and standards that provide a framework for the physical development and redevelopment of any community facility. Not only do these standards set an expected baseline for a community's size, type, location and amenities of its parks and recreation facilities, it establishes a community wide standard that can be used by the City, more specifically the Parks and Recreation Department.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines (2009) to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of natural areas, parks and recreation facilities. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The current standard method is based upon providing a set number of acres or facilities per 1,000 people in population. This methodology was developed in the 1970s and 1980s and remains the basis for most parks and recreation master plans throughout the country.

Recently, the NRPA stated that communities should be cautious in using the national standards with no additional input, noting that all communities are unique, dynamic and ever changing, with varying climatic conditions, geographies, fiscal capabilities and demographics. Recognizing the inherent weaknesses in applying a national standard, the NRPA's current methodology strongly suggests that each community only use the national standards as a benchmark to develop their own standards or levels of service through research based citizen input and

community trends in parks and recreation services. While national standards are useful as a benchmark, it is important to ensure that they are reasonable for the community given other considerations such as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, socioeconomics, climate, natural environment, public input among other considerations. Therefore, it is important that the standards represent the interests and desires of the community.

The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to use the NRPA standards as a benchmark. National standards were then modified specifically to fit Laramie's needs and unique characteristics. This method is not new for Laramie; the 1982 Master Parks Plan took a similar approach, noting that parks and recreation should "be sensitive to Laramie's characteristics rather than superimpose so called 'National Standards' which may have limited practical value." Both in the



*Playground at Washington Park*

past and today, this approach is preferred because it allows flexibility in how standards apply, while accomplishing the vision and desires of the community.

Although the standards in this chapter do not outline every conceivable scenario related to the improvements of every park and facility, an expectation is established that should be attained if possible. In those cases where specific standards have not been addressed, the “National Standard” as defined by the NRPA should be used for guidance in development of facilities.

## Parks

Parks are arguably considered the most important and most commonly thought of amenity that is provided to any community. Because of the myriad of uses a park may have, from active to passive recreation, to the general aesthetic improvements it provides to the community and neighborhoods they are located in, parks play an important role in our community. The following element of this chapter provides a description of each park type and its corresponding roles and standards in the community.

In general all parks are recommended to consider the following:

- Neighborhood Parks and Playlots distributed by geographic region or park Service Areas (as defined in Chapter 5), are more desirable than fewer larger parks spread across the community.
- Parks, Recreational, Trails and Natural Areas should take advantage of being in proximity or connecting to one another in some fashion. For example, Parks and Trails should be situated adjacent to or near Natural Areas and near other recreational areas.
- Multi-modal access through bicycling, walking, driving and public transportation are all viable means to access parks.

- Maximizing the uses within our parks in order to do more with less is always desired. However, allowing all uses in every park is not required, considering some uses may not be compatible with each other. Unique uses such as beginner bicycle tracks, challenge courses and climbing walls as well as small scale uses such as mini-skate parks should be considered, however, not for every location.
- Natural water features should be considered in all parks, if available. Not only do these features provide for a unique park landscape, they may also provide specific uses such as fishing, ice skating or swimming opportunities.
- Sensitivity to the landscape, topography, climate and geography should always be considered when developing or improving a park.
- Partnerships, volunteer groups and sponsorships should be used whenever possible to help with improvements, construction and maintenance for all Parks, Trails, Natural Areas and other recreational areas.
- Bicycle racks should be located in all parks at convenient locations and be aesthetically pleasing,



*Pedestrians and bicyclists near the University of Wyoming*

with artistic racks considered over standard bicycle racks.

- Improve access to parks across major barriers such as roads and busy intersections through the use of crosswalks, traffic signals and other traffic control measures.
- Consider improvements or amenities that take advantage of Laramie’s cold and wintry climate.
- ADA access should be available for all activities and specialized uses in the Parks and Recreation system.



*Basketball court in Washington Park, an example of a Community Park*

- Some parks throughout the community should be considered as pesticide/herbicide free.

In addition to the general standards above, corresponding contextual maps for Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Playlots should be used for locating each park type within the community. Also specific standards related to each park type; Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Playlots should be considered and are found below.

## **Community Parks**

Community Parks function on a large scale, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community, not just a specific Service Area or neighborhood. They are typically larger in size, 20-40 acres, and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events. Community Parks can have picnic areas, walking and jogging trails, athletic fields and other larger scale activity spaces. It is important that adequate off-street parking is provided. Community Parks also provide quiet spaces for enjoyment and may include local environmental features such as rivers, ridgelines, drainages or other topographical features. Community Parks, although traditionally serving a large geographic area, also serve as recreation

spaces for the neighborhood in which they are located.

### **Community Park Role**

In cities that are similarly sized to Laramie (30,816 people), a Community Park often serves as the principal focal point for civic gatherings and organized recreational programs, special events and sports league play. Moreover, a Community Park can often become a major landmark as a flagship park in a community, a symbol that enhances community identity and is beloved by residents. For Laramie, the primary need for additional Community Parks is based upon the need for large open turf areas for soccer, lacrosse and all types of youth and adult sports. Additional Community Parks should be a priority for acquisition and development.

### **Community Park Standards**

The size of Community Parks should be large enough to accommodate a variety of activities with adequate space for major activities. The NRPA standards for a Community Park are that they typically serve two or more neighborhoods and community members will travel one-half mile to three miles in distance to reach a Community Park. The size of a Community

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Park is a minimum of ten acres, but generally contain between twenty and fifty acres. The standard for acreage is between three and five acres per 1,000 in population found within the community.

Recommended Community Park facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks, Shared Use Path or Rural Trail with exercise stations
- Off leash, fenced dog area
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 50 children, ages 5 to 12 with a separate area for children 3 to 5 years old)
- Perimeter landscaping
- Trash and recycling receptacles, enclosed or with lids
- Community Gardens
- Curb cuts and crosswalks at standard locations and across major barriers
- Restrooms
- Off-street parking
- All public improvements (paved streets, drinking water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)

Good examples of Community Parks in Laramie are LaBonte Park or Washington Park. Each serve as a location for multiple private and community events and contain most of the recommended improvements desired in a Community Park.

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks shall provide facilities and improvements that conveniently accommodate use by surrounding neighborhoods. Easy and safe access for nearby residents, central location and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing Neighborhood Parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and should have a blend of passive and active facilities.

### Neighborhood Park Role

Neighborhood Parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity. Most Neighborhood Parks are the foundation of a parks system and function as the center of activities within a neighborhood or subdivision area. For Laramie, Neighborhood Parks have been identified as highly important in providing recreation needs for the community, even more so than Community Parks.



*Undine Park Playground*

Neighborhood Parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents within one-half mile. The level of activity is limited by the space available and the needs of the neighborhood. The size of Neighborhood Parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition and intended use. The NRPA standards recommend a minimum Neighborhood Park size of five acres, assuming an adequate and even distribution of this type of park. Although a 10 acre park may accommodate athletic fields and larger recreation and open space areas, two parks that are five acres in size will typically better serve the needs of the community, by providing a broader distribution of Neighborhood Parks.



*O'Dell Mini Park a Playlot Park located in north Laramie, SA1*

### **Neighborhood Park Standards**

The ideal Neighborhood Park should be between five and ten acres, with the standard acreage at three acres per 1,000 in population found within the Service Area.

Recommended facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks, Shared Use Paths and Rural Trail
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 25 children ages 5 to 12 with a separate area for children 3 to 5 years old)
- Perimeter landscaping

- Trash and recycling receptacles, enclosed or with lids
- Restrooms
- Curb cuts and crosswalks at standard locations and across major barriers
- On- or off-street parking
- All public improvements (paved streets, drinking water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)

Good examples of Neighborhood Parks in Laramie are Kiwanis and Undine Parks. Although these parks are used by the entire community, a majority of the use is by nearby residents.

### **Playlots**

Playlots are intended for active recreational use of nearby residents typically within a one-quarter-mile radius. There are no specific criteria to guide development of Playlots, but they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of the population living in the immediate area. All age groups and abilities should be able to use the Playlot. Notable features that distinguish Playlots from Neighborhood Parks are a considerably smaller size that typically can only

accommodate active recreation, fewer uses and lack of restrooms. Another type of Playlot, uniquely different than a standard Playlot is a School Playlot. Often School Playlots, specifically elementary schools or schools with playgrounds and/or open fields, play a vital role in serving neighborhood recreational needs.

### **Playlots Role**

Playlots provide a minimum play area within minutes walking distance of residents in the area. Unfortunately, Playlots in many communities are established to mitigate the need for a nearby Neighborhood Park. When this circumstance arises, the Playlot often sustains heavy use and requires considerable maintenance.

Facilities that are less than one-half acre in area are usually considered inefficient, as they require nearly as much time for mowing and other routine maintenance tasks as Neighborhood Parks. For this reason, many communities discourage the acquisition and development of small Playlots. However, the City of Laramie believes that Playlots are useful and beneficial to the neighborhoods they serve.

### **Playlots Standards**

As mentioned before, there are no specific size or facility standards for Playlots. For Laramie, the community has indicated that a Playlot should be at least 14,000 square feet (.33 acres), approximately two medium sized residential lots, per 1,000 in population found in the Service Area.

Recommended facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Perimeter sidewalks
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting



*Spring Creek Elementary Playlot*

- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 15 children ages 5 to 12)
- Perimeter landscaping
- Trash and recycling receptacles, enclosed or with lids
- Curb cuts and crosswalks at standard locations and across major barriers
- On-street parking
- All public improvements (paved streets, drinking water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)

Good examples of Playlots in Laramie are O'Dell Mini Park and First Street Plaza. Each are uniquely distinct; however both serve the immediate neighborhood or area.

### **School Playlots**

School Playlots and the open play areas, playgrounds and recreation aspects associated with them can meet the

needs of both the school systems and the community, particularly when located in areas that are not adequately served by a Neighborhood Park or Playlot. The location of School Playlots are primarily dependent upon the location of elementary schools which typically contain open areas for play as well as playgrounds. Although variable in size these areas typically do not serve areas much more than that of a standard Playlot and are represented throughout the plan as a Playlot.

### School Playlots Role

The open areas, playgrounds, and recreation aspects of the Albany County School District #1 facilities function as Playlots for the surrounding neighborhoods.

### School Playlots Standards

With School Playlots being the primary facilities of the School District, the establishment of development standards is not applicable. It should also be noted that School Playlots will not be applicable to the acreage needs in each Park Service Area.

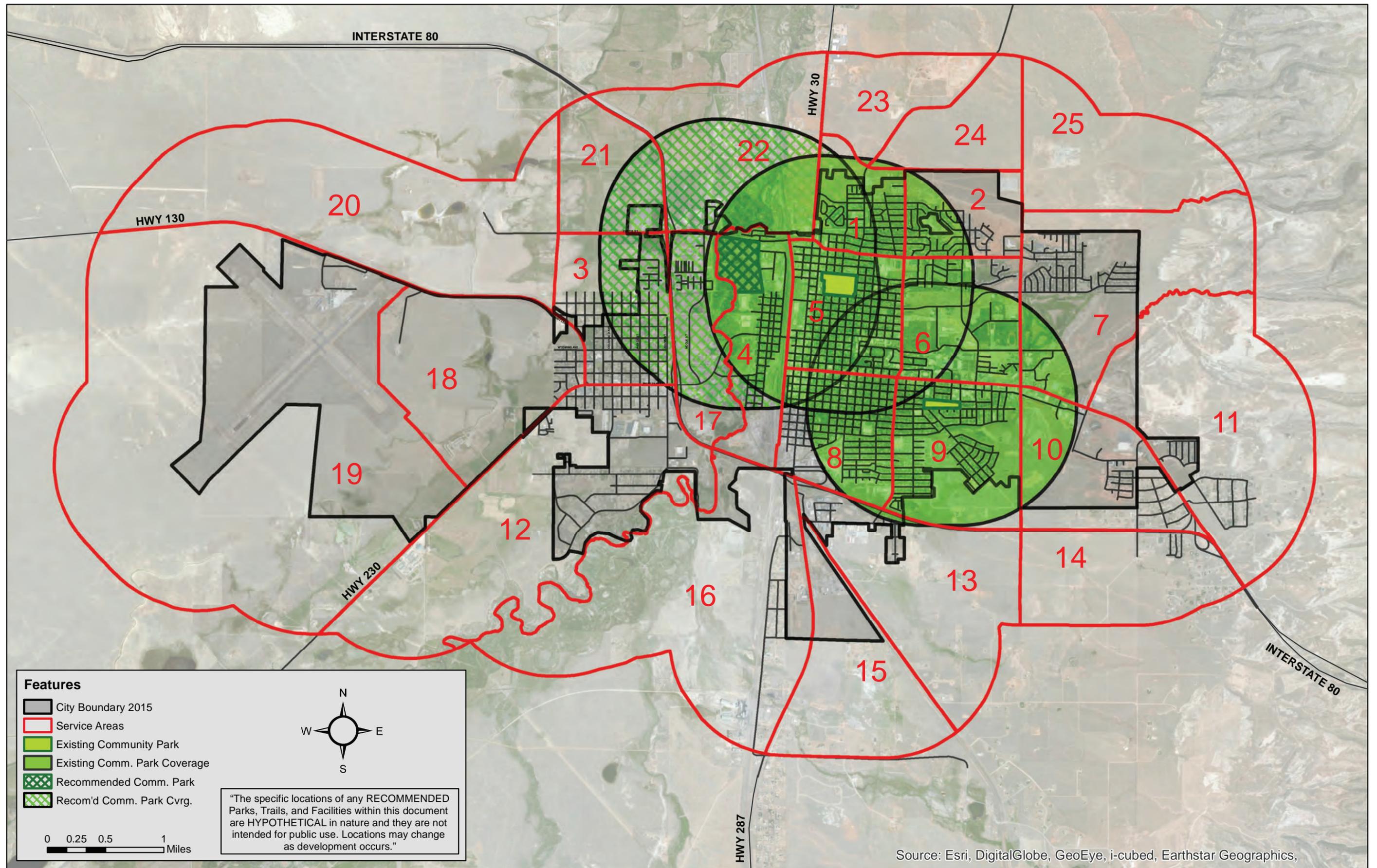
### Classification Standards for School Playlots

Elementary schools: With limited access and lack of City control, the local elementary school sites serve the immediate neighborhood (~1/4 mile radius), similarly to that of a Playlot. The total acreage of the elementary school site should not be used to meet the level of service within the park service areas. Using this rationale, all of the elementary school sites should be counted as one Playlot and have one-quarter mile spatial service radius. Middle, Junior High and High Schools: These sites do not serve the immediate neighborhood like the elementary school sites, due to the fact that no playground equipment is available for use and green areas are often limited on the sites. These larger sites serve the community in a recreational capacity with open turf areas and athletic facilities. Using this rationale, the junior high and high school should be counted in the overall number of recreation sites within the community, but not towards acreage calculation assigned within the specific service area.

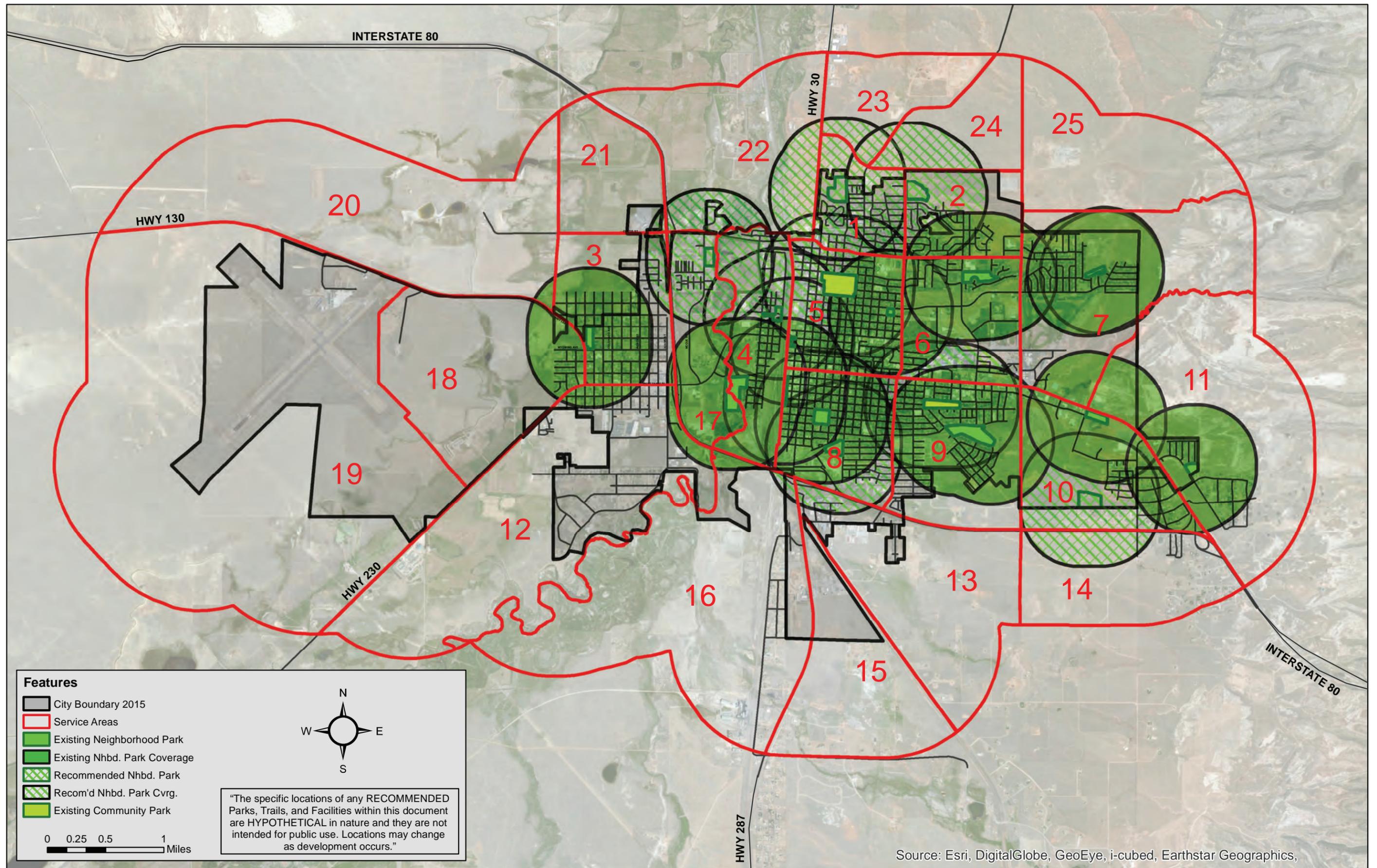
Service Area	Total Acres	Community Park Acreage Needed (1 Mile)	Neighborhood Park Acreage Needed (.5 Mile)	Playlot Acreage Needed (.25 Mile)
SA 1	408	0	1	3
SA 2	482	0	1	4
SA 3	741	0	1	6
SA 4	639	0	1	5
SA 5	650	0	1	5
SA 6	691	0	1	5
SA 7	1443	1	3	11
SA 8	633	0	1	5
SA 9	867	0	2	7
SA 10	841	0	2	7
SA 11	1855	1	4	15
SA 12	2803	1	6	22
SA 13	1299	1	3	10
SA 14	853	0	2	7
SA 15	968	0	2	8
SA 16	2390	1	5	19
SA 17	539	0	1	4
SA 18	1292	1	3	10
SA 19	5631	3	11	45
SA 20	2303	1	5	18
SA 21	576	0	1	5
SA 22	1276	1	3	10
SA 23	449	0	1	4
SA 24	442	0	1	4
SA 25	860	0	2	7

	Service Distance	Total Acreage Needed (City and 1-Mile)
Community Park	1 Mile	2010
Neighborhood Park	.5 Mile	503
Playlot Park	.25 Mile	126

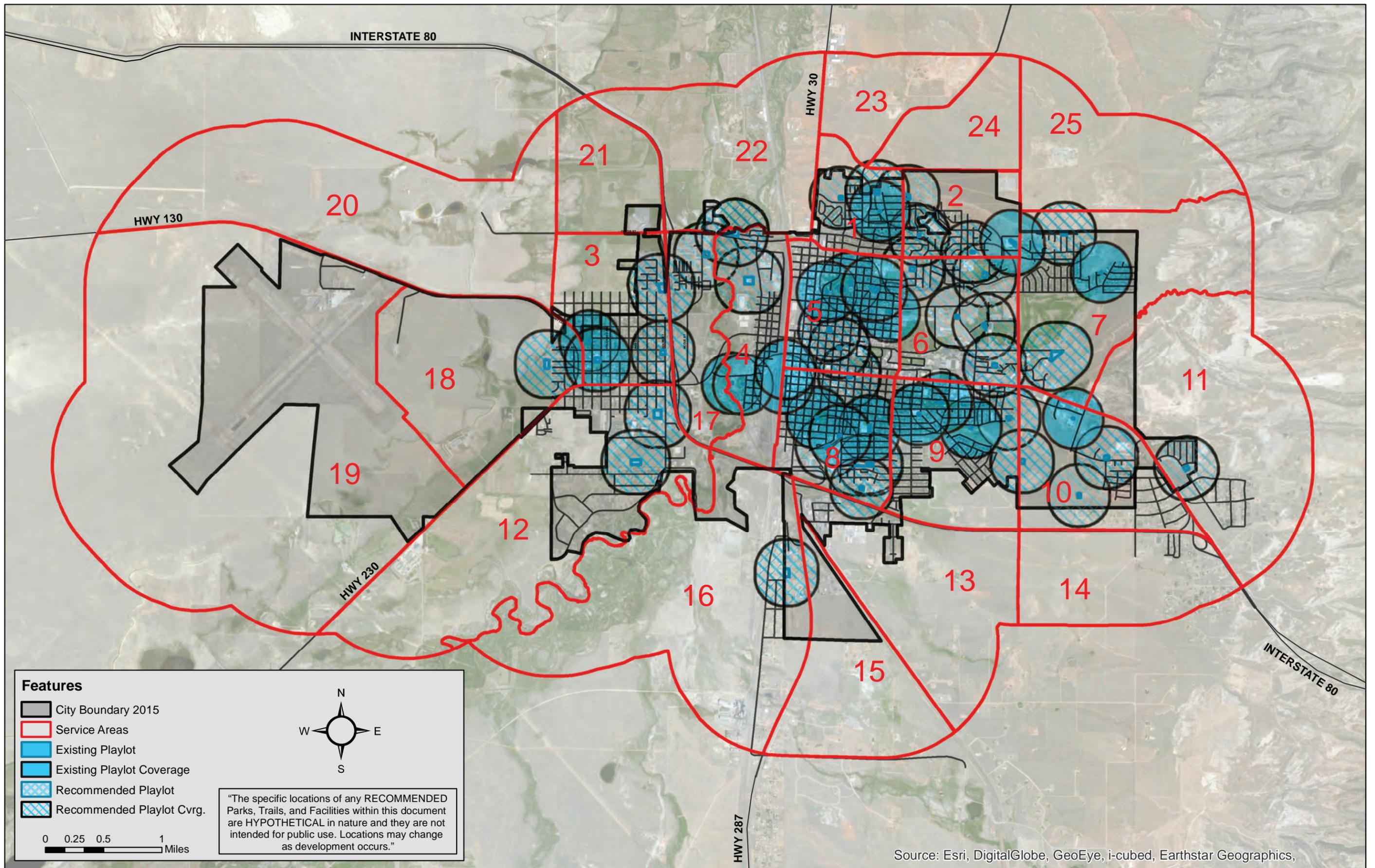




Regional Map of existing and proposed Community Parks within the city limits and the areas they serve. Extraterritorial needs can be found within Chapter 5 for each SA.



Regional map of existing and proposed Neighborhood Parks within city limits and the areas they serve. Extraterritorial needs can be found within Chapter 5 for each SA.



Regional map of all existing and proposed Playlots within city limits and the areas they serve. Extraterritorial needs can be found within Chapter 5 for each SA.

## Recreation Facilities and Amenities

Another of the other major recreation components is facilities and amenities. For Laramie and many other communities a Recreation Center is typically the most prominent and diverse facility a community can have. However, other facilities and amenities must also be considered as part of the recreation component for a community. Amenities and facilities such as Events Centers, Sports Complexes, Splash Pads and Skate Parks are just a few of the amenities that are common. In addition to serving the specific activities particular to each amenity, many of these facilities and amenities play a large role in recreational programming, community events and private events.

### *Laramie Community Recreation Center*

The Laramie Community Recreation Center is the preeminent recreation facility in Laramie. It is well known, highly used and now plays an extremely important role in the community's recreational programming, health and fitness. Like many other facilities, standards for this facility are not as defined as other facilities; however the history and future of the Recreation Center will provide the needed "standards" for this facility. More defined goals and action statements can be found in the individual analysis of the Recreation Center found in Chapter Six.

The Laramie Community Recreation Center was completed in October of 2004 on time and under budget for a total construction cost of \$11,301,000 with



*Laramie Community Recreation Center*



*Laramie Community Recreation Center Leisure Pool*

approximately \$350,000 in remaining funds for FFE (furniture, fixtures and equipment) items. The Recreation Center is located on a 25 acre parcel of City-owned land, and contains 63,000 square feet of space, tailored to the community's needs and desires. The center contains many of the facilities typical of a Community Recreation Center, such as basketball courts, locker rooms, workout areas, pools and exercise rooms. However the facility also contains some more unique and specialized amenities such as an 8-lane pool with continuous gutter system, an indoor playground/babysitting room, an outdoor leisure pool, and indoor/outdoor waterslides.

In addition to the direct facilities the Recreation Center provides, many partnerships have evolved that allow for increased use of the Recreation Center. Increased use results in increased revenue which provides far more facilities, opportunities and programming through other means, that might not be available without these partnerships. For instance, a monetary partnership which helps maintain the pool through funding allows Albany County School District's use of the 8-lane pool for swim meets, and private businesses have agreements to use the facility for physical therapy for their patients. These are just a few examples of how these partnerships are vital to the Recreation Center and keep it fiscally operational.

Finally, these partnerships are not the only way the Recreation Center is funded. The Recreation Center operates on an operational pro-forma that was developed in 2003 with the design and construction of the Recreation Center, that had an annual projected cost recovery rate at 76%. The operational pro-

forma relates to project expenditures, revenues, staff requirements, cost recovery and operational deficit based upon the facilities program amenities equaling a 76% cost recover and the remainder being covered by the general fund. The Recreation Center has met or exceeded the operational analysis pro forma projections every year but one since the facility opened in 2004.

While the “standards” for the Recreation Center may not be as defined as other facilities such as parks; the standards below provide for a defined direction and baseline for operation of the Recreation Center into the future.

- Continue to “enhance the health and quality of life for Laramie citizens and visitors through parks and recreation services,” specifically the utilization of the Recreation Center.
- Evaluate the services provided by the Recreation Center through the analysis of participation numbers, surveys, interactions and community input.
- Modify services, facility usage and programs to meet the needs of the community based on evaluations and surveys.
- Continue to maintain/build/add partnerships that allow the facility to maximize usage and funding sources for long-term viability of the Recreation Center’s facilities and programming.
- Monitor and evaluate, and continue to meet and exceed the financial operation goals of the Recreation Center, specifically the pro forma operation related to expenditures, revenues, staff requirements, cost recovery and operational deficit based upon the facilities program amenities.

### *Ice and Event Center*

Another major recreation facility in the City of Laramie is the Ice and Event Center. Similar to that of the Recreation Center, the need for the facility arose out of awareness and usage by the community and the inadequacies of the outdoor ice rink formerly located in Undine Park.

Though the outdoor rink established in the 1940s had

served Laramie well, a public process identified the need for an indoor ice facility and through fundraising done by the Amateur Hockey Club a rink was constructed in 2000 on a 3 acre property on the Turner Tract. In 2001 the City purchased the Ice and Event Center with Specific Purpose Tax monies and completed the construction of the lobby/lounge area, locker rooms and bleachers. At a total cost of \$850,000, the 30,000 square foot facility was constructed as a year around event center with ice for a minimum of six months a year.

October through mid-March, the Ice and Event Center maintains ice for ice skating, figure skating, instructional classes, curling, broomball and league hockey as well as UW Club Hockey. “Ice Time” demands especially during desirable time of the day have increased over the years, creating the need for longer ice season than six months as these activities continue to grow. The rest of the year, the center is used for other types of “summer” programming and events, such as roller skating, roller derby, and social events hosted by the City and private parties. The Ice and Event Center is also available for many types of activities ranging from weddings to circuses. Although, the primary season for this facility is winter, off-season should always remain a priority for at least two months.



*The “Ice Follies” at Undine Park Ice Rink, 1945*

*Photo from the Allen Krafczik Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming*



*Public Ice Skating at the Ice and Event Center*

Unlike that of the Recreation Center, the main funding stream for the Ice and Event Center is through user fees, rentals as well as a general fund subsidy. Activity programs and rental fees are based upon the direct and indirect overhead costs to operate the facility. These costs are analyzed and compared with other ice arenas in the Rocky Mountain region to benchmark and establish the ice season activity program and rental fees. The off-season activity fees are based upon the recreation programming fees to cover one hundred percent of the direct costs for a program or activity with any indirect costs recovery based upon the specific facility and overhead requirements of the program or activity. The average recovery rate over the last 5 years has been over 50%.

While the "Standards" for the Ice and Event Center may not be as well defined as other facilities such as parks, the standards below provide for direction and a baseline for operation of the Ice and Event Center into the future.

- Continue to "enhance the health and quality of life for Laramie citizens and visitors through parks and recreation services," specifically the utilization of the Ice and Event Center.

- Evaluate the services provided by the Ice and Event Center through the analysis of participation numbers, surveys, interactions and community input.
- Modify services, facility usage and programs to meet the needs of the community based on evaluations and surveys.
- The winter season should be given priority over the summer season; however summer season should remain for a minimum of at least two months.
- Continue to maintain/build/add partnerships that allow the facility to maximize usage and funding sources for long-term viability of the Ice and Event Center's facilities and programming.
- Monitor and evaluate, and continue to meet and exceed the financial operation goals of the Ice and Event Center, specifically the pro forma operation related to expenditures, revenues, staff requirements, cost recovery and operational deficit based upon the facilities program amenities.

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## Sports Complexes

With only one true Sports Complex, Laramie relies on the use of fields and facilities found in most of the parks to support league play for multiple sports. However this scattered distribution is not optimal and creates difficulties on many levels in providing quality recreation service to the community for associated sports. Nationally it is becoming more common to see recreation districts, along with municipalities, construct large sport field complexes. These complexes support several athletic fields which enable activities to all occur at one location, making it more convenient for the user groups and lowering the costs associated with the maintenance of these fields.

Laramie should consider a Sports Complex that would be large enough to support a minimum of ten full sized soccer fields. Being centrally located would make it a one-stop location for families involved in athletic activities where players of multiple ages could play at the same time. Additionally, the centralizing of staff, materials and equipment, not to mention required maintenance, will improve staff efficiency and service for these activities. Two possible locations have been recommended for this complex; the BP Amoco site located in the west side neighborhood, or the area located south of the Recreation Center and north of the future Laramie High School athletic fields.

The City should also consider a baseball/softball complex

with a minimum of four separate softball fields along with six separate baseball fields of different dimensions that would support varied age groups and classifications. Currently softball and baseball are located at four separate sites, with three of them being located on UW property, whose use and scheduling is governed by the agreement mentioned below in the partnership discussion. Two of the complexes (Little League and Cowboy Field) were both constructed in the 1950s and are becoming somewhat dilapidated and difficult to maintain, making a facility for a new Sports Complex evermore pressing.

## Dog Parks

Dog Parks provide a space where canines can exercise and play in a controlled setting under the supervision of their owners. These areas are intended to be a worry-free zone, where design and space of the park work together to create an area that can accommodate numerous dogs and allow for a multiplicity of dog play and exercise. Dog Parks also provide a community setting in which people can gather and socialize and where they can observe the interaction of groups of dogs at play.

There are two sizes of Dog Parks that would meet the need of the community: Regional Dog Parks and Community Dog Parks. Regional Dog Parks are larger, more natural, areas where dogs have more freedom to roam. Community Dog Parks are a more traditional park space with a fenced-in area for dogs and can include other amenities or enhancements. Laramie is committed to creating more dog-friendly spaces throughout the community and is focused in particular on dedicating new areas designated for future Dog Park development. Ensuring access to spaces where dogs can exercise off leash in a larger area is particularly important in a community that has many residents living in communal dorms or in large apartment complexes where enclosed outside recreation space may be limited.

### *Regional Dog Park Role*

The Regional Dog Park is generally larger in size and does not provide many services other than space. A Regional Dog Park is typically left as natural as possible, and provides a large space where dogs and their owners can recreate together.



*A summer night softball game at Sandy Aragon Softball Fields*

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## ***Regional Dog Park Standards***

The size of a Regional Dog Park is generally 10 acres or larger and does not have a set service area radius. With the Regional Dog Park's size, it should accommodate a wide array of uses for dogs and their owners.

### ***Recommended Regional Dog Park Requirements:***

- Signage shall be placed in all future Community Dog Park sites prior to development, alerting the neighborhood surrounding the land of a possible Dog Park.
- 11' wide Rural Path surrounding the boundary
- Informational signage around the park, including signage noting rules and the boundaries of the park.
- Grass and soil native to the area
- Benches around the path
- Tree planting where feasible
- One restroom accessible by all visitors
- Optional pond or water feature(s)
- Multiple dispensers for dog waste bags
- Trash and recycling containers

Laramie has no example of a Regional Dog Park.

## ***Community Dog Park Role***

A Community Dog Park is the traditional off leash area that is found in communities all over the United States. A Community Dog Park is created to provide an area for an owner to bring their dog to exercise in a controlled, fenced-in area. Typically separate areas for large and small dogs are provided. Community Dog Parks fill an important role in the community as they provide off leash space for dog-owners who might not have a yard of their own.



*Dog Friendly Off Leash Area at Optimist Park*

## ***Community Dog Park Standards***

A Community Dog Park is a minimum of 2 acres, but is preferably 3-5 acres and provides a service area of 5 miles. A Community Dog Park provides a play area for all types of dogs, large and small.

### ***Recommended Community Dog Park Requirements:***

- Signage shall be placed in all future Community Dog Park sites prior to development, alerting the neighborhood surrounding the land of a possible Dog Park.
- 6' high fence around the off leash area
- Regulatory informational signage at entrance way
- Separated areas with a 6' divider fence for large and small dog areas
- Double gated entry way with 12' x 12' paved area
- Surface material can be grass or non-organic material
- Separate drinking fountains for humans and dogs
- Multiple dispensers for dog waste bags
- Restroom accessible by all visitors

- Trees and other shrubbery
- Optional water feature for dogs (pond, canine drinking fountain or canine “showers”)
- Trash and recycling containers
- ADA accessible areas

Optimist Dog Park and Aragon Softball Field Dog Park are examples of Community Dog Parks in Laramie.

## Splash Parks

Splash Parks have been at the top of the national list for planned additions at facilities for several years running. Because of the popularity and advantages Splash Pads have, communities desire these facilities, Laramie included.

Installed on zero-depth pads, splash parks allow features with themed elements shaped like sea animals, plant life and other designs that go beyond the basic spray pole. In addition, features have been developed that have the ability to turn on when someone shows up to play, but turn off so as not to waste water when no users are present. Advances in water treatment also have come into play, helping ensure a safe experience for splash park users. In addition to being highly popular elements in the



*Undine Park Splash Pad*

communities they serve, other advantages include far less maintenance than most aquatic facilities (though regular maintenance is required to ensure things are in working order), reduction in staff cost because a lifeguard is not required and eliminates safety and lighting issues.

Laramie has seen these trends first-hand, as Laramie’s Splash Pad at Undine Park has recently undergone expansion as a result of its popularity within the community. Additional Splash Pads should be considered for future park sites.

## Playgrounds

Playgrounds, a common feature in almost all parks, provide children with an opportunity to exercise in ways that allow them to build skills, such as climbing and explore their imagination through play. In a time of growing concern over childhood obesity and lack of outdoor time for children, increased playgrounds is a common trend in cities as a measure to encourage children to exercise and be active. For most communities, playgrounds are an easily attainable amenity and can be placed in a wide variety of sized parks and locations, thus increasing access to an area which is highly used by this younger demographic as a primary means of exercise.

However, the concept of the traditional playground is no longer the only option communities have. Many playground manufacturers have added elements to traditional playgrounds such as slides and climbing areas that lend themselves to a more modern style including more natural colors, modification to traditional features and new features such as artificial boulders instead of stairs. Finally, increasing inclusiveness has also been a growing trend in the playground space, with manufacturers and those who build playgrounds alike aiming to go beyond simple accessibility to ensure that children of different abilities can play alongside one another as well as providing access for disabled children. Providing playgrounds in parks across the city helps increase access to these highly used amenities, to those residents

who live close by. As the park system continues to grow, Laramie must incorporate playgrounds and other play structures within their parks, no matter the size, in an attempt to increase access across the community.

Most playgrounds are broken into two distinct categories; playgrounds for children ages 3-5 and for children 5-12. The main distinction between the two types of playgrounds relates to the skill level needed safely use the playground. Although only one component other differences between the two make it safer for each age group to use the facility as well as tailored to each age group by offering amenities that would be use by a younger or older population. Within most parks, depending upon size, location and type of park both categories of playground could be considered.



*Skate Park in LaBonte Park*

## Skate Park

As the popularity of skateboarding has increased over the last twenty years, conflicts between skateboarders and property owners became commonplace in communities across the nation. In response many communities were faced with how to provide facilities for this activity; the skate park was the answer.

Laramie was not immune to this conflict; across the community, private businesses, schools and the University continued to have issues with skateboarders. However spurred by this conflict, a 1998 grassroots effort by Junior High and early High School age kids, in cooperation with the City and Albany County School District #1, the first ever Recreation Mill Levy was instituted to help construct the skate park. Driven by this grass-roots effort and financially supported by the Recreation Mill Levy and substantial private funding, a skate park in Laramie became a reality. The current skate park located in LaBonte Park, provides Laramie skateboarders a location for skateboarding to occur. Use of the facility is adequate for now; however, possible expansion or an additional

facility, such as a street style park, may be needed in the future if the popularity continues to increase.

## Cemetery

Laramie's only cemetery, Greenhill Cemetery, is situated just east of the core of the University of Wyoming Campus, near the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Willett Drive. The cemetery, established in 1881, is centrally located within the community and has good views of both of the Snowy Range and Laramie Range Mountains. Aside from the burial plots, the cemetery grounds also contain a mature tree canopy, as well as a cemetery office, maintenance area, roads and community gardens.

One of the largest issues facing Laramie's cemetery in the upcoming years is the lack of space available for future burial plots and the need for an additional cemetery location. Although nationally the trend from burial plots to cremation is becoming more common, burial plots continue to be purchased and more space is needed for cremated remains. It is estimated that within the next 10 years the cemetery will be at capacity. An additional cemetery location has been proposed north of town that would accommodate the needs of the community for more than 40 years. With the addition of the new cemetery location, the Parks and Recreation Department will need to consider how it will manage both sites, one for perpetual



*Greenhill Cemetery*

maintenance and the new site in preparation for opening. Below are recommendations that will need to be considered in the management of the current facility and the future facility.

- Early purchase and development of the new cemetery location should be a high priority. The earlier trees, grass and other facilities (maintenance buildings and offices) are developed the better for the new cemetery location as well as for the overall budgeting and management of both sites.
- Continue to provide excellent services related to operations and burials.
- Continue to provide excellent service related to monument settings and grounds.
- Development of the columbarium as well as plans for a future columbarium in the additional cemetery location.
- Encourage uses outside of burial activities that are compatible with the space such as quiet and passive leisure activities like community gardens, walking paths, and meditation areas.
- Educate the Laramie community about cemetery history through improved burial records, walking tours as well as other educational opportunities.

## Jacoby Golf Course

An important amenity based on citizen comments is the University of Wyoming, Glenn “Red” Jacoby Golf Course. As stated on the University of Wyoming’s web page,

“Jacoby Golf Course is located at the east side of the UW campus in Laramie. Jacoby Golf Course is one of the unique public courses in the nation. It is located 7,220 feet above sea level and measures 6,855 yards to play. Home to the UW Men’s and Women’s golf teams, Jacoby Golf Course is maintained by the University of Wyoming Physical Plant.”

As a public course, approximately 145 acres in size and maintained by the University, a highly desired activity is provided to all residents that may otherwise not be financially feasible for a community such as Laramie, without this partnership. In addition to the course, Jacoby Golf Course has completed an indoor driving range and practice center for year-round use, furthering the benefits this amenity provides to the community. Because of the major benefit this amenity offers Laramie, a continued partnership with the University of Wyoming in matters related to the future of Jacoby Golf Course should be considered. The regional detention ponds constructed on the golf course as part of the “East Campus Drainage Agreement” is an excellent example of cooperation and partnership between the City and the University. In this case, a major amenity was provided to the golf course, while dealing with excess stormwater for the City creating a win-win for the City, University and the community.



*Jacoby Golf Course*

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## Natural Areas

The Laramie community has noted throughout the development of this plan that Natural Areas are highly important to the community. Overall, it is recognized that we live in the middle of some of the region's greatest natural areas, but a blending of these natural areas into an urban environment to create a human connection is important.

Natural Areas are typically lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space, unique topography, visual aesthetics, access to other natural resources areas (State Lands, National Forest, etc.) or some other resource that has been determined of value to the community. There are no specific national standards for size or number of acres per population, rather the standards note that Natural Areas should be unique and variable to each community.

Natural Areas serve an important role in the parks and recreation system in preserving the natural ecosystem, wetlands, water bodies, forest or woodlands, geologic features, protection of rare, threatened or endangered species or endangered natural resources. They also serve as wildlife habitat, interpretive exhibits and educational opportunities, nature trails, as well as preserving historic and cultural sites and resources.

Because the definition of a Natural Area is so broad the Laramie community and the Ad Hoc Committee felt that two main types of Natural Areas should be considered: Open Space and Preserve.

### *Open Space vs. Preserve*

Explained in more detail below, the main difference between Open Space and Preserve is the allowance of improvements to be made within Open Space areas, versus the lack of improvements allowed in Preserves. The community felt that some Natural Areas should have some allowance for improvements which allow residents to enjoy the area that has been designated



*Laramie River running through the Monolith Ranch*

for a set reason. However, it was also noted that some areas should be kept pristine, have limits or no improvements allowed and possibly limit or restrict access so that the area is kept as natural as possible. By creating two different sub-categories within the Natural Area, a clear definition for each area is given.

### *Open Space*

Open Space for the Laramie Community preserves land (public or private) that allows for different levels of improvements such as, but not limited to, improved access through trails, play structures, benches or viewing areas, and serves one or more of the following functions: (1) preservation of natural areas and natural resources; (2) provision of outdoor recreation; (3) maintenance of Laramie's unique identity, geology or topography; and, (4) preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.

### *Open Space Role*

The role of Open Space should be mainly focused on, however not solely, conservation and preservation, and connecting people with their natural resources and environment. Open Space can allow and encourages areas to be used to varying degrees. Depending upon each Open Space area, improvements or access will allow citizens to use this area much differently than a Preserve.

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Because Open Space types widely vary, Open Space may allow a situation where only an improved dirt trail and access to the area exists, all the way up to paved trails, interpretive areas and playgrounds. The role Open Space plays will be dependent upon where and why each area has been designated as Open Space, with the primary focus remaining on conservation and preservation. Only when these factors are considered will the community be able to determine how the Open Space can be best used and what is appropriate in the Open Space area.

### *Preserve*

A Preserve is open land that remains in a relatively natural state or use, void of any man-made development, can be public or private and serves one or more of the following primary functions: (1) preservation of natural areas and natural resources; (2) provision of outdoor or low-impact recreation; (3) maintenance of Laramie's unique identity, geology or topography; and, (4) preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.

### *Preserve Role*

Similar to Open Space, the emphasis or role of a Preserve area should clearly be on conservation, education and preservation, connecting people with their natural resources and environment through preserving our heritage, respecting our natural resources, defining our community, treasuring our future, and protecting what Laramie values. Because a Preserve's main emphasis is preservation, typically most preserves will limit access, reduce impact and typically protect a specific feature or characteristic of the area. Each Preserve may play a different role, depending upon location, what is being preserved and the sensitivity of the area, which should also be a factor in determining what is appropriate for the area.

### *Public vs. Private Natural Areas*

All Natural Areas, both Open Space and Preserve areas, can be either public or privately held. In many cases "Public" Natural Areas are held in City ownership, but they also could be held by another local government such as the County, or the State and/or Federal Government. Although held as "Public" this may or may not mean

that the property is accessible to the public. It is possible to have "Public" Natural Areas that have very limited or no public use, or restrictive public access/use, depending upon the topography or other natural resources that the City or other entity determines should be protected.

Natural Areas can also be held under private ownership as well. Private Natural Areas are typically associated with some sort of private entity, such as a person or limited liability corporation, or a conservation group or entity. Although held in private ownership, Private Natural Areas normally preserve the same types of areas that public Natural Areas preserve. Similar to public Natural Area, private Natural Areas, may or may not allow access or limit access/use, depending upon many of the same factors listed above. In many of these cases, some mechanism is in place that restricts development of the land over a long period of time or forever.

In any case Open Space or Preserve, public or private, consideration should be given to what the area is intended to preserve. When deciding between Open Space versus Preserve, consideration should be given to factors that address the long term needs of the community as well as the area that is being designated. If areas are to be truly protected, a Preserve may be more desirable. In cases where other benefits may be gained through access and improvements, Open Space may be the correct designation. Furthermore, if given the option of public versus private ownership for Natural Areas, consideration such as accessibility, long term protection, use, and long term management/maintenance should all be considered.

### *Open Space and Preserve Standards*

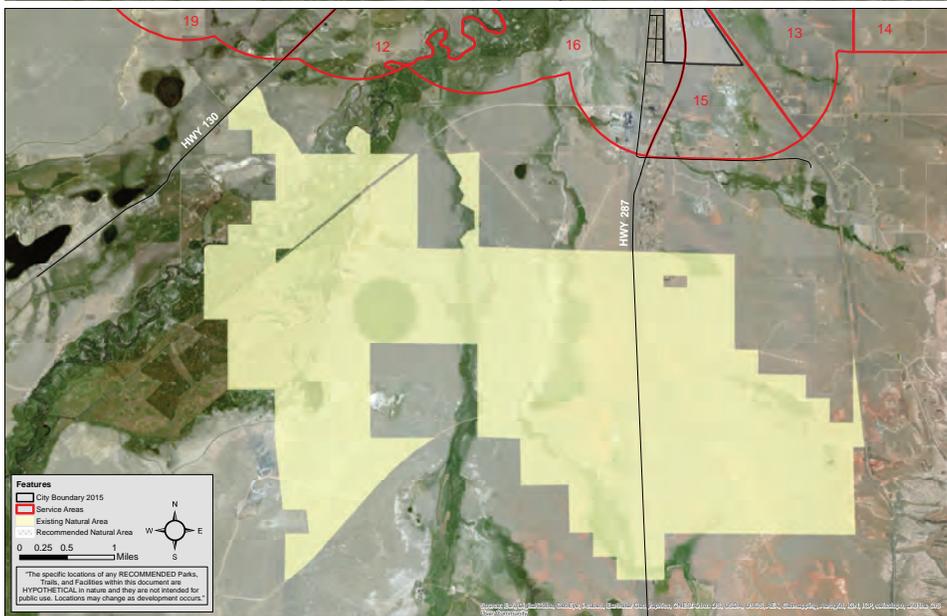
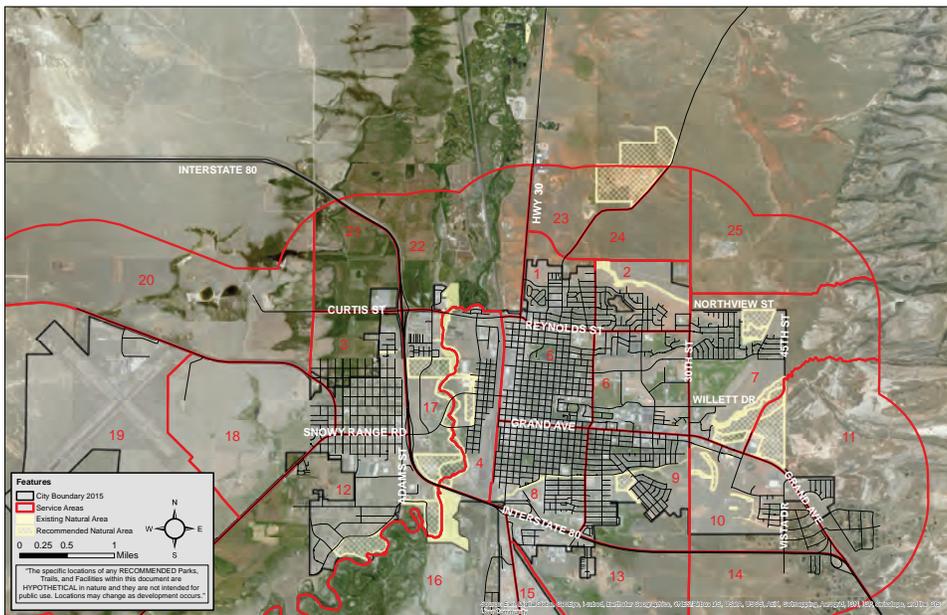
While there are no specific size or facility standards for Open Spaces or Preserves, the guidance provided above distinguishes between the two and must be maintained for each of the designated Natural Areas. Generally Open Space and Preserves should:

- Preserve natural areas and natural resources, including but not limited to, significant natural resources, open space, preservation of unique topography, visual aesthetics, environmentally sensitive areas, access to other natural resources (State Lands, National Forest, Parks etc.) or

some other resource that has been determined of natural resource value to the community. Provide outdoor or low-impact recreational opportunities such as walking, hiking, biking, animal exercise and passive recreation as well as other types of recreational opportunities, such as wildlife and bird watching in and surrounding the Laramie community.

- Maintain Laramie’s unique identity, geology or topography.

- Preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.
- Preserve the natural ecosystem, wetlands, water bodies, forest or woodlands, geologic features, protection of rare, threatened or endangered species or endangered natural resources.
- Encourage the development of both public and private Natural Areas.
- Provide opportunities within an urban setting for human interaction with resources found in Natural Areas.



Existing and proposed Natural Areas within Laramie and surrounding the City

• Shared Use Paths, Rural Trails and Natural Areas go hand in hand by providing access to other Natural Areas, public lands, facilities and parks.

• Natural Areas should consider their proximity to surrounding lands, both public and private, in an effort to make adjacent uses and activities as compatible as possible all while maximizing preservation. Consideration of uses limitations, times in which the areas are used, or through techniques such as wildlife fencing can all improve compatibility.

• Accessibility for everyone should be considered for all Natural Areas. Although access may be limited, every attempt should be made to encourage usage by everyone.

• Individual plans should be considered for each Natural Area to assess management, access, improvements, fire concerns and other issues associated with the area, if needed.

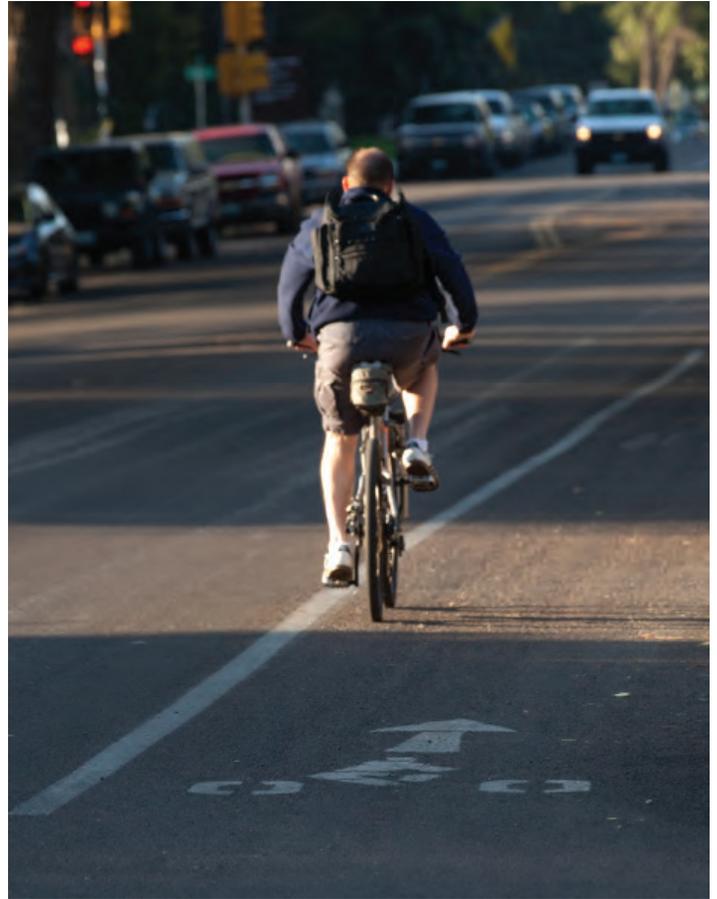
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## Trails, Bicycles and Pedestrians

Throughout Laramie, trails, bicycle and pedestrian routes are heavily used and regarded as important to the community as a means of accessing the park, recreation and natural area opportunities the City has to offer. Not only do these routes offer an alternative to driving, they provide a way for all segments of the population to access the amenities in an equitable fashion. In general, four main types of trails, bicycle and pedestrian routes exist; Bicycle Lanes, Shared Use Paths, Rural Trails and Other, which are further explained below.

Generally, all bicycle lanes and Shared Use Paths and any other pedestrian routes noted in this plan or constructed in Laramie should conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2009, published by the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities 2012 published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Furthermore, both of these documents address Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (as amended) (ADA) requirements, as most Shared Use Paths, and Other types of pedestrian ways should always conform to these requirements.

In addition to the design and construction information provided by these documents, City of Laramie Engineering Standards as well as customary engineering standards shall be considered for all of these facilities. Laramie specific and/or good engineering practice may further dictate design and construction; including a focus on transition from one lane type to another, safety and overall network integration. Furthermore, alternative engineering design should also be considered when applicable, in order to provide a facility that works well in the Laramie community. Although many innovative treatments are possible and are widely accepted practices, standard design treatments should be explored first. Engineering studies, trial periods and analyses, related to traffic flow, safety, among other factors, should also play a role in dictating the location and design of these facilities. Finally, these facilities may require approval by City Council, Planning Commission or Traffic Commission prior to development.



*Bicycle Lane on Iverson Street*

With the possibility of new facilities and innovative designs, making sure all users understand how to best use these trails, bicycles and pedestrian ways should be important as well. Providing opportunities for facility users to learn “how to” use these new facilities or through educational materials in safe and proper use of these facilities could provide the necessary guidance in maximizing and easing the use of the facilities.

These documents provide general standards related to types of paths, design requirements, painting requirements, signage and safety among many other standards related to the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It should also be noted that as these standards are used, further study should be done, specifically related to an integrated transportation plan that includes these categories, not just the automobile. Although specific detail can be found in these documents, a summary of some of the common standards have been included within the plan for reference.

In addition to the general standards outlined in the above referenced documents it was made clear through the public process and by the Ad Hoc Committee that additional standards should be specifically addressed that would make Bicycle Lanes, Shared Use Paths and Other Routes more usable for the community. These standards should be used in conjunction with the standards above. Corresponding contextual maps have also been provided for Bicycle Lanes, In-Park Paths, Shared Use Paths and Rural Trails, which should be used for locating each path, trail, and lane type within the community. Finally, the Major Street Plan (see page 80) and routes identified on it should always be considered for future Trails, Bicycle Lanes and Paths.

## Bicycle Lanes

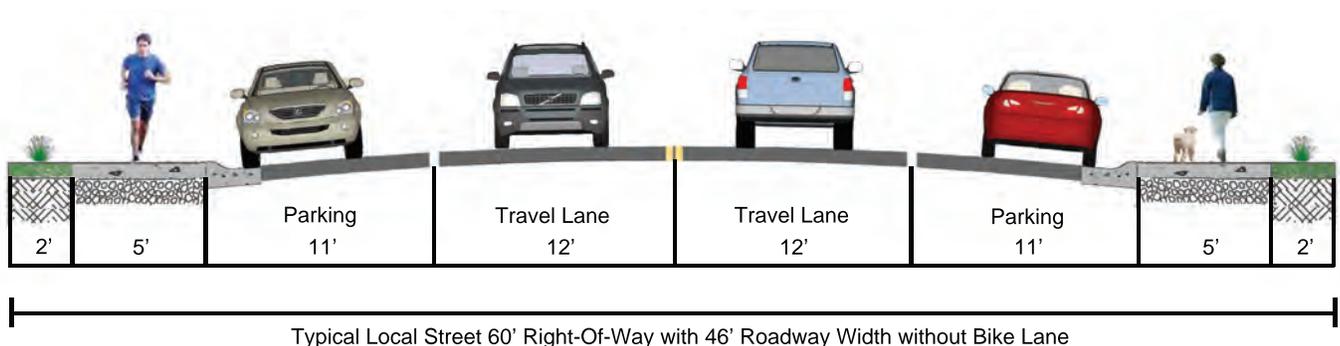
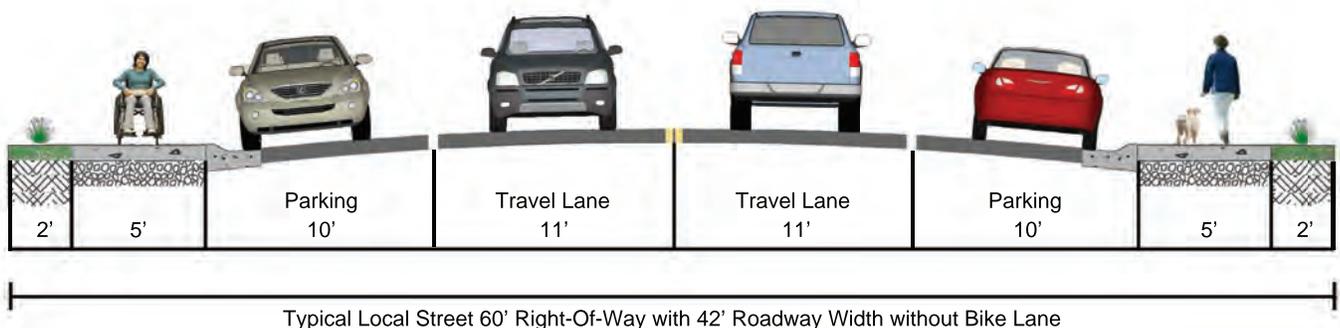
It was noted during the adoption of the Laramie Comprehensive Plan in 2007 as well as the public participation process for this plan that Bicycle Lanes were extremely important to the community. Although general satisfaction of the Bicycle Lanes was good, it was noted that improvements could be made that would dramatically improve the use of the lanes in and around the Laramie community. For this plan Bicycle Lanes and their locations were primarily noted for their

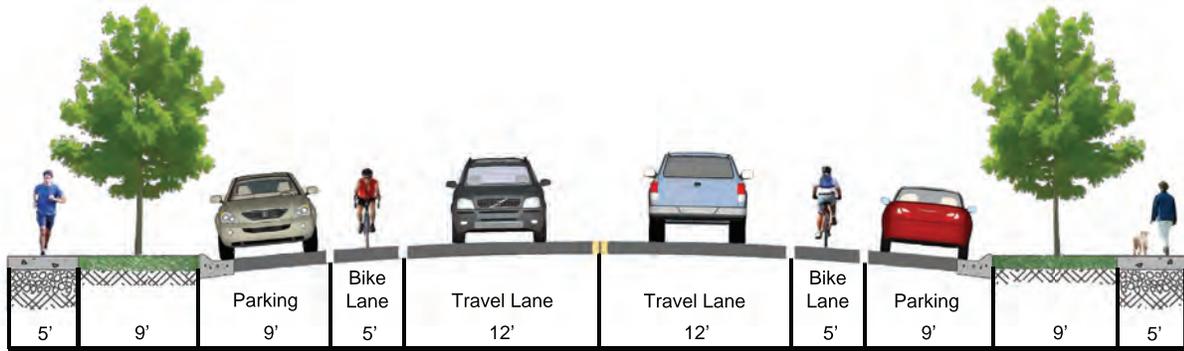
connectivity to other Parks and Recreation facilities throughout the community. However, it should be noted that although the primary function outlined in this plan is for connectivity to these facilities, these lanes also play a primary and larger role in a multi-modal transportation network. It is likely that in the future a bicycle plan that is transportation oriented will be developed to address the other component of the system.

## Bicycle Lane Standards

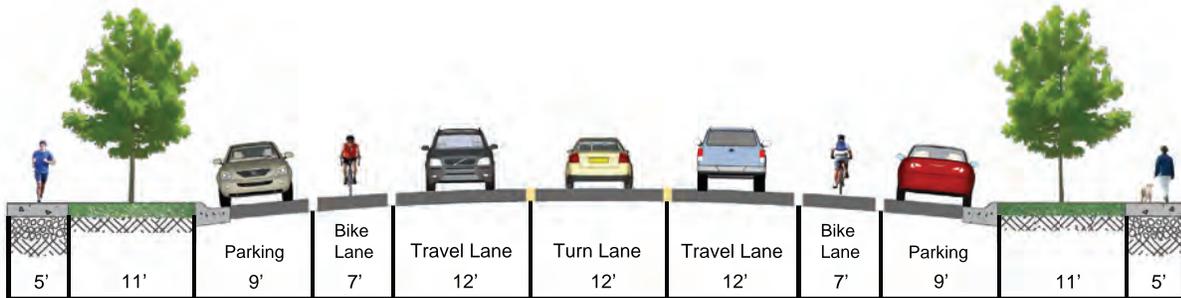
Recommended standards would include the following:

- A bicyclist's preferred operating width is 5 feet. In a busy or narrow parking lane with adjacent commercial uses, a wider bicycle lane of 6-7 feet is preferred. In a high bicycle use lane, a 6-8 foot lane is preferred to allow for side-by-side bicycle use. Standard City Street is 52 feet, curb to curb.
- Consistent and continuous painting/stripping of the bicycle on-road symbols shall be required. Special attention should be paid to the painting on the lanes up to and at the intersection (also see bike boxes section). Consideration of non-slip

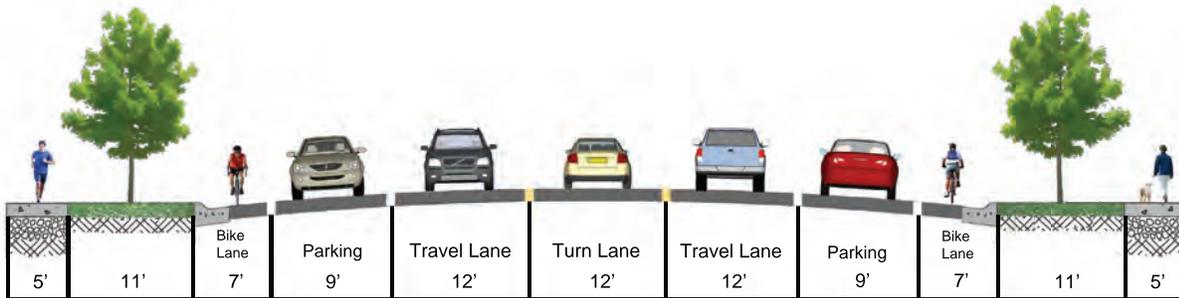




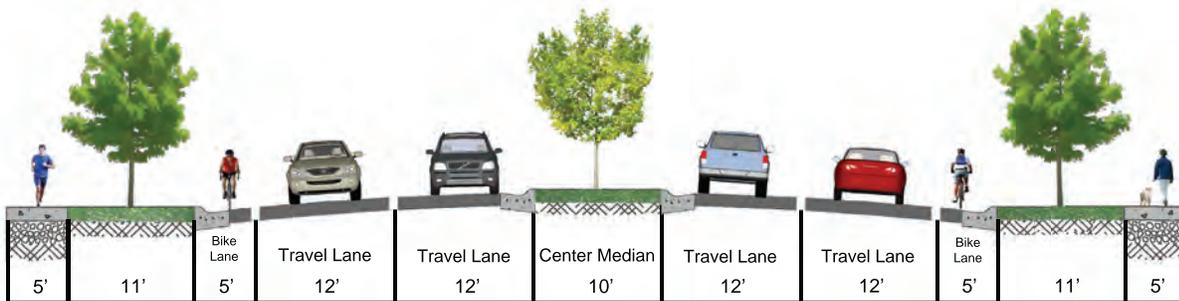
Typical Collector Street 80' Right-Of-Way with 52' Roadway Width with Bike Lane



Typical Arterial Street 100' Right-Of-Way with 68' Roadway Width with Parking Lane and Bike Lane



Typical Arterial Street 100' Right-Of-Way with 68' Roadway Width with Parking between Drive Lane and Bike Lane

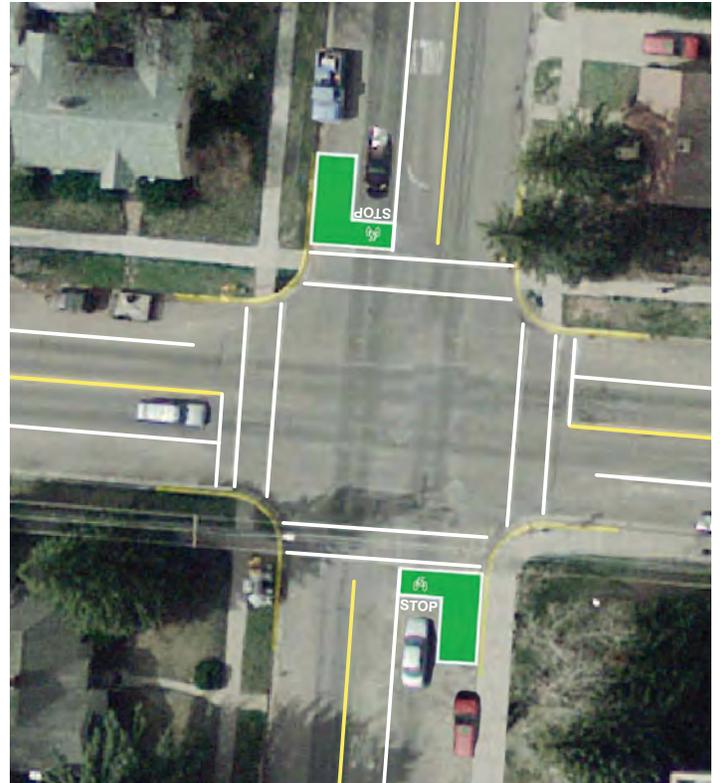


Typical Arterial Street 100' Right-Of-Way with 68' Roadway Width with Bike Lane and Center Median

colored lanes in high traffic areas should also be entertained, especially in and around intersections.

- Sharrows should be considered to denote shared bike and vehicle traffic on roadways.
- General maintenance of Bicycle Lanes should be increased, paying particular attention to the condition of the travel surface, the curb/asphalt interface and consistent sweeping of the lanes.
- In addition to general maintenance needs, winter maintenance and snow clearing should be incorporated into the overall snow removal plan, keeping routes across the community as open as possible.
- Bicycle Lanes at controlled intersections with traffic signals – cameras should be used to be able to detect bikers. When upgrading streets, cameras should be implemented to detect bicyclists.
- When upgrading streets, improvements should be considered to facilitate Bicycle Lanes. Improvements such as widening of the street, removal of parking, and separated lanes near intersections should be considered. In the case of new or upgraded traffic signals at controlled intersections, cameras, or other detection devices shall be implemented to detect bicyclists.
- A reduction in parking, along the block face or at intersections, through painting, signage or physical improvements (curbs) should be examined to provide for good street/bicycle lane interface. Bicycle Lanes shall not be secondary to on-street parking.
- All transportation studies should include deficiencies, needs, interactions, warrants and impacts, among other items in relationship to Bicycle Lanes as an integral part of the street
- A solid white line 4 inches wide on the inside and outside of the lane is preferred to delineate bicycle lanes. When warranted, such as in heavily used areas or on collectors and arterials, dual white line lanes shall be used.

- Supplemental directional arrows and bicycle pictures can enhance the bicycle lane for both bicyclists and motorists. As depicted, a painted bicycle rider should be 6 feet in length followed by a directional arrow of 6 feet in length. This allows for increased safety awareness between bicyclists and motorists.
- Bicycle lane signage can also indicate to motorists of



*Bike boxes imposed on a standard Laramie street.*



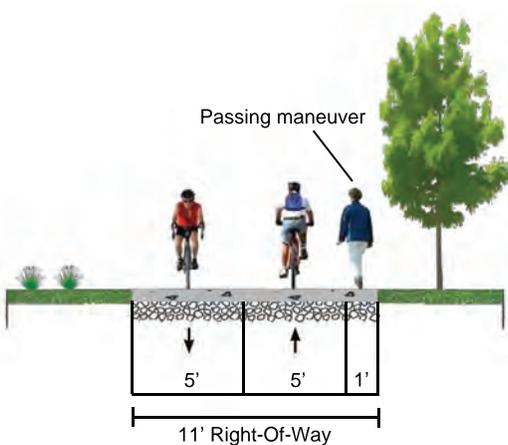
*Bicycle Lanes on a typical residential street with parking and two way travel lanes.*

an existing bicycle lane. Signs are often less effective on streets with on-street parking, however, bicycle street signs can be used periodically throughout a route to aid in times when painted lines are not visible. The signs should be clear and simple indicating when a bike route begins and ends.

- Bike boxes are implemented for increased safety between motorists/bicyclists at intersections. They also increase safer intersection crossings and create greater distances between the cyclist and motorist. Criteria should be developed in order to determine when bike boxes may be needed, which could include the need for engineering studies, usage counts, among other factors

### Shared Use Paths

Shared Use Paths are multi-modal paths that are physically separated from motorized traffic. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Shared Use Paths are commonly designed for two-way travel and serve a multitude of purposes from shortcuts in residential neighborhoods, school connections and commuting routes from job centers, schools and residential areas. Shared Use Paths are designed



Shared Use Path

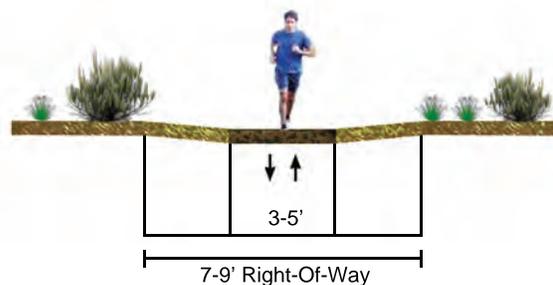
for bicyclists, inline skates and pedestrians. They are also considered a safer mode of travel for less confident bicyclists to learn and improve their skills.

### Shared Use Paths Standards

- The City of Laramie will adopt the AASHTO standard of an 11' wide Shared Use Path for multi-directional bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- Striping of the Shared Use Path is not necessary to separate bicyclists and pedestrians. In areas with blind spots or high traffic, a solid yellow line can be used to indicate no passing in addition to signage.
- Bike racks, maintenance station (air, tools and work racks) and rest areas at locations where people may stop will be incorporated along Shared Use Path.
- Shared Use Paths will be constructed of concrete.
- Where applicable, adjacent gravel pathways will accompany shared use paths to accommodate equestrian and or jogging activities.
- For specific shared use design standards adjacent to neighborhoods, commercial properties, public right-of-ways, etc, the AASHTO guidelines will be followed.

### Rural Trails

Rural Trails will be primarily used by pedestrians, bicyclists, hikers and equestrian users. Rural Trails will be established in more rural settings providing a more remote experience ideal for those user groups mentioned above. The trails will be designed to minimize soil disturbance and erosion. Other trails, such as standard Bicycle Routes or Shared Use Paths, can transition into a Rural Trail. While this plan does not address more broad ranging rural trail connections, linkages to public lands, wildlife refuges and similar locations should be attempted.



Rural Trail

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### Rural Trail Standards

- Standard Rural Trail guidelines suggest a clearing width of 7 to 9 feet, tread width of 3 to 5 feet, and the tread surface should be a natural material, such as crushed fines.
- Rural Trail improvements such as crushed fines can be used in heavily used areas (parking lots, trail heads) to reduce wear and prevent soil erosion.
- Rural Trail transitions, connecting to a different trail type, or vice versa, will be marked with clear signage indicating the change in surface or trails designated use.
- Signage will indicate trail type, difficulty, route and recommended uses.
- All Rural Trails shall be used for non-motorized use only.

### Other Routes

Some routes proposed within the plan cannot be classified as one of the more traditional standards outlined above, however they play an important role in the parks and recreation systems as a whole. These “other routes” include Pedestrian Ways, In-Park Paths and Bicycle Routes.

### Pedestrian Ways

Pedestrian Ways are found throughout the community and are generally, mid-block sidewalks that allow a “cut-through” for pedestrians in the area. Pedestrian Ways should be clearly marked, consistent, and uniform throughout the City. Shrubbery and hedges adjacent to the path should be maintained to provide clear walking paths.

### Pedestrian Ways Standards

- New Pedestrian Ways are required in areas where the route has more than 600 feet without intersecting another route.
- Pedestrian Ways will be clearly marked with signage

- Walking paths shall be maintained for safe and clear passage.
- Improve existing Pedestrian Ways for ADA accessibility.

### Bicycle Routes

On some streets within the community the ability to accommodate a Bicycle Lane or Shared Use Path may not be an option, due to many different factors. However, in instances where bicycle use is higher than normal, Bicycle Routes should be used to inform all users, both vehicular and bicyclist, that the road is being shared. Bicycle routes should be clearly marked on the road and include consistent and uniform signage throughout. Signage should be easy to locate, read and alert motorists that the route exists and cyclists could be present on roadways.

### Bicycle Route Standards

- Clearly marked signage that is easy to read and indicates to the cyclists that he/she is on the



*Bicycle Route Signage Example*

- correct route and is moving in the right direction
- Signage shall show motorists that the road is also a Bicycle Route.
- Bicycle Routes may go through or be incorporated into existing park or recreation facility routes. In these instances lanes should be clearly marked and denote that bicycle riding is allowed.

### In-Park Paths

In-Park Paths are Shared Use Paths that are located within a park. Although similar to a Shared Use Path in the

terms that they are paved and serve pedestrians traveling in the community, path usage is much different. Because the path is located within the park and is used to primarily circumvent and navigate within the park, use should be limited to pedestrians walking, jogging, or running on the path. The path width should be 8 feet at a minimum and when applicable match the Shared Use Path standard.

### **Trail Heads**

It was determined by the Ad Hoc Committee and the public that an extensive network of Bicycle Lanes, Shared Use Paths and Rural Trails be provided throughout the community. In addition, it was identified that Trail Heads should also be found throughout the City in an effort to provide a starting off point, resting point or as a place to locate services such as restrooms, parking and bicycle service stations.

### **Trail Head Standards**

- Off-street parking shall be provided to accommodate parking for less than a 24 hour time period.
- Signage should clearly indicate the Trail Head and provide a map or other means of providing contextual location within the system.
- Co-location of Trail Heads with other facilities such as Parks, Recreation Center, or institutions such as schools should be encouraged.



*In-Park Path at LaBonte Park*

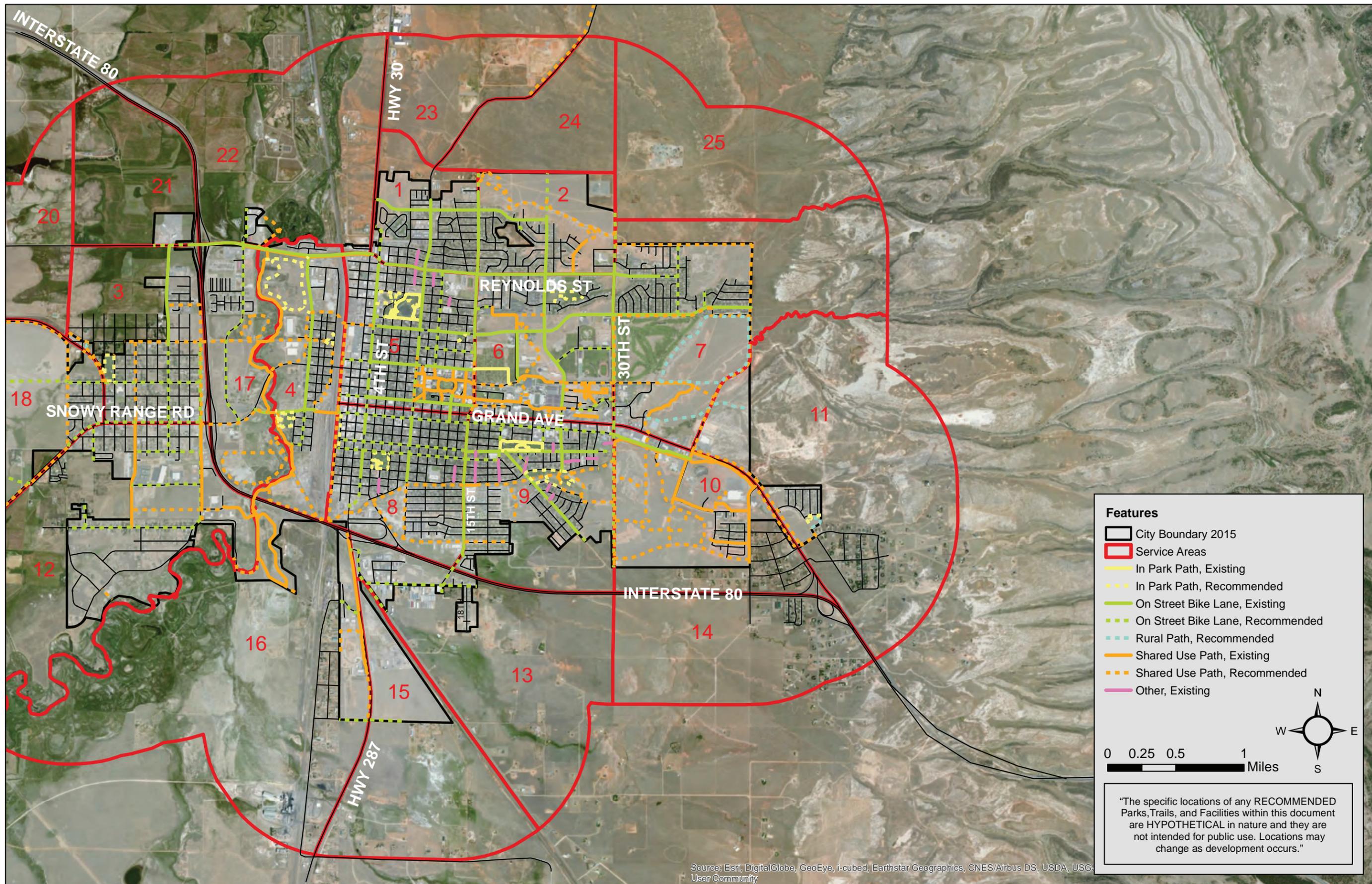
- Co-location of Trail Heads with other transportation networks such as bus routes should be encouraged.
- Provide amenities such as benches, water fountains, picnic tables, trash cans, donation/fee boxes, dog refuse bins/bags, bike parking, service stations, shelters and bathrooms depending upon the size, need and location of the Trail Head.

### **Recreation and Programming**

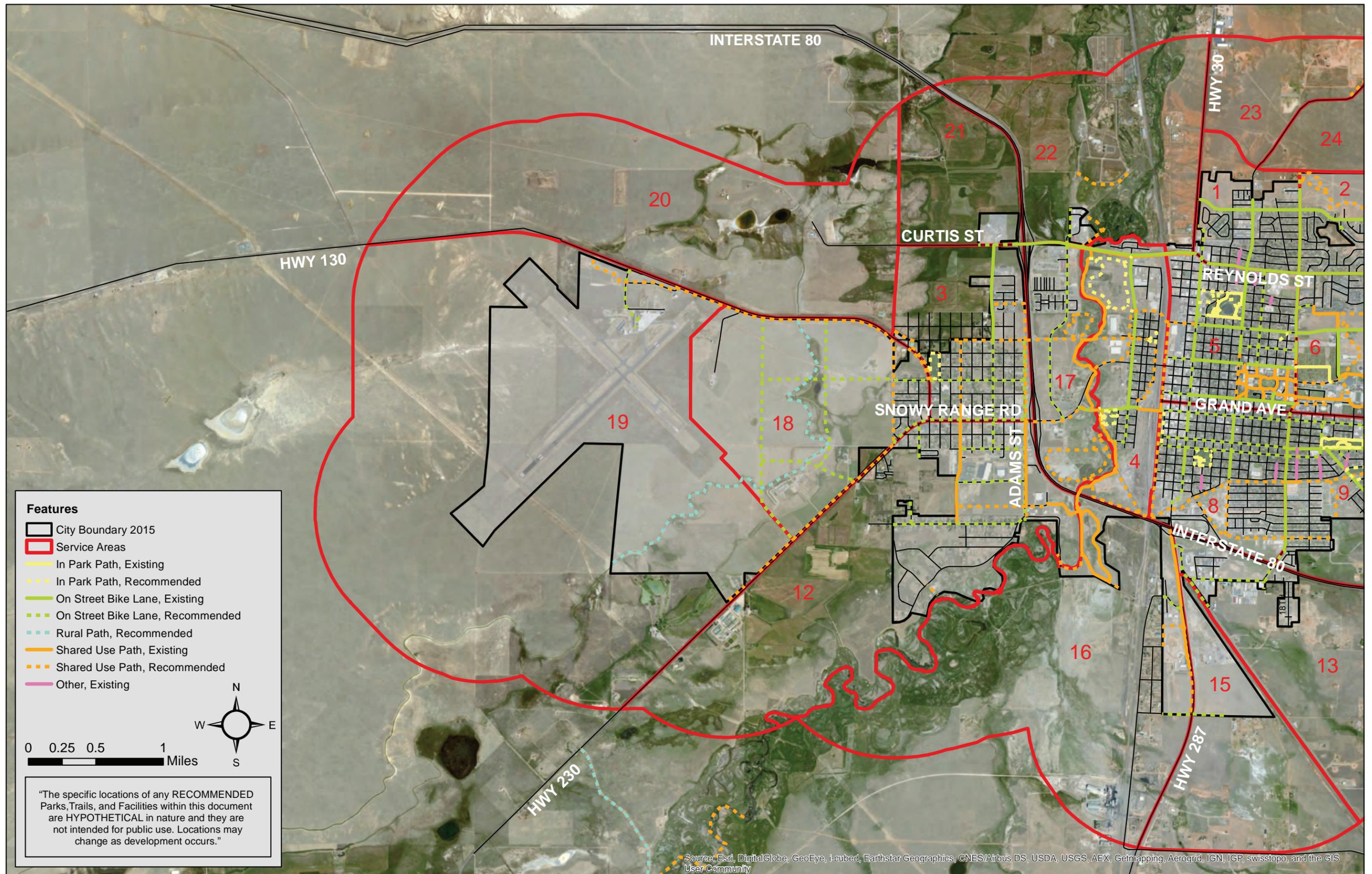
Recreation services and programming play a complementary and vital role to the Parks system.



*The Laramie River Greenbelt Trail and the Trailhead at Optimist Park*



Regional map of all existing and proposed In-Park Paths, Bike Lanes, Shared Use Paths, and Rural Paths, focal point east.



Regional map of all existing and proposed In-Park Paths, Bike Lanes, Shared Use Paths, and Rural Paths, focal point west.

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The functions and activities that provide structured recreation, such as basketball, volleyball and other sports or those that provide an enrichment component such as pottery or art all fall within this type of service. As the City of Laramie continues to grow, and trends shift, staff, citizens and elected officials will need to consider regional trends, monitor and adapt recreational programming and fees to reflect the changing needs and desires of the Laramie citizens.

Although the recreation areas component does not provide for specific standards, many of the trends are used to shape the direction this component will take. Standard measures that should be taken include working with other “partnering” agencies, clubs and organizations to work together as a collaborative effort to provide recreation services to the Laramie community.

The recreation and programming standards component of this plan provides the criteria for decision making that will help shape programming and an appropriate fee structure that is in keeping with community values. Laramie is accustomed to utilizing a very public process for making decisions about Parks and Recreation items, creating a regular flow of information between citizens and staff that help shape programs.

In addition, staff regularly evaluates the financial aspects of programs and facilities to help set the rate structure. The proportion of program costs that is subsidized versus covered by fees is part of this discussion, and has historically been shaped by the public process as well.

### *Recreation - Programming*

Several factors tie together to drive recreational programming in the community: community demographics, facilities and funding. The programming component exists to make the most of the facilities available for the citizens’ current needs according to their financial abilities. Programming is really the result of these factors and a quick look at recreational programming in Laramie makes this evident. Athletic activities for youth and adults such as softball, basketball, soccer and other sports have long been a mainstay of recreational programming. Recreational facilities in Laramie for many years

were limited to park amenities such as open space for field sports and eventually features were added for sports such as basketball and softball. These facilities were limited due to public interest, other available facilities at schools, the University and funding.

The City also had limited building space that was utilized for enrichment classes such as arts and crafts, theatre, pre-school activities, pottery and other activities that could be offered in a general purpose facility. Enrichment activities were offered year round at the Fort Sanders Center (which is no longer in operation) and also through partnerships with organizations and businesses. These partnerships enabled the City to make the most of limited staff and budgets while providing a variety of programs to the public.



*Little Kickers Soccer Games at Undine Park*

An example of the activities that form the foundation of the City's recreational programming is the School Aged Child Care (SACC) after school program. The SACC program is an enriching afterschool program for Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> graders from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm each day after the regular school day. The SACC program includes creative activities, recreational and physical activities, clubs for older children, homework opportunities, and a nutritious snack in an enriching environment. The SACC program was developed from the Latchkey Taskforce that recommended a need to provide an enriching recreation program for the supervision of children after school so they are not home alone.



Another foundation of the recreation programming is the youth sports programs that include the “Little Kickers” soccer program, the Jr. Cowboys and Cowgirls youth basketball program, the “Little Punters” flag football program and the “Little Sluggers” youth baseball programs. All of these youth sports programs are designed to introduce youth to sports activities while teaching the fundamentals of each sport in a format where everyone plays and fun is the key outcome for all participants.

*SACC participants on the Recreation Center playground*

When taxpayers passed the bond issue in 2001 that provided funding for the new Recreation Center and improvements to the community funded Ice and Event Center it sent a strong message about citizens' recreational priorities. When these facilities opened, programming naturally became focused on activities supported by the infrastructure. The City continued to program the fields similarly to past years, but now activities in the pools, gyms and on the ice became a focus as the City scaled back on the enrichment-oriented classes.

Now that these facilities have been in place for about ten years and the community continues to evolve the programming does as well. We now see more interest in activities for the baby-boomers who particularly appreciate fitness classes, the cardio equipment and fitness-oriented sports such as pickle ball. Additionally, as activities and organizations in the community change citizens look to the City to fill the void. The current

environment appears to be pointing back towards some enrichment activities. Several organizations that once offered these classes have ceased and citizens have begun to ask City staff where they can find these activities. As an example the City once offered pottery and ceramics classes, then a local business filled the niche when the City stopped offering this activity. Unfortunately the business ceased and now the City has partnered with the Laramie Plains Civic Center to help reinstate this class without expanding City investment.

In Laramie, as part of a 2012 Recreation Program Survey, Laser Tag and Paintball were noted as highly desirable, as well as a climbing wall and a larger fitness studio. Across the nation this trend is also true; with holiday/special events, fitness programs, mind-body/balance programs, day and youth sports camps and finally youth sports, rounding out the top five programs. In addition to the above mentioned programs, both regionally and locally, skating is still a popular offering (both ice and roller), although interest in both is declining across the nation.

This normal ebb and flow currently sees an environment where activities such as afterschool programming, fitness classes, alternative/extreme sports, social events such as birthday parties/weddings and senior activities among many others are a part of the programming environment.

The City objective for recreation programming is to

provide healthy activities for all ages, abilities and populations throughout three separate recreation program seasons, winter/spring, summer and fall. The City strives to offer programs that fill a niche different from other organizations in order to broaden the opportunities for recreation to the citizens. Staff aim to offer appealing class opportunities that will naturally have enough participation to be financially self-sustaining, but also to recognize that some activities are more suited to for-profit businesses and offer complementary programming, not competing activities. This enables City programs to continue to enjoy the support of citizens who value the benefits of recreation as a quality of life issue.

Understanding the community, as well as regional and national trends, must continue for the City to remain on the pulse of the community when it comes to programming citizens want. By providing programming tailored to the community, enrollment remains high and allows for the City to continue offering these programs. Routine surveys, similar to the survey done in 2012, should continue and remain integral in providing the service desired by the community, not just what is trending nationally or regionally.

### *Populations Served*

The City's recreation programs are designed and tailored to suit a broad range of population and demographic areas. Parks and Recreation offers several "Learn to..." classes that are offered to all ages and abilities. These classes allow for broad-based participation and are offered throughout the year. The primary "Learn to..." classes are swimming and ice skating. The "Learn to Swim" program in particular strives to teach basic water safety skills to as many community members as possible. These "Learn to..." classes are offered throughout the year depending on the season. While the majority of the recreation programming focus is on adults and youth, there are a number of special events and programs tailored to other population groups. Examples of programs that are tailored to each community group are:

### *Infant/Preschool/Toddler:*

The indoor playroom at the Recreation Center is

specifically designed for pre-school and toddler aged children. The indoor playroom allows children to play with development enhancing toys and equipment in a safe and warm environment. Having a separate play area for this age group also allows children to socialize and engage in co-operative play activities with others in their same age group. Child care is also offered in the playroom while parents utilize other areas within the facility.

Past recreation programs for this age group have included Gym Jam and Water Play. Both programs are designed for parents to participate with their children, creating an enriching environment in which young children can work on motor and social skills.

Supporting activities for this younger demographic also enables adults to participate in recreation for their age group while their children are supervised, enabling the programming to meet the recreational needs for both groups. This can also help support the programs financially because parents with easily available childcare are more likely to participate in other classes.

### *Youth*

Various youth sports camps, instructional programs



*Indoor Playroom at the Laramie Community Recreation Center*

or competitive leagues are offered throughout the year. Little Kickers Soccer Program, Little Sluggers, Junior Cowboys and Cowgirls Basketball, and Youth Volleyball are all recreation program mainstays. Kid's Night Out is also offered to children in grades Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> as a chaperoned night of fun at the Recreation

Center. A variety of skill-building sports camps are also offered as well as a state-wide, annual Youth Basketball Tournament.

The School Age Child Care (SACC) after-school program is a fun enrichment program designed for kids in grades Kindergarten through Sixth. SACC provides a safe environment for kids to spend their after school hours and helps to inspire learning through activities, field trips, tutoring, structured play and sports. During the summer, Parks and Recreation also offers Summer Fun Clubs. These day-long enrichment camps provide a place for kids in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> to learn and grow in a safe environment.

A number of interpretive and enrichment programs are also offered to this age group, often through community partnerships with organizations such as the Laramie River Conservation District. Examples of such programming include youth pottery classes, bicycle safety courses and informational programs on a variety of outdoor or environmental topics. The LaBonte Outdoor Learning Center hosts many of these seasonal programs and boasts an instructional community garden, greenhouse and bee colony.

### *Tweens/Teens*

The Recreation Center hosts a monthly Teen Night for this age group. Teen Nights are alcohol, tobacco, and drug-free events offered on weekend nights. These chaperoned events offer teens a safe place to hang out with their friends for a nominal fee. A meal is provided and several activities are offered throughout the evening. Instructional summer sports camps, the annual Youth Basketball Tournament and the Hershey Track Meet are also offered to this demographic. Junior Lifeguard camps are offered to ages eleven to fourteen as a leadership and skill building program for those interested in lifeguarding in the future.

### *Family*

Special events comprise the majority of family focused



*Municipal Band Concerts at the Edgar J. Lewis Bandshell in Washington Park*

programming that Parks and Recreation sponsors. These special events include Ice Skating with Santa, Trunk'r Treat, Pumpkin Dunkin', the annual Recreation Center Free Day, annual Ice and Event Center Free Day, the Aquatic Easter Egg Hunt, Arts in the Park, Exhibition Ice Skating Shows, Turkey Curling, Free Summer Band Concerts, Speed Skating Ice Races, and Community Service Days. Additionally, the aquatics section offers "family float nights" which allow for the use of inner tubes in the Leisure Pool and will typically offer one of the large inflatable pool toys in the 8 Lane Pool at least twice a month.

### *Adults*

A wide variety of fitness classes are offered to adults including Revolutions (spinning), Body Shock, Power Yoga, Pilates, Step, Sculpt, Zumba, Total Body Training, 6 Pack Attack, Taiji Fit, Yoga and Tai Chi. These fitness classes are offered throughout the week and individuals may drop in or sign up for weekly or monthly classes. Aquatic fitness offerings have been expanded in recent years including Water Aerobics, Hydro Core, Aqua Attack and Twinges in the Hinges.

Sport leagues are also offered in competitive, recreational and co-ed configurations. The primary adult sport leagues that Parks and Recreation offers are: Sand Volleyball, Basketball, Volleyball and Softball, Broomball and Curling. Swing Dancing classes and interval running training are relatively new forays into

alternative programming which breaks away from the more traditional sports and fitness based programs.

### **Seniors**

Programs that are developed especially with the senior demographic in mind include Pickleball, Chair Yoga, Twinges in the Hinges and Tai Chi.

### **Special Needs**

The Parks and Recreation Department believes that all individuals should have recreational opportunities that allow for performances at their highest level. All the recreation programs, activities and facilities are accessible to all populations and demographics. The recreation staff will make every reasonable accommodation necessary to meet the needs of all participants, including permitting a caregiver or partner at no cost in all programs and activities.

The recently developed Twinges in the Hinges aquatic fitness program is geared toward those with mobility issues or anyone recovering from illness or injury. Twinges is designed to ease individuals back into physical activity. Many of the adult fitness offerings provide opportunities for modifications allowing for those with decreased mobility to still benefit from physical activity.

## **Recreation Program Services**

The Recreation Division offers recreation programming and activities in eight general services. The program services are divided based upon recreation programs and the associated recreation facilities. The program services are listed below with examples of recreation programs and populations served:

### **Recreation Center**

The Recreation Center facility services encompass all of the various programs and activities that the facility can accommodate. This includes; childcare babysitting, open gyms, birthday party packages, cardio and circuit weights equipment, indoor walking/jogging track, and all of the aquatics services listed above.

### **Aquatics**



*Tai Chi Class at the Laramie Community Recreation Center Gym.*

The aquatic program services encompass all the programs and activities within the aquatics facilities, which include; the outdoor leisure pool, the indoor leisure pool, the 8-lane competitive lap pool, the Jacuzzi, the Washington Park Wading Pool and the Undine Park Splash Pad. Some program examples are the learn to swim lessons, the family float nights, dive-in movie nights, the 8-lane pool inflatable nights, and the Dog Day in the Pool.

### **Enrichment Activities**

The enrichment activities includes both organized activities and programs and open non-organized activities that include; youth garden club, summer enrichment clubs, theater workshop, model rockets, dance classes and lessons, and municipal band concerts. These activities are found throughout the community in many different locations and facilities.

### **Youth Sports**

Youth sports activities are typically organized leagues, short term events or tournaments such as; Little Kickers soccer, golf, tennis, youth soccer, youth baseball, youth flag football, Kids Night Out, sport camps and clinics, archery, skiing, Hershey track meet, youth volleyball, and girls softball.

### **Adult Sports**

Adult sports activities are typically organized

leagues, short term events or tournaments such as, tennis, indoor/outdoor triathlons, dance classes and lessons, volleyball, adult fitness classes, adult sports leagues, horseshoes, and pickleball league.

### **Adult Fitness**

Adult fitness activities are typically routine daily and weekly classes or events that include the following examples; adult fitness classes, adult sports leagues, trainers and seniors on the go outdoor activities.

### **Special Events**

Special events are typically organized around a historical event or day, or for a specific purpose or goal that includes the following examples, “Day of Play” special event, free days at the Ice and Event Center and the Recreation Center, Huck Finn Fishing Derby, youth basketball tournament, teen night special events, pool inflatable’s, indoor/outdoor triathlons, municipal band concerts, and turkey curling.

### **Ice and Event Center**

The Ice and Event Center facility services encompass all of the various programs and activities that the facility can accommodate. During the ice season this includes public ice skating, ice skating lessons, ice speed skating, ice figure skating, broomball, all ages of ice hockey, ice figure skating shows, and special events. During the off season this includes roller skating, floor hockey, in-line skating, indoor soccer, scooter races, circuses, wedding



*Girls Youth Hockey at the Ice & Events Center*

receptions and other special events.

### **Recreation Programming Cost/Fees/Funding**

As with any Recreation System operation costs, fees and funding are critical factors concerning what a community can provide. The recreation program fee structure is based upon a business model that encourages and develops programming fees to cover one hundred percent of the direct costs for a program or activity with any indirect costs recovery based upon the specific facility and overhead requirements of the program or activity. The direct costs include the following elements:

- Part time/provisional staff costs
- Materials and supply costs
- Equipment costs
- Transportation costs
- Any direct fees, dues or rental costs
- Officials or Referee costs
- Participant certification costs
- Any other costs directly associated with the recreation programming.

Based upon this business model, the overall cost recovery for all recreation programs and activities throughout a fiscal year averages fifty to fifty-five percent.

### **Other Cost/Fees/Funding Considerations**

In addition to the standard funding, recapture and fees typically associated with the following facilities and programs provide the best picture as to how these facilities are funded, however not all financing scenarios can be accounted. In unique cases and special circumstances the City has set up other ways in which citizens can have the opportunity to participate in community activities. As with all aspects of this plan, providing an equal and equitable opportunity for all to use and participate in what the community has to offer, is highly desired and a major recommendation of this plan.

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## ***Recreation Scholarship Program***

The Recreation Division offers partial activity and membership scholarships based upon the following guidelines: Scholarships are awarded to children, youth, adults, and seniors based on family income/financial need, family size, and highly extenuating circumstances. Scholarship income guidelines are based on the Wyoming Department of Family Services guidelines and are revised each year.

### ***Recreation Center Multi-Pass Scholarship Guidelines***

- Scholarship recipients will receive one (1) multiple pass good for 20 daily visits to the Recreation Center each recreation season (Winter/Spring, Summer, and Fall).
- Scholarship recipients must pay 30% of the applicable multiple pass fee for their age group.

### ***Recreation Program/Activity Scholarship Guidelines***

- All recreation activity scholarships are partial awards, covering 50% of the activity registration fee, with the total award not to exceed \$50.
- Scholarships may be applied for at any time. However, Activity Scholarship awards will be limited to a total amount not to exceed \$150 per any twelve (12) month period of time per individual.
- If a recipient is unable to attend the registered activity, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify Parks and Recreation staff at least 3 working days prior to the start date of the activity to cancel. The scholarship cannot be transferred to another program and the amount of the scholarship awarded will be counted towards the \$150 maximum allowed in a twelve (12) month period. Refund of the fee portion paid by the scholarship recipient will be processed and refunded within 3 weeks of notification.

### ***Recreation – Disability Fee Schedule***

The Recreation Center has established a fee schedule for disabled adults based upon the current senior membership



*Recreation Center Basketball Courts*

fee scale. The disability fee scale is applicable to all adults that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability that limits one or more major life activities. The disability fee schedule applies to all individual adult multiple pass, six month and annual memberships.

### ***Volunteers***

One of the greatest assets a community and a Parks and Recreation Department can have is volunteers. Using volunteers on a small scale to run specific programming needs or with the maintenance of parks facilities is encouraged. Many communities rely upon the actual user group of an athletic setting to assist with many of the maintenance items needed for their use, for example: requesting that the Laramie Youth Baseball along with Legion Baseball be responsible for the dragging and lining of the ball fields for games and tournaments. Some recreational programming could also be performed by volunteers such as refereeing, score keeping and concession sales with a percentage of the profits being dedicated to the volunteers' group.

Volunteers should also be used in nearby parks, trails or other facilities across the community. By using volunteers, individuals have a vested interest in the overall park, trail or facility. Not only do these groups provide “manpower” to projects such as spring clean-ups, special events or projects, these volunteers also provide the City with “experts” on a specific park, trail or facility. A park that has used this concept with great success is Undine Park. The Friends of Undine Park, a local volunteer group not only provided clean-up and help

during special events, but also provided guidance for staff related to improvements or recommended changes to the park throughout the group's existence. Although not an active group today, their participation was invaluable.

However, with the good come some other issues associated with volunteers. Working with volunteers on a large scale can be problematic in that there will be issues of consistency along with not having as much control over their actions and/or inactions. Also, considerable staff time is often needed to organize, direct and provide guidance to the group. These factors, among others, should be taken into consideration whenever considering utilizing a volunteer group in these programming or maintenance activities.

### **Partnerships**

Another option in reducing budgetary expenditures that would normally be incurred by the City is through partnerships. The City currently has partnerships with the University of Wyoming, Laramie County Community College (LCCC) and Albany County School District #1 for use and programming of athletic fields, parks, pools, gyms and other amenities within the parks system and use of the Recreation Center. The partnerships allow community use of several athletic venues, so the City and community partners have access, but do not need to duplicate recreation opportunities offered in the community. The agreements should be updated as needed to ensure that they encompass all known recreational areas and can be redrafted to meet current demands. Other partnerships should be researched to enhance and grow recreational opportunities offered to the citizens of Laramie. Some new and existing examples may include the Laramie Trap Club, Laramie Country Club, Albany County Fairgrounds, United States Forest Service, Wyoming Game and Fish, WyoTech, Laramie County Community College and United States Bureau of Land Management, just to name a few. Additionally, partnerships to create large sporting complexes for multiple sports and uses should also be employed. Commonly, large entities such as the University of Wyoming or the Albany County School District would be likely partners in creating a sporting complex that would serve not only the community, but also the region.

### **Sponsorships**

Whether it be a large corporation, service group



*Albany County Fairgrounds*

or individual, the City should consider allowing sponsorships along with sponsorship recognition for new amenities within the parks system. Many communities look at this as a way to further enhance funding streams for replacement of, or new amenities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters or even a complete park depending upon the support for the item. The City currently has accepted sponsorships within the Laramie Community Recreation Center for the picnic pavilions, water features, concessions area and water slide for the outdoor pool. This enhanced revenue stream is a real advantage as the City budget continues to decrease due to the limited funding streams from taxes and the State. Criteria for sponsorships should be developed in order to provide the City as well as those sponsoring a benchmark as to what is expected for a sponsorship.

### **Park Land Dedication Requirements and In-lieu fees**

Although new to Laramie, park land dedication and in-lieu fees are not a new concept. Recently, with the adoption of the Unified Development Code (15.14.070 – Parks and Open Space, UDC) and associated resolution (City Council Resolution 2010-64), Laramie has employed this requirement for all new residential development throughout the community. During review by staff, either the dedication of land or the in-lieu fee is evaluated and the preferred option is chosen.

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by City staff. In the event land is dedicated, that land then goes towards providing the needed park land for the area, recreation facility or other feature such as a natural area. In the event an in-lieu fee is paid, the collected amount is placed into a fund that must go towards parks and recreation facilities within the Service Area. Park land dedication requirements and In-lieu fees must continue to be required to keep pace with the growing need for parks and recreation areas. Furthermore the requirements should be frequently updated to keep pace with rising land prices and other economic factors, as well as the desires of the community.

### *Supplemental Tax Funds*

Under Wyoming law (State Statute 18-9-201), County Commissioners and School Districts have the authority to enact a tax levy up to one (1) mil of assessed valuation specifically for public recreation. The County's authority to impose a tax levy of one mil for recreation lies within the 12-mil limit for County Commission funding. In Laramie, the Albany County School District #1 first imposed the one mil for public recreation in 1999, with the establishment of the Laramie Community Recreation Board. The first project completed with Recreation Board funds was the Laramie Community Skate Park in LaBonte Park. The Board revised their bylaws in 2006 to amend the makeup of the board members and to change the name of the Board to the Albany County Recreation Board. The board receives proposals each year for recreation projects from the City of Laramie, Albany County, Albany County School District #1 and the Town of Rock River, which may include facilities, construction, programs, maintenance and operation, and equipment to support recreation in Albany County.

The Albany County Recreation Board has been instrumental as a supplemental funding source for parks and recreational capital improvements, operations and maintenance support, programming and equipment replacement. The Parks and Recreation Department has relied heavily upon the Albany County Recreation Board to supplement the operations and maintenance (O&M) budget as well as new projects and equipment for City projects and volunteer organizations to the tune of nearly \$350,000 per fiscal year. Without this supplemental funding, many future projects within

the Parks and Recreation Department will not come to fruition. This funding mechanism must remain in place to accomplish the goals and direction of this plan.

### *Other Services*

Aside from the many different types of Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Area uses already mentioned, some attributes and services that contribute to the overall Parks and Recreation System do not fall under one particular standard; however, each is important and vital to a system that serves the needs of the community.

### *Laramie Beautification Areas*

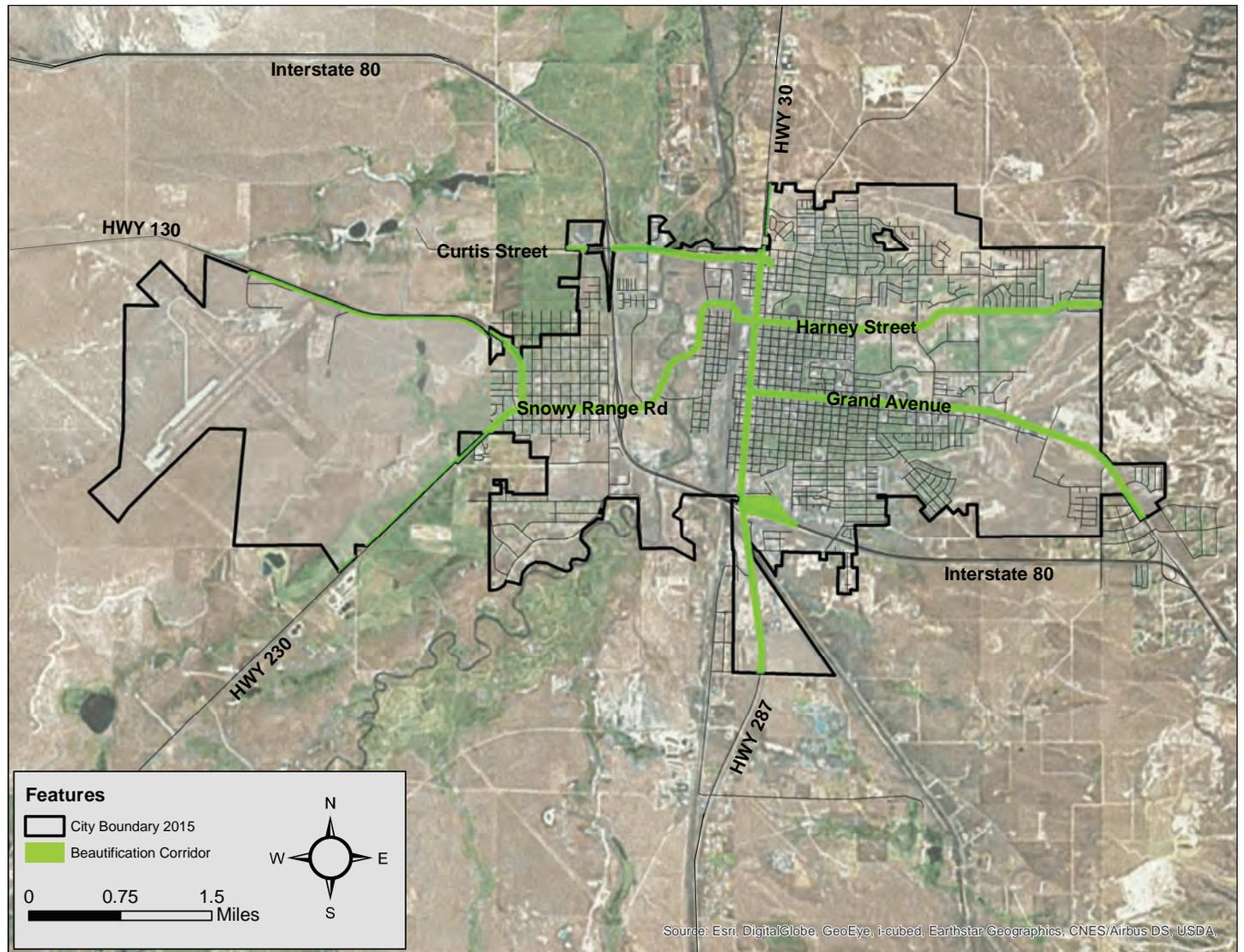
It was noted throughout the development of the plan, opportunities to improve major gateways into the community were of particular interest. Although typically not considered a major component of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City of Laramie has specifically charged the Parks and Recreation Department with the task of improving these gateways, which in part is already underway. For over twelve years, the City of Laramie, through the Parks and Recreation Department has made improvements to gateways all over town. In the beginning these improvements centered on "Welcome to Laramie" signs and landscaping around these signs. As beautification goals began to evolve, landscaping near right-of-ways and near major entrances to the community became more extensive, including hundreds of trees being planted along major corridors such as Highway 130, Highway 287, and Grand Avenue. Other more specialized projects have also been completed that further the efforts of entrance beautification. One example of this specialized beautification was the "South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Beautification Project" which created planting areas with trees, bushes and grasses, as well as sidewalk and drainage improvements in an area that lacked any vegetative interest and vital improvements like sidewalks.

Although most interstate entrances to the community have seen the bulk of the improvements specific attention was given to make sure that all interchange areas also be included in the Beautification Areas. As new interchange areas develop, or existing interchange areas are redeveloped, changed or altered, a higher level of design considerations shall be given to the structure

and areas around the interchange. Architectural details, art and murals should be incorporated into the structures themselves, such as the bridge, but also into secondary construction items such as pillars and retaining walls. The areas around these interchanges should also be incorporated into the overall design of the site through improvements to landscaping and the appearance of area that would go beyond just the typical re-vegetation of the area. These interchanges are the gateways to our community, and the community believes that these areas should be a showcase, not a deterrent, to what Laramie has to offer as a community.



Although most apparent, entrance corridors *Landscaping and welcome sign near the I-80 entrance to Laramie.*



Map showing Laramie's Beautification Corridors

coming into the community are not the only focus for the Beautification Areas. Through the public process and as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, extending the beautification areas through the community, not just focusing improvements near the interchanges, was considered just as important. By extending these corridors through the community as the community grows, consistency in appearance and enhanced visual appeal will be achieved. This concept was also noted as being important due to the fact that some of our major through-streets, Grand Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Snowy Range Road are all state highways, and thus carry additional traffic, including visitors, that might not otherwise be on these roads. Because of the larger size and more traffic these roads have, beautification enhancements will reduce the impact these thoroughways will have on the community as a whole, and in part making the best of these roads coming through our community for our residents and visitors.

### *University of Wyoming Campus*

Generally, the UW campus includes six large open areas that are accessible to the public and serve the immediate neighborhoods. The areas identified are Fraternity and Sorority Mall, “The Green” area at 9<sup>th</sup> and Ivinson Streets, Prexy’s Pasture, Arts and Sciences Green (north and south of the building), the White Hall Green and the Cooper House area. Five of these areas are large open turf areas that serve the community in more of a developed “open space” capacity with informal play and athletic areas. However, Fraternity and Sorority Mall is



*Paths adjacent to Prexy’s Pasture on the UW Campus*

considered slightly different and plays a larger role in formal athletic activities such as soccer and rugby, and includes a basketball court on site. Because of the multiple uses of Fraternity and Sorority Mall, this area is classified as a Recreation Facility/Sports Complex versus an Open Space. Using this rationale, the five UW campus sites should be counted in the overall “Other” locations and one site as a Recreation Facility/Sports Complex. The acreage of these areas should not be considered towards park land calculations since the use of these areas could change as the campus continues to grow and evolve.

### *Detention Areas*

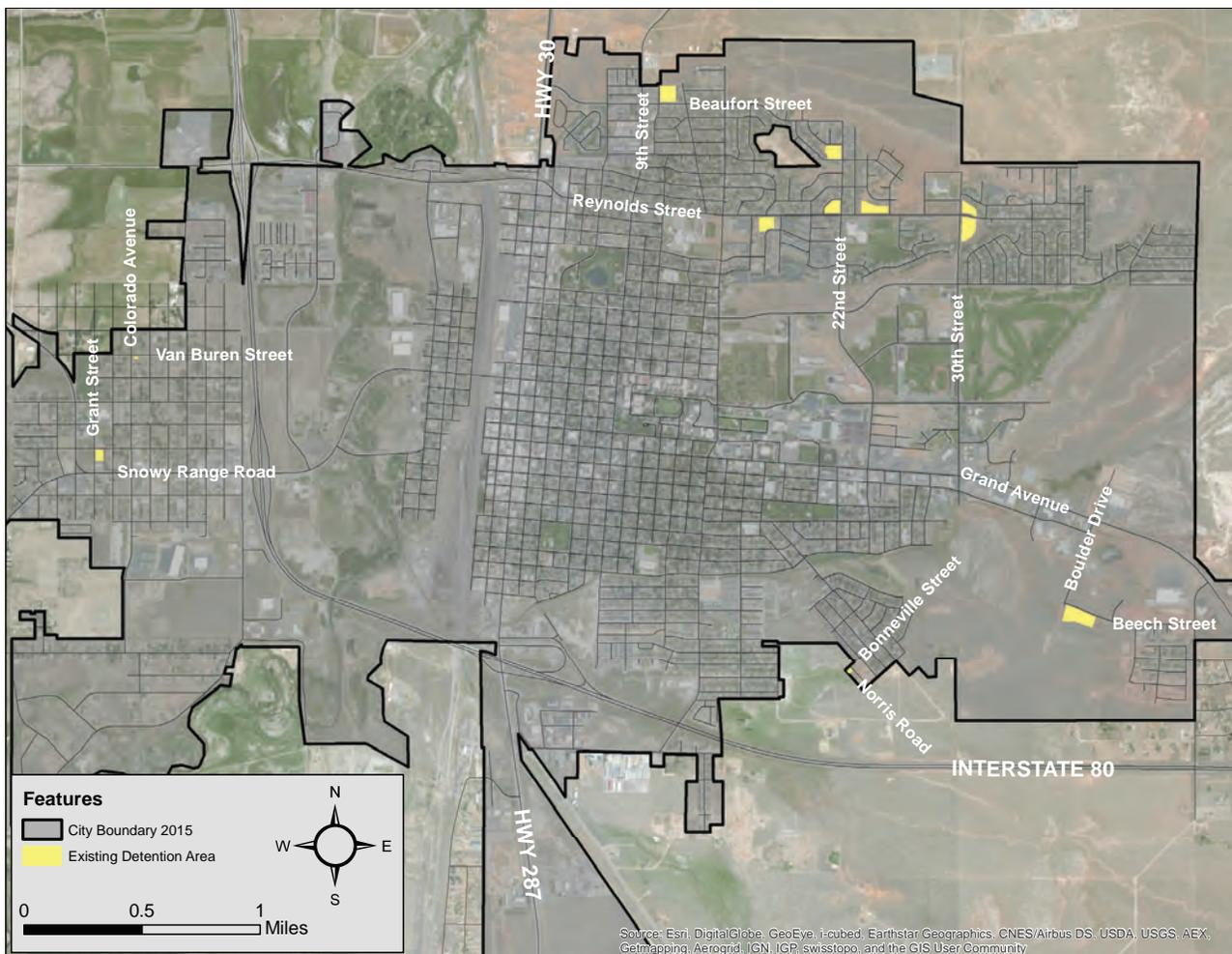
Throughout the Laramie area, stormwater management is an ever-present issue that often requires attention as new development occurs. Although some areas of town contain underground stormwater pipe which convey the water, many areas throughout the community rely on surface conveyance for stormwater (typically within the street) and the use of Detention Areas to regulate the release of the water in a controlled manner. Often these Detention Areas are undeveloped depressions that collect stormwater in a precipitation event and release the water at a regulated rate. Although these areas are inundated with water during the event and for some period of time after the event, typically less than 24 hours, the remaining time these areas are dry and under utilized. During the development of this Plan these areas were noted as possible opportunities for recreation and general beautification of Laramie. In terms of recreation and beautification, foremost consideration must be given to the original intent of the detention areas as stormwater facility. Any opportunities considered must first address any impacts it may have on the functionality of the facility. Once these impacts have been evaluated, opportunities can be considered.

Specifically focusing on recreation, consideration was given to a wide variety of uses within the detention area. Uses such as low impact (gravel or dirt) running trails around and or through the facility, benches or rest areas (if along Shared Use Path routes or streets with Bike Lanes) and improved turf in the bottom of the areas to accommodate passive recreation were just some of the ideas considered. Because of the varying size of some of the ponds, different uses may or may

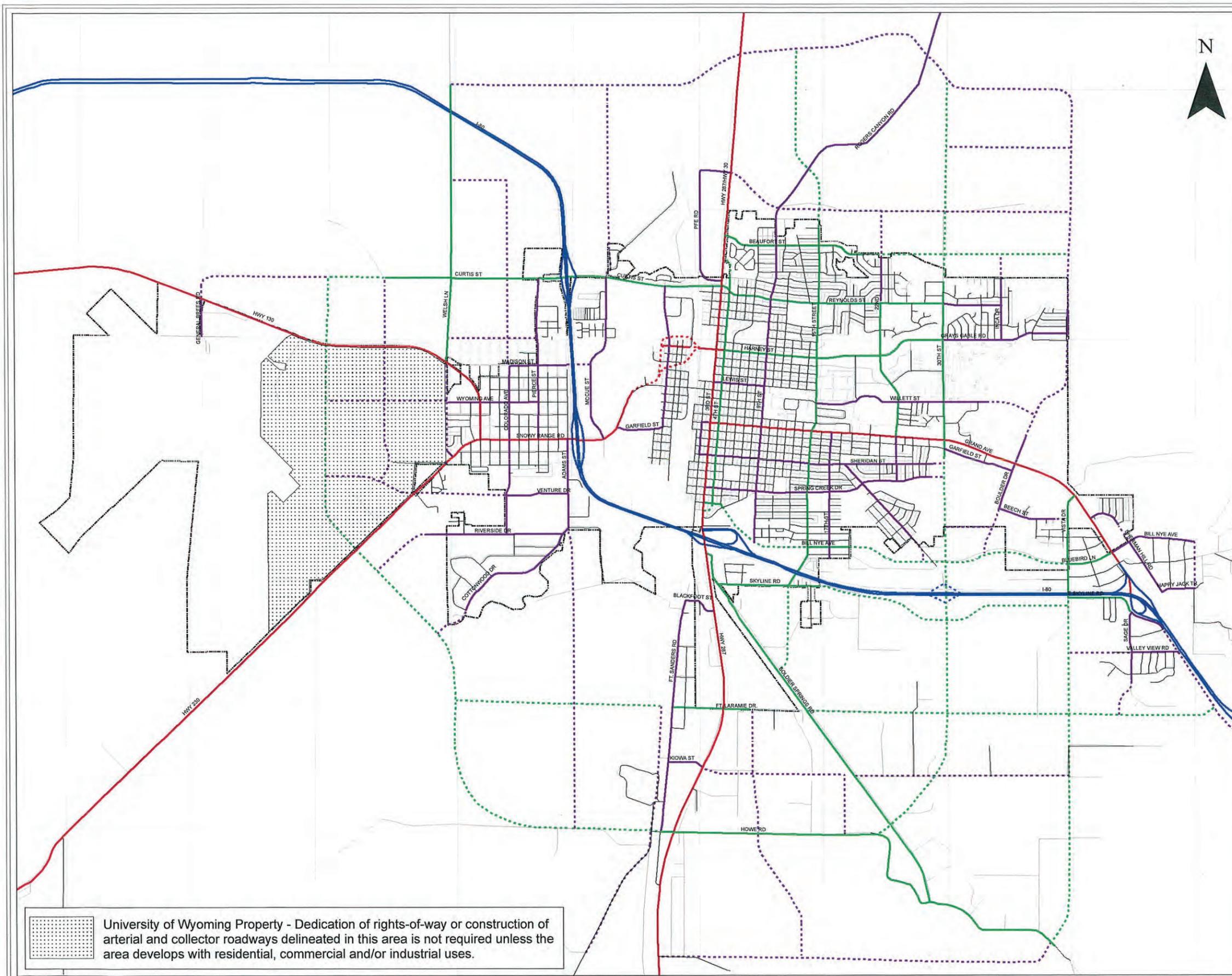
not be compatible. In some instances Detention Areas may be able to serve as a playlot, accommodating a play structure or other possible improvements. However, it was noted that any physical improvements could pose a potential hazard by snagging material, thus possibly impacting the function of the detention pond. Proper design must be considered in these instances. It should be noted, one use, Dog Parks, were considered the one incompatible use that should not be allowed in detention areas, due to pollution concerns associated with dog feces and potential smell from water and feces.

In conjunction with recreation, beautification of these areas, no matter the size or location should be considered. In many cases due to natural topography in the Laramie area these Detention Areas are often located along major corridors, such as our collectors and arterials. To the untrained eye, these areas are often considered ugly and lacking appeal. Although not a new

concept within the City, Laramie now has a few examples across the community where Detention Areas have been landscaped. In some locations irrigation and trees have been installed along the tops and perimeters of existing detention ponds in order to beautify them. Because of the size of many of the ponds a number of trees can be installed around the perimeter which create a positive impact. In addition to general landscaping other uses such as community garden plots, flower beds or other treatments should be considered. Finally, because these areas are not primary recreation facilities, maintenance of these areas should remain as low as possible so not to become a strain on budgets and staff time.



Existing Detention Areas throughout Laramie



# Major Street Plan

City of Laramie &  
Albany County, WY

## Legend

Existing Roads	Future Roads
Interstate	Interstate
Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial
Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial
Collector	Collector
Local	
	<b>Other</b>
	City Limits
	Section Lines



Wyoming Department of Transportation,  
District I

9/7/2010  
P.E. District Engineer, Jay Gould Date

## Approvals

City of Laramie Planning Commission  
 5-10-10  
Chairman, Dave Paulekas Date

Albany County Planning & Zoning  
Commission  
 5-5-2010  
Chairman, Chris Nicholson Date

Laramie City Council  
 6/15/10  
Mayor, Jodi Guerin *Via Mayor* Date

Attest  
 6/15/2010  
City Clerk, Sue Morris-Jones MMC Date

Albany County Board of County  
Commissioners  
 8-25-10  
Chairman, Tim Sullivan Date

Attest  
 08-25-10  
County Clerk, Jackie Gonzales Date

University of Wyoming Property - Dedication of rights-of-way or construction of arterial and collector roadways delineated in this area is not required unless the area develops with residential, commercial and/or industrial uses.