

# CITY OF BOZEMAN

**2023 COMPREHENSIVE**

**PARKS, RECREATION, AND  
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

**PLAN**



September 2023



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### **Urban Parks and Forestry Board**

Angie Kociolek, Chair  
Dan Fenn  
I-Ho Pomeroy, Commissioner Liaison  
Alice Stanley  
Donald Ulrich  
Reno Walsh  
Anna Wearn

### **Department of Parks and Recreation**

Mitch Overton, Director  
Addi Jadin, Parks Planner and Development Manager  
Candace Mastel, Transportation Demand Management Coordinator  
Jamie Saitta, Recreation Program Manager

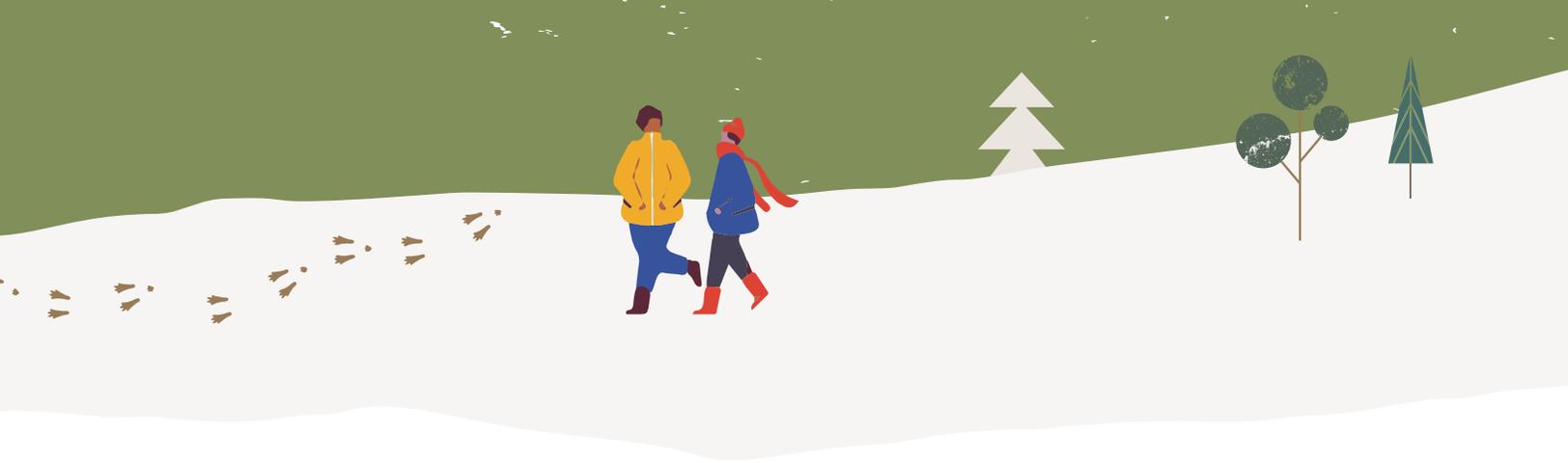
### **City Commission**

Cyndy Andrus, Mayor  
Terry Cunningham, Deputy Mayor  
I-Ho Pomeroy, Commissioner  
Jennifer Madgic, Commissioner  
Christopher Coburn, Commissioner

### **Safe Routes to Parks Liaisons**

Bri Daniels  
Luis Islas  
Mikayla Pitts

Agency Landscape + Planning | Sanderson Stewart | Berry Dunn |  
Alta Planning | Groundprint | ETC Institute



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# PLAN SUMMARY

The plan identifies a vision and realistic, actionable goals for the City's most valued places – its parks, trails, and recreation facilities.



## Actions

Each Strategy includes a list of actionable items, found in the PRAT Vision Chapter, page 48.

#

## GOALS

What the PRAT plan aims to achieve

## Strategies

The methods to make each goal a reality

### 1 Build on Bozeman's unique strengths while creating **WELCOMING, EQUITABLE ACCESS** to all spaces and programs.

- 1.1 Create a consistent set of basic elements across neighborhoods.
- 1.2 Maintain the current level of parkland per resident (17 acres per 1000) by growing park acres as the community grows.
- 1.3 Balance the needs of different park users.
- 1.4 Support all-season recreation.
- 1.5 Increase safe evening / night time access at designated facilities with appropriate lighting, management, and programming.
- 1.6 Design parks that reflect their unique neighborhoods and reflect the Department's brand.

See page 50 to learn more about the plan's 21 Equitable Access actions

### 2 Strengthen **PROGRAMS, PLACES, AND PARTNERSHIPS** to meet changing community needs.

- 2.1 Invest in distributed community recreation hubs across the City.
- 2.2 Create program offerings and elements that respond to community needs, especially for underserved demographic groups.
- 2.3 Craft a formal policy to define partner and affiliate group relationships.
- 2.4 Clarify the field reservation and use process.
- 2.5 Broaden awareness of programs and services.
- 2.6 Work with regional tourism and economic development organizations to create a strategy that addresses the benefits and impacts of increased tourism on parks, facilities, and events.
- 2.7 Gather program data and track program participation annually.
- 2.8 Grow program partnerships in areas that are complementary to Department offerings.

See page 68 to learn more about the plan's 24 Programs, Places, and Partnerships actions

### 3 **Connect Bozeman's community with safe and enjoyable PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES.**

- 3.1 Invest in a city-wide active transportation network.
- 3.2 Identify + develop a network of Anchor Routes that serve as key travel corridors.
- 3.3 Close existing gaps in the pedestrian + bicycle network.
- 3.4 Improve east-west connections.
- 3.5 Improve crossings that act as major barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- 3.6 Implement a comprehensive wayfinding system.
- 3.7 Install path improvements along active transportation routes.
- 3.8 Include Bozeman's linear parks and watercourse corridors as part of the active transportation network.
- 3.9 Ensure inclusive and equitable access to and within parks.
- 3.10 Revise the active transportation network classifications and comprehensive design and maintenance standards.

See page 80 to learn more about the plan's 24 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities actions

### 4 **Steward and sustain NATURAL RESOURCES across the parks and trails system.**

- 4.1 Create design standards and management practices appropriate to each landscape type.
- 4.2 Promote sustainable trail and park use.
- 4.3 Advance the protection and enhancement of natural resource areas and trees, especially sensitive lands.
- 4.4 Expand nature play and programming.
- 4.5 Implement low-impact design and management practices in park and facility capital projects.
- 4.6 Scale Department capacity to provide knowledgeable natural resources evaluation during the planning process for future facilities investments and management of natural areas.

See page 104 to learn more about the plan's 12 Natural Resources actions

### 5 **Grow STAFF AND CAPACITY to benefit the community.**

- 5.1 Attract and retain staff to effectively support the needs of Bozeman's parks, programs, and trails.
- 5.2 Continue to refine and communicate the Bozeman Parks and Trails Special District.
- 5.3 Develop a philosophy and policies for cost recovery and revenue generation.

See page 112 to learn more about the plan's 10 Staff and Capacity actions

**THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC**

Strategy 2.7 recommends that program data be tracked annually. Those items that are quantifiable, including non-program data, are marked with this flag throughout the document.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

---

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- A UNIQUE NATURAL SETTING
- A FAST-GROWING MICROPOLITAN CITY
- HISTORY OF THE PARK SYSTEM
- FROM PROST TO PRAT
- RELATIONSHIPS TO PAST PLANS
  - PREVIOUS PROST PLAN
  - TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (TMP)
  - ALIGNMENT WITH UDC PROCESS

Nestled in the Rocky Mountains of Montana, Bozeman, a city of nearly 50,000 people as of the 2020 Census, is one of the fastest growing micropolitan areas in the country. The city includes a vibrant historic downtown, is home to Montana State University, and serves as a gateway to the wonders of Yellowstone National Park and other natural areas. In addition, the city boasts its own recreational elements, programs, facilities, parks and trails, all of which contribute to the vision embodied by the City's slogan: "The Most Livable Place". In fact, its high quality of life, vibrant cultural elements, access to nature, and recreational opportunities attract new residents at a rate that is putting Bozeman on the trajectory of becoming Montana's third largest city by 2025.

## A Unique Natural Setting

Bozeman is situated within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, which is the largest intact ecosystem in the continental United States. It is at the foothills of many environmentally sensitive areas, with the Bridger Mountains to the northeast and Gallatin National Forest to the south. Primary rivers in the Bozeman area include the Gallatin, Madison, Missouri, Yellowstone and Jefferson. A 90 mile drive southeast of the city center takes one to Yellowstone National Park. Established in 1872 as the country's first national park, Yellowstone attracts an average of 4 million visitors annually, many of which use Bozeman as their home base to access the Park. The Park serves as an important sanctuary for the largest concentration of wildlife in the lower 48 states, which includes elk, bison, grizzly bears, and nearly 300 bird species. Directly south of city limits is the 1.8-million acre Gallatin National Forest which is home to federally listed threatened species: the grizzly bear and the Canada Lynx. **Bozeman's location near these ecological sanctuaries cements the importance of local efforts to co-exist with nature.**

## BOZEMAN IS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING CITIES OF ITS SIZE IN THE NATION.

Bozeman is at a unique hydrological setting: the city is situated at the headwaters of the drainage of the Missouri River Basin. Numerous rivers, streams and irrigation canals transverse Bozeman, mostly in a north-south direction. These rivers, creeks and streams host different habitats, scenic views, and a diverse population. Due to their excellent recreational value, these water bodies have greatly influenced the location of parks, open spaces, and trails.

## A Fast-Growing Micropolitan City

Bozeman is one of the fastest growing cities of its size in the nation: the population has grown by 43% in the past decade. Cities that are experiencing similar trends or challenges as Bozeman, known as "peer cities" include Fort Collins, Missoula, and Helena. In contrast, these cities have grown by 20% or less in the past decade, with the exception of Bend, OR which has grown by 29%. Bozeman and the greater Bozeman area are projected to keep growing at an annual rate of about 3% to reach more than 200,000 people by 2040. According to the 2019 City of Bozeman Community Housing Needs Assessment, as of 2017 27% of owner households were single-occupant, compared to 37% of renters households. A majority (41%) of owned households were 2-persons. There is also a high percentage of roommate occupancy, contribution to a large percentage of over 3-persons households (33% for owners and 29% for renters). Bozeman's population is young compared to the rest of the state, with the city's median age at 27.4 years old, compared to 40.1 years old statewide. Given its



Figure 1.1 *Rec Mobile Program*

younger population, and the presence of Montana State University, most of the population is single with 64% of residents filing as such, almost twice as much as the state's average. The city is not as diverse as its peer cities used for comparison in this plan, with 92.1% of the population identifying as white.

During and following the Covid-19 pandemic, many people relocated to Bozeman from urban areas across the country in search of more space, access to recreation and proximity to nature, making Bozeman an ideal place. While growth is bringing opportunities for investment, its rapid pace puts pressure on the natural system and recreation areas. The timing of this update highlights the need for a proactive planning approach to maintain Bozeman's high access and use of park spaces and recreation services.

## History of the Park System

In May of 1883, the same year Bozeman became an official town, the City added a street grid of 52 blocks south and west of city limits. Investors set

aside two blocks as a public park. The park was named Cooper Park, after one of the investors, and was a popular spot for picnics in the summer. Other early parks include Southside Park, Lindley Park and Bogert Park, which were added to the park system in the 1920's. The land of what is now Bogert Park (originally Bogert Grove Park) was originally purchased by the City as a tourist park following its past use as a favorite overnight camping location during community events like the Bozeman Roundup. Following the purchase, the park quickly became a popular spot for locals to picnic and host Boy Scout gatherings.

Recreation programs began the same decade when Eva Pack became the City's first playground supervisor at Beall Park in 1929. She worked at the park during the summer months and served as Athletic Director for Montana State College during the school year. Early recreational programs at Beall park included playgrounds, tennis, picnic grounds, a bandstand for music in the summer and an ice skating rink in the winter. In the 1950's, the City planned for a park and recreation department

with a professional recreation director and a park maintenance crew. The 1958 City Plan listed a variety of seasonal activities, including swimming, baseball, and special activities during summer months, and ice skating, sledding, and dancing in the winter.

In the 1960's, community service groups and the City Recreation Board began promoting the idea of a new indoor-outdoor swimming pool. Support for the idea was plentiful but costs escalated, inhibiting the proposal until a bond passed in 1974. The Bozeman Swim Center opened to the public in 1975. The center closed temporarily in May 2022 to make necessary repairs to the building's structure. These repairs wrapped up at the end of 2022.

As of 2022, the city's system includes over 1,000 acres of parkland and 79 miles of natural trails. Residents have the option to participate in a vast variety of seasonal recreational programming, including art classes, nature-based activities, athletic offerings, ice skating, sledding, volleyball, and various indoor classes.



Figure 1.2 *Bird's eye view of the city of Bozeman, Gallatin County with approximate boundary of its historic core.*



Figure 1.3 *Cooper Park, the City's first public park.*

## PRAT TERMINOLOGY

**Open space** - Privately owned and maintained land; generally free from significant structural improvements, typically with public access easements, and seen as protecting or restoring areas of high natural resource benefit. Private land/HOA equivalent of “natural areas” is called “open space.”

**Parks** - City-owned and/or managed land; categorized into six park types – Pocket Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Special Use Park, Natural Area Park, and Linear Park. (see pages 46, 47, 54 and 55 for more information).

**Natural Area Park** - One of Bozeman's six park types; primarily focused on natural resource conservation and passive recreation without significant structures.

**Natural areas within parks** - City-owned land that has high natural resource value, such as native plants, forested areas, wetlands, riparian corridors, ponds, etc.; may be present in any park type; free from significant human-made improvements. Park system equivalent of “open space” is called “natural areas within any park type.”

# From PROST to PRAT

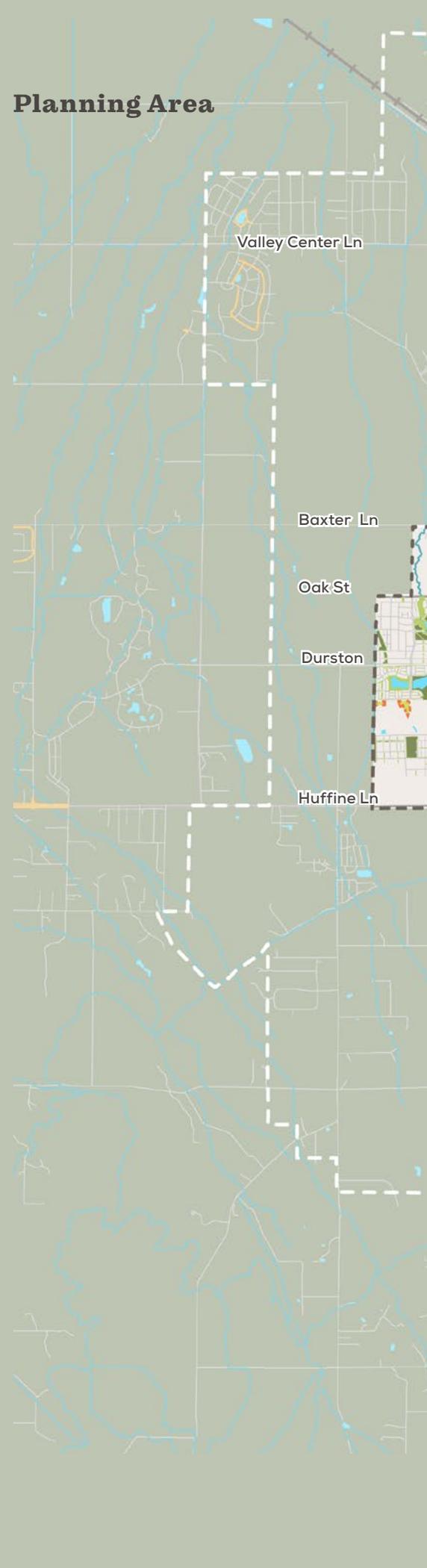
Bozeman, like many other peer cities, is grappling with fast population growth, a changing climate with warmer winters and drier summers, and a higher risk of environmental disasters. The City aims to assess and plans to address these issues while recognizing the importance of racial equity, inclusion and environmental sustainability within its parks, trails, and recreation centers and programs. This document is part of its mission to continue its high standard for quality of life through a safe, welcoming and connected parks and trails system.

The City’s most current plan is the 2007 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (“PROST”) Plan which has guided the creation of numerous trails and has helped elevate the role of parks, recreation programs, and facilities in maintaining the City’s quality of life. However, as Bozeman’s population continues to grow and diversify, the City’s parks and recreational facilities will face more pressure from increased usage. The City and its residents want to ensure that it maintains the quality elements, natural resources, and recreational opportunities that continue to draw people in. Bozeman’s parks, open spaces (privately owned)/natural areas in parks (City-owned), and trails are important in realizing this vision.

Open space has come to mean privately owned land with high natural resource benefit (see also PRAT terminology on pg. 9). In the context of City parks and recreation, open spaces are particularly important for certain trail connections and passive recreational use. However, since privately owned open spaces are not under City management, this plan focuses

- Trails
- Roads
- Railroad
- City Boundary
- Growth Boundary
- Streams
- Lakes & Reservoirs
- Parks
- Privately-owned Open Space
- Future Parks

## Planning Area



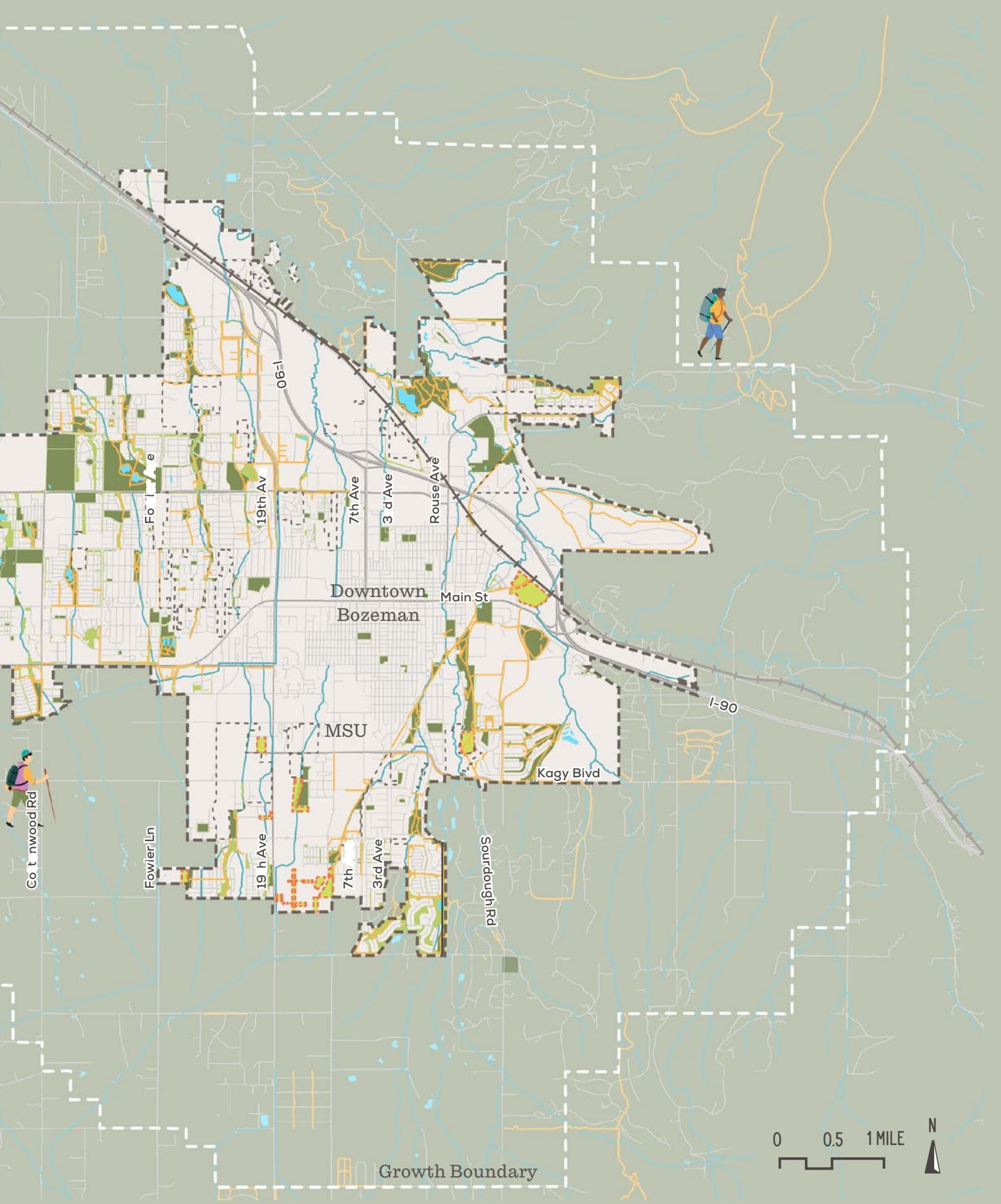


Figure 1.4 The planning area and its context

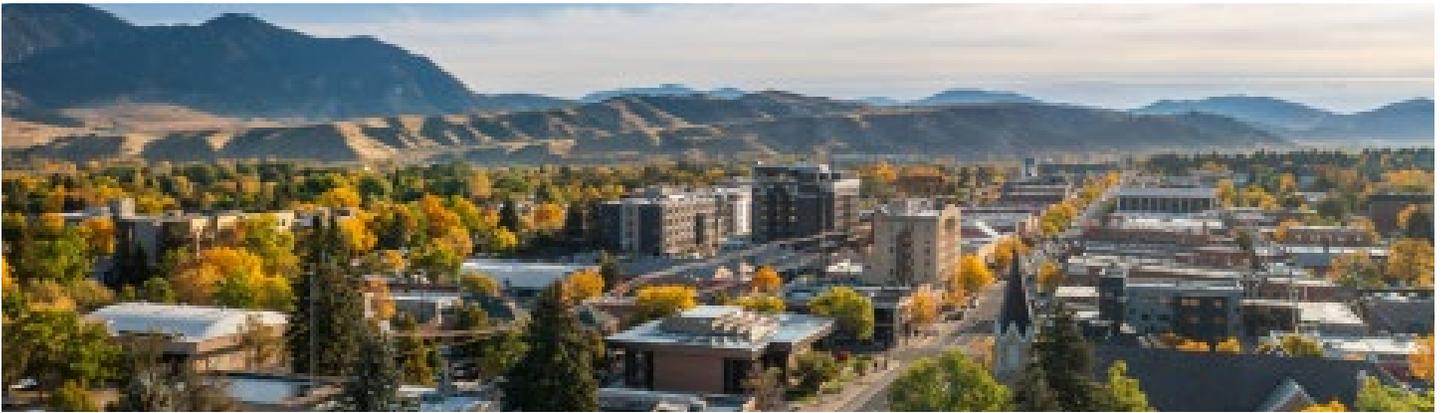


Figure 1.6 *Main Street and Downtown Bozeman*

on City parks and its “natural areas” equivalent. Significant public comment indicates the desire for more natural areas to be added to the City park system. One outcome of the PRAT plan is to amend the UDC to make it easier to allow natural areas into the park system (with design constraints to mitigate human impact) rather than open space under private ownership and management.

This plan also brings an active transportation emphasis into the world of parks, recreation, and open space, including the full network of trails from gravel paths to on-street bicycle facilities. This shift recognizes the community’s shifting values around transportation and recreation, and the need to create greater connectivity between park assets and places across the city. In 2012, voters approved a \$15 million Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOP) bond program which has so far increased parkland by 145 acres and added 3 miles of trails. Additionally, in 2020, at

the outset of the COVID pandemic, residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Parks and Trails District to address park and trails maintenance in the City.

This document first aims to understand and inventory the existing system of parks, privately owned open space, City-owned natural areas, recreation, and active transportation. This assessment informs a set of recommendations to enhance current elements for all Bozeman citizens, as well as guide the future expansion and evolution of the system to meet the needs of a growing and changing community.

*Note: At the direction of the PROST, Resolution 4784 was created to establish the criteria for evaluation of requests for use of cash in lieu of parkland dedication.*

## WHAT IS THE PARKS AND TRAILS DISTRICT?

In 2020, residents voted to create a parks and trails district. This district provides a dedicated source of funding for maintaining and improving our City’s parks and trails. One of the key components of the District is authorization for the City to annually levy assessments to provide for maintenance of all City-owned or managed parks and trails.

This means that every penny that goes into the Parks & Trails District will be spent on parks and trails in the Bozeman community. It also ensures that these publicly accessible spaces are maintained consistently across the City.

Population

2022

~50,000 people

2007

Population

2010

37,280

2017

Transportation  
Master Plan

PRAT  
Plan!



PROST Plan



Figure 1.7 Current documents that are informing PRAT Plan. The PROST plan was used by the city starting in 2005 but formally adopted with the 2008 version of the transportation plan.

## Relationships to Other Planning Efforts/Projects

### Previous PROST Plan

Adopted December 17, 2007, the City of Bozeman’s current Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (“PROST”) Plan provides a framework for integrating existing facilities and programs, while further developing a system of parks, recreation facilities and programs, open spaces, and trails. The plan also helped to establish City policies and influenced the evaluation of development proposals that impact this system. Finally, it provided a basis for grant application, regulatory requirements, and other funding mechanisms for parkland expansion.

Following an assessment of Bozeman’s recreational facilities and trends at the time, the plan identified issues and needs for the City of Bozeman’s Recreation

Division as (1) increasing the quality and/or quantity of local swimming facilities, (2) enhancing local recreation facilities for youth, (3) developing two new family-oriented leisure aquatic centers, one southwest and one northwest of town, (4) developing a community recreation facility with an indoor-outdoor aquatic component connected to a large community park, (5) offering programs that provide multi-generational recreational activities, fosters healthy family relationships, develops character and team building programs, educates. Through community surveys, the PROST plan identified trails as the most used recreational facility in the City. The PROST plan was successful in ensuring new private development and city growth contributed to new open space and trail creation.

### Transportation Master Plan (TMP)

Upgrades to the City’s transportation system following the PROST Plan and the community’s

THE PROST PLAN  
IDENTIFIED TRAILS  
AS THE MOST USED  
RECREATIONAL  
FACILITY IN THE  
CITY.



SINCE THE RELEASE  
OF THE TMP, THE  
CITY'S PAVED  
PATHWAY NETWORK  
AND ON-STREET  
BICYCLE LANES HAVE  
BEEN EXPANDING.

increasing interest in transportation-related matters called for a comprehensive transportation master plan to help direct future growth through innovative planning. The Bozeman Transportation Master Plan (TMP) aimed to provide a new examination of multi-modal transportation issues within the Bozeman area and address the present and future needs of the community. Since the release of the document, the City's paved pathway network has been expanding. However, although the PROST plan also highlighted the importance of a connected trail system, the two documents are not always in sync. The objectives of the PROST plan sometimes differ from the TMP, complicating the implementation of both the TMP and PROST, further exacerbated by the fact that the two documents are funded and managed by two separate departments.

### ***Alignment with UDC Process***

The Unified Development Code or UDC is a set of regulations that support public health, safety and general welfare related to physical city growth, use of property and development. Found within Chapter 38 of the Bozeman Municipal Code, the UDC covers a wide range of subdivision and zoning topics such as setbacks, building height, allowed uses, landscaping, affordable housing and parking. Some regulations apply city-wide while others are specific to different city districts. In terms of parks, the UDC (in compliance with state law) sets the calculations for minimum park area (and/or cash in lieu) requirements for new residential development as well as minimal design requirements such as frontage, irrigation and sidewalks. The UDC also addresses other related factors such as trails and pathways and watercourse setbacks. Rules related to park and facility usage are addressed in a separate chapter (Chapter 26) of the Bozeman Municipal Code.

The City is at the beginning stages of a UDC overhaul. Upon completion of the overhaul, it will be important to make changes to reflect the vision of the PRAT Plan.



Figure 1.8 *Bicycle tour through City parks to kick off the PRAT process*



Figure 1.9 *Many residents commute to work by bicycle everyday and share the road with cars.*

# 2. PLAN PROCESS

---

## IN THIS CHAPTER

TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH AND OUTCOMES

METHODS AND MILESTONES

ENGAGEMENT KEY FINDINGS



# Timeline and Milestones

The development of the PRAT Plan was a 15-month process, beginning in the Summer of 2021 and concluding in the Winter of 2022. The planning process was framed largely around significant engagement efforts to ensure the desires of the community and Department staff were accurately reflected in the plan’s recommendations. Plan development was also shepherded by the Urban Parks and Forestry Board (UPFB).

The plan process was structured around four phases:

*Phase 1: Analysis:* The first phase encompassed the discovery and understanding of Bozeman’s unique recreation and parks system, its organization, and its provision of programs. It included a high level review of park types and distribution of parks and

trails across the city, in depth study of historical and ecological systems, a needs assessment, and a statistically valid community survey.

*Phase 2: Vision & Concepts:* During this portion of the project’s development, system-wide concepts and plan themes were developed and tested through public and staff review and comment.

*Phase 3: Draft Plan:* The third phase of the process included establishing guiding goals and objectives, as well as an implementation strategy. A review of trail connectivity, investments and maintenance was also conducted.

*Phase 4: Final PRAT Plan:* The final stage of the project included documentation, review, and approvals. This phase resulted in this document and supporting design and maintenance manuals.

## Project Schedule

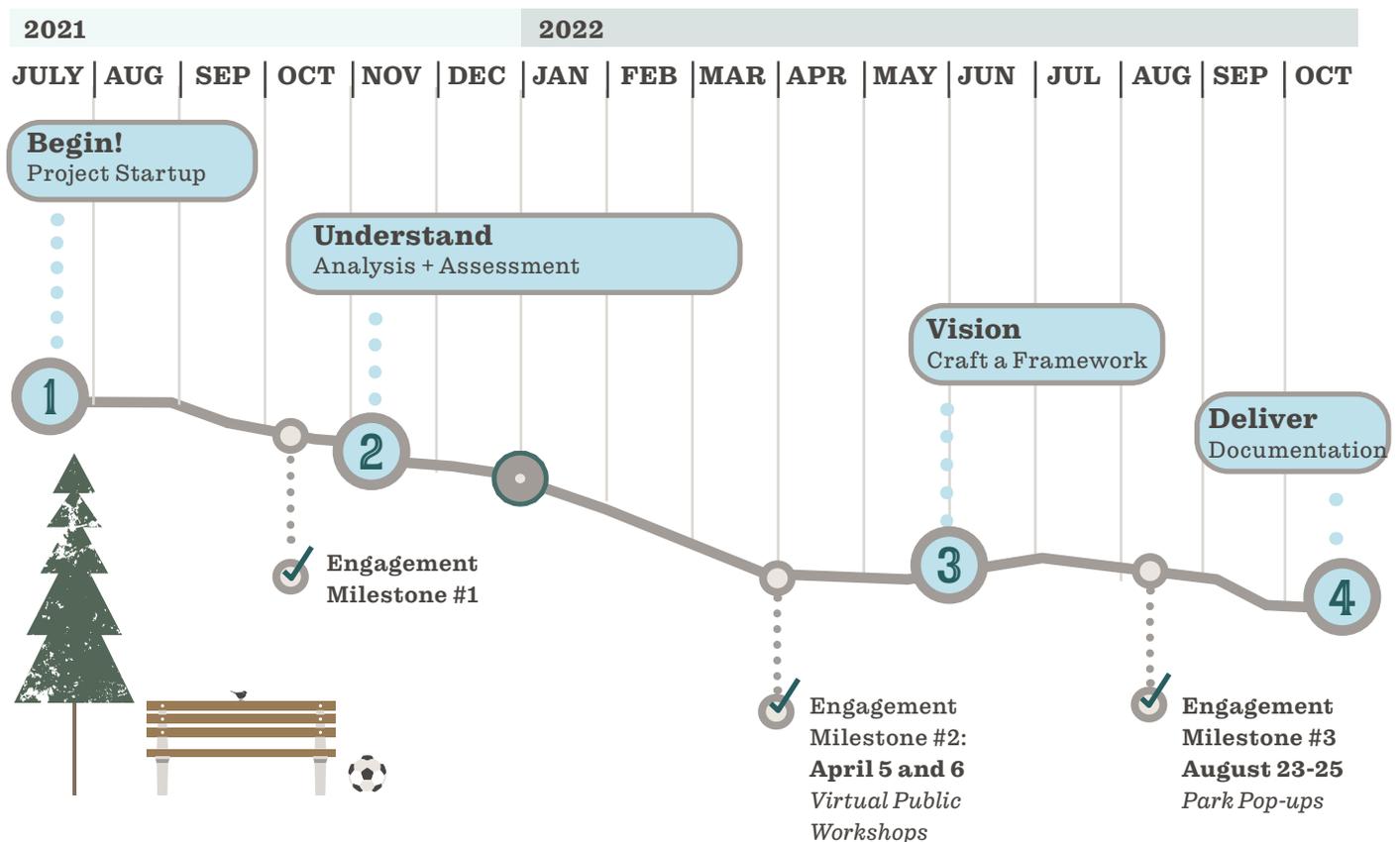


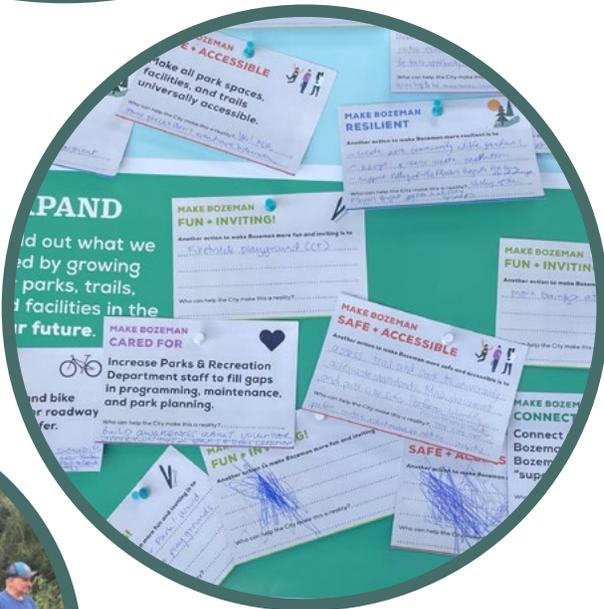
Figure 2.1 Plan process and schedule.

# Engagement Approach and Outcomes

During the 15-month long planning process, the project team engaged over 900 community members and stakeholders. The City's parks, facilities, and programs are all beloved, and the master plan process was structured to ensure that all park users and communities were invited and had the chance to weigh in on the future of this important recreational system.

## Methods and Milestones

Much of the plan's development occurred during uncertainty in the COVID pandemic and encouraged the City to think creatively about meeting residents where they were and through diverse means of communication and engagement. To ensure people felt safe and included in their participation, the plan included both online and in-person engagement methods, like online workshops, pop-up events in parks and events, partnerships with other city initiatives and outreach methods, and both statistically valid and community surveys with opportunities for residents to give feedback on preliminary plan recommendations.



## In-person Engagement

**Drop-in at local events:** Tabling at existing events like farmers markets and City-sponsored festivals can help to reach residents unaware of the plan process and ask quick questions about needs and aspirations for the future of the park, trail and recreation system. Early on, the City identified a series of events to participate in and destinations to visit to help build awareness of the plan process and goals and to gather feedback using questions relevant to what was being explored by the process at that time. For events happening in 2021, this meant asking about favorite parks and barriers to access using a map and mad libs exercise, in which residents responded to an incomplete sentence with responses about their recreation experiences. In the Spring of 2022, engagement at existing events focused on resident visions and big ideas for future projects or policies. Ultimately, the PRAT plan was represented at over 20 events throughout the city.

## Online Engagement

**Project Web Content:** Regular content updates were made to the City's website, which serves as an increasingly popular resource for information and updates regarding city-led projects.

The PRAT Plan was the first comprehensive plan to take advantage of a new digital platform, engage.bozeman.net. The project team shared PRAT plan updates at and in between milestones. The site pulled 4,537 unique visits over the year that the platform was publicly accessible.

**Social Media:** Ahead of major public milestones, the City posted visual graphics and imagery to promote the plan, promote public events, and gather reactions to early ideas on existing City social media platforms. Certain advertisements were translated into Spanish

and were also posted on the City's website, which offers Google Translate services.

**Statistically Valid Survey:** A statistically valid paper survey was mailed to 2,500 residents across the City of Bozeman. This tool provided an important data set that represented a user group with similar demographic characteristics to the City as a whole and offered a balanced resident perspective across the City. Final results were based on 300 total surveys providing a 95% confidence level. The City also made this community survey available online to residents who had not participated in the statistically valid survey. An additional 100 people shared their existing patterns and needs for the City system.

**Community Workshops:** Due to ongoing COVID restrictions during the plan's development, the project team made the decision to hold community workshops online, halfway through the plan process.



These workshops included a short presentation and small group conversations that used the Engage Bozeman platform to help facilitate conversations and map or catalog participant ideas. The community workshops were recorded and posted on Engage Bozeman for anyone interested in participating but unable to attend during the early April meetings.

At the end of each engagement milestone, engagement feedback was synthesized and shared with them in an easily digestible and clear format that can be shared on multiple digital platforms, both internally and with the broader community.

## Alignment with Other City Initiatives

**Safe Routes to Parks:** The project team also worked in parallel with the Safe Routes to Parks grant team to ensure the PRAT plan helps to reduce barriers to accessing parks and facilities. This grant was awarded to the Human Resource Development council, District IX (HRDC) in partnership with the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) at Montana State University and the City of Bozeman to create and test a community liaison program to highlight systematically excluded voices. The plan worked alongside three community liaisons who are connected to different underrepresented communities including the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), LatinX and

### COMMUNITY LIAISONS | CONEXIÓN COMUNITARIA



Grant Partners:



**Bri Daniels**

**Goal:** to engage the disability community, help raise voices that are often not heard or listened to and to emphasize that access and inclusion is about so much more than checking off ADA boxes

**Tools:**

- Survey
- Interviews/Story Telling



**Luis Islas**

**Goal:** to hear from the Latino community about the types of outdoor activities that are favored and what accessibility issues impact access to local parks

**Tools:**

- Front Door Conversations
- Planned a Walk Audit



**Mikayla Pitts**

**Goal:** to engage the BIPOC community and make parks and recreation programming more welcoming

**Tools:**

- Host Group Conversation
- Survey
- Exploring if there are events to better welcome more diverse people into the City

Figure 2.2 HRDC Safe Routes to Parks Community liaisons

disability communities. The liaisons tested a variety of tools such as targeted surveys, hosting small group conversations, organizing a walk audit, and collecting stories through one-on-one interviews.

## Staff and Stakeholder Engagement

Staff engagement was essential to the success and implementation of the plan. In October, as part of the project's kick-off, staff and stakeholders participated in a series of topical focus groups to learn about the system through the eyes of staff, partners, and city leaders. These representatives were reengaged as part of the plan vision process in June 2022 and again to help identify implementation priorities in August 2022.

## Engagement Key Findings

Through the engagement process, the plan uncovered that the City's parks and trails provide an important oasis in the fastest growing city in Montana.

**Bozeman residents clearly value opportunities to connect with nature and to safely access walking and biking trails. Residents also want their parks and facilities to be inclusive places where they feel welcomed by other park users, staff, and by the design of these places and the programs within them.** Residents were also aligned in their desires for special use facilities, more specifically swimming pools. Though these values are not explicitly contradictory, they span many topics, so the planning process was oriented toward finding the right balance of investments, whether they be in policy, Department capacity, or capital improvements.

The top responses from the public engagement process were related to desires for inclusion, relevant programs and elements, safe access, nature immersion, trail connectivity, special use facilities, and park etiquette. These seven engagement themes provide an important framework for the goals and strategies outlined within this plan.

## ENGAGEMENT BY NUMBERS (PARTICIPATION AND METHODS)



**401** community surveys  
(300 statistically valid)

**24** disability community  
Surveys

**12** BIPOC surveys



**78** locations mapped  
**45** ideas shared  
**1** online implementation  
poll  
**4,537** unique site visits



**2** online community  
meetings  
**15** meetings with city,  
boards, and councils  
**24** pop-ups at events and  
in parks

## Inclusion

Many residents reported feeling uncomfortable or unsafe in their parks. Efforts to enhance physical access, lead program inclusion, and expand park policies will ensure that parks, programs, and trails are welcoming for all Bozeman residents.

## Relevant Programs and Elements

Residents continually noted their love of their park spaces and requested that same level of investment in their programs and events.

## Safe Access

Fast moving and wide roadways that are difficult to cross, limited universal accessibility between homes and privately-owned open spaces or buildings, inadequate access to parks and facilities for the disabled community, and difficult to reach park spaces were all identified as creating barriers to safely getting to and using parks and participating in recreational opportunities.

## Nature Immersion

Residents enjoy the proximity to nature both within the City and outside its limits. Many residents are also excited for more nature play and educational opportunities.

## Trail Connectivity

Trails not only facilitate connections between natural areas and public lands, but foster community connections as well. Residents and visitors love the existing trail network and are excited for a more connected system of pathways and trails that are connected to beloved parks and important community destinations.

## Special Use Facilities

Swimming pools and aquatics programs were consistently among the top ranked needs by plan participants. The need for more water play and swimming opportunities emerged early on in the process, before the temporary closure of the Bozeman Swim Center. Other desired special use facilities included a nature center and affordable indoor fitness spaces.

## Engagement feedback themes

### Inclusion



### Relevant Programs and Elements



## Care

Many different audiences use Bozeman parks, and not everyone is thoughtful about the impacts their park use has on the experience of others, the park's maintenance burden and financial cost, and the natural resources and habitat quality. In order for parks and trails to be fully inclusive, the City must ensure that people's use of parks isn't entirely shaped by dogs. Park rules should be clearly communicated and respected. Park users are expected to actively care for habitat, park equipment, and facilities. Through a community of care, people can protect their investment made via the Parks and Trails District and can begin to yield to others' needs.

## Safe Access



## Nature Immersion



## Trail Connectivity

## Special Use Facilities

## Care





# 3. STATE OF THE SYSTEM

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## IN THIS CHAPTER

### BOZEMAN OUTDOORS

EXISTING FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS

COMPARISON TO SIMILAR CITIES

### BOZEMAN AT PLAY

RECREATION ASSESSMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

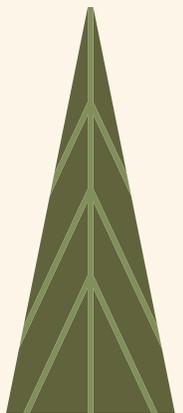
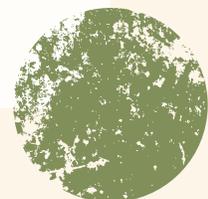
SIMILAR PROVIDERS

COMMUNITY SURVEY

EVALUATING FACILITY AND AMENITY NEEDS AGAINST DEMAND

### BOZEMAN ON THE MOVE

EXISTING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



Bozeman’s park system reflects its unique development history, natural system infrastructure, and outdoor culture. The recreational facilities, parks, and trails are intertwined into the daily lives and experiences of Bozeman residents and have become a central part of one of the most cherished destination towns in the country. To understand more deeply how this system is structured and how to expand its role equitably across the community, we need to understand what the system includes today and compare that understanding against what we’ve heard from residents. We also need to see how Bozeman’s system compares to other cities to identify where there is an abundance of access and where gaps exist. Finally, we have to look to the future, to anticipate needs not yet identified and proactively address those trends through the plan. To do this, the PRAT plan evaluated the complexity of the system through three lenses:

- ◇ **Bozeman Outdoors** - What is the structure of the physical system and how does it compare to cities with similar populations and growth patterns?
- ◇ **Bozeman at Play** - What programs and events does the city lead and what programs are led by other similar organizations?
- ◇ **Bozeman on the Move** - What are the connections and gaps in the city’s system of trails, paths, and street network and how can the City work to close gaps in access between parks, homes and other important destinations?



Figure 3.1 *Recreation programs invite residents of all ages to spend time outside.*

895 CITY-OWNED  
ACRES OF PARKS

390 OPEN SPACE  
ACRES

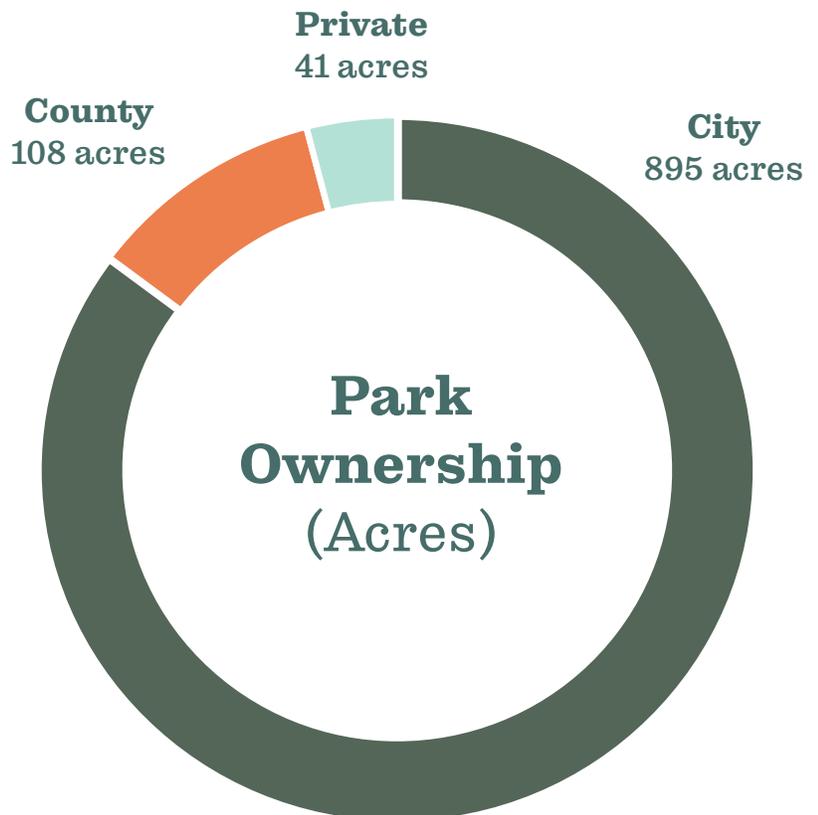
17 ACRES OF PARK  
SPACE PER 1,000  
RESIDENTS

176 MILES OF  
PATHWAY

125+ PROGRAMS

## Bozeman Outdoors

There are 91 city parks and 24 linear parks in the City that range in size and function. Within city parks, there is a total of 895 acres of different kinds of park elements like sports fields and courts, fishing docks, playgrounds, natural areas, and meandering stream corridors. Since the PROST plan, the system has preserved 17 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. The City's park system plays host to a variety of fixed and temporary park elements. From ballfields to wintertime skating rinks, tennis courts to dog parks, and paved trails to BMX trails, Bozeman's parks are destinations for everyone.



## Equitable Access to Parks

Understanding park needs and equitable distribution of services is multi-layered and includes demographic mapping of

- ◇ population density,
- ◇ car ownership,
- ◇ race,
- ◇ income,
- ◇ disability,
- ◇ age (particularly among seniors and children under 18).

This snapshot of Bozeman's current population provides a basis for understanding community needs for recreation elements. Demographic ranges have

been combined into a composite geography that reveal places with defined opportunities for city services like parks and recreation programming. In general, areas surrounding MSU and west of 11th Avenue and northeast of Oak Street and 19th Avenue show the highest need for parks and elements based on the demographic composite.

The demographic data also establishes the magnitude and composition of population change in Bozeman and highlights segments (youth, the elderly, and people with incomes below the poverty line) that the City should position itself to better serve in the future. A proximity analysis reveals physical community access and gaps to parks and facilities. The analysis evaluates a ten minute walk (half mile) and six minute bicycle ride (one mile) from each park by following the existing road structure and it also takes into account road crossing barriers from the

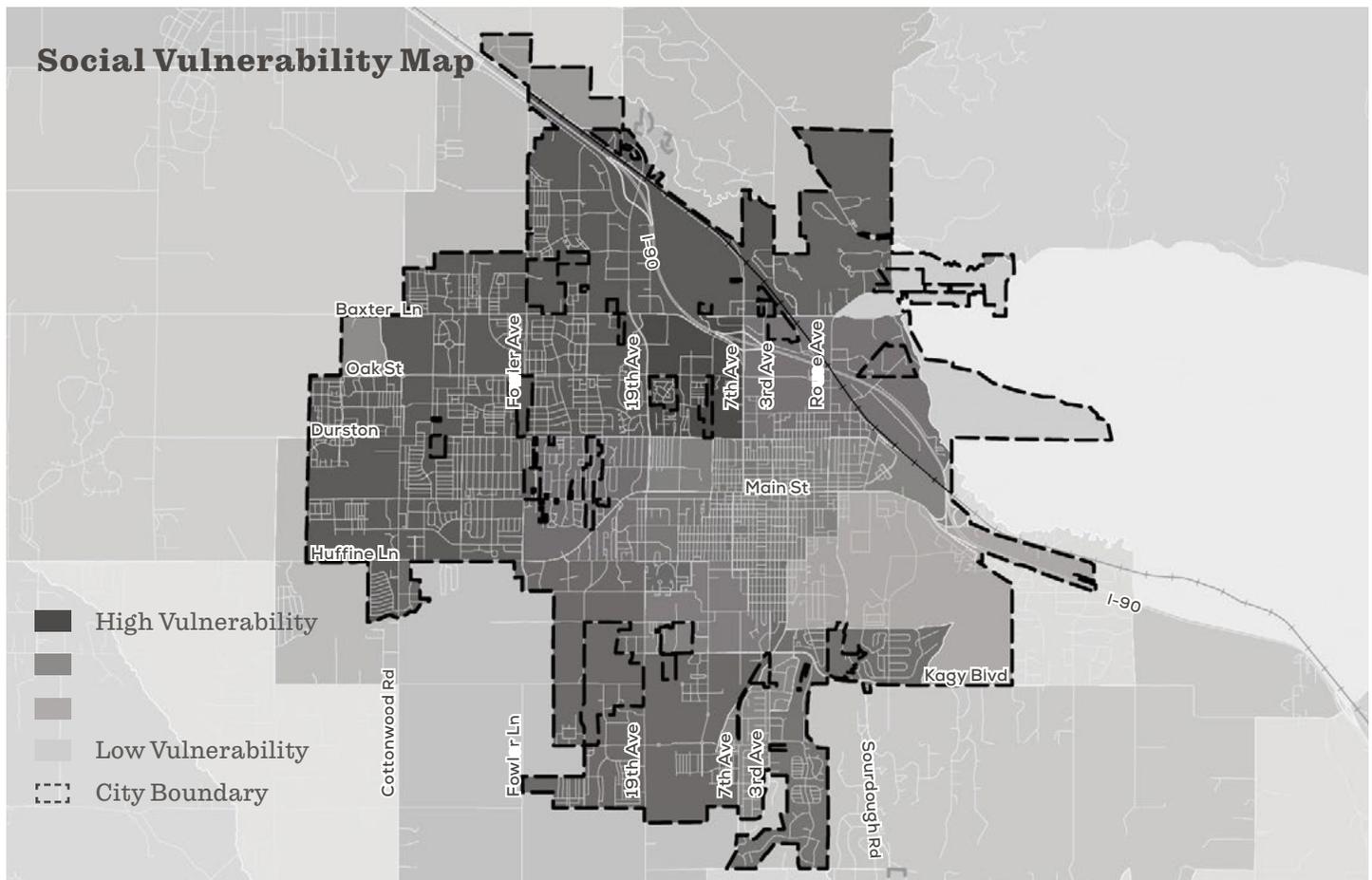
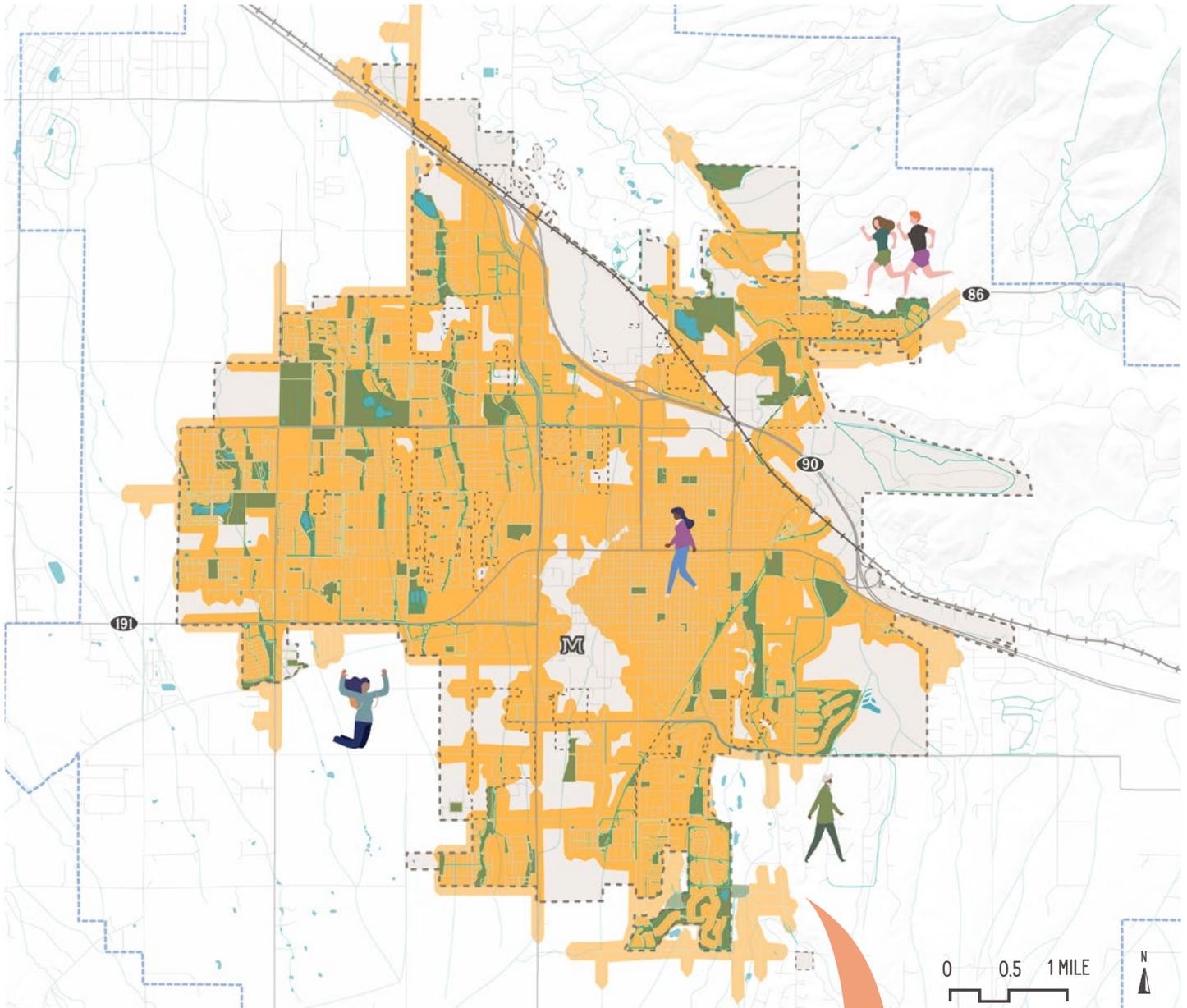


Figure 3.2 Social vulnerability demographic compilation map. Households with the highest vulnerability are the darkest shades on the map.

# Parks Proximity Map



- Roads
- ++ Railroad
- - - City Boundary
- - - Growth Boundary
- ~ Streams
- Lakes & Reservoirs
- Parks
- Areas within 10-minute walk

**Many of the Spanish-speaking people who were interviewed during walk audit outreach identified Main/Huffine as a major barrier to get to their nearest neighborhood parks - Kirk Park and Bozeman Pond.**

Figure 3.3 Proximity analysis of access to parks from a 10 minute walk.

2017 Bozeman Transportation Master Plan. Any walkshed that falls over those significant barriers was removed to further indicate where park access is limited, especially for residents with mobility limitations, families, and people without cars. Access to parks is generally strong within the denser areas closest to Bozeman's Downtown. Still, the mapping within this section only highlights the geographic and quantifiable side of the PRAT's understanding of access. From conversations with various members of the disability community, the Safe Routes program liaisons surfaced that a significant number of parks and trails and elements lack access for the disability community and for low income and Latinx communities.

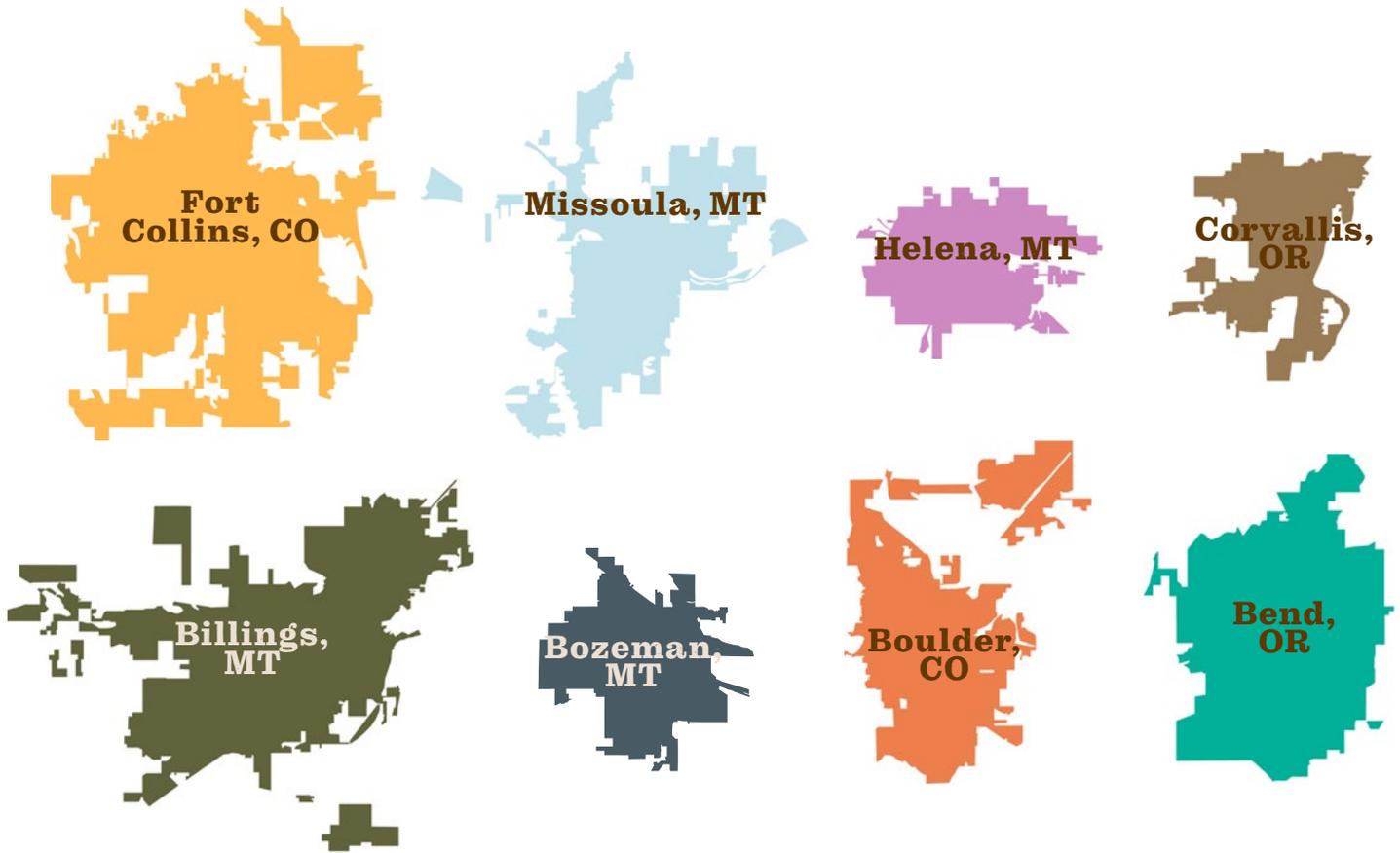
The City has gotten ahead of growth by investing in new parks where growth was highest, so neighborhoods with the highest populations have high walkable access to parks. This means that park access is typically high along gridded city streets. Conversely, large areas west, north and south where large subdivisions are being built lack walkable access to community parks and elements or are bisected by fast moving streets like Huffine Lane (Highway 191) and 19th Avenue. Bozeman is growing most rapidly in the areas with the newest parks as a result of land dedication regulations for new developments. Communities north and west of downtown are also increasing in population, and this growth pattern is projected to continue and reinforces the importance of safe access between parks and neighborhoods. Population growth is also occurring outside of downtown near the edges of the city.

## ***Comparison to Similar Cities***

As a city of just over 50,000 people, Bozeman has an abundance of park acreage, but the city's population and development continues to grow up and out, a phenomenon that has outpaced many other urban areas during the pandemic. Prior to 2020, Bozeman was already growing rapidly, similar to peer communities. Like Bend, Oregon, Fort Collins, Colorado, and Boulder, Colorado which boast substantial outdoor tourism economies - Bozeman appeals to an outdoor culture and is increasingly a destination for people seeking outdoor adventure. The PRAT plan looks to cities of similar size and character to understand how Bozeman's acreage, average park size, trail miles, and park and facilities elements compare. This assessment incorporated data from both the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) to draw these comparisons.

Bozeman was compared to seven other similar cities - Fort Collins, Colorado; Missoula, Montana; Helena, Montana; Corvallis, Oregon; Billings, Montana; Boulder, Colorado; and Bend, Oregon. Not only are these cities generally similar in size, ranging from 28,000 to 170,000 residents, they also have been growing substantially over the last decade. While Bozeman is the second least populous city among this comparison, it is the fastest growing city among those compared. Bozeman also has the third highest number of acres per thousand residents (17 acres), after Bend, Oregon and Missoula, Montana. The majority of Missoula's overall parkland is also not developed. Only 6 acres per thousand residents is comprised of active park space.

## Population Growth 2010-2020



Peer Department	Total Population (2020)	Growth 2010-2020	Density Residents/mi <sup>2</sup>
Helena, MT	28,190	+14%	1,724
Missoula, MT	73,489	+10%	2,671
Bend, OR	99,178	+29%	2,347
Billings, MT	117,116	+12%	2,697
Bozeman, MT	53,293	+43%	2,839
Fort Collins, CO	169,810	+18%	3,015
Boulder, CO	108,100	+11%	4,003
Corvallis, OR	59,922	+10%	4,240

SOURCE: NRPA/US CENSUS

Figure 3.4 With a population growth of 43% in the past decade (2010-2020) Bozeman has grown faster than peer cities that share similar growth patterns, size, and community appeal.

## Where is Bozeman Leading?

Through its development code and 2012 TOP Bond, Bozeman has facilitated investment in playgrounds and its trail system, and is working to expand access to a variety of typical park elements across the city. A closer look at Bozeman's facility and amenity counts against similar cities highlights the importance of those investments - Bozeman has 54 playgrounds, twelve more playgrounds than Bend, Oregon with the second highest number of playgrounds. Bozeman is also well served by pavilions and natural surface trails. Bozeman however also has a deficit of recreation facilities (the City currently has no recreation-focused facility), basketball and tennis courts, sports fields, and water based play (spraygrounds and pools).

## Bozeman at Play

From learning and exploring nature to opportunities for dancing and family cookouts, to spaces for sledding in the winter and public art, Bozeman's park, recreation and active transportation system has the potential to meet the needs and wishes of every visitor. These places provide vital venues for people to experience togetherness or provide space for reflection and alone time, to get exercise, and to learn new skills. The PRAT Plan evaluated what programs exist today and gathered community thoughts and ideas about what experiences they enjoy, would like to see expanded, or would like to introduce.

### *Recreation Assessment*

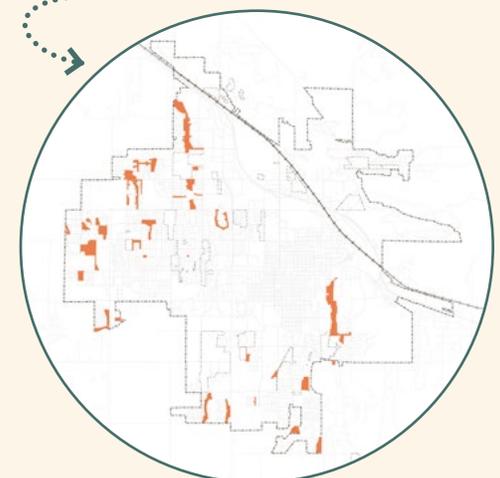
As Bozeman grows, changes and new trends in recreation are also evolving and expanding across the country. Understanding both the localized and national changes in demand for recreation and wellness-centered classes and programs can help project future program needs and the spaces that will support them. The community survey helps to define demand for programs and research into the City's

## HOW DOES BOZEMAN COMPARE TO PEER CITIES?

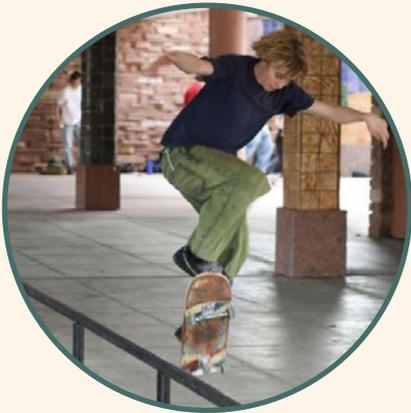


In Boulder, CO, the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department manages permanently protected land that forms a buffer around the city.

In contrast, Bozeman has an extensive network of natural areas within town that serve as an urban oasis, and if better connected, will be part of an active transportation system.

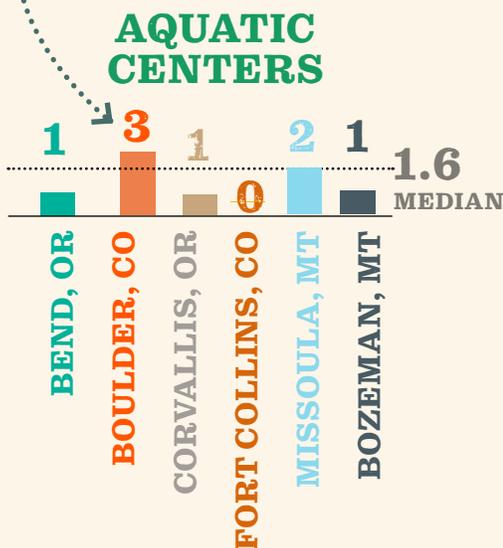


# HOW DOES BOZEMAN COMPARE TO PEER CITIES?



In the past year, Boulder, CO has updated and added skate elements to 3 existing City Parks and at their Main Library

Boulder, CO also has the most aquatic centers out of all of our peers



seasonal program guides and participation data as well as staff insights help to provide a framework for the city’s availability and gaps in program access.

## Mix of Recreation Programs

The city provides over 125 different types of classes and events to residents. Many of these programs fall into the category of “core program”, which are categories that help to distinguish what audiences or what topics are covered in the City’s offerings. Bozeman has seven core programs - active aging, adult, aquatics, camps, events, preschool, and school’s out activities. In many departments, core programs are organized by activity type (fitness, nature, sports) and not by age group (preschool, youth, adult). Bozeman uses a combination of both activity type and age group. Like many growing cities, the Bozeman Parks and Recreation Department acknowledged a desire to expand offerings that are more inclusive and welcoming to an increasingly diverse population. As the variety of programming increases, re-establishing the core programs by topic or activity will help to clarify what programs are offered publicly, and better identify gaps in program areas internally. The City’s core program areas are described in more detail below.

### Active Aging

Active aging programs are for participants 55 years and older. Nearly all of the classes offered in 2019 were fitness classes including Heart and Sole, Balance & Beyond, Sole Energy, and Stability and Mobility.

### Adult

Adult recreation encompasses most programs that serve participants ages 18 years and older. These include avalanche awareness classes and sport leagues such as sand volleyball, ping pong, badminton and pickleball.

## Aquatics

The Department offers a robust swim instruction program for children 6 months through 12 years. For the youngest age group (6 months – 3 years), these classes are parent and child together (Angelfish). For the next age group (3 & 4 years), Clownfish is offered. There are several levels of swim instruction for 5 to 12 years olds and also for 6 to 12 years olds depending on ability. These courses are offered at the Bozeman Swim Center year-round and at the Bogert Pool during the summer months. The Department also offers lifeguard courses and a Water Safety Instructor course.

## Camps

The Department provides several camp options for the community broken down into different age groups including 3 – 5 years, 5 – 7 years, 5 – 10 years, 8 – 10 years, and 11 – 14 years. Camps are offered during spring break, winter break, and summer and include opportunities for all interests including art, fishing, sports, and spring break at The Mill just to name a few.

## Events

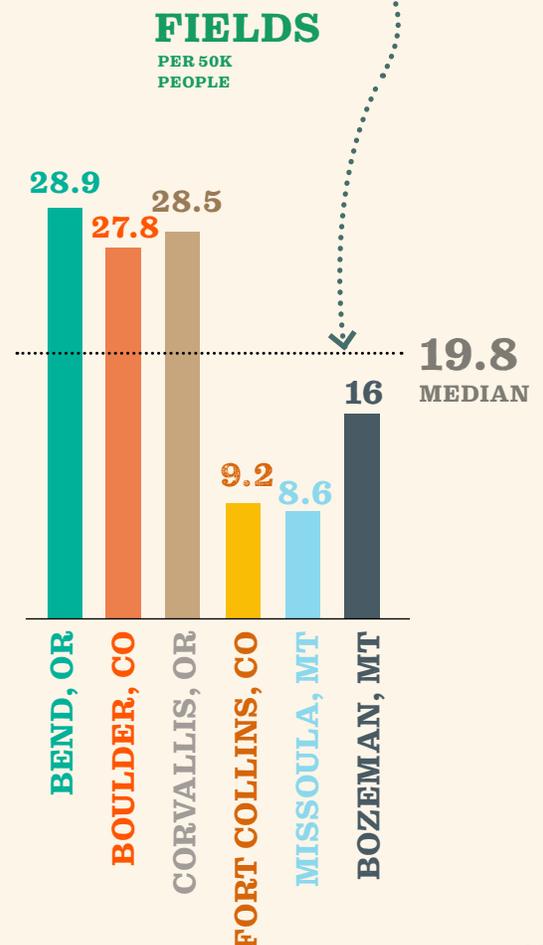
Several events are offered throughout the year – many which are free and do not require advance registration. These events include Easter Egg Hunt, Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival, Discovery Walks, Pickin' in the Park, Fishing Derby, National Trails Day, Youth Triathlon, Sweet Pea Children's Run, Wellness in the parks, Walk with Ease, Avalanche Awareness, and Active Aging Week. Monster Mash (a Halloween themed event), Breakfast with Santa, and the Father Daughter Dance all require advance registration and target specific age groups.

## Preschool

Programming for preschoolers is divided up into several different age groups and includes a range of

## HOW DOES BOZEMAN COMPARE TO PEER CITIES?

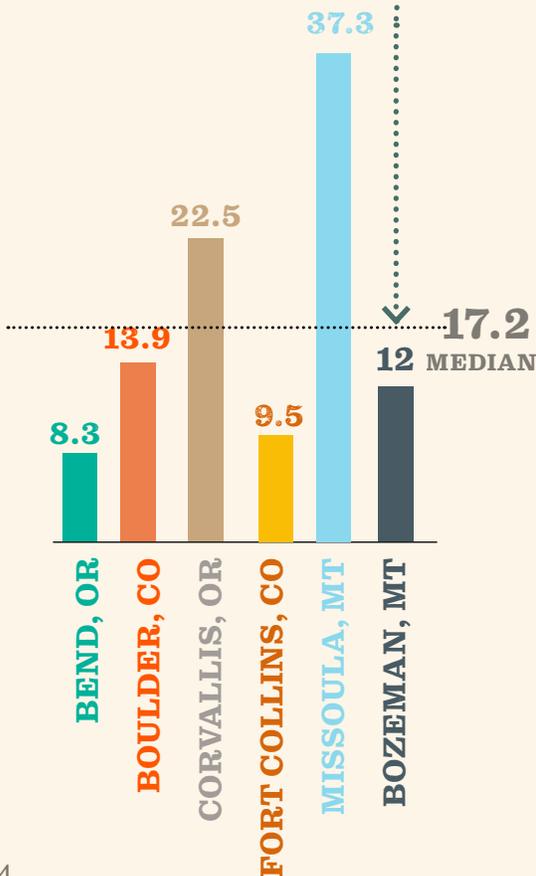
Bozeman sits below the median for number of fields: elements typically found in Community Parks



# HOW DOES BOZEMAN COMPARE TO PEER CITIES?

Bozeman sits below the median for number of courts: elements typically found in Neighborhood Parks

## COURTS PER 50K PEOPLE



activities, from organized sports to nature play and education for ages two years to four years old.

### School's Out Activities

School Day off events are offered throughout the school year when school is not in session. Programs are offered for 5 to 10 years and include several opportunities including sports, nature, and science.

### Youth

Youth programming is also divided up into several age groups that range from six years old to early teen programs.

### Other Services

In addition to the core programs and activities, the City manages other types of facilities that provide community leisure opportunities.

- ◇ Bogert Pool is an outdoor facility that has two swimming areas: a 25-yard lap pool (3.5 – 9 feet in depth) and a shallow pool for young children (1 – 3 feet in depth). The lap pool includes a climbing wall, a small slide, and a zip line. The shallow pool includes a small slide. This facility is typically open from mid-June to late-August each summer.
- ◇ The Swim Center is an indoor aquatic facility with a 50-meter, eight lane lap pool that is typically open year-round. From mid-August to mid-March, it is divided into a 25-yard pool and a 24-meter pool.
- ◇ The Rec Mobile provides recreation to children ages 2 – 10 years in neighborhood parks throughout the spring and summer. Recreation leaders facilitate play that keeps children outside, active, and engaged with peers. These opportunities are available on Monday and Wednesday evenings at different parks.

- ◇ Several Bozeman facilities are available for rental including Beall Park Recreation Center, Lindley Center, Story Mansion, and Story Mill Community Center.

## Distribution of Programs and Activities

A total of 329 programs were offered by the Department between 2018 and 2019. Understanding how the City’s enrollment-based program offerings are distributed across core program areas helps to identify broader City trends and community needs.

The program with the largest quantity of programs offered was aquatics (160), regardless of season. The second largest quantity of programs offered was preschool (43). Excluding events since they generally don’t require registration, the program areas with the lowest quantities are school’s out activities and adult programs, with 8 offerings each. Events (4) include the Easter Egg Hunt, Pickin’ in the Park, Youth Triathlon Camps, Youth Triathlon Race, Sweet Pea Children’s Run, Wellness in the Parks, Walk with East, Avalanche Awareness, and Active Aging Week.

## Evaluating Programs by Age

The PRAT plan evaluated recreational programs against current citywide age groups. This analysis indicates that while 91% of City recreation programs are designed for people under the age of 18, this age group represents only 22% of Bozeman’s population. The reason for this disparity is that the City bases its program offerings on public demand. The City will continue to test the demand in all age groups for new or expanded recreational programs.

## Program Enrollment

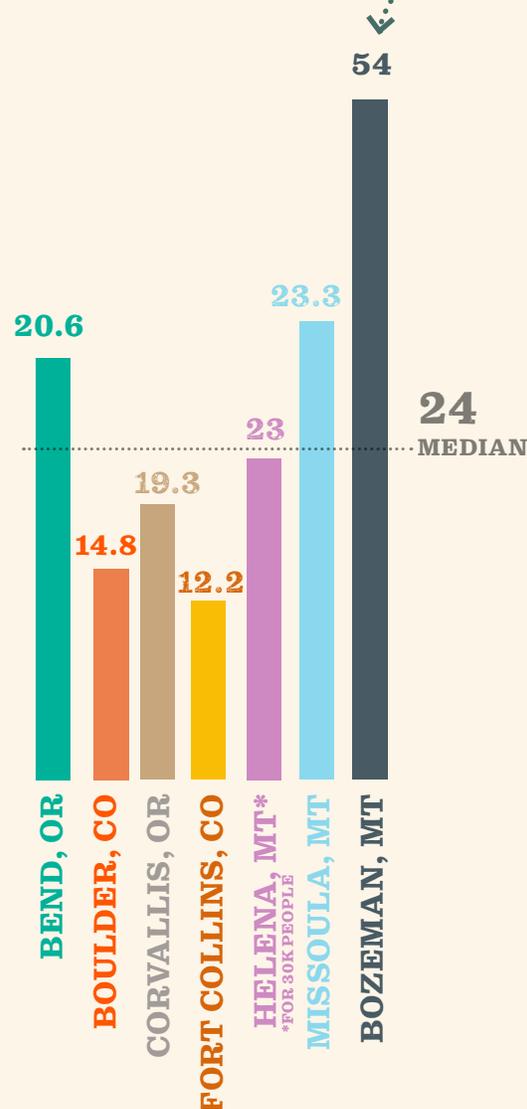
Total enrollment into the Department’s programs was 3,414 in 2019. Aquatics had the highest enrollment with 1,092 participants, followed by preschool at 783, and camps at 661. Figure 5 shows all the programs and the percentage of each of the

## HOW DOES BOZEMAN COMPARE TO PEER CITIES?

Bozeman sits well above the median for number of playgrounds, which are typically found in both Neighborhood and Pocket Parks

### PLAYGROUNDS

PER 50K PEOPLE



# TOP 10 PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

ON-ROAD BIKE LANES OR FACILITIES

POOLS, INDOOR

POOLS, OUTDOOR

TRAILS, PAVED

NATURE CENTERS

COMMUNITY GARDENS

WATER ACCESS FOR RECREATION

SPRAYGROUNDS/SPLASH PAD

PAVILIONS AND PICNIC AREAS

RECREATION FACILITIES

whole. There are some programs that are offered by other organizations who take their own registration (Skyhawks) and this data is not included in any of these analyses.

Aquatics accounted for a third (32%) of the 2018-2019 enrollments, and preschool and camps accounted for approximately one-fifth of the programming each, 21% and 19% respectively.

Aquatics accounted for nearly half (48.8%) of the program menu and 32% of all enrollments, which is typical due to the smaller class size and the advertisement of several course sections that can be combined, if needed. For camps and preschool, the percentage of participants is greater than the percentage of courses offered.

## ***Similar Providers***

Bozeman residents enjoy a wide variety of recreation programs offered by a host of different organizations – some of these are nonprofit groups and others are private businesses. Many of these are provided space for their activities by the Department.

The Department permits space to several affiliate groups that provide recreation programs to the community. When discussing the permitting process with staff regarding the local sports programs, understanding of requirements were inconsistent. Future policies should be clarified for consistent communications between the Department and affiliate groups and should consider requiring all affiliate groups to:

- ◇ require all coaches to submit to a criminal background check,
- ◇ compare the list of coaches to the state and federal sex offender databases,
- ◇ charge a special field use fee for nonresident participants

- ◇ track demographics and city-county resident status, scholarships given out and DEI training

Fitness programs are often a desire for young adults in communities across the country. Due to the low percentage of programs offered by the Department for adults, fitness opportunities within the community were reviewed. There are several private facilities spread out in the community offering fitness opportunities for Bozeman residents.

In addition to the camps offered by the Department, there are dozens and dozens of summer camps available for Bozeman Youth. There are opportunities for children of all interests including art, dance (ballet, hip hop, aerial hammock, and choreography), hiking, camping, rock climbing, STEAM (outdoor science and coding), sports, yoga, drumming, karate, performing arts, horseback riding, farm camp, and more.

### ***Community Survey***

During the winter of 2021, the City released a community survey and received 300 responses. This survey, which is statistically valid and has a confidence level of 95%, highlighted community-wide desires for programs, parks, and park improvements. The survey, which was administered by mail, contained a cover letter, survey document, and instructions for the survey to be taken online. The cover letter included instructions for taking the survey over phone for any residents that preferred to speak a different language in their response.

### **Findings**

The survey surfaced significant shifts in park and facility use that could be attributed to the impacts of the pandemic on outdoor and indoor recreation, like recent changes in level of comfort with visiting facilities or taking part in online programs. There were also many unsurprising conclusions, including the finding that Bozeman residents visited parks

## TOP 10 PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT

AQUATICS OR SWIMMING

ARTS AND CULTURE

WINTER RECREATION

FITNESS

ETIQUETTE PROGRAMS FOR PARKS AND TRAIL USERS

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

HISTORY

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

SENIORS/ACTIVE AGING

SPECIAL EVENTS

PROGRAMS

much more frequently in the past year than the national average. Ninety-seven percent of Bozeman residents visited parks in their community during 2020-2022 compared to 70% nationally.

Using a calculation that combines the importance that residents place on a park, trail and program with the identification of unmet need, the survey was able to identify where a community should invest resources to add or increase facilities or programs. **The top five priorities for investment in recreation facilities and elements in Bozeman included natural trails, on-street bicycle lanes, indoor pools, outdoor pools, and shared use paths. The top five priorities for program investment in Bozeman include aquatics programming, arts and culture, winter recreation, fitness, and etiquette programs for park and trail users, tied with outdoor adventure activities.**

The community survey also surfaced barriers to park or facility use and program participation. Only 22% of residents participate in programs and events offered by the City, which is below the national average of 32%, however this doesn't necessarily reflect the people who participate in programs within parks managed by user groups. The top reasons for lack of participation are that residents are not aware of the programs offered, have no time to participate, or have little interest in what the City offers. While park participation is at an all time high for residents in Bozeman, barriers still exist. Limited time, lack of relevant elements, maintenance and cleanliness concerns, and limited operating hours were among the top barriers to park visitation.

When considering the priorities identified between facilities and programming together, there is clearly a need to focus future investment on aquatics as well

as outdoor education. With indoor and outdoor pools and aquatics being included in the top four for both facilities and programs, finding spaces for arts and culture and history programming are two additional areas of potential focus. In addition, having a nature center and outdoor education both rating high, this type of programming (and potentially creating a new space) should be a priority as well. Bozeman already provides winter recreation, but additional offerings should be explored.

### ***Evaluating Facility and Recreation Component Needs Against Demand***

The community survey and public engagement process helps to define priorities for strengthened or new elements from a public needs perspective, while an evaluation of national and similar peers articulates an understanding of demand for elements. By evaluating need and demand in unison, the PRAT plan can best describe where priorities for investment exist. Based on this evaluation, there are clear, aligned priorities for aquatics facilities, a nature center and indoor fitness space.

# TRAILS HEALTH BENEFITS

## Bozeman on the Move

The 2007 Bozeman PROST Plan established that the local trails are the City's most utilized recreation facilities. Likewise, the PRAT Plan statistically valid survey revealed this to still be the case in 2022. This is not unique to Bozeman, as throughout the country walking and biking on local trails are low-cost, low-impact recreation and exercise options for people of all ages and abilities.

### *Existing Network*

As a result of past and current investments in shared use paths, natural-surface trails, and on-street bicycle facilities, the City of Bozeman has established a solid foundation on which to continue to build a robust, city-wide pedestrian and bicycle transportation network. Currently, Bozeman is home to over 39 miles of shared use pathways, 79 miles of natural-surface trails, and 58 miles of on-street bicycle facilities, resulting in an existing active transportation network of approximately 176 miles.

Active transportation routes were consistently prioritized as highly valued community elements during public outreach for this plan. Current trails and pathways overwhelmingly received positive responses from the community in terms of quality, and are also rated the top two most important facilities for future needs. Pathways and trails for recreation and transportation are top community priorities identified in numerous local planning documents including the Bozeman Community Plan and the Bozeman Area Transportation Plan.

In 2020 American Trails published a guide highlighting the health benefits of trails:

#### **Mental Health Benefits**

- Spending even 20 minutes outside will have short term effects on the brain to reduce stress.
- Countless studies show people self-reporting reduced stress, clearer thought patterns, more optimism, and an overall heightened sense of well-being after being outdoors.
- We are now seeing more medical practitioners prescribe time in the outdoors as a way to combat depression, anxiety, and other health related issues.

#### **Physical Health Benefits**

- For every dollar spent on trails, there is a three-dollar savings in health care costs.
- More overall physical activity is measured in communities after trails are built.
- Cardiovascular benefits are seen across all trail user types. This means healthier hearts, and a reduction in preventable disease for trail users.
- Commuting by foot or bicycle gains popularity when trails go into a community. This both reduces traffic and creates a healthier, more physically active community.

The current network, however, needs substantial improvement regarding equitable accessibility, range, connectivity, and safety. These key elements were identified through the survey, public engagement and City staff input.

## East-West Corridors

The trail system relies on the natural network of waterways throughout the valley that allow development of trails to parallel these waterways. As a result, traveling in a north-south direction using off street trails is relatively accessible throughout the City. However, corridors that run east-west tend to rely on sidewalks and on-street bicycle lanes for this directional movement.

## Lack of Connectivity

The City has a system of shared use pathways, on-street bicycle facilities and off-street trails, but connectivity between these facilities is often lacking. For many common routes continuity of experience is frequently broken through lack of transitions between existing trails, shared use paths and bicycle lanes. This makes these routes more challenging and less comfortable as users are forced to negotiate wide roadways with high speed traffic. Furthermore, recreational trails in the winter, while still used by residents, can be unsafe or not enjoyable due to a lack of maintenance.

# WHAT IS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION?

From the Partnership for Active Transportation:

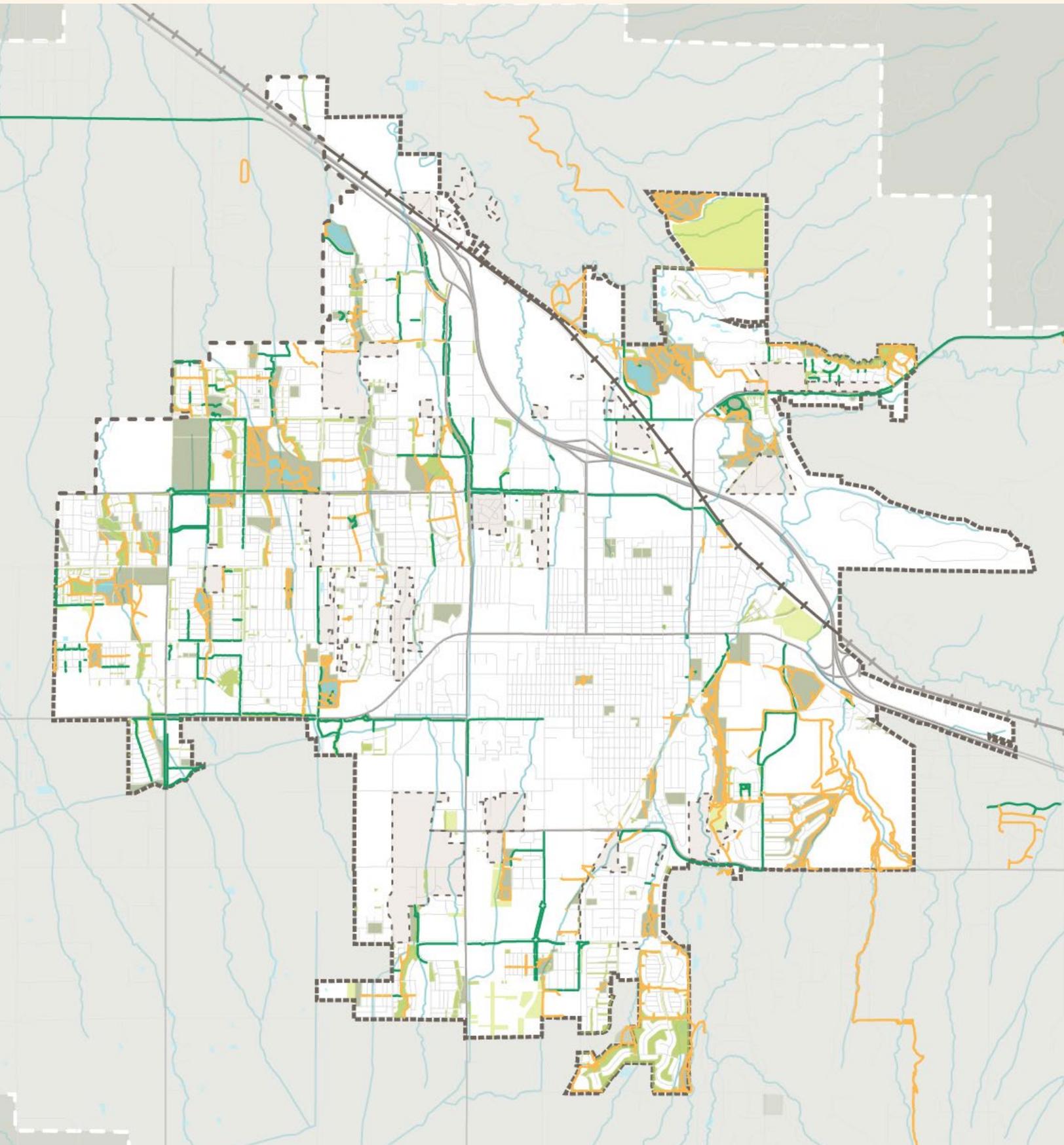
“Active transportation is a means of getting around that is powered by human energy, primarily walking and bicycling. Often called “non-motorized transportation,” we prefer the term “active transportation” since it is a more positive statement that expresses the key connection between healthy, active living and our transportation choices.

Communities that prioritize active transportation tend to be healthier [because they enable] residents to be more physically active in their daily routines and [because they have] cleaner air to breathe. Active transportation systems also foster economic health by creating dynamic, connected communities with a high quality of life that catalyzes small business development, increases property values, sparks tourism, and encourages corporate investment that attracts a talented, highly educated workforce.”

*Source: Partnership for Active Transportation*

- Existing Bicycle Routes
- Existing Trails
- Existing Shared Use Paths
- Roads
- ++ Railroad
- ~ Streams
- 🌊 Lakes & Reservoirs
- 🌳 Parks
- 🌳 Open Space
- ⬜ City Boundary
- 🌲 Forest and Woodland
- 🌾 Grassland
- 🌿 Shrubland + Savannah

**Current Active Transportation Network**





## System Barriers

Based on analysis within the Transportation Master Plan of critical safe crossings at high traffic intersections and arterial streets which act as barriers, there are opportunities for future investments in parks and trails to be coordinated with opportunities to make the sidewalks, crossings, and roadways that surround parks and trails safer.

The active transportation system relies on on-street bicycle lanes and designated bicycle routes to create a network for bicycles to travel throughout the city. The unprotected bicycle lanes in Bozeman are most commonly used by confident bicycle riders, as these facilities are separated by traffic with just a painted line and exist within the street. While the network may appear to be robust, bicycle lanes are often viewed as not safe for a majority of users.

## Where Are Needs and Demands Aligned?

Demand represents priorities identified by the Bozeman community in the statistically valid survey and Need represents alignment of elements with peer communities. For example, not many people indicated that sports fields were a priority in Bozeman, though the City has a lot less sport supporting infrastructure than peer communities. Playgrounds were identified as being important and Bozeman has more than their peers.

There is alignment in both demand and need for the following:

- Aquatics
- Nature center
- Indoor fitness

### Barriers: Parks, Trails, or Facilities

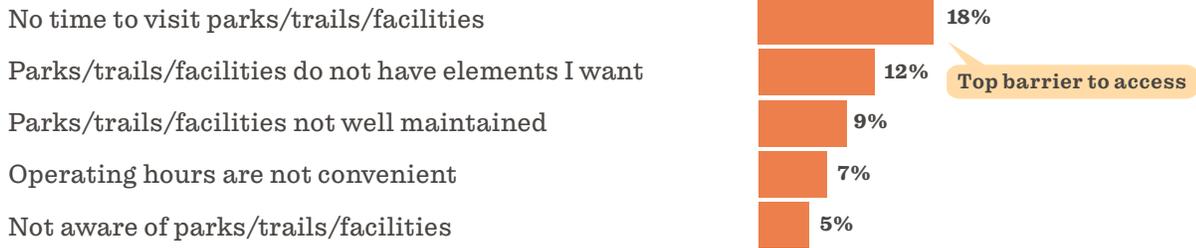


Figure 3.5 Top five identified barriers to parks, trails, or facilities within the Statistically Valid Survey

### Barriers: Programs



Figure 3.6 Top five barriers to programs within the statistically valid survey

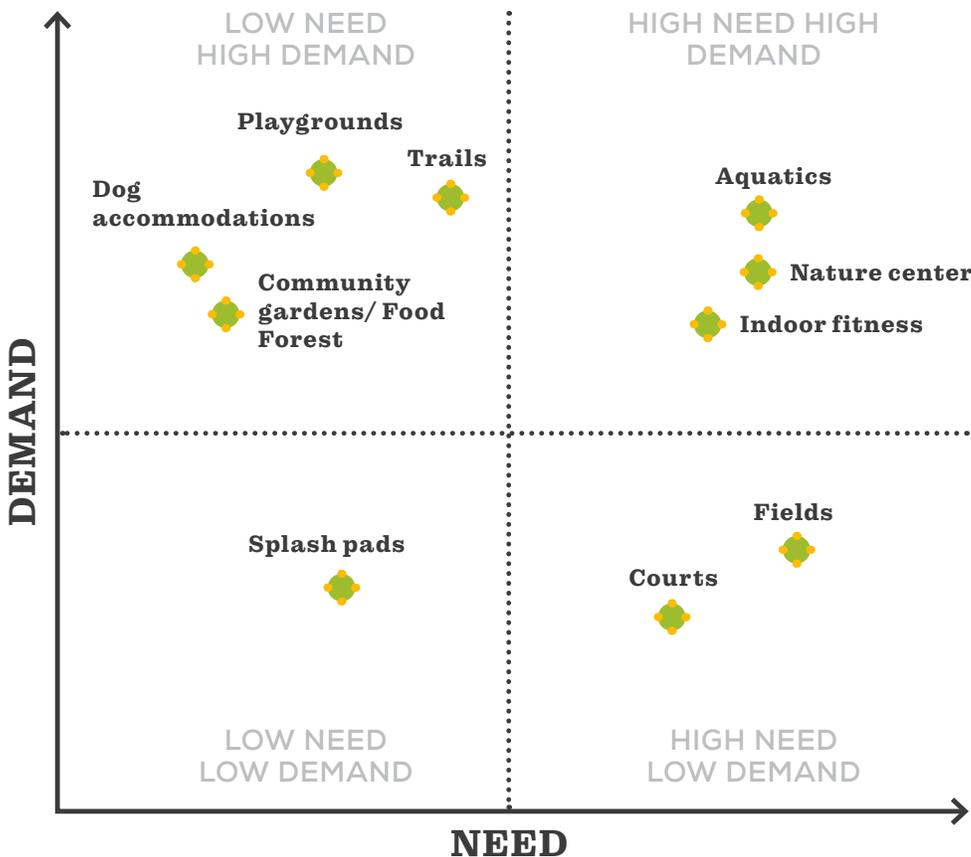


Figure 3.7 Demand (the y-axis) represents priorities identified by the Bozeman community in the statistically valid survey and Need (the x-axis) represents alignment of elements with peer communities.

# SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The “Safe Routes to Parks Community Survey: Disability Community” and interviews conducted by the Community Liaisons indicated that several respondents were unsatisfied or unsure of support options for programming and events. A lack of access to ASL interpreters in the City of Bozeman was used as one example. Other participants cited inadequate transportation options to programming and events as a barrier. Comments included:

***“Post that interpreters will be made available upon request.”***

***“If there is a sign with info, you can offer a bar code to scan so the device will link to web pages or audio files to be able to read it. Also, partnering with organizations like Montana Independent Living Project, Montana Association for the Blind, School for the deaf/blind, VR agencies and senior focused housing to get more folks active and out into the community.”***

***- Survey Respondent***

***“At the event at Bogert, he would have liked to be able to ask questions. He couldn’t do that without an interpreter.”***

***-Interviewee***

***“He needs an interpreter to be understood. And it is the law.”***

***-Interviewee***

***“For self and native students, main concern is how do we do this for free”***

***- Interviewee during Safe & Welcoming Parks to BIPOC Communities conversation***

***“At MSU, one thing that has been successful having events that engage in a direct cultural activity; not a lot of visual cues that people of color belong unless there are other people there”***

***- Interviewee during Safe & Welcoming Parks to BIPOC Communities conversation***

***“We haven’t had much opportunity yet, but how do the deaf get interpreters so they can get equal access?”***

***- Survey Respondent***

## COMMUNITY LIAISONS

Mikayla Pitts



Hosted group conversations and conducted surveys to engage BIPOC community

Bri Daniels



Conducted interviews and surveys to engage disability community

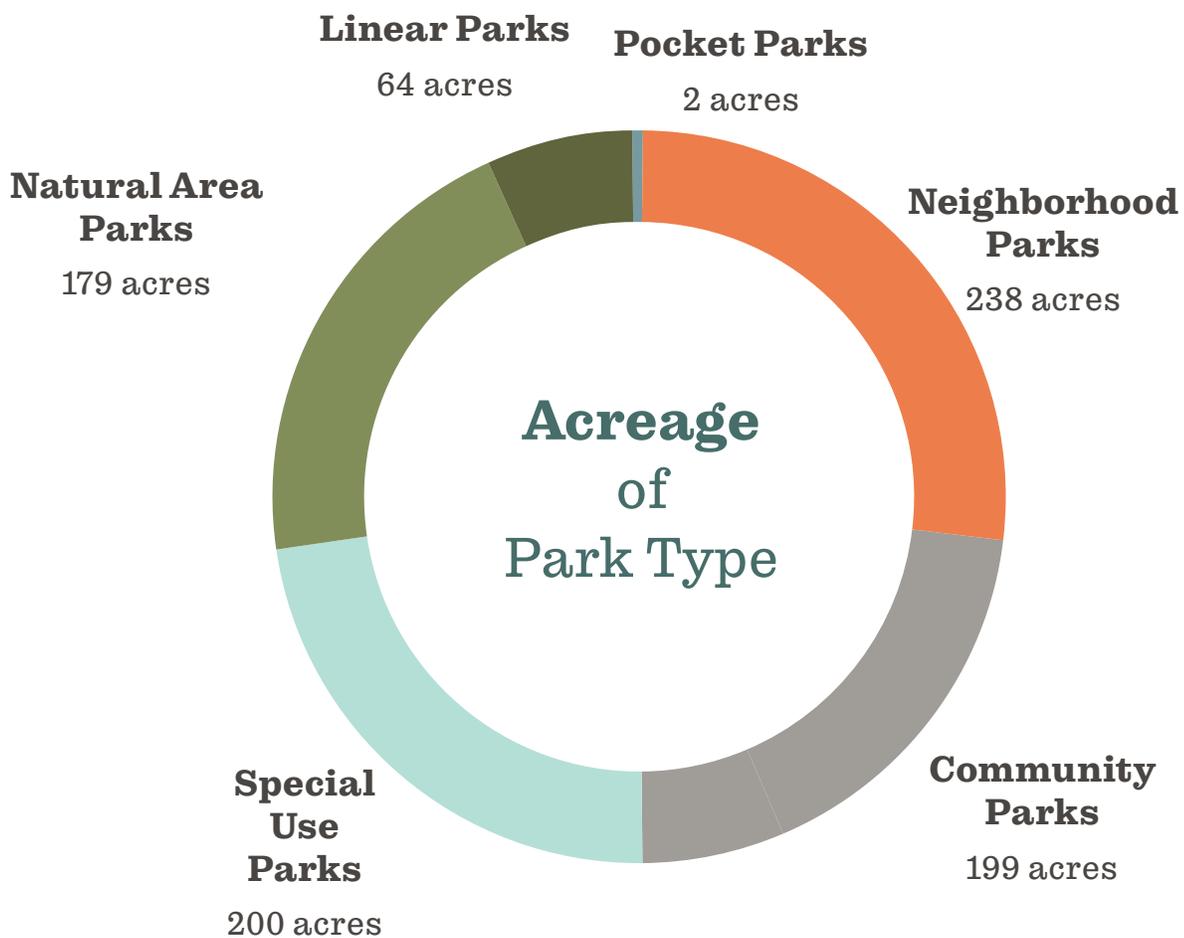
Luis Islas



Hosted front door conversations to hear from Latino community

# Parks and Trail Facilities by Type

There are six park types that frame how the City activates, maintains and develops parks. These park types have unique characteristics that balance a variety of elements and demands based on their size, use, and location within the city. Each type is described in more detail on the next few pages.



Park Type	Number of Parks	Total Acreage	Program and Use	Environmental Benefits	Siting/Access
<b>Pocket Parks</b>	6	2	Provides public space and recreational opportunities to underserved or commercialized areas	Allows access to shade + water during hot summers	Urban or commercialized areas without access to public open space, accessible by sidewalks, trails, or residential streets
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	47	238	Flexible multi-use spaces (traditional recreation elements, including courts, playgrounds, and fields, informal seasonal recreation, movable furniture, access to electrical/water)	More land area for denser canopy + shade, accessibility by interconnected trails create valuable ecological corridors for local wildlife	Centrally located within residential service area, easily accessible by way of interconnecting trails, sidewalks, or residential streets, aesthetic qualities, leftover parcels of land that are undesirable for development are also generally undesirable for neighborhood parks and should be avoided.
<b>Community Parks</b>	8	199	Provides active and passive recreational facilities for all, space for group activities, sitting areas	Guided walking trails connect to existing trail network, areas with native plantings, and nature study areas	Natural character of site, serviced by arterial and collector streets, community trail system, accessible to parking areas
<b>Special Use Parks</b>	8	200	Provide for single-purpose recreational uses (such as indoor/outdoor recreational facilities or historic/cultural sites)	Single-use cultural sites advocate for environmental stewardship (arboretums, native plant gardens, sculpture gardens), benefits of turf with droughts, keeping facilities cool	Accessibility from arterial/collector streets, recreation need, community interests, and land availability determine location
<b>Natural Area Parks</b>	27	179	Provide for greenway, trails, and nature viewing opportunities	Protect natural resource areas such as wetlands, riparian areas, and ponds	Lands unsuitable for development, remnant landscapes, parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainageways, riparian areas, wetlands, ponds
<b>Natural Areas within Parks</b>	--	--	Provide for greenway, trails, and nature viewing opportunities	Protect natural resource areas such as wetlands, riparian areas, and ponds	Lands unsuitable for development, remnant landscapes, parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainageways, riparian areas, wetlands, ponds
<b>Linear Parks</b>	22	64	Allow uninterrupted and safe pedestrian and bicycle movement between parks, connect parks, trails, recreational areas, and open spaces into a cohesive system	Linear parks improve stormwater runoff, connect ecological habitat	Edges of developments, buffers adjacent to linear features such as water courses or railways, linear parks are often places with significant topography, located in floodplains or other locations not suitable for development
<b>Regional Park*</b>	--	--	Provide park elements and larger recreational facilities for the larger region, special events, concerts, sports tournaments	Connect to countywide trail system	Sited to be accessible from a multi-county area, serviced by arterial and collector streets and the countywide trail system, accessible to parking areas

\*Note: Future park types (regional parks) will be added at the time of creation; the City doesn't currently have any regional parks under its management.

# 4. BOZEMAN PRAT VISION

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**The Bozeman Parks, Recreation and Active Transportation Plan's recommendations are formed around five central goals:**

- 1** Build on Bozeman's unique strengths while creating **WELCOMING, EQUITABLE ACCESS** to all spaces and programs
- 2** Strengthen **PROGRAMS, PLACES, AND PARTNERSHIPS** to meet changing community needs
- 3** Connect Bozeman's community with safe and enjoyable **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES**
- 4** Steward and sustain **NATURAL RESOURCES** across the parks and trails system
- 5** Grow **STAFF AND CAPACITY** to benefit the community



These citywide goals were developed through analysis into the existing system today, identification of gaps and opportunities for the future, and - most importantly - through community conversations, engagement, and input into the plan. Each goal is supported by a series of recommendations that will help to realize and implement them over time. Community conversations and ideas were distilled into plan themes which drove the outcomes.

The PRAT recommendations reflect the community's love for their parks and recreation system, their aspirations and concerns for its future, and the changing social, environmental, and economic context that surrounds the system and future generations who will steward it.

## IN THIS CHAPTER

GOAL 1: EQUITABLE ACCESS

GOAL 2: PROGRAMS, PLACES,  
PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL 3: PEDESTRIAN AND  
BICYCLE FACILITIES

GOAL 4: NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL 5: STAFF AND CAPACITY



# GOAL 1

## **Build on Bozeman's unique strengths while creating WELCOMING, EQUITABLE ACCESS to all spaces and programs.**

A high priority of the PRAT Plan and the Bozeman Parks and Recreation Department is to provide high quality, equitable access to parks, nature, and recreation programs for all city residents - especially as the city grows and changes in the coming years. Through the planning process, both the level of service analysis and feedback from community members pointed to key areas of gaps in access, barriers created by fast-moving roadways, and to the increasing challenges of having more park users occupying the same beloved spaces. Even as population growth is projected to increase significantly in the coming years, the Bozeman Parks and Recreation Department holds firm in its commitments to work to ensure residents are within a safe ½ mile (or ten minute walk) to a publicly-accessible park, and can access a wide variety of recreation experiences and programs that meet the expectations of Bozeman's high quality of life.

To meet this goal, the plan includes strategies to

- ◇ ensure a baseline of elements across the city,
- ◇ meet targets for expansion as growth occurs,
- ◇ balance park use by increased numbers of people
- ◇ reinforce the diversity of the park system and
- ◇ expand access and usability of the system in all seasons and into the evening.



Bozeman's growth as a city has moved from its original development in the 1920s around Downtown and the first park at Cooper Park outward, with recent development focused in the west, north, and southwest. As the decades have evolved, development patterns have changed and the shape, uses, and character of the parks and open spaces within each neighborhood reflects the era within which it developed. This varied character is both a strength and a challenge for the system: the variety lends interest and choice across the city, yet makes equitable access to recreation elements difficult when the underlying park fabric is so different. Looking forward to increased growth and change, the PRAT plan seeks to leverage the diversity of the system, while ensuring a baseline of elements, access, and equity citywide.

In the rectilinear gridded neighborhoods of historic central Bozeman, vehicular transportation did not fully impact the neighborhood pattern leading to more walkable neighborhoods where classic neighborhood and community parks predominate today. There, over  $\frac{1}{2}$  of all parks are community serving parks and over  $\frac{1}{3}$  are neighborhood parks. In the next ring of development, which formed in the middle to later 20th century, Bozeman grew outward from its downtown core and was developed around the rise of the automobile. Here, parks - such as the recent Story Mill Park - perform more multifaceted services drawing community members from both local neighborhoods and driving distances. In this middle era of development, natural areas in parks, linear parks and special use parks are much more common. Finally, modern neighborhoods that developed most recently in Bozeman echo the car-orientation of the latter part of the 20th century. There, destination parks with unique elements, such as Gallatin County Regional Park, can be found alongside more natural areas.

# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

EQUITABLE ACCESS MEANS THAT PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL BOZEMAN USERS REGARDLESS OF AGE, ABILITY, LANGUAGE, OR INCOME.

*“N19th is a bike/ped barrier. Need safer crossing for east-west shared use paths”*

*- Feedback from April Public Workshop*

### **1.1. Create a Consistent Set of Basic Elements Across Neighborhoods.**

Elements are assets or features found in Bozeman parks and trails. Examples include play spaces, multipurpose fields, courts, pathways, buildings, and other physical infrastructure to support a positive park experience. The PRAT Plan Design Manual identifies typical park elements that exist within different types of parks. As the city grows and as new park spaces are constructed or existing parks are renovated, the City should use the design manual to ensure that a consistent baseline of elements are provided within each park type. Special parks may have a unique approach; this baseline is meant to serve as a general guide to promote equity and balance.

#### **◇ Add park assets that were identified as in high demand by the community in new and existing spaces.**

Using community feedback as a guide, add elements to increase access citywide to playgrounds (including universal play spaces), trails, spaces for dogs, community gardens/food forests, fields, courts, and splash pads. Explore ways to respond to high demand and identified need for aquatics, indoor fitness, and nature centers, which require more significant investment.

#### **◇ Create and implement a plan to provide universal access to parks and programs.**

Parks and recreation services should be made accessible to all Bozeman users regardless of age, ability, or language. The Department can begin with an ADA audit of physical facilities and program access to create an ADA Transition Plan which should include clear phasing over time and identified funding. Universal access should consider access and cultural appropriateness with special consideration of play spaces, trails (including paved trails), printed and digital materials, wayfinding and signage, and ongoing community engagement and communication.

◇ **Strategically include and allocate resources for equitable community engagement in parks, recreation plans and capital projects to align with changing community needs and concerns.**

Bozeman’s recent Strategic Plan resulted in creation and adoption of the Engage Bozeman Community Engagement Initiative in April 2021 which is a guiding framework for how the community can contribute to decision making processes. The PRAT plan incorporated Engaged Bozeman principles and approaches, and was able to use a partnership with the HRDC’s Safe Routes to Parks grant to increase the focus on engagement and outreach to underheard communities to ensure that their voices were heard and incorporated. In particular, the grant included community liaisons to Bozeman’s BIPOC, Latinx, and disability communities.

Future engagement should build on the lessons learned from PRAT engagement overall and on the early relationships from this engagement to deepen and extend connections into all communities in Bozeman. Perhaps the most important lesson learned was that additional resources (both funding and time) need to be specifically added to projects to meaningfully support this type of more diverse engagement. Additional engagement recommendations include:

- ◇ In line with the universal access strategy above, future community engagement should factor in universal access and translation/interpretation. These components should be planned and budgeted for at the start of any project.
- ◇ During future park and recreation planning and improvements, staff should develop engagement processes that match the scale of the improvement and subsequent impact. These plans should coordinate with the City of Bozeman’s community engagement process and early outreach to community organizations, partners, and affected community members.

*“Need parks and outdoors where people can just “exist and be yourself;” as a writer I crave to walk to a park and just write or read”*

*- SRTP Conversation: BIPOC Communities*

*“Parks build and enhance neighborhood character and community culture”*

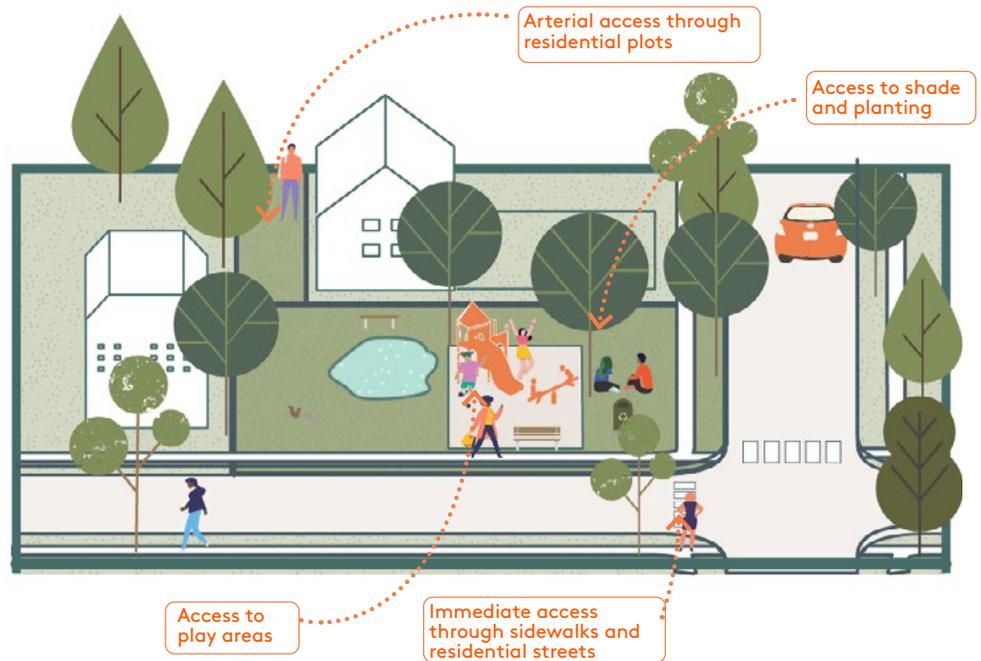
*- Partners PRAT Visioning Session*

Figure 4.1 (Next page) *The Design Manual included in this plan outlines park typologies and typical assets.*

# PARK TYPOLOGIES & TYPICAL ASSETS

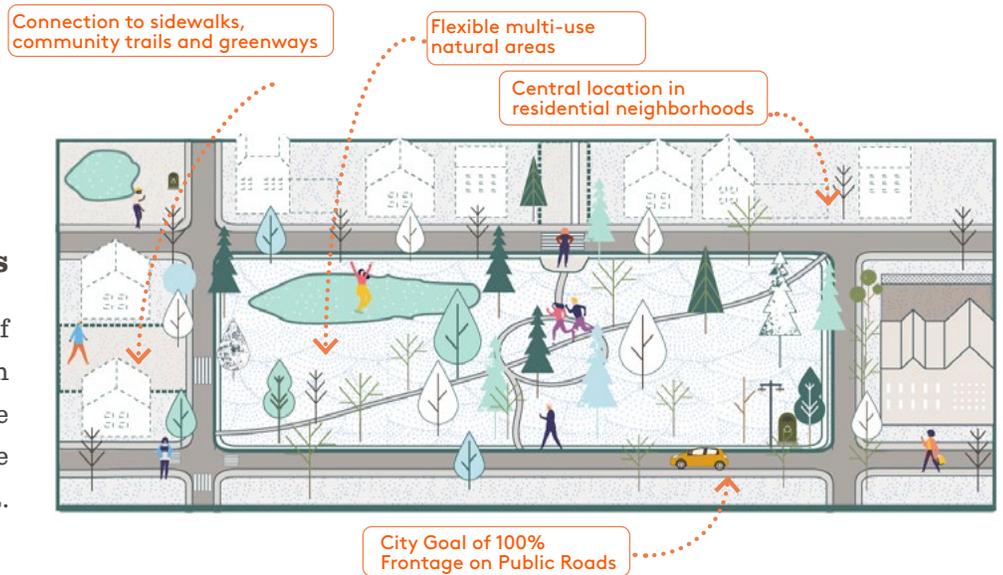
## Pocket Parks

Address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs and typically 1 acre or less in size.



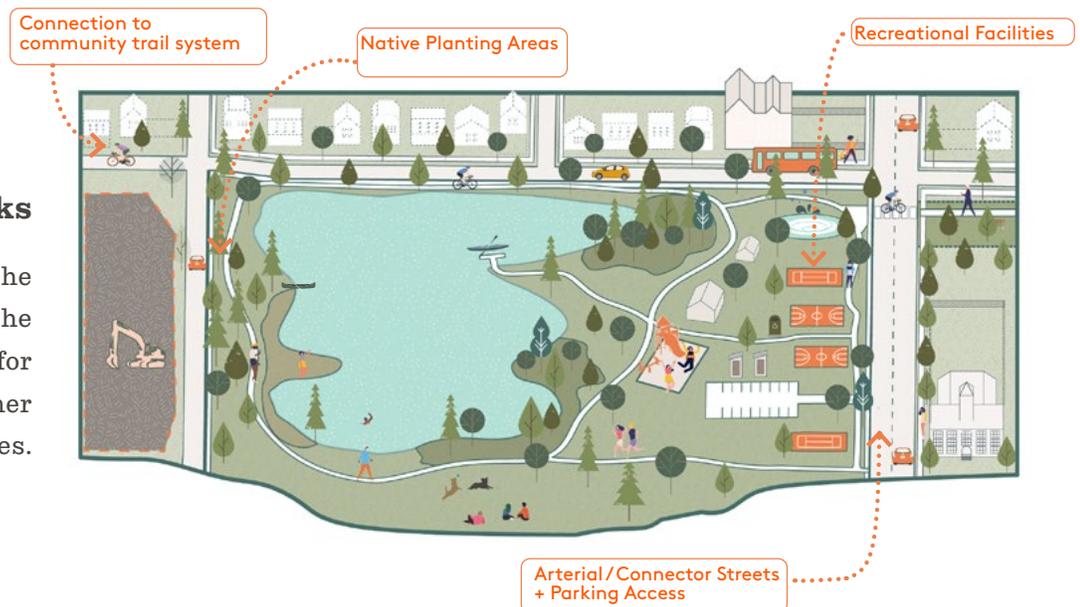
## Neighborhood Parks

Recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal recreation for all age groups and geared towards those living within the service area.



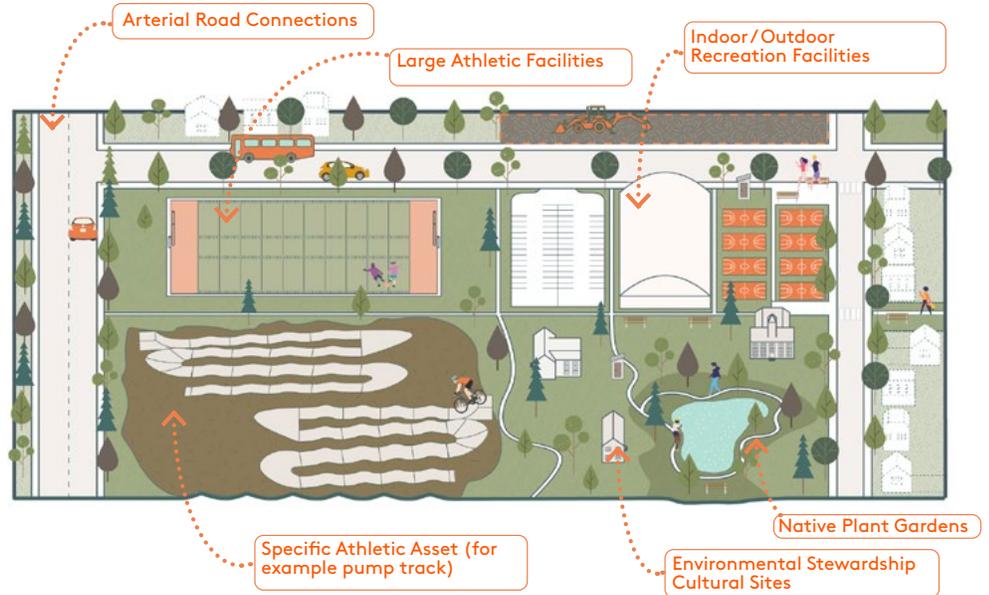
## Community Parks

Focus is on meeting the recreational needs of the entire community. Allow for group activities and offer other recreational opportunities.



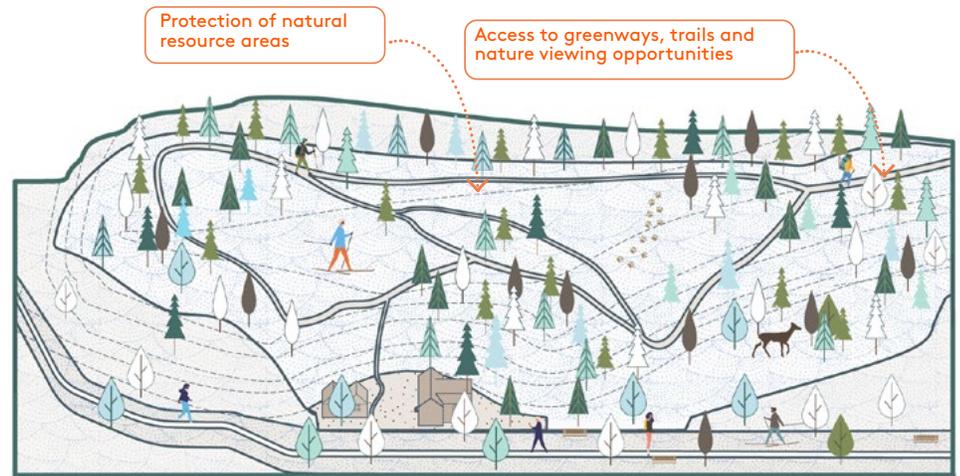
## Special Use Parks

A broad range of parks and recreation facilities for single-purpose or specialized use. These could be historic/cultural/social sites, or indoor/outdoor recreation facilities.



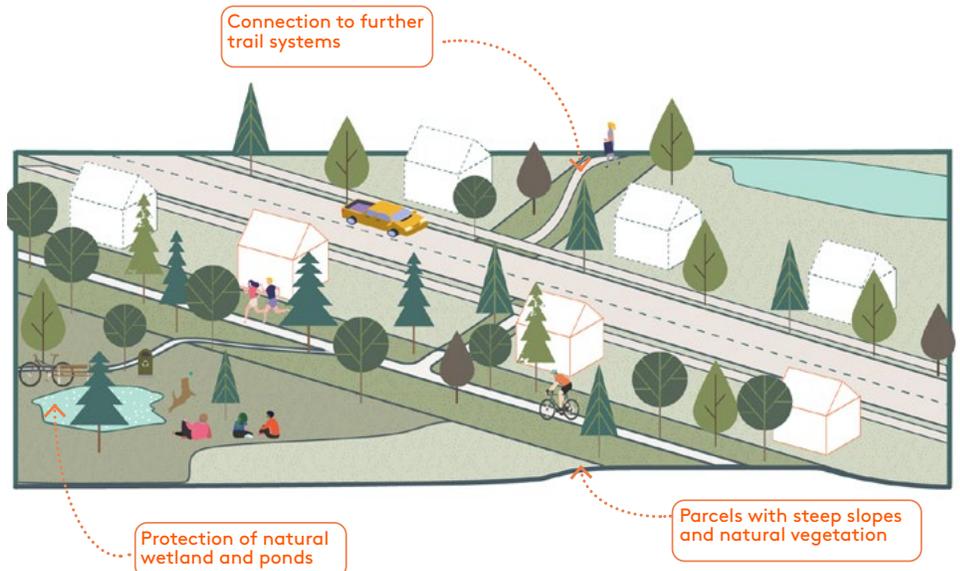
## Natural Area Parks and Natural Areas within Parks

Lands set aside for the preservation of natural resources, remnant landscapes, natural areas, and visual aesthetics or buffering.



## Linear Parks

Linear parks tie park components together to form a cohesive park, recreation, and active transportation system.



# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

THE CITY OF  
BOZEMAN CURRENTLY  
PROVIDES 17 ACRES  
OF PARKLAND PER  
1,000 RESIDENTS



IF THE POPULATION  
GROWS TO 91K BY  
2050 AND THE CITY  
DOESN'T NOT CONTINUE  
TO ACQUIRE PARKLAND  
THROUGH DEVELOPMENT,  
PARK ACREAGE WILL  
DROP TO 9.6 ACRES PER  
1000 RESIDENTS.

### **1.2. Maintain the Current Level of Parkland per Resident (17 Acres per 1000) by Growing Park Acres as the Community Grows.**

The City of Bozeman currently provides 17 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, not including undeveloped open space, putting Bozeman's current parks provision in the upper middle of similar peer cities. If the population grows to 91,000 residents by 2050 and the city does not acquire land, this ratio will drop to 9.6 acres per 1000 residents. While Bozeman's overall park supply does not indicate a shortfall today, staying in balance with future rapid growth will be important since residents have made clear that parks are a core driver of quality of life in the city.

- ◇ **Refine and clarify the process of obtaining new parks, natural areas within parks, facilities and trails from new development through changes to the UDC.**

The UDC currently requires new residential development to support park system growth through either direct land dedication, a contribution to a fee-in-lieu fund, or a combination of both. This contribution acknowledges that residential development generates a need for additional parkland, facilities and trails; yet, it has not always produced spaces with the right match of elements to community needs or enabled more strategic investment in the system. The plan recommends creating criteria that allow more targeted allocation of resources to meet the specific needs of a neighborhood and acknowledge the land's intrinsic value for recreation or environmental contributions. These criteria, if met, could enable the contribution of more well-designed park spaces and more connected trails/pathways between parks.

---

◇ **Continue to improve coordination with the School District.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

State law and the UDC allow for a subdivider to dedicate a land donation to a school to satisfy park land requirements, subject to the approval of the City Commission and acceptance by the school district. This provision could be explored in more detail to foster increased coordination for mutually beneficial public facilities such as a new aquatics center.

◇ **Explore the possibility of requiring commercial development to also contribute to parkland.**

Hotel and motel guests are increasingly using city parks and trails as Bozeman continues to grow into one of the leading outdoor recreation tourist destinations and sports tournament centers. While state law currently prohibits requiring parkland for subdivisions that are all nonresidential, there is the potential to explore commercial linkage for parkland through zoning requirements. Using existing national data to supplement local data can help to efficiently create the needed nexus study. This could supplement the cash-in-lieu fund and be used for park and pathway improvements. Staff should monitor discussions at the state level that could open the door for parkland requirements applicable to commercial developments.

# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Invest in acquisition of new pathways, parks and natural areas within parks that: 1) help to close existing 10-minute walk gaps, and 2) overcome extreme physical barriers.**

For future investments, the Department should use park space & trail gap mapping to prioritize adding land in areas that are experiencing limited public park space today, or reducing barriers, such as rail or busy roads, between existing neighborhoods and parks.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Focus increased parks and recreation service in areas of high growth or current park overcrowding.**

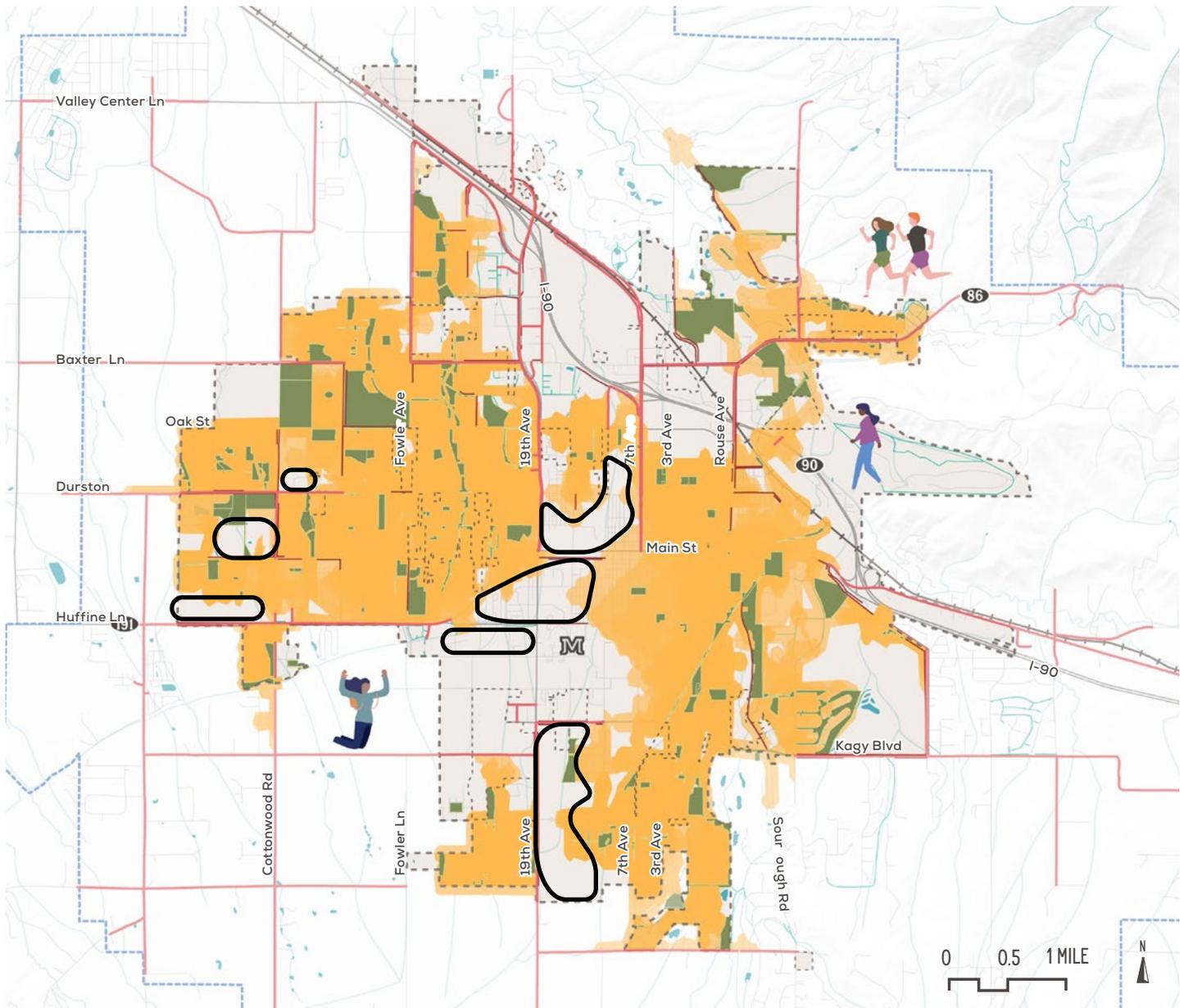
Work with the Community Development Department, during growth policy updates in particular, to align park and recreation investments in areas planned for new housing or increases in density in the future.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Acquire land to make key trail, path or park connections identified in the Active Transportation component of the plan (Goal 3) and to better connect people to parks.**

Collaborate with staff in Transportation and Engineering to expand the continuity of the active transportation network by overcoming existing gaps through acquisition of land, facilitation of safe crossings, and the maintenance of continuity of facility type and level of comfort.

TOURISTS ARE INCREASINGLY USING CITY PARKS AND TRAILS AS BOZEMAN CONTINUES TO GROW INTO ONE OF THE LEADING OUTDOOR RECREATION DESTINATIONS



- |                      |                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| — Roads              | ■ Parks                           |
| ⚡ Railroad           | ■ Areas within 10-minute walk     |
| ⋮ City Boundary      | — TMP-identified roadway barriers |
| ⋮ Growth Boundary    | ○ Park access gaps                |
| ~ Streams            |                                   |
| 🌊 Lakes & Reservoirs |                                   |

Figure 3.8 Proximity analysis of access to parks from a 10 minute walk.

# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

### 1.3. Balance the Needs of Different Park Users.

The popularity of many of Bozeman’s parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation centers is both a success and a challenge. Community members reported many issues with overcrowding, user conflicts, and balance of different activities. As the City continues to grow, these concerns will only increase without efforts to respond with greater service or programs and policies that reinforce shared spaces.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Expand on the local culture of respect for and accessibility to public land to create safe, accessible and well cared for parks, privately owned open space, City-owned natural areas, and trails.**

Continue to partner and expand public land and public space ethics that reinforce respect and civic engagement in public spaces. Reinforce the Gallatin Valley Land Trust’s additional educational efforts to support similar outcomes.

- ◇ **Make rules and regulations clear and easy to understand.**

Ensure that all parks, trails, and centers contain clear, direct, non-conflicting, and community-minded signage that clarifies rules, regulations, and expectations of behavior for use of facilities. Signage should be communicated in English and Spanish. Chapter 26: Park Regulations, Bozeman Municipal Code should be separately evaluated and updated.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Partner with volunteers and youth.**

Explore a park ranger volunteer program and junior ranger program to expand monitoring capacity and model “Leave no Trace” and respectful ethics in parks and recreation spaces.

◇ **Expand dog park spaces, programs, and policies to promote balanced use and enjoyment of park spaces by all.**

Bozeman is a dog-friendly city, and many residents use the parks and trails system to get outside and recreate with their pets. Today, there are nine city-owned off-leash dog facilities, and dedicated spaces have been created through private development contributions to parks and open space. According to the NRPA, dog park spaces are an important community asset to promote social gathering and well being of pets and owners. Still, community feedback reported that dogs in parks is a large source of conflicts and complaints among residents. Future investments should combine design and management strategies with informational programming and policy changes to balance and manage the needs of dog owners and non-dog owners in parks.

A few areas for exploration to address this topic directly include:

◇ **Design and manage future dog park spaces according to best practices and community needs.**

The National Recreation and Park Association recently published guidelines to inform the design, management, and maintenance of dog park spaces. Their recommendations range from organizing the space for separate users, to elements to include (water, lighting, surface materials) to signage and regulations, and maintenance practices. Dog park locations and design in Bozeman should also consider protection of natural spaces and riparian plantings.

◇ **Expand programs and activities.**

Many parks and recreation departments offer a range of courses geared to dogs, including training, owner information, and social activities. Consider broadening into this area through partnerships or expanded

## CASE STUDY

### **One Montana “Outside Kind” campaign:**

The primary goal of Outside Kind is to share best practices, principles and tips for enjoying the outdoors in any community. Whether you wish to encourage your friends and family or visiting guests to hike kind, ride kind, fish kind, etc., Outside Kind is designed to offer users consistent and clear messages around outdoor activities, increase user knowledge, and maintain natural resources. We also encourage users to engage with organizations and communities that provide opportunities for you to enjoy our wild places.



# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

### CASE STUDY

The City of Austin's B.A.R.K. program is an example of a new city-initiated dog etiquette program, based on the National Park Service's Healthy People Healthy Parks Initiative which created a B.A.R.K. program for national sites. Austin's B.A.R.K. program strives to teach dog owners etiquette specific to visits to public parks with dogs. The program stands for: Bag your pet's waste; Always leash your pet; Respect wildlife; and Know where you can go. With successful program completion, dogs can also become "BARK Rangers!"



programs to support more formal opportunities for dogs and dog owners to socialize and get easy access to instruction.

#### ◇ Consider designated off-leash hours.

Some communities also include specific off-leash hours in parks, not just designated off-leash areas. These additional off-leash hours are designed to avoid times when small children or high volumes of people are likely to use the park space and reduce conflicts. Some areas are also closed to dogs during wet or thawing conditions to prevent damage to grass and field areas.

#### ◇ Partner with Animal Control on initiatives to increase compliance.

#### ◇ Continue to incentivize low income and affordable housing through changes to the UDC.

### 1.4. Support All-Season Recreation.

The Bozeman community's desire to get outdoors and be active is not limited to fair weather days. Instead the city and its parks and recreation spaces and landscapes take on new dimensions and activities during the colder months. Maintaining access to outdoor experiences in the winter can be important to balance Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a type of depression that is brought on during the fall and winter months. Currently, partners such as the Bridger Ski Foundation program existing park spaces, groom cross-country ski trails.

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◇ **Support existing winter activity partners by increasing access to complementary indoor space.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

Indoor spaces support outdoor wintertime activity by providing storage and warming spaces which expand programmatic and concession opportunities. Indoor space also makes participation more viable and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. Bozeman's larger historic parks, which also are located in the east side of the community with better winter snow access, are often characterized by older park buildings. These buildings abound with charm and authenticity, but are not fully operational to the public. Opening small buildings to community use offers many benefits, but also will require additional resources, in terms of staffing and operational support. Small buildings also do not offer the efficiencies of larger centers, but meet more specific, local needs. The City should explore the costs and benefits of each site and investigate ways to partner and share costs.

◇ **Conduct a feasibility study of indoor recreation facilities.**

The Lindley Center is currently being renovated but could be further explored for renovations and improvements that better support year-round public use to expand recreation and programming opportunities at Lindley Park, for skiing and beyond. A feasibility study of the building should first be undertaken to understand costs associated with physical improvements (weatherizing, insulation, code-compliant updates, access and parking), program and staffing costs, operations and maintenance implications, and community benefits. With a complete picture of needs, opportunities, and constraints, the City can explore potential partnerships or grants to support capital improvements and future operations. Vendors or concession operators can also be additional ways to outsource elements and raise small amounts of revenue; however, the commodification of these spaces could displace the individual community users who rent the spaces for public and private events.

# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC



### ◇ **Reduce barriers to participation in wintertime activities.**

Many wintertime activities entail specialized equipment and require warm weather clothing to be comfortable and safe. The Bridger Ski Foundation’s annual Ski Swap is an example of a community-driven effort to make wintertime recreation equipment available in a more affordable and sustainable way. If a building like Lindley were renovated and made open to the community, a possible vendor or city-led effort could include loaning or renting equipment to encourage new users in addition to the BSF program.

### ◇ **Communicate best practices for safety outdoors in the winter.**

Outdoor winter recreation safety practices are similar, but different, from those in warmer months. While many in Bozeman are well-prepared for outdoor activities, newcomers to winter sports may benefit from safety information and support around hydration, staying warm, and risks to mobility. Informational signage for trails prepared for winter use or other outdoor spaces and the presence of warming huts or access to water can support safe use.

### ◇ **Adapt maintenance practices for winter use.**

As more spaces are made available and adapted to wintertime use, align maintenance practices and resources to additional care needed to maintain paths, parking areas, and access to facilities, parks and open trails. This might include winter maintenance of shared use paths (see Goal 3 for alignment with active transportation recommendations) to allow for more ‘year-round’ commuting, as well as enhanced winter recreation use of trails, like designated/groomed fat bicycle trails or Nordic skiing areas.

Figure 4.2 *Pedestrian bridges in Bozeman*

## 1.5. Increase Safe Evening / Nighttime Access at Designated Facilities with Appropriate Lighting, Management, and Programming.

The top barrier to usage of parks, trails, or facilities that Bozemanites identified in a statistically valid survey was a lack of available time to participate (18%). Survey results also noted that residents say operating hours are not convenient (7% or 4th place ranking). Today, Bozeman Parks and Recreation does not have a fully operational, all day recreation and community center. Instead, a combination of the new Story Mill Community Center, Beall Center, and the Bozeman Swim Center work together to provide distinct services to the community, with the recent addition of the Story Mill Community Center taking an important step forward. However, Story Mill's main office typically closes by 4:30pm unless a user group has reserved a space (though, as of 2022, Ping Pong is happening in the evenings several nights). Beall Center also closes though is available for community use Friday, Saturday, Sunday. In contrast, Bozeman park policy is to keep parks open until 11:00pm, unless specified otherwise. In peer communities, recreation and community centers are often open until 8:00pm or 9:00pm most evenings.

Evening programming and drop-in hours provide important flexible options for busy Bozeman residents of all ages. In particular, it offers a “third space” for teenagers to be together and socialize, other than home and school. Extended hours are important to capture teens and younger children after school hours and support busy people whose days are occupied with work and other requirements.

Extended hours bring with them expanded needs for staff resources to support programming and facility operations. The Department should evaluate demand and access across its facilities, determining where it can begin to pilot extended hours and what it will cost to support this. As planning for the westside recreation and community aquatics facility continues (see Goal 2.1), evening hours should be considered as part of that major, citywide investment.

BOZEMAN'S PARKS,  
RECREATION SPACES  
AND LANDSCAPES  
TAKE ON NEW  
DIMENSIONS DURING  
THE WINTER.



Figure 4.3 *Cross skiing is a popular outdoor winter activity*

# EQUITABLE ACCESS

## STRATEGIES

### 1.6. Design Parks that Reflect Their Unique Neighborhoods and Reflect the Department's Brand.

- ◇ Use parks to tell stories that engage with arts, culture and local history and reflect local identities.

Bozeman residents identified a need and desire for more arts and cultural programming, a request that was a much higher priority for Bozemanites than in other cities. In addition to considering programs, Bozeman's parks and trails have a chance to engage with art to express community culture, the city and region's history, industrial relics, local heroes, and unique environmental systems. Approaches to storytelling must reflect the diversity of the city and region to celebrate a range of lived experiences as the area becomes increasingly diverse. Signage and interpretive panels can communicate effectively, while murals and other forms of public art are more creative platforms for storytelling. Always plan ahead for needed maintenance practice changes and engage maintenance team members in design decisions for non-standard features and art.

Key possibilities for storytelling include:

- ◇ Weave local sports history and heroes into parks, educating the public about important Bozeman figures such as mountaineers Conrad Anker or Alex Lowe, paleontologist Jack Horner, teacher Frieda Bull, and Sacagawea, the Shoshoni woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their westward journey.
- ◇ Amplify hyper-local stories at neighborhood parks, through art, interpretation or naming, in partnership with community processes and partners. The PRAT plan engagement included a naming contest for a new park. Carefully consider



Figure 4.4 *Multi-modal transportation on trails in the winter include biking, walking, and skiing.*

the common practice of naming parks and other places after people, as the meaning and relevance of these names can change over time.

- ◇ Work with partners to incorporate art into functional park elements when possible, like the existing frog and trout drinking fountains.
- ◇ Draw attention to and educate about interesting natural history elements such as watersheds, creeks, and wetlands as successful programs such as the Gallatin Valley Land Trust's Discovery Walks have done.
- ◇ Prioritize the hiring of women and minorities in the formal request for proposal process, and in contracting for recreation providers, vendors, and park investment work.
- ◇ Beyond permanent installations, activate spaces and tell stories through festivals and special events.

#### ◇ **Explore signature play experiences.**

Creative play experiences are increasingly popular, as evidenced at Story Mill Community Park where design of the play structures interpret the landscapes of Montana, from farms and agriculture to rocky terrain and forested wilderness. While it is not practical to have every play structure represent this level of design for maintenance and cost reasons, there is an opportunity for strategic expansion of artful play in other areas of the city as future community parks are developed. These are key opportunities for partners or philanthropic engagement.

#### ◇ **Celebrate Bozeman's park bridges.**

Bozeman's parks and trails include many unique, architectural pedestrian bridges that go beyond their utilitarian function. The city should build on this pattern and embrace opportunities to continue it in the future. Artful/designed bridges could be mapped to create a Bridge Loop or passport for visitors to explore Bozeman's parks and trails through a new lens.

TOP BARRIER  
TO USAGE OF  
PARKS, TRAILS, OR  
FACILITIES WAS A  
LACK OF TIME TO  
PARTICIPATE

*"To cater to youth and teenagers, transportation infrastructure could be expanded for teen destinations"*

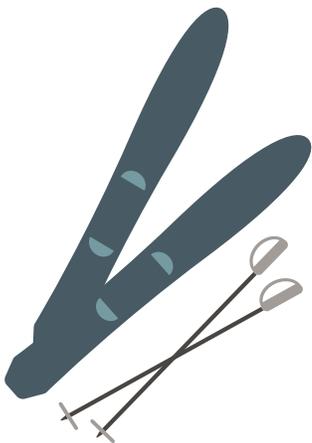
*- Partners PRAT Visioning Session*

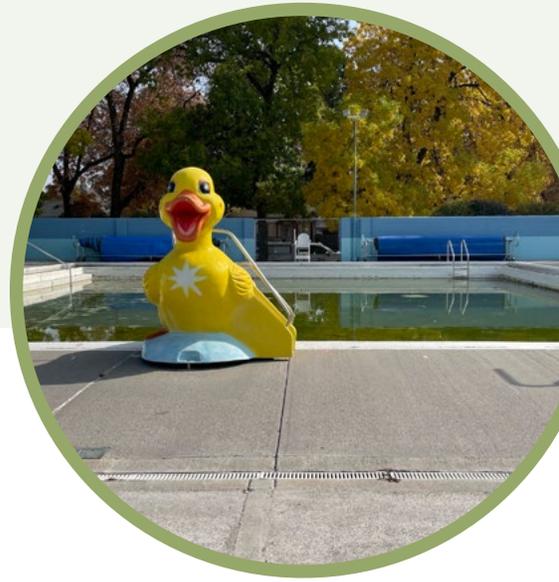
# GOAL 2

## **Strengthen PROGRAMS, PLACES, AND PARTNERSHIPS to meet changing community needs.**

Demand for existing and new programs is high, and Bozeman residents are keenly interested in structured programs like classes, sports, bicycle parks, and events and places that allow for unstructured or individual-led recreation. Investments in this range of activities, classes, sports, and events alongside places to enable residents to explore their own creative approaches to fitness and wellness will have a significant impact on residents' lives.

Finally, the Safe Routes to Parks Community Survey: Disability Survey and a review of program participation rates all identified a gap in inclusive or adaptive programs. These programs can build on what the Parks and Recreation Department already offers and be structured around the specific needs of persons with different physical, visual, or mental abilities. From a youth soccer game to a swimming class, residents' lives are impacted everyday by their participation in the recreational programs that the City offers. In addition to developing more inclusive program offerings, the PRAT plan also recommends filling in existing programming gaps based on regional and national trends to create a more robust and equitable range of opportunities for residents of all backgrounds and abilities.





Bozeman residents are aligned in identification of their top three program needs: access to aquatics or swimming, arts and culture, and winter recreation. Beyond this consensus, residents identified needs for over 18 different programs.

Given the size of existing facilities, the City's staffing capacity, and the wide range of recreation needs, the Bozeman Park and Recreation Department today is unable to provide all programs at all locations. By re-purposing the facilities that the City has and partnering to build new spaces that support what the community wants most in places with the lowest access, the Department can make better use of available resources and tailor programming to meet the needs of all residents. The following strategies outline how the City can make use of what it has, expand inclusive programming, and craft a transformative program menu over time.



# PROGRAMS, PLACES, PARTNERSHIPS

## STRATEGIES

### **2.1. Invest in Distributed Community Recreation Hubs Across the City.**

Bozeman has limited indoor space to support indoor programming and has less community center and recreational facilities than its peer cities. Still, the City and various partners are actively engaged in conversations to close facility gaps. For example, the City of Bozeman and Belgrade are all working to increase access to aquatics spaces and programs through investments in new swim facilities.

#### **◇ Create an intergenerational, multi-functional center on the west side of the city.**

The 2012 Feasibility Study, ongoing library and community center project, and ongoing aquatics discussions reinforce the need for a new recreation center and outdoor pool facility. Investments also need to be made in existing facilities, especially the Bozeman Swim Center and Bogert Pool to ensure aquatic facilities are more evenly distributed across the city.

#### **◇ Prioritize future facility or community hub investments in areas with limited park access and places where growth is highest.**

Coordinate all long-term future community hubs near land within the city designated commercial mixed-use or residential mixed-use as identified by the City's future land use map.

#### **◇ Regularly update and expand the City's park and facility inventory to support community health, wellness, and need across the city.**

Baseline elements for community hubs like universally accessible and gender neutral restrooms, indoor gathering spaces, outdoor pavilions, water access and aquatics related elements, and trails within parks should be increased in areas of the city with high social vulnerability or in areas projected to grow.

BOZEMAN HAS LIMITED INDOOR SPACE TO SUPPORT INDOOR PROGRAMMING

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

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## 2.2. Create Program Offerings and Elements That Respond to Community Needs, Especially Underserved Demographic Groups.

While people across all ages currently participate in recreation programs, anecdotally, community members indicated that currently the Department does the best job providing a range of options for youth activities. Winter recreation, arts and culture, and aquatics or swimming programs were the programs for which the highest number of residents indicated were a priority for future investment. Many of the programs identified as community priorities have specific requirements about the types of facilities that can support their function or have limitations on inclusion. The Department should focus on providing program offerings that support a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment for all residents.

### ◇ **Redefine core program areas to focus on program type rather than age.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

Rather than organize programs by age group, which is how these programs are organized today, Bozeman should consider using activity types to designate core programs, building on the core programs residents identified as priorities for future investment. The PRAT Plan proposes that the future core programs be organized into nine program areas - arts, athletics, aquatics, camps, fitness, general interest, lifelong learning, nature/outdoor education, and outdoor adventures.

Within each program area, the goal would be to provide offerings for all age groups (preschool, youth, teen, adult, active aging). There will still be age-specific core program areas like camps, which would only include preschool, youth, and teen. Organizing in this fashion will clarify the structure of recreation programming and reinforce how the City is incorporating the needs and desires of residents for structured experiences and activities.

# PROGRAMS, PLACES, PARTNERSHIPS

## STRATEGIES

THE CITY  
PRESENTLY  
ORGANIZES  
PROGRAMMING BY  
AGE GROUP

### ◇ **Develop a policy for inclusive or adaptive recreation programming.**

While the Department aims to make all programs inclusive and accommodate participant special needs for accommodations on a case by case basis, the Department needs a formal policy for therapeutic or inclusive programming to communicate how these needs will be met and set expectations regarding program participation with Bozeman residents with intellectual, physical and/or sensory disabilities. In accordance with these efforts, Eagle Mount distributed disability survey to get relevant community feedback. The City needs to continue outreach to get the word out to partner organizations, leaders and individuals with disabilities and their families.

### ◇ **Center park equity.**

Use lessons from initiatives such as the Prevention Institute's People, Parks, and Power initiative to ensure that Black, Latino, and Indigenous people benefit from investments in parks and park programming.

## **2.3. Craft a Formal Policy to Define Partner and Affiliate Group Relationships.**

### ◇ **Formalize oversight of athletics partners and field use with public and private sports organizations.**

Explore an athletic commission to work with the operators of private leagues to coordinate scheduling, sign-ups, marketing, and officials.

### ◇ **Consider requiring all affiliate groups to provide proof of coach criminal background checks, and compare the list of coaches to the state and federal sex offender databases.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

◇ **Partner to expand the mix of Arts and Culture program offerings.**

Building on a successful partnership with the Bozeman Municipal Band, explore more opportunities for program partnerships or shared use agreements with Bozeman Art Museum, the Emerson, and other cultural organizations to support arts-based education and capacity building.

◇ **Expand temporary art exhibitions and permanent public art programs across city parks and facilities.**

Work with the Gallatin Art Crossing and other organizations focused on community enrichment and wonderment, like Random Acts of Silliness and Mountain Time Arts to foster more engagement with art and exploration throughout the city.

**2.4. Clarify the Field Reservation and Use Process.**

- ◇ **Create a clear calendar and reservation system for field reservation needs.**
- ◇ **Charge a special field use fee for nonresident participants.**

**2.5. Broaden Awareness of Programs and Services.**

In the statistically-valid community survey, over 90% of respondents rated parks and recreational opportunities in Bozeman as good or excellent. Yet, throughout the planning process, and in that same survey, citizens and stakeholders frequently indicated they were unaware of all of the parks, facilities, and programs that the Park and Recreation Department offers. Just under half of respondents were unaware of or do not take advantage of the City's programs.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

CASE STUDY

**BumbleWood Thicket Fairy Village 2022**



Located amid the winding, wooded paths of Glen Lake Rotary Park in Bozeman, the 3rd Annual Fairy Village contained all new fairy homes and business establishments created by talented Montana artists.

# PROGRAMS, PLACES, PARTNERSHIPS

## STRATEGIES

- ◇ **Develop mobile applications for users to find system information (e.g., park locations and elements, trails and paths, program information, upcoming events) or to report a problem.**

People increasingly prefer to access the majority of their information online, rather than through print material. In response, communities across the country are developing mobile applications, or apps, with information and locations of all of the municipality's parks and facilities and their elements, tied to work cities are already doing to inventory and communicate all that their parks have to offer. It can be a great tool to get the word out to teens and young adults about park-specific events, share updates about new facilities or programs, and provide a seamless connection to a centralized program registration system.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Continue to review the most effective uses of electronic and social media for marketing and informational purposes.**

Almost half of Bozeman residents are unaware of the programs the City offers and the printed program guide continues to be the primary source of information about City-led programs. The City of Bozeman social media platforms including, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram collectively have over eleven thousand followers. These platforms could be used to market programs and classes, as well as to broadly share when the Department is hiring and celebrate major events.

- ◇ **Highlight health and wellness benefits of Park and Recreation Department programs in all informational materials.**

Bozeman Health, Healthy Gallatin, the Billings Clinic and the City-County Health Department, among others, already track localized health information and share health benefits of increased physical activity, thoughtful eating habits, and access to the outdoors. The Department should develop

*"People freaking love the park when it gets flooded for hockey."*

*- Partners PRAT Visioning*

a relationship with these health-focused partners to communicate the role of parks and recreation on community health online, in social media posts and program guides, and in City facilities.

## **2.6. Work with Regional Tourism and Economic Development Organizations to Create a Strategy That Addresses the Benefits and Impacts of Increased Tourism on Parks, Facilities, and Events.**

Over 1.94 million visitors flew into Bozeman’s airport and spent a total of \$1 billion dollars in Gallatin County in 2021 alone. As the gateway to Yellowstone and Big Sky, the Park and Recreation Department has the opportunity to capitalize on the value and quality of its events and parks to attract visitors to the city, recoup costs, and support economic development. Given the increasing trends in visitor numbers and park uses in and out of Bozeman (including those who are coming through Bozeman to get to other destinations), the City plans to respond to the impacts of increased use on parks and natural areas within parks to preserve environmental health and programmatic opportunities.

- ◇ **Work with the City of Bozeman’s Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Bozeman Partnership to strengthen the Park and Recreation Department’s contribution to local and regional marketing efforts.**

At a minimum, this could include flyers in the tourism office, at the Bozeman airport, and top ten City park attractions on partner webpages to help strengthen engagement between visitor experiences of the city.

- ◇ **Cross-market Park and Recreation Department destinations with other regional attractions to encourage visitors to spend time and money in the city of Bozeman, like the Pathway to the M.**

## **The following programs are offered by many agencies across the country, but are programs not currently offered by the Department.**

- ◇ Arts
- ◇ Childcare
- ◇ Cooking
- ◇ Dance
- ◇ E-Sports
- ◇ Golf
- ◇ Gymnastics/Tumbling
- ◇ Homeschool
- ◇ Horseback Riding
- ◇ Language Arts
- ◇ Martial arts
- ◇ Music
- ◇ Open Gym
- ◇ Pets
- ◇ Preschool
- ◇ Seniors
- ◇ Theatre/Acting
- ◇ Therapeutic Recreation

# PROGRAMS, PLACES, PARTNERSHIPS

## STRATEGIES

IN 2021, OVER  
1.94 MILLION  
VISITORS FLEW  
INTO BOZEMAN'S  
AIRPORT

### ◇ **Advocate for a resort tax.**

Montana legislation enables local communities to charge a resort tax. The resort tax is a local-option sales tax that provides Montana communities and resort areas a funding source to finance a variety of services or improvements. The City of Bozeman should continue to push for legislation that would allow it to charge a resort tax.

### ◇ **Consider impact of tourism on facilities and infrastructure.**

## **2.7. Gather Program Data and Track Program Participation Annually.**

The pandemic has shown just how beneficial parks and recreation programs are to the health and wellness of a community; yet, Parks and Recreation Departments continue to work within increasingly tight budgets and cuts as a “nonessential” community service. Data can help to safeguard against budget cuts. Data-driven decisions are needed to better make the case for the essential contributions of parks, open space and recreation services as well as to ensure that investments are shared equitably across the city and, particularly, to places where investments could have outsized impacts on the long-term physical and mental health of residents.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

### ◇ **Establish metrics for measurement of departmental goals (i.e., program cancellation rate, program reach, new programs offered, and residency).**

One method to establish and track progress is to develop a Department-led “business plan” process that establishes priorities and defines performance metrics as a way to quantify the Department’s success towards program goals. The business plan could be developed as part of recreation staff meetings to brainstorm metrics and connect staff to achieving quantifiable goals.

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◇ **Begin Recreation Division quarterly program evaluation process.**

Using fee to participation data, customer satisfaction surveys, and overall program participation as a guide, meet as a Department quarterly to share updates to program investments, participation rates, and revenues after every program season to reflect on the season and prepare for future investments.

◇ **Track population changes, community health metrics, and development starts across the city, and use that data to inform decisions about locating recreation programs and events.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

Work with Gallatin City and Gallatin County Health Department, Bozeman Health, and Billings Clinic to help support their Community Health Needs Assessment process and identify any metrics that help to tie individual and community health outcomes to nutrition programming, physical activity, and outdoor experiences.

DATA CAN HELP  
TO SAFEGUARD  
AGAINST  
BUDGET CUTS

# PROGRAMS, PLACES, PARTNERSHIPS

## STRATEGIES

### **2.8. Grow Program Partnerships in Areas That are Complementary to Department Offerings.**

- ◇ **Enhance existing local public, private and nonprofit partnerships and seek out new ones to fill gaps in service delivery.**

The City's Park and Recreation Department operates over 125 programs a year, which is significant for a small group and a resident population of over 50,000 people. There are also many private and not-for-profit organizations that provide either similar programs or help to close the gaps on programs the Department cannot operate. As an example, Aquatics are among the most sought after programs for residents of all ages, reaching capacity within hours of opening the registration portal. The YMCA, and other programs and private providers help to alleviate the pressure on Bozeman to provide aquatics programs across the City, especially more recently when an unexpected closure at the Bozeman Swim Center meant that many City-led programs needed to find space for aquatic needs. YMCA partners with Eagle Mount to provide swim opportunities (the YMCA facility does not have a swimming pool). Other pools include Lone Mountain and the Ridge. Another possible partner is Big Sky Wind Drinkers, a running club that promotes physical health while bringing people to parks and natural areas around the City.

*“Organize frequent family, kid runs”*

*- Community member during August Pop-Up Event*

- ◇ **Expand partnerships beyond the Montana Parent Magazine to deploy seasonal program guides.**

Additional partners could include organizations that serve persons with disabilities, persons who speak a language other than English at home, seniors, teens, and young adult populations. The Department needs to also formalize, and improve, coordination of relationships to best utilize these partnerships.

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◇ **Create partnership, teaming guidelines and policy to define goals and expectations.**

The City of Bozeman currently has a wide range of partnerships with various organizations for programming, advocacy, land acquisition, and park improvements. To protect and strengthen these relationships, it is vital that the Department craft formal agreements that better define common mission, outline expectations, timelines, and specify leadership roles for both the City and the partner organization.

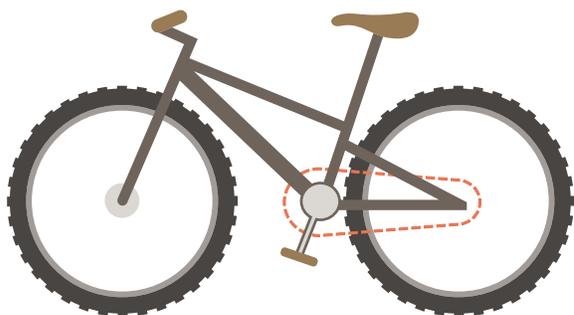
Bozeman's operations, capital investments, and programs are made stronger by successful partnerships with like-minded organizations. The Gallatin Valley Land Trust and their trail acquisition and trail building programs are an example of a mutually beneficial partnership the City of Bozeman wants to continue to enhance and expand. Not all relationships are as successful. Communicating expectations early and clearly around topics that can easily become significant challenges if not addressed, like maintenance or operations roles, will help to support the capacity of City staff and optimize existing resources aligned with the core mission of the Department.

Partnerships, even strong ones with long standing organizations like the Gallatin Valley Land Trust, benefit from short term agreements that allow both parties to revisit terms every few years to protect the relationship over a sustained period. The PRAT plan proposes that the Department engage all partners in two to five year agreements with all program, maintenance, and investment partners. The Department's addition of a Volunteer/Engagement Coordinator position to staff will help coordinate these partnerships and maximize the benefits of such relationships.

# GOAL 3

## **Connect Bozeman's community with safe and enjoyable PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES.**

Demand for new facilities to expand the current network of pathways, trails and bicycle facilities is strong and the network will need to keep up with the growing community. Additionally, the need to improve connectivity and reduce barriers within the network must be addressed. This goal is focused on the facilities and policies needed to connect and grow the recreation and active transportation network of shared use paths, natural trails, on-street bicycle boulevards, and sidewalks. A safer, well-maintained, connected path and trail system provides more residents with the option to walk or bicycle as a primary means of transportation. Whether for work or accessing goods and services, the better the network the more residents will choose active transportation as a less expensive, healthier, and environmentally friendly option over driving a personal vehicle.



How people move to, from, and within parks is fundamental to building a healthy community, both in terms of providing active options for transportation, but also for providing equitable means for residents to access park facilities and programs. Active communities have improved health, a cleaner environment, and are more sustainable and resilient. To maintain and improve its status as an active transportation community, Bozeman must prioritize the construction and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Expanding and improving a network of safe, accessible, and efficient paths and trails will make active transportation an even more attractive option for everyday travel by everyone.

This plan includes recommended strategies and key actions to create a connected active transportation network that integrates with the parks and recreation facilities. Together with the specifications outlined in the Design Manual and the implementation recommendations, these strategies outline the actions to build a seamless network for active transportation.

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

### 3.1. Invest in a City-wide Active Transportation Network.

Expand the active transportation network to provide both reliable recreation and transportation opportunities throughout the community. In coordination with the county level Triangle Trails Plan, this plan identifies preferred routes that establish network connectivity. Additional neighborhood trails built through the private development process will further enhance connectivity.

- ◇ **Use this plan as a guide for future public infrastructure planning and investment and as a resource in the private development process.**

Proposed facilities identified in this plan will be incorporated into the City's GIS mapping and other resources to ensure that the public and development community has access to the proposed network.

Proposed pathway alignments shown are a 'planning level' representation of intended routes, which provide connections between destination points and desirable pathway experiences for a variety of users. In the final implementation of the proposed network, adjustments and modifications to the alignments shown are expected. Such adjustments may be required to navigate environmental features, meet code requirements, accommodate landowner desires, and complement future development projects. These adjustments should be expected and accommodated, so long as the adjustments do not compromise the original intent to enhance network connectivity.

The proposed new routes represent approximately 137 new miles of shared use paths, 36 new miles of connector paths, 107 new miles of neighborhood trails, and nine miles of bicycle boulevards for a total of 289 miles of new pathways.



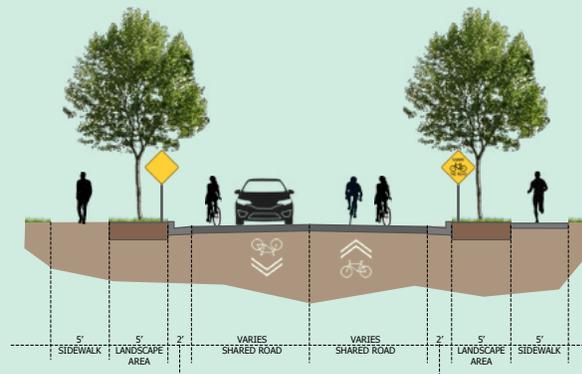
*“A big investment in parks and connecting trails would make the city much more vibrant and livable.”*

*-PRAT Plan Engage Bozeman public comment*

# TYOLOGIES\*

## Anchor Routes

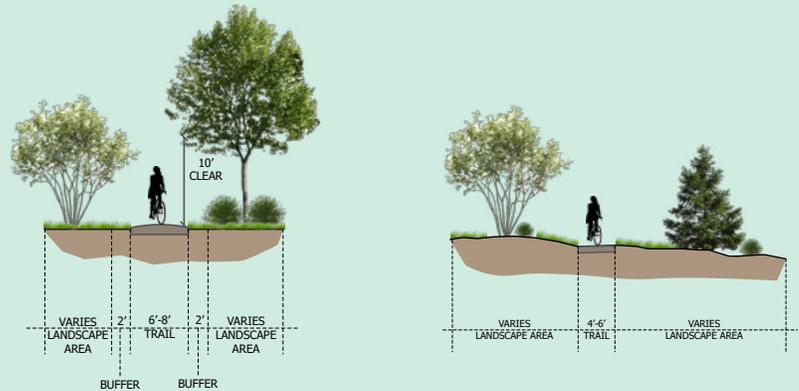
Primary routes linking neighborhoods to parks and commercial areas. They connect to neighborhood trails and connector pathways to provide a unified network.



**Bike Boulevard**

## Bike Boulevard

Streets that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle travel by using signage, pavement markings, and lane constrictions to limit vehicle traffic.



**Connector Path**

**Neighborhood Trail**

## Connector Path

Connect other bike and pedestrian corridors and neighborhood destinations with 6 to 8-foot wide paved or natural surfaces.

## Neighborhood Trail

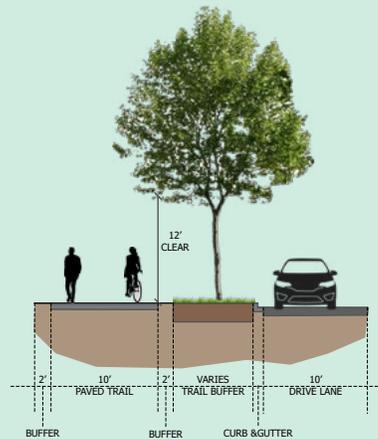
Four to six foot wide local, natural surface or gravel routes that are typically used for recreation

## Pathways

A term used to collectively refer to all types of active transportation routes.

## Shared Use Path

Ten to twelve foot paved paths that accommodate higher speed travel directly connecting community destinations.

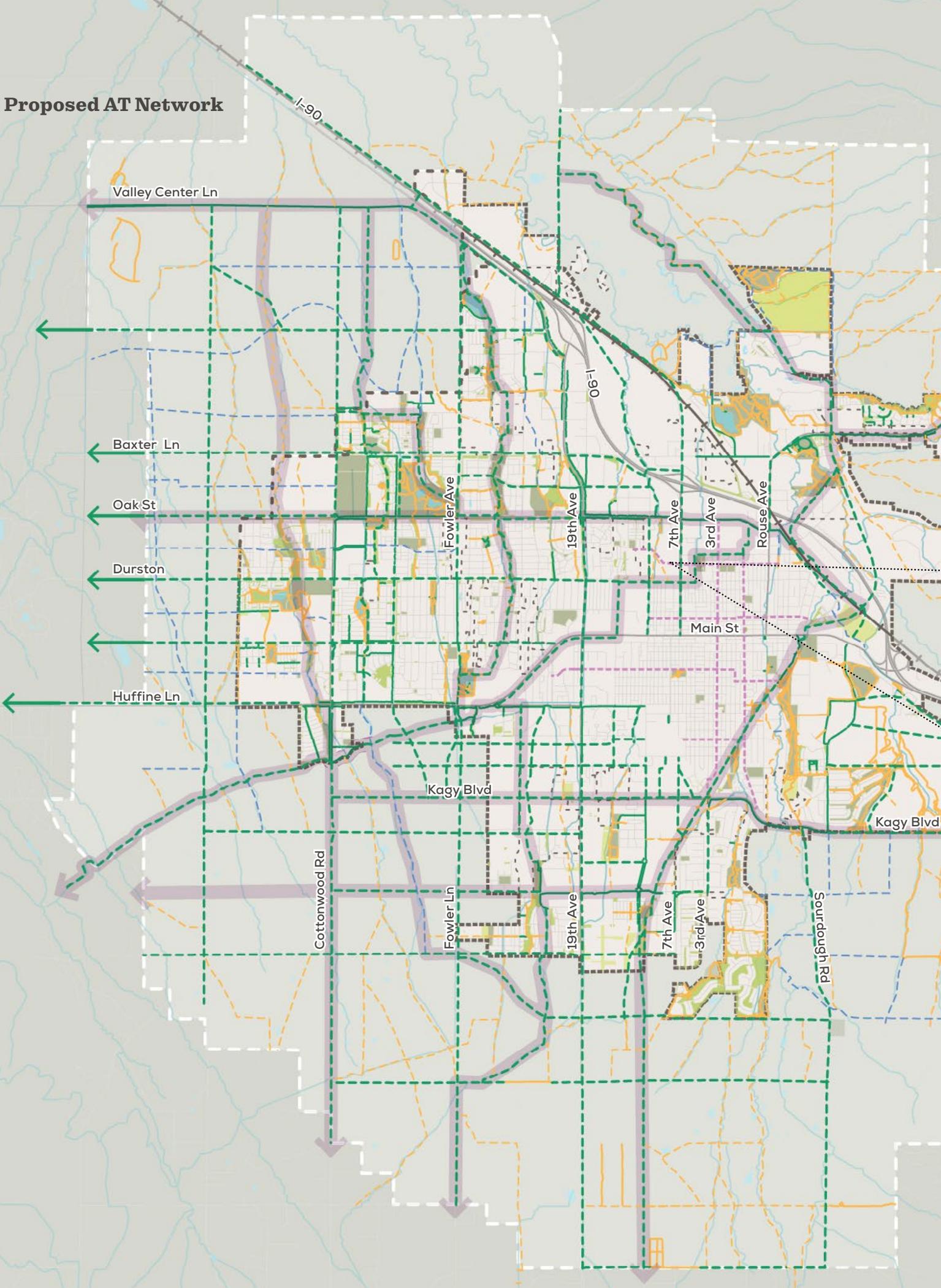


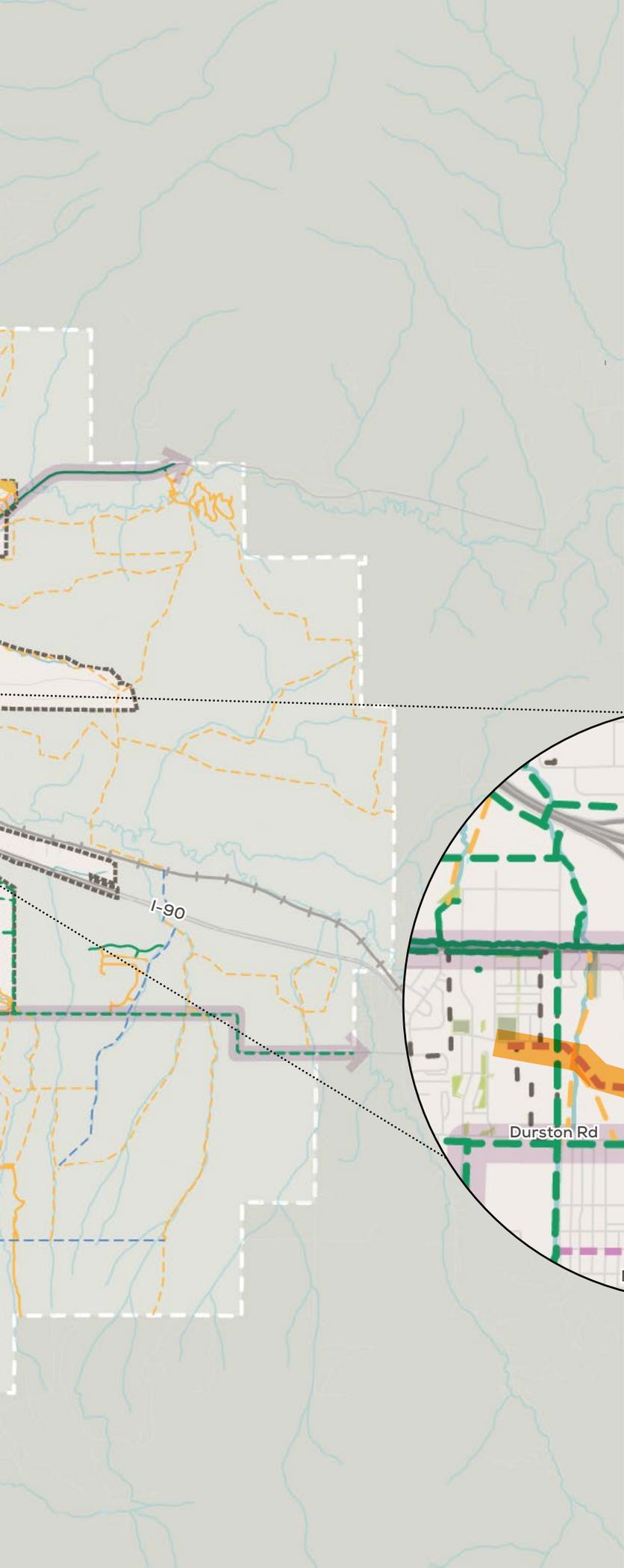
**Shared Use Pathway**

Figure 4.5 Active Transportation facility typologies

*\*New typologies may be introduced through other guiding documents or in code revisions, and the Design Manual will be updated more frequently to incorporate and provide specifications for new typologies*

# Proposed AT Network





### Pathway Facilities

- Proposed Anchor Routes
- - - Proposed Shared Use Paths
- - - Proposed Connector Paths
- - - Proposed Neighborhood Trails
- - - Proposed Bike Boulevards
- Existing Trails
- Existing Shared Use Paths
- City Boundary
- Growth Boundary
- Roads
- + — Railroad
- ~ Streams
- ◡ Lakes & Reservoirs
- Future Parks
- Parks

### 7th-Front Street Connector



0 0.5 1 MILE



Figure 4.6 Proposed Active Transportation network with zoom in of 7th-Front St Connector, highlighted in orange.

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

### WHAT IS AN “ANCHOR ROUTE”?

- ✓ Visionary
- ✓ Highly visible
- ✓ All-ages and abilities
- ✓ Uninterrupted
- ✓ All-season

Anchor Routes are Shared Use Paths, with a minimum width of 12-feet, are intended to establish unbroken routes linking neighborhoods to parks and commercial areas. They connect to neighborhood trails and connector pathways to provide a unified network.

- ◇ **Build upon the practices and standards established by this plan by including active transportation within future Transportation Master Plan update.**

Many facilities included in this plan are also identified as bicycle and pedestrian facility recommendations in the 2017 Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Providing a comprehensive approach to active transportation, including pathways, trails, and on-street bicycle facilities, within future updates to the TMP will enable the continuation of best practices for an integrated system for transportation and recreation facilities.

- ◇ **Annually update the network improvements priorities using the recommendations included in Chapter 5.**

The list of proposed new routes and connections exceeds the annual investment for active transportation. In order to maintain and grow the network, the City should annually review and dedicate funds to effectively construct the new routes over time and consider requirements in the development code for new developments to infill the system as they currently do for roads.

### **3.2. Identify and Develop a Network of Anchor Routes That Serve as Key Travel Corridors.**

Anchor Routes are the backbone of the active transportation network. Existing pathway corridors, like the Gallagator Trail, as well as new routes are identified as Anchor Routes. These primary routes will serve as longer-distance, lower-stress, and comfortable anchors for the active transportation network. Anchor Routes provide a highly visible system enhanced by the wayfinding plan.

These primary routes strive to maximize connectivity between key community locations. The alignments are designated because they provide cohesion within the system (sufficient spacing and connection to the supporting grid) and directness in terms of distance. These routes and improvements will focus on safety,

comfort and enjoyment for all ages and abilities. At times, Anchor Routes will be primarily part of a street cross-section that ties together lively civic spaces. At other times, Anchor Routes will fall entirely within a park or a parklike space.

- ◇ **In collaboration with Gallatin County, Belgrade and regional partners, develop a regional shared use path loop system and look for opportunities to implement the loop using wayfinding as the City grows and the pathway system improves in connectivity.**

- ◇ **Identify key needs for land acquisition, easements, and coordination opportunities with land development projects to secure Anchor Route corridors.**

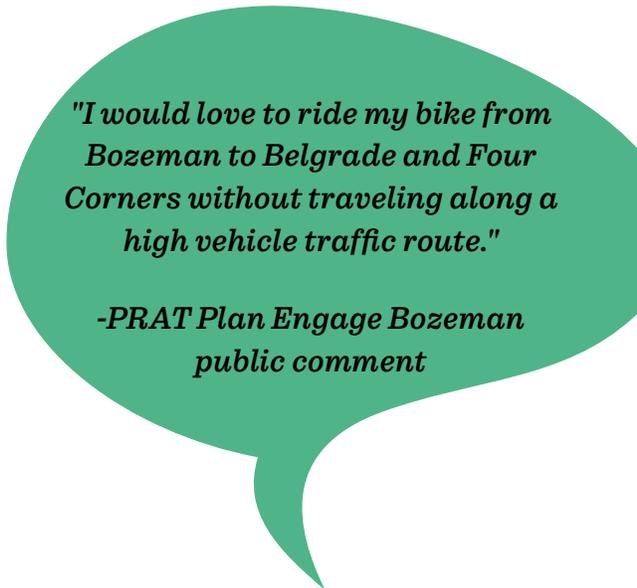
Developing a network of Anchor Routes will require a long-term vision and a comprehensive strategy to aggregate the necessary land or legal access.

- ◇ **Prioritize funding to build, connect, and maintain Anchor Routes.**

The City should add prioritized shared use path and connector path projects to the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Likewise, an annual portion of the City's street construction budget should be allocated to build shared use paths and critical connector paths. In areas of key park connectivity benefit and where severe barriers exist, cash-in-lieu of parkland money can be used to close gaps. Routes not likely to be completed with adjacent development should be prioritized.

- ◇ **Plan for robust maintenance of Anchor Routes to ensure year-round use and a high level of accessibility.**

A complete set of maintenance recommendations are provided in the Design Manual.



*"I would love to ride my bike from Bozeman to Belgrade and Four Corners without traveling along a high vehicle traffic route."*

*-PRAT Plan Engage Bozeman public comment*

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

# Proposed AT Network East/West Connector

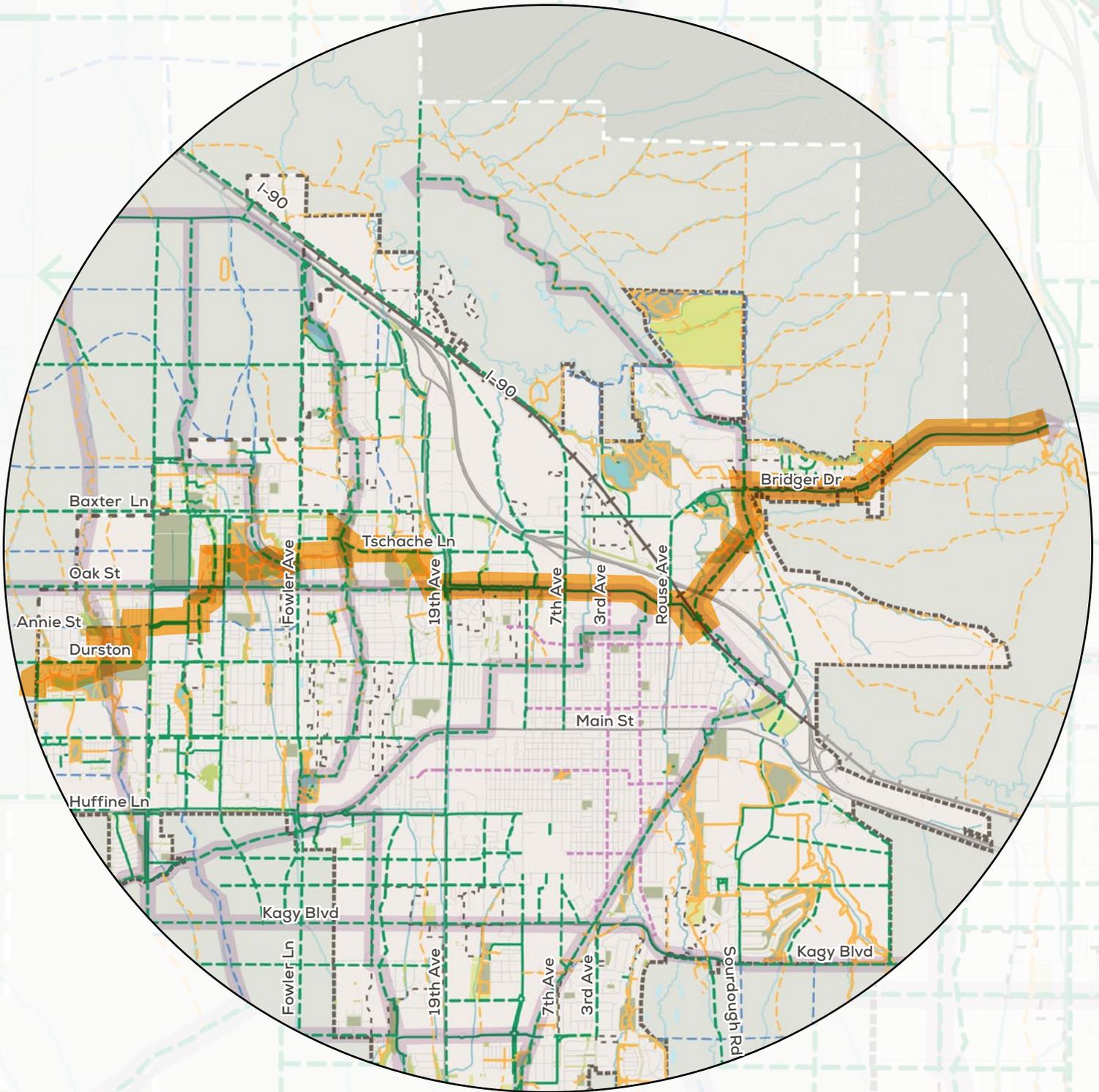


Figure 4.7 Proposed East-West Connector highlighted in orange

**Frontage Pathway**

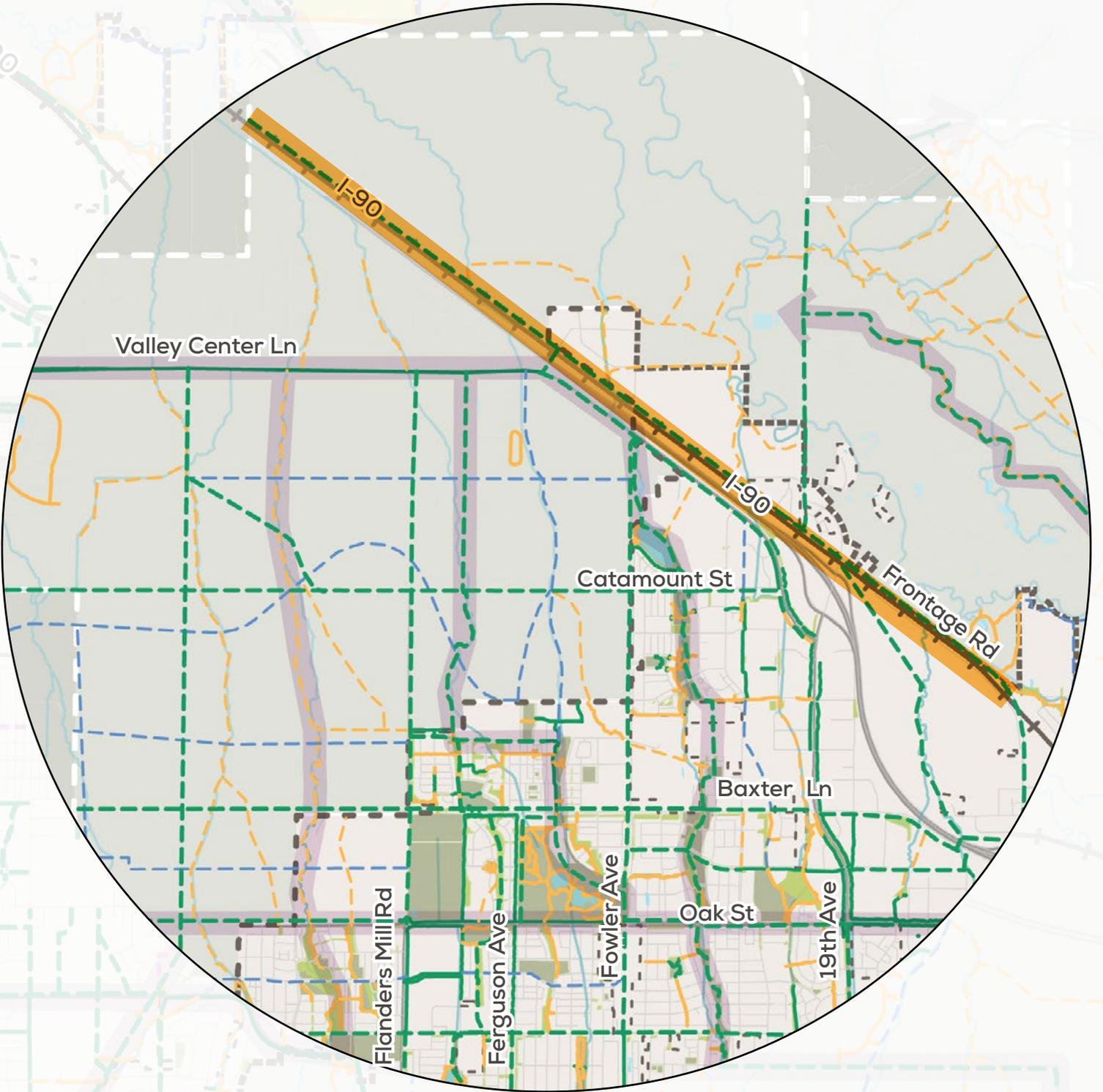


Figure 4.8 Proposed Frontage Pathway highlighted in orange

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

- ◇ **Design traffic calming measures into the routes, particularly at key destinations to reduce potential conflicts.**

As the network grows and connectivity improves, developing design standards to minimize conflicts at key destinations will build a safer network. These include bollards, striping, signage, and designating space for different mode types.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

### **3.3. Close Existing Gaps in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Network.**

This plan identifies areas of Bozeman that lack adequate access to the network and neighborhoods where facilities are isolated due to a lack of connectivity. New shared use paths and connectors are proposed in these areas to close network gaps and increase overall connectivity.

*"Traffic Calming on Babcock is critical as promoting access to Valley West park. Bike lane on Babcock is a step, but decreasing the width of the road and more trees close to the street edge would slow traffic more naturally on this corridor and improve multimodality."*

*-PRAT Plan Engage  
Bozeman public comment*

- ◇ **Prioritize construction of network segments to close key connectivity gaps.**

This plan recommends creating a project prioritization matrix. High priority projects should be added to the City's CIP or funded with an allocation from the City's street construction budget.

- ◇ **Establish an inclusive network of bicycle boulevards that provide low-stress connectivity through Bozeman's core.**

Bicycle Boulevards are streets with low motorized traffic volume and speeds. More than simply a designated bicycle route, they are designated and designed to give pedestrians and bicycles travel priority by using signs, pavement markings, and obstacles to limit speed and number of vehicles.

Bicycle boulevards are a key component of a low-stress active transportation network providing connections throughout the core of the community.

# BIKE BOULEVARDS

Bike Boulevards are local streets that prioritize bicyclists, pedestrians, and rollers of all ages and abilities. The goal of a bike boulevard is to increase bike and pedestrian comfort, safety, and accessibility to provide more active transportation opportunities through urban settings. Although some vehicle traffic is still allowed on these boulevards, cars are demoted to secondary users.

Creating successful bike boulevards require implementing a variety of strategies including traffic-calming mechanisms, ample signage and pavement markings, and protected crossings.

Bike boulevards should include a selection of (but are not limited to) the following design elements:

**Signs and pavement markings –** Essential elements for establishing and differentiating a bike boulevard from a local street. Signage and markings communicate priority for bikers and pedestrians, while limiting through traffic and lowering vehicle speeds. Signage guides users through the active transportation network.



Figure 4.12 *Bike boulevard*



Figure 4.9 *Sharrow pavement markings*



Figure 4.10 *Wayfinding Signage*



Figure 4.11 *Identification Signage*

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

### Vehicle speed management strategies –

Physical improvements to the streets that reduce vehicle speeds to a maximum of 15 to 20 miles per hour. Vertical deflections, such as raised speed humps, horizontal deflections, such as chicanes, and street narrowing, all create streets designed for slow driving.



Figure 4.13 Chicane



Figure 4.14 Speed hump



Figure 4.15 Median island



Figure 4.16 Neighborhood traffic circle



Figure 4.17 Pinch point



Figure 4.18 Curb bulb outs

### Vehicle volume management strategies –

Established to reduce vehicle through-traffic. Diversions can be either regulatory or physical. Regulatory treatments include signs that post written street restrictions, such as banning turns or entry onto a street during specific times of day or only allowing

residents to drive on the bike boulevard. Physical treatments are constructed barriers that prevent certain vehicle traffic from entering the bike boulevard.



Figure 4.22 *Signage/Partial closure*



Figure 4.23 *Right-in, right-out*



Figure 4.19 *Median diverter*

**Crossings** – Protected intersections and crossings allow for continuous and safe travel of bikes and pedestrians along the bike boulevard corridor. Adequate protection at intersections should ensure that intersecting car traffic is highly aware of crossing pedestrians and bicyclists, while establishing a comfortable crossing experience for users.



Figure 4.20 *Median refuge island and RRFB*



Figure 4.21 *Curb bulb out*



Figure 4.24 *HAWKS crossing*

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

### MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS

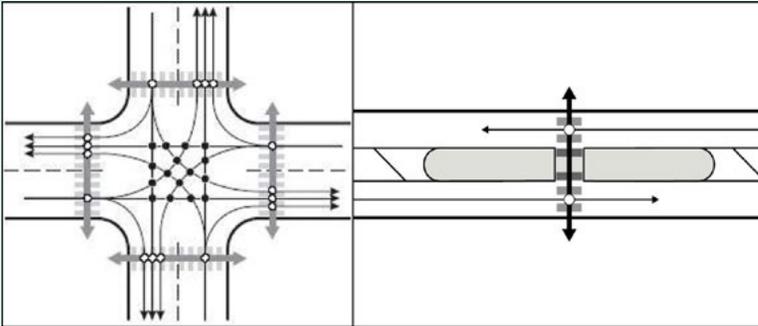


Figure 4.25 Conflict diagram showing that mid-block crossings have fewer conflicts with vehicles.

Mid-block crossings are often needed due to off-street active transportation routes intersecting the street network away from existing street intersections. These are ideal for connecting neighborhood trails to nearby services and the greater active transportation network.



Figure 4.26 The Gallagator trail at Graf Street where trail has been cut for road extension. Snow tracks after a few hours of use show that the sign routing users to a crosswalk 160 feet away is not effective.

An effective mid-block crossing consists of a marked crosswalk, appropriate pavement markings, warning signage, and other treatments to slow or stop traffic such as curb extensions, median refuges, beacons, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs), hybrid beacons, and HAWK signals. Designing crossings at mid-block locations depends on an evaluation of motor vehicle traffic volumes, sight distance, pedestrian traffic volumes, land use patterns, vehicle speed, and road type and width.

Mid-block crossings provide opportunities to provide convenient and direct connections between pathways. Experience in Bozeman shows that diverting these users to nearby intersections is not effective or practical and will not dissuade many users from crossing at the most obvious location.

On collector or arterial streets with center turn lanes, mid-block crossings should be paired with pedestrian refuge islands to shorten the crossing and enable users to focus on crossing one direction at a time. Mid-block crossings vastly simplify the number of potential conflicts and decisions that need to be made by both trail users and motorists over intersection locations.

- ◇ **Ensure new private development is required to construct any adjacent active transportation facility identified in this plan.**

As Bozeman continues to grow, private development will continue to be the means for building out the active transportation network. Update the UDC to include best practices from other communities adapted for Bozeman.

### 19th & Lincoln Pedestrian Crossing



THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

### 3.4. Improve East-West Connections.

Most of Bozeman’s primary active transportation corridors run north-south, aligning with creeks or other waterways that flow through the area. Thus, there are currently very few continuous path and trail corridors in Bozeman that run east-west resulting in serious connectivity and access issues.

- ◇ **Prioritize construction of east-west network facilities.**

Identification of gaps and routes that provide east- and west-running routes should be identified on an annual basis in order to address this network inadequacy.

- ◇ **Improve safety of pedestrian and bicycle crossings for east-west routes.**

North-south arterial streets act as major barriers to east-west active transportation routes. Therefore, as the recommended east-west routes are implemented, safe crossings must be included.

### Mid Block Crossing on Oak St (View 1)



### Mid Block Crossing at Oak & Ferguson (View 2)

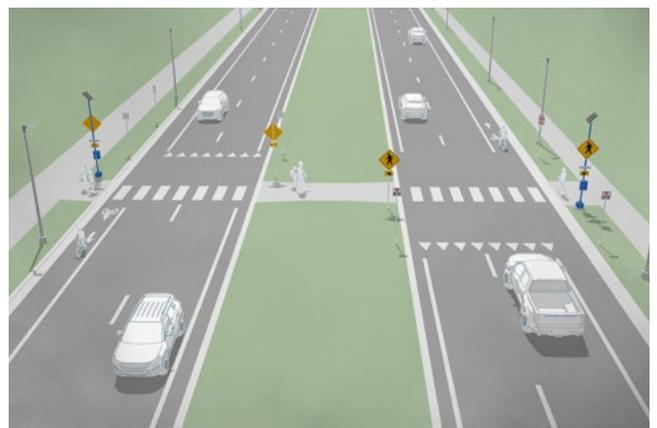


Figure 4.27 At locations where active transportation facilities cross a major street, a variety of treatments can improve visibility and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

### 3.5. Improve Crossings That Act as Major Barriers for Pedestrians and Bicyclists.

Addressing network barriers created by Bozeman's arterial roadways is a priority to ensure that the active transportation system is no longer fragmented by busy streets. Strategies have been established for various safe and intuitive pedestrian and bicycle crossings across large roads, such as 7th Avenue, 19th Avenue, Oak Street, and Huffine Lane, which prevent continuous low-stress active transportation connectivity across the city. Critical locations for these crossings were identified by assessing pedestrian-bicycle-vehicle conflict points and desire lines along major arterials.

#### ◆ Prioritize improvements to critical safe crossing locations.

This plan identifies the locations of important crossings that need safety improvements. The goal of these improvements is to increase connection throughout the city to improve the entire system.

#### ◆ Implement 'best practice' safe crossing configurations and technology.

The safest crossing design alternatives will likely not be the least expensive. The critical importance of providing the safest crossings and the long-term health and air quality benefits of increased ridership requires committing the necessary funding.

### 3.6. Implement a Comprehensive Wayfinding System.

A comprehensive wayfinding system is a mandatory element of Bozeman's active transportation network. Effective wayfinding signage is a cost-effective way to improve the overall use and accessibility of the system. Comprehensive wayfinding helps people traveling throughout the network and directs them to community destinations.

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

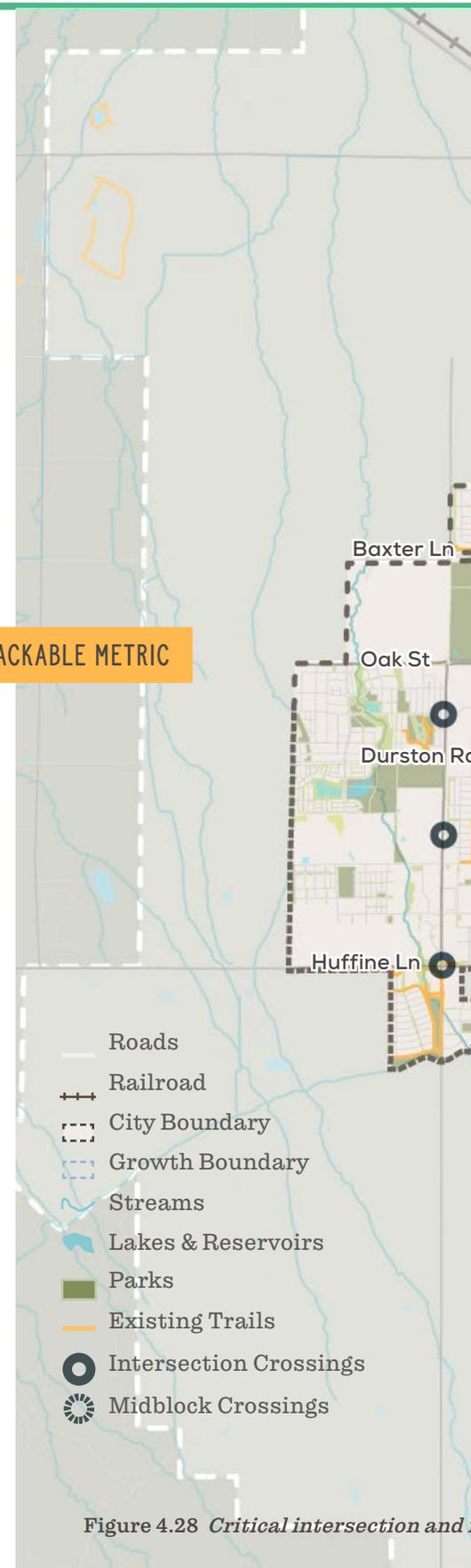
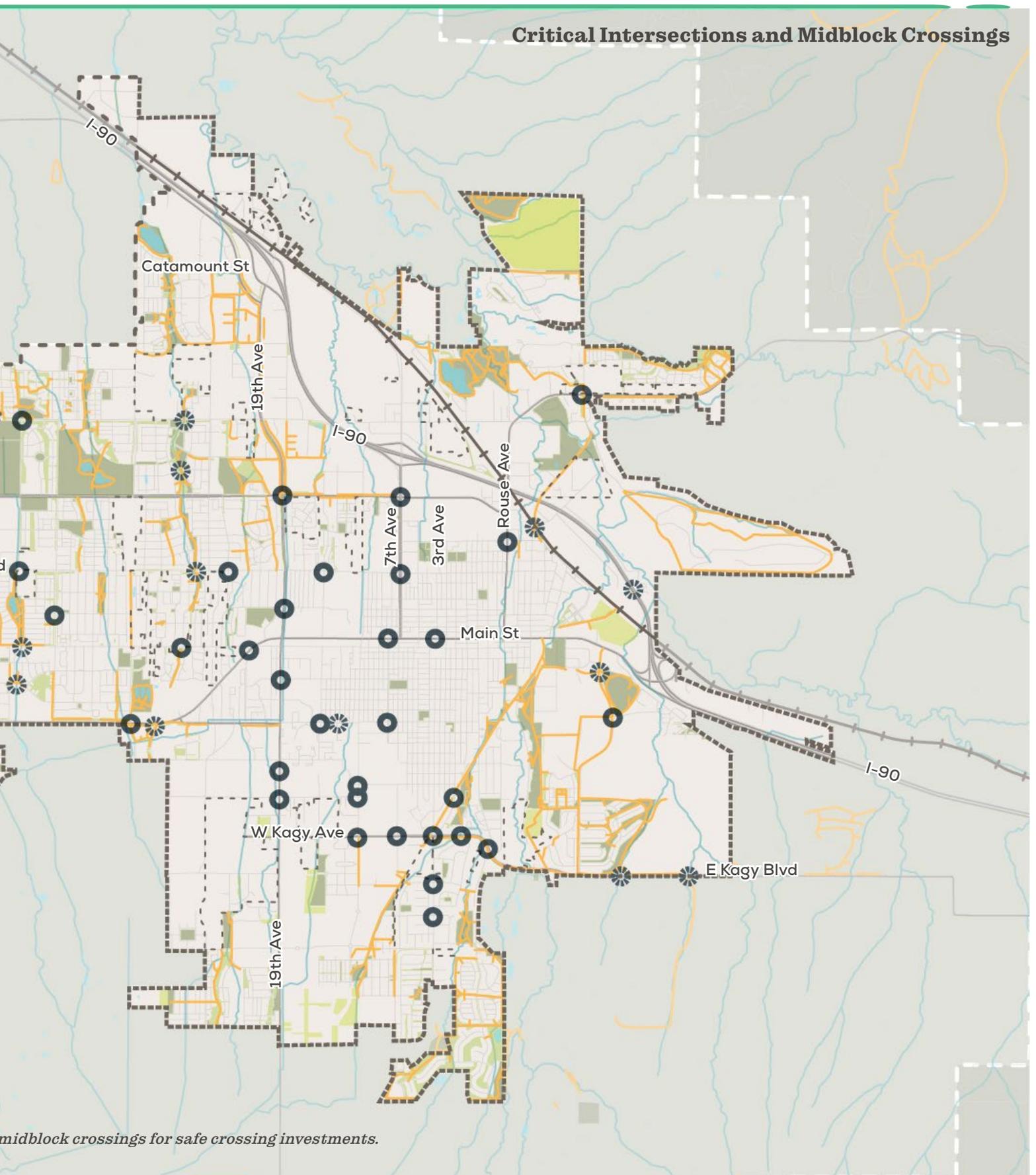


Figure 4.28 Critical intersection and midblock crossings

## Critical Intersections and Midblock Crossings



midblock crossings for safe crossing investments.

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

A coordinated and well-designed wayfinding system improves the coherency of the network and can provide a greater sense of user security and comfort, as users receive confirmation that they are on the correct route and are aware of how far they must travel to reach their destination.

### ◇ Enhance users' ability to navigate Bozeman's network and find key destinations.

The wayfinding system should give clear guidance to users to ensure their experience is safe and that they understand any accessibility considerations related to that particular pathway, crossing, or facility.

### ◇ Provide information such as destinations, direction, distance, and travel time.

Detailed and accurate wayfinding information will increase user confidence, improve travel efficiency, and ultimately increase overall network utilization.

### ◇ Support and promote Bozeman's identity.

Future wayfinding should reinforce the unique identity of the City in the colors, textures and fonts used in signage. To ensure that the wayfinding identity is communicated comprehensively, implementation of the system should happen within phases over ten years and include parks and buildings that tie into the active transportation system. To ensure cohesiveness of the whole system, existing signage should be considered into decisions of future wayfinding identity as much as possible.

### ◇ Build community voice into the wayfinding strategy process and raise visitor awareness of the overall network.

The wayfinding strategy should look back to community feedback to the PRAT Plan related to access and safety in order to ensure increased awareness of the final result.



Figure 4.29 *Oak street trail*

### 3.7. Install Path Improvements Along Active Transportation Routes.

Certain associated improvements adjacent to pathways are essential for the success of a functional and safe active transportation network. Others are not critical for network function but enhance the user experience, safety, and cleanliness, and are often greatly desired by the community and are particularly necessary when trying to effect mode shift toward bicycling.

◆ **Commit to installing the recommended required improvements.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

As discussed further in the Design Manual, certain supporting facilities like wayfinding and lighting are essential to a highly functioning active transportation network. Lighting should be included in priority transportation routes and be dark-sky compliant.

### Pathway Improvements Classification

	Shared Use Paths	Connector Paths	Neighborhood Trails
<b>Required Improvements</b>	Wayfinding lighting (Dark skies compliant) Benches Bike racks Bike stations Trash Receptacles	Wayfinding Bike racks Benches	Wayfinding Dog Waste Stations
<b>Optional Improvements</b>	Picnic tables Water fountains Dog waste stations	Lighting Bike stations Water fountains Dog Waste Stations	Lighting Water fountains Trash Receptacles Benches

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

*“I would like to see the city plan for a connecting network of trails that allow bike and ped access throughout the city, even to Belgrade and Bridger Bowl, etc.”*

*-PRAT Plan Engage Bozeman public comment*

- ◇ **Prioritize installation of recommended optional improvements to enhance user experience.**

Optional improvements not only improve resident’s experience but encourage higher utilization of the active transportation network. These include strategically located benches, bicycle racks, and water fountains.

### **3.8. Include Bozeman’s Linear Parks and Watercourse Corridors as Part of the Active Transportation Network.**

Many of the existing network gaps and new routes identified in this plan could be implemented by allowing more flexible use of linear parks and watercourse setbacks. Consider updates to the Unified Development Code, as recommended in the Policy Considerations section, within the “How Do We Get There” chapter.

- ◇ **Explore limited use of paved pathway typologies within watercourse setbacks while adhering to best practices to avoid impacts to natural resources.**

If shared use paths, connector paths, and neighborhood trails were permitted within Zone 2 of watercourse setbacks regardless of surface types, then infill pathways could facilitate connections to the larger trail network. Note: Any allowance of trails in watercourse setbacks should be the exception, not the rule.

Partner with natural resource organizations and agencies to establish the best practices for environmentally sensitive pathway designs

- ◇ **Allow certain active transportation corridors to be designated as linear parks that meet parkland requirements.**

In many cases corridors that incorporate pathways and adjacent open areas should be recognized as both active transportation routes and parkland.

### 3.9. Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Access To and Within Parks.

To develop an inclusive active transportation network, pathways must be designed and maintained to engage communities of varying incomes, and feel safe and accessible to all age groups, modes of travel, and ability levels. The network should consist of a variety of facility types that promote walking, biking, and micromobility as both recreation activities and transportation options. Finally, the network of shared use and connector paths should meet the minimum standards for accessibility to create a variety of accessible active transportation and recreation opportunities for those with mobility challenges.

#### ◇ **Develop policies to guide the use of e-bikes, e-scooters, and similar modes of assisted mobility within the active transportation system.**

Electric assisted modes of micromobility encourage and allow more people to engage in active transportation. Comprehensive policies that include education and enforcement components can effectively incorporate all modes and minimize user conflicts. A comprehensive approach to electric assisted modes should be included within the future updates to the TMP.

#### ◇ **Develop a toolkit to evaluate and prioritize projects.**

Use adopted City plans (Strategic Plan, Community Plan, Climate Action Plan, Transportation Master Plan), key network connections, and equitable access goals as prioritization criteria.

*“Everything that is not a car” that weighs less than 1,000 pounds*  
- Horace Dediu on what constitutes Micromobility

## WHAT IS MICROMOBILITY?

Micromobility is an umbrella term encompassing a variety of small, generally low-speed vehicles and conveyances that can be electric or human-powered and privately owned or part of shared fleets. Micromobility devices include most small, predominantly one-person vehicles that operate at low speeds and are not gas-powered. Most micromobility devices fit within a standard bike lane or sidewalk and weigh less than 100 pounds. Although the term applies to everything from skateboards to wheelchairs, the term, coined by Horace Dediu, gained popularity when fleets of bikes and scooters flooded city streets in the 2010s, kicking off a revolutionary trend that has altered the way planners and policymakers think about and regulate street space in many cities.

When supported by safe and accessible infrastructure, micromobility devices can bridge the gap between public transit options, replace cars for short trips, and complement larger delivery vehicles by providing last-mile services in dense neighborhoods. Shared fleets can eliminate the cost of private ownership and the hassle of bringing devices onto public transit while connecting urban residents to their destinations.

Source: What Is Micromobility? | Planetizen Planopedia

# PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE FACILITIES

## STRATEGIES

### **3.10. Revise the Active Transportation Network Classifications and Comprehensive Design and Maintenance Standards.**

Clearly defined typologies for active transportation routes is critical to identifying which facilities best serve which users. The recommended typologies are intended to not only provide common nomenclature for this plan and future plans, but also to establish corresponding design standards. A more comprehensive analysis of these typologies and standards is included in the Design Manual.

#### **◇ Redefine and simplify off-street active transportation typologies.**

This plan recommends a revised structural hierarchy of pathway typologies that loosely mimics Bozeman's roadway classifications of arterial, collector, and local streets. The three recommended pathway typologies are shared use paths, connector paths, and neighborhood trails.

#### **◇ Create standards for bicycle boulevards.**

Bicycle boulevards create low-stress routes within existing neighborhoods by increasing awareness and safety of pedestrians and bicycles, by ensuring vehicle speeds are reduced. Major street crossings will have treatments designed to enhance safety and comfort.

#### **◇ Establish comprehensive standards and specifications for construction and maintenance.**

Standards for the design and construction of all active transportation typologies is critical to successful implementation of the PRAT Plan. Maintenance standards for construction, surface preservation, repairs, safety precautions, and managing adjacent landscaping should be developed for and consistently applied to all network typologies.

## Comparative Typologies

Street Network	Active Transportation Network
Local	Neighborhood
Collector	Connector
Arterial	Shared Use
Urban Route	Anchor Route

WINTER  
MAINTENANCE, LIKE  
REMOVING SNOW  
FROM SHARED USE  
PATHS, IS CRITICAL TO  
YEAR-ROUND ACTIVE  
TRANSPORTATION

# GOAL 4

## **Steward and sustain NATURAL RESOURCES across the parks and trails system.**

The intersectionality of Bozeman's natural and human systems continues to shape how the city grows and manages its environmental, social, and economic assets. The City of Bozeman is shaped by thousands of years of human interaction with the land, which has changed more rapidly as white settlers built roads, businesses and houses over the landscape--culverting creeks and covering wetlands.

As the city approaches its growth boundary, the balance of agrarian uses and woodland, meadow, and wetland land covers continue to decline at a rapid pace, giving way to more developed places.

Since the PROST, developments have been required to give neighborhood parks, and open space/natural resource areas have been left to HOA management. As learned from PRAT plan outreach and to simplify landscape management, the PRAT recommends changing policies to include natural areas within parks, which include stands of native trees and shrubs, watercourses, riparian corridors, and wetlands as part of a larger neighborhood park. The PRAT recommends that barriers to achieving this type of park system be removed from the code to embrace a balanced parkland system.



Keeping in mind that the need for ecological conservation is constant, the PRAT Plan presents an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with natural systems and to develop new approaches for City-owned and managed parks. This Plan seeks to protect more natural areas in order to adapt to climate change, sustain ecosystem services, and provide for the recreational use and enjoyment for generations to come. This goal identifies strategies to protect valuable green space balanced with increased development pressures, improve water conservation and air quality, support responsible use of our parks and natural areas, and craft a resilient future.



Mature existing trees are an asset to be protected at every opportunity. Urban trees represent habitat and food for wildlife and also provide an array of ecosystem services and health benefits for humans and non-humans alike (i.e., shade, cooling, carbon sequestration and storage, soil stability, clean air, etc.)

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## STRATEGIES

### **4.1. Create Design Standards and Management Practices Appropriate to Each Landscape Type.**

Environmental standards will provide much needed guardrails for decision making that ensures that the City has the capacity to purchase, improve, and appropriately maintain various park landscapes.

#### **◇ Create a landscape design and management best practices toolkit.**

Pull best practices from past plans and local manuals as a guide, like the 2017 Gallatin Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018 Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Strategy, and 2020 Bozeman Climate Plan among others. These best practices should include considerations regarding desired outcomes, typical designs, and plant lists.

#### **◇ Consider a rating system to set goals and benchmarks and evaluate progress.**

Rather than starting from scratch, the City can look to existing environmental standards and benchmark systems like The Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES), which provides a comprehensive framework for designing, developing and managing sustainable and resilient landscapes and other outdoor spaces. This program provides clear guidance for standards and also connects environmental outcomes with community benefit. The standards should also include tools for reduced fire risk, drought management, shade, and flood adaptability.

#### **◇ Encourage sustainable trail design and maintenance through the PRAT Design and Maintenance Manual.**

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## 4.2. Promote Sustainable Trail and Park Use.

Parks are ideal places to build awareness of natural systems. This can be accomplished by planting native vegetation, incorporating trails that immerse people in nature while staying on paths, reducing the use of machinery or chemicals in maintenance processes that can impact water and air quality, and communicating the ecosystem service values of natural areas.

- ◇ **Use thoughtful trail design that encourages people to stay on the trail, with inviting access points to sit, watch, fish, and play.**
- ◇ **Establish an awareness campaign for low impact park and trails use within natural areas.**

The value of natural areas should be better communicated to enable more stewardship of those places.

Well-intentioned visitors should always stay on marked trails to protect wildlife habitats and reduce negative impacts to native vegetation, including ecological degradation from heavy foot traffic off designated paths.

Successful awareness campaigns are accessible to young audiences and provide a balance of friendly, clear messaging with facts that reinforce the importance of abiding by park rules.

Campaigns that reinforce the relationship between dog owner behavior and intended or unintended outcomes should also be considered. Refer to Strategy 1.3 (Balance the needs of different park users) for more information about programs to support a dog owner and dog etiquette program.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## STRATEGIES

### **4.3. Advance the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Resource Areas and Trees, Especially Sensitive Lands.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

- ◇ **Use the Sensitive Lands Plan and maps to guide future parkland acquisition and developer dedication in accordance with 76-3-621 Montana Code Annotated.**
- ◇ **Identify funding mechanisms or partnerships for acquisition of land.**

The Park and Recreation Department's mission focuses on recreation experiences for people. While the Department does own many natural areas and works to maintain the land sustainably, the purchase of public lands that limit public access are not aligned with that mission unless well-integrated into the design of the park. In order to maintain the net open land, a portion of cash-in-lieu and other funding should be focused on acquisition.

The City should continue to purchase land but also needs to rely on partnerships and other entities to acquire land in flexible and creative ways.

- ◇ **Allow watercourse setbacks, wetlands, and other priority conservation lands and similar acreage to contribute to dedication requirements in new developments.**

As of 2022, land dedication in new developments is limited to upland parcels that enable active uses, however these same dedication requirements do not include improvements to the park beyond irrigation infrastructure, sod, and perimeter trees and sidewalks. Incorporating critical habitats, riparian corridors, and wetlands into a portion of the land dedication requirement will enable the City to take on unified management of sensitive lands and increase the development's responsibility to improve adjacent areas for more active uses with more elements than previously required. Not only will this change to dedication encourage responsible long-term stewardship by the City, it will also reduce the burden on maintenance staff to mow and irrigate large areas.

- ◇ **Require developments to provide a parkland and natural resource analysis to facilitate the connection and continuity of natural resource areas (streams and ditches, floodplains, wetlands, riparian areas, trees and plant species, soils) and to save existing native trees and vegetation.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

## CASE STUDY

### **Boulder Public Library and Boulder Creek Pathway**



When the Boulder Public Library was moved to its current location along the Boulder Creek Path, improvements were made to the path, adjacent creek and a new nature playground was incorporated into the project, next to the new library site. The balance of active, children-centered uses and protection of an important creek corridor highlighted the City of Boulder's approach to reinvestment and critical habitat protection.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

### CASE STUDY

#### Mount Stirling Alpine Resort Interpretive Trail

Victoria, Australia

Merit Award 2015



A suite of interpretive elements that highlight local history and resources and presented the information on trail markers that provide visual clarity while blending into the natural environment. Sturdy cypress pine posts are laser-etched with the name of the resort and at eye level, partially encased in three-sided aluminum panels with digital prints applied

#### 4.4. Expand Nature Play and Programming.

- ◇ Find more ways for people and children to interact with wetlands, waterways and forests.

The Parks and Recreation Department should develop a metric similar to the “10-minute walk” for unstructured play areas or “wild” spaces. The City should frame nature play as intergenerational, or as spaces that allow people of all ages to be wild. The park system as a whole should mirror the greater natural context of Bozeman and include “wild” natural plantings, outdoor recreation, and places to pause and enjoy nature for all.

#### 4.5. Implement Low-Impact Design and Management Practices in Park and Facility Capital Projects.

In May of 2022, the City Commission enacted permanent watering restrictions to curb irrigation of private lawns and landscape, which often use half of all city water in the summer months and the Parks Division followed suit. The Park Division’s participation in achieving and demonstrating water conservation strategies will make it more difficult to irrigate parks and fields with large swaths of lawns. It also provides an opportunity for Parks and Recreation to think differently about water use and find creative ways to maintain the same high quality spaces while prioritizing water management needs. Best practices are needed to develop specific design guidelines and management for wetlands, soccer fields, and other park or natural spaces to be improved for sustainability and climate metrics.

◇ **Create standards for efficient irrigation infrastructure.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

Prioritize simple irrigation systems to reduce unnecessary water waste. Install flexible irrigation systems that are easy to manage, maintain, and replace if needed. Develop an irrigation policy appropriate to the parkland setting. Irrigating planting beds and trees during the vegetation's establishment period will greatly increase the chances of survival for the planting and the planting's lifespan.

◇ **Increase the amount of drought tolerant and native vegetation and trees in the park system.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

Work with the Sacajawea Audubon Society and Montana Native Plant Society and other like minded organizations to confirm and update plant selection guidance, share low water best practices with city staff, and lead workshops with community members to promote residential drought tolerant landscape.

**4.6. Scale Department Capacity to Provide Knowledgeable Natural Resources Evaluation During the Planning Process for Future Facilities Investments and Management of Natural Areas.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

◇ **Train and hire staff in sustainable land management practices.**

Consider creating a park ranger program or partnering with an existing city security program to monitor appropriate park and trail use.

The program could be expanded to include volunteer programs with residents interested in invasive species management, riparian corridor enhancement, or trail maintenance. It could also include best practices for management of wetlands to support better natural area maintenance and management.

# GOAL 5

## **Grow STAFF AND CAPACITY to benefit the community.**

To fully care for Bozeman's parks, trails and facilities and to provide the most inclusive experiences for the community, the City needs to build internal capacity and resources internally. Today, the City is managing increased maintenance of parks alongside the management, activation, and investment in existing and new parks and facilities with a small staff. Increasing staff and City resources can elevate the quality of the City's operations and ensure that Bozeman's community has equitable access to high-quality spaces and programs. To start, the City needs to ensure that the capabilities and capacity of its current staff match the department's needs.





# STAFF + CAPACITY

## STRATEGIES

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

### **5.1. Attract and Retain Staff to Effectively Support the Needs of Bozeman's Parks, Programs, and Trails.**

The design and upkeep needs of parks and facilities and the growing variety of programs offered by the Department increasingly require a larger staff. Currently, the Department has 54 full time employees, which is far below staffing numbers of the City's peer communities. The City needs to increase staff capacity now, while simultaneously looking to the future. As needs and offerings grow, the Department must constantly reassess and adapt its staffing to maintain efficiency and meet the community expectations.

#### **◇ Create intentional strategy to address hiring gaps directly.**

Work with the City's Human Resources Department to actively and efficiently recruit qualified staff to fill open positions. Human Resources has already responded to position gaps with signing bonuses and hourly wage increases, and is positioned to do more to connect Department staffing needs to important programs, like lifeguards and aquatics.

The Department will also need to be proactive about onboarding and training new staff who need to develop the skills necessary to fill the roles they are hired for. A training program can be developed to specifically address needed skills, and encourage staff growth through the Department.

Alongside clear communication and training of roles, the Department should shed any tasks historically given to programming staff, including janitorial or administrative tasks, that are not core to the reason for their hiring.

◇ **Conduct annual staff surveys to assess job satisfaction, staff development, staffing levels, and work environment.**

Assign a lead investigator within the Department to summarize surveys and share high level takeaways Department-wide. The Department should incorporate those takeaways into future policies and projects to appropriately retain existing staff, and attract future staff.

◇ **Provide regular training to ensure that existing staff develop the skills to perform their duties and grow within their roles.**

For example, if the City is accepting more watercourse setbacks as dedicated parkland, the overall maintenance is likely reduced but is much different from mowing turf grass because its management will require different types of equipment and technical skills. Staff should be hired with expertise in ecology and natural resource management and/or trained to gain that expertise.

◇ **Conduct an in-depth operational assessment including a staffing plan to define roles and responsibilities and to strategically allocate funding.**

## FIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE HIRING PROCESS

### **1. Create and improve job descriptions**

### **2. Communicate with applicants in multiple channels**

### **3. Post job in many databases**

### **4. Center training/development as part of the job**

### **5. Move quickly to respond to applicants and potential hires**

# STAFF + CAPACITY

## STRATEGIES

### **5.2. Continue to Refine and Communicate the Bozeman Parks and Trails Special District.**

In May 2020, the City created the Bozeman Parks and Trails Special District. The purpose of the District is to equitably invest and manage the City's parkland. One of the key components of the District is the transition of maintenance of parkland from Property Owners Association management to City management to City management. In order for the effective management and maintenance of these spaces, the City now levies assessments that will benefit all City-owned or managed parks and trails. As the City works to transition to this new structure, it is imperative that the City sets expectations with communities through a variety of communication methods.

#### **◇ Develop a dashboard to share successes and communicate how resources are being allocated.**

The online dashboard can live on the Parks and Recreation webpage, and will include updates regarding District implementation and improvements, along with responses to frequently asked questions.

Start by comparing costs and benefits of current maintenance district structure against Department desires for building out staff capacity including reduced contract reliance, increased supervision, redundancy with HOA maintenance, etc.

Create a ticket system for the Community Enhancement application program and publicly track requests from community members regarding the District program. Using the seeclickfix program (a 311 app for word order requests) as a model, share what parks are included within the Maintenance District and include tags in spaces where questions have been asked and responded to.

The dashboard could include a Frequently Asked Questions document that is shared with key stakeholders, including property managers, Homeowners associations, developers and residents.

◇ **Undertake a drive time analysis to determine the time maintenance staff spends driving during a typical day.**

Ensure maintenance district oversight and work to limit the amount of drive time (ideally to no more than an hour daily) to increase productivity and reduce the cost of maintenance and associated expenses such as fuel.

Use and communicate the highest standards of maintenance (Per NRPA's maintenance standards), with the PRAT's maintenance and design manual as a guide.

**5.3. Develop a Philosophy and Policies for Cost Recovery and Revenue Generation.**

The Department does not currently have a broad-based cost-recovery plan that could be used as a guideline for setting fees and systematic resource allocation; however, there is appetite to adopt a comprehensive cost-recovery philosophy, which can provide guidance for prioritizing core program areas, setting fees and charges, identifying tax subsidy levels, and allocating resources effectively and efficiently.



◇ **Establish cost recovery targets.**

THIS IS A TRACKABLE METRIC

The Department's average annual cost recovery, or the calculated percentage of aggregate costs in relation to the revenues generated from programs and services, is 34.6%. As context, the offering of an activity or delivery of a service would achieve 100% cost recovery if the fees charged generated revenue sufficient to cover all associated costs related to the operation of the program.

In order to increase the percentage of cost recovery to a new target, the Department should identify a range of cost recovery targets related to individual activity and service categories. Once the range has been established, adjust fees within that service category accordingly and monitor the program or service's cost recovery annually.

# STAFF + CAPACITY

## STRATEGIES

### ◇ **Adjust fees and pricing to balance revenue generation with community accessibility.**

Departments typically subsidize activities for youth, teens, and seniors more than adult activities. Bozeman should also consider subsidies to programs with higher participation by low-income residents, or scholarships in programs in which affordability or willingness to pay are a barrier for low income families and other underrepresented demographics.

### ◇ **Create pricing strategies for different audiences based on a variety of factors that take into account existing fees, affordability, and program attractiveness.**

The following are common pricing factors the Department should consider when developing an approach to updating fees and charges:

- ◇ Cost to offer the program (limited direct costs only)
- ◇ History of fees charged
- ◇ Perceived ability and willingness to pay
- ◇ Number of participants per class/activity
- ◇ Affordability for target audience
- ◇ Ability to attract participants

### ◇ **Set a target for performance measures.**

Complete cost recovery for the costs to run programs, classes, and events should not drive decision making or changes to fee policies for programs. Instead, the City should set targets for cost recovery by age group and encourage low income households to participate using scholarships or program subsidies. In order to support these subsidies and encourage participation, the plan recommends setting the following targets: between 35% and 50% for both youth and active aging, and between 50% and 100% for adult programs.



# 5. HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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## IN THIS CHAPTER

PARKS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE MANUAL

# PARKS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

Successful implementation of the strategies and projects identified by the Parks, Recreation and Active Transportation Plan requires balancing and addressing community aspirations, partner and stakeholder goals, and the Department's mission and vision. The following build on the strategies and actions identified in the PRAT plan document and serve as first steps the Department and the City can take to begin a successful and inclusive implementation process.

## **The PRAT Plan is a Framework**

The vision, goals, strategies, and recommendations should serve as a framework for decision making. When decisions or responses to the Bozeman community are needed, the plan serves as the reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what's been established as existing direction. Because the plan is an integral tool for the Department, it should also be central to employee onboarding.

**Track Progress:** Publicly release the plan online by placing the plan on the Department's website and on Engage.Bozeman to track plan implementation progress on these sites. The Department can share updates about recommended implementation progress. Track and share progress with interested partners and community members as well as with key decision makers.

At the end of each fiscal year, reflect on the results of the implementation efforts to-date and include continued community engagement and progress made within each big idea. In addition to yearly reviews, the Department should comprehensively reflect on accomplishments to-date and evaluate progress in equitable project completion that achieves the plan's goals. These comprehensive reviews are an opportunity for Bozeman to refine or change strategies and recommendations to reflect changing community needs and recreation trends. In these reports the Department should provide data and metrics to clearly articulate plan developments and explain project benefits in a way various audiences can understand.

## **Identify the Plan Champion(s)**

Identify a primary staff person (or team) to guide various pieces of the plan's implementation to ensure success. These staff people are responsible for monitoring progress and works with staff to effectively integrate the plan into the department. A strong candidate or team should be knowledgeable of the planning process, design and community engagement values of the recommendations made by the plan. Additional staff members should also lead specific big ideas. These individuals can manage each recommendation within a big idea to ensure implementation is followed through and communicated with the Plan Champion, project partners, stakeholders and the broader community.

## Commit to Community Goals

Engage community members (residents, businesses, Department partners, and non-profit organizations) early and often during the implementation process. A knowledgeable community is the best way to secure support and ensure the project(s) suit the needs of those who will benefit from them. Equity needs to continue to be at the forefront of all conversations and engagement with underresourced communities must also be paramount to the engagement process. The following actions can be used to help get the word out and provide a continuous feedback loop with community members:

- Engage the community through maintenance and recreation program staff who interact with the community daily in conversation or through formal feedback methods.
- Include a plan progress update in the Urban Parks and Forestry Board agenda to keep staff and stakeholders informed of the plan's progress.
- Guide outreach in an inclusive direction and adapt to changing community desires by using formalized policies for outreach advertising and messaging.
- Use strong, clear visuals paired with data and reflections on community input to frame the conversation.

## Potential Plan Champions

PARTNERS	Regular Maintenance and Monitoring		Activation and Programming		Significant Renovations or New Investments	
	Core Implementer	Plan Partner	Core Implementer	Plan Partner	Core Implementer	Plan Partner
Parks/ natural areas	Parks	GVLТ	Recreation	Volunteer organizations; Downtown Bozeman Partnership; Western Transportation Institute; Private Recreation Programmers; HRDC; Leagues	Parks Planning & Development; Bozeman Planning Division	Private Developers, Land Trusts (e.g. Gallatin Valley Land Trust, Trust for Public Land)  Property Owners Associations
Trails/AT System	Parks	Future Trails Staff; Private maintenance crews to offset staff capacity  Urban Parks and Forestry Board  GVLТ	Recreation	Gallatin Valley Land Trust; Western Transportation Institute; Private Recreation Programmers	Parks Planning & Development; Bozeman Planning Division	Private Developers, Land Trusts (e.g. Gallatin Valley Land Trust, Trust for Public Land)
Buildings/ facilities	Facilities Management		Recreation; Aquatics	Bozeman Libraries; Bozeman School District	Parks Planning & Development	YMCA, Bozeman Libraries; Bozeman School District

- Hold meetings at times and both in person and online that make it possible for all members of the community to participate.
- Partner with community leaders and project partners to maintain momentum for the plan.
- Build from the Safe Routes to Parks liaisons program to address language barriers, communication issues, and cultural barriers.
- Continue to require that developers prepare individual park master plans for all newly dedicated parkland.
- Revise the Unified Development Ordinance to support more connected park spaces and Active Transportation investments.
- Allocate funds in the City budget for City staff and/or consultants to prepare individual park master plans for existing parks lacking an adopted plan.
- Revise and update existing park plans to reflect changing community needs as identified by this process and community feedback.

## Funding

In order to maintain the net open land, focus cash-in-lieu program funds and other funding on acquisition. For the purposes of cash in lieu, a reasonably close proximity shall include parks that are well connected safe and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle access to the development.

## Regulations

The City of Bozeman enables park acquisition and improvements through the Unified Development Code. The City should use the design manual and the current geographic distribution and gaps in parks and specific park types to dictate what types of investments should be made in different parts of the city, either by the city on city-owned or dedicated land or by developers. The following actions are recommended.

- UDC revisions are recommended that support an equitable distribution of elements, park types, and facilities, especially in communities of color, low income communities, and in places where there are gaps in safe, walking access.
- Collect copies of all adopted individual park plans.

# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is the primary goal of any community plan. However, there are fundamental questions that must be answered to successfully implement a comprehensive active transportation network connecting Bozeman's parks and recreation facilities. How will new routes and segments be established? Who pays for construction? How will the routes be maintained? What criteria determine prioritization for investment?

The foundation of successful implementation is built upon coordination and cooperation between the City, landowners, developers, non-profit organizations, and Bozeman's citizens. Coordination beyond Bozeman and its city limits are also critical to ensure the plan's active transportation efforts align with those in Gallatin County as outlined in the 2020 Triangle Trails Plan.

The implementation strategies focus on network construction and route maintenance. As emphasized throughout this plan, properly maintaining existing routes is equally important to constructing new ones. The primary implementation components for both construction and maintenance include:

- **Methods:** Various methods need to be used to construct and maintain Bozeman’s active transportation network and associated wayfinding system.
- **Regulations:** City regulations must efficiently guide route construction within future subdivisions, private development, public transportation projects, and specifically wayfinding elements
- **Policies:** City procedures and policies need to align with the goals of establishing and maintaining a robust active transportation network
- **Standards:** Clear standards for route construction and maintenance must be established and coordinated between jurisdictions and partners
- **Funding:** Multiple sources of financing for both construction and maintenance must be identified and leveraged
- **Prioritization:** Strategic criteria need to be utilized to establish annual and long-term priorities for route construction and maintenance

# NETWORK CONSTRUCTION

Active transportation facility construction is needed throughout the community for several key reasons: extending existing routes; closing gaps in the existing network; upgrading an existing segment from one typology to another; and providing entirely new routes. This plan recommends construction projects meeting all four of these needs.

## Methods

A variety of methods will be employed to construct new routes and segments of the active transportation network. Which method for a given construction project will be most appropriate will depend on facility type, location, responsible parties, and funding sources.

## Anchor Routes and Shared Use Paths

Anchor Routes and shared use paths are typically, but not always, aligned with street corridors. Therefore, the most logical method for constructing new shared use paths is to incorporate them into street improvement and construction projects. These projects are usually planned and funded by the City of Bozeman or Montana Department of Transportation, but occasionally are part of large private developments. The “Path to the M” is an example of a significant shared use path construction project involving multiple government jurisdictions and several non-profit organizations.

## Connector Paths

Connectors can be constructed using the widest range of methods. Often, they need to be constructed with private property owners as required by

Bozeman Unified Development Code. Connector paths and associated wayfinding can be planned and budgeted as a part of street improvement or construction projects. Lastly, non-profit partners may also construction new connectors.

## Neighborhood Trails

Trails are typically constructed in conjunction with private development. Therefore, they are primarily dictated by the Unified Development Code.

## Regulations

The City of Bozeman requires active transportation improvements through the Unified Development Code, in sections of the code that include transportation pathways and recreation pathways. There are also design and construction standards for some active transportation facilities within the City's public work standards.

The following actions are recommended.

- New development, regardless of type, should be required to construct any active transportation facility identified in this plan. The UDC should be reviewed to ensure this is clearly required.
- Several other UDC revisions include allowing some flexibility for active transportation typologies to be located within watercourse setbacks (see pg. 100 for details) and allowing certain facility corridors to count towards a project's parkland requirements.
- The City should revise its Transportation and Engineering standards to include all of the active transportation facilities identified in this plan and the corresponding specifications.

## Policies

Building the comprehensive active transportation network requires a variety of aligned policies to ensure efficient implementation. A review of existing policies should be completed to ensure they support the recommendations in this plan.

The following actions are recommended.

- Replace the routes proposed by the PROST Plan with those proposed in the PRAT Plan in the City GIS Community Development and Infrastructure Viewers.
- For the PRAT Plan routes added to the City GIS include a data layer like the "View Additional Resources" layer currently available for existing facilities to provide basic specifications of the proposed routes.
- Continue to engage developers and educate them about the PRAT Plan routes, facility classifications, design standards, and maintenance requirements. Ensure the PRAT Plan is readily available and directly referenced in City entitlement process materials.
- Revise policies and procedures to reference the Triangle Trails Plan and the Triangle Transportation Plan.
- Develop policies in conjunction with Gallatin County and the City of Belgrade to review proposed network facilities adjacent to jurisdictional boundaries and identify opportunities to partner on the construction of new routes.

- The City should include the active transportation component of the PRAT Plan within the scope of establishing a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

## Funding

Financing the construction of a comprehensive active transportation network will require a long-term commitment from the City and its partners. A variety of funding sources will be necessary to implement the route construction proposed in this plan. Different funding mechanisms will apply to each facility typology.

Numerous State and Federal grants are available annually to assist with active transportation facility construction. These grant funds are awarded on a competitive basis and demand often exceeds allocation. While grants are not a reliable source of funding, they are worth pursuing. An overview of applicable grants is included below.

The purpose of the future Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is to coordinate transportation planning. The MPO may be an option to assist with the planning, coordination, and funding for active transportation route construction.

New shared use paths that align with City or State rights-of-way can be designed and constructed as streets and roads are improved or built. Therefore, the funding could come from several sources or a combination thereof including Montana Department of Transportation, City of Bozeman, private developers, and grants.

Connector paths are a critical component of a complete active transportation network and can be

funded similarly to, and potentially in conjunction with, shared use path projects.

The following actions are recommended.

- Add prioritized shared use path and connector path projects to the Parks and Trails Capital Improvements Plan and the Transportation, Engineering Capital Improvements Plan and as part of the Cash-in-Lieu program.
- Allocate an annual portion of the City's street construction budget to build shared use paths and critical connector paths
- Include Bozeman's active transportation network and plan into the scope of the future Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Identify potential State and Federal grants for proposed shared use and connector path projects on an annual basis. Work with community partners where appropriate.
- Coordinate with other jurisdictions and partners to secure matching funds and improve competitiveness of active transportation grant applications.

Neighborhood trail construction will likely be incorporated as part of future residential and commercial development projects. These improvements will be completed by the developer as part of a private project's required infrastructure improvements.

The Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLT) has partnered with the City to construct numerous neighborhood trails and improve connector trails throughout the community. GVLT will continue to play an important

role in the implementation of the PRAT Plan as it relates to trails and outdoor recreation.

The following actions are recommended.

- Continue to ensure that UDC requirements facilitate the construction of neighborhood trails in a way that connects to the larger active transportation network.
- Use Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland funds for constructing trails that are part of park and recreation facilities, create key linkages between parks or eliminate significant barriers within the overall Active Transportation network.
- Continue to partner with GVLT to develop and maintain important neighborhood trails.

## **State and Federal Grants**

### **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)**

The Surface Transportation Block Grant program (STBG) provides flexible funding that may be used by States and municipalities for projects to improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects.

The recent Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” (BIL), expanded and reformed this critical program which supports smaller biking and walking projects. The act also increased the size of the transportation alternatives funding set aside.

### **Rebuilding American Infrastructure and Sustainability and Equity (RAISE):**

The RAISE program to help urban and rural communities move forward on projects that modernize roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, and intermodal transportation and make our transportation systems safer, more accessible, more affordable, and more sustainable. Previously known as BUILD and TIGER discretionary grants, these competition awards support the development of transportation infrastructure. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) more than doubled the funding the RAISE Program in 2022.

### **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)**

This program provides funding to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The Access Program supplements State and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators.

### **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**

This is a financial assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The RTP provides funds to the States for a variety of uses including construction of new recreational trails and acquisition of easements and fee simple title for recreational trail corridors. Utilize Community partners to increase likelihood of grant funding.

### **Montana Trail Stewardship Program**

This program is administered by Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department and can be used for the construction and maintenance of natural trails or

shared use paths. The maximum award is \$75,000 and approximately \$1.67 million were dispersed to over 30 projects in 2022. Utilize Community partners to increase likelihood of grant funding. This can also fund nordic ski grooming and equipment.

## Prioritization

The PRAT Plan proposes an ambitious slate of new active transportation routes to extend and connect the network. The construction of new segments and routes will take years and considerable funding. Therefore, it is important to develop and utilize a method to prioritize the proposed improvement projects.

The following actions are recommended.

- Develop a methodology for prioritizing potential active transportation network projects based on the following criteria:
  - Importance of active transportation connection or route as outlined in the PRAT Plan
  - Importance to the Parks & Recreation Department facilities, operations, and objectives of the PRAT Plan
  - Importance to the Bozeman Area Transportation Master Plan
  - Importance to the Bozeman Climate Action Plan
  - Importance related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals

- Opportunity to leverage partnerships and funding sources

- Create, and annually revise, a rolling 5-year construction plan similar to the City's CIP
- Add larger high-priority projects into the City's CIP

## NETWORK MAINTENANCE

Maintaining active transportation routes that are safe and accessible for users of all ages and abilities is a high priority. In addition, adequate maintenance is critical to maximizing year-round utilization. The City needs to establish annual and long-term maintenance plans that includes a deferred maintenance analysis.

There are three essential elements to properly maintaining an active transportation network. First, establish minimum standards for maintenance. Next, determine maintenance responsibility for each segment of the network. Lastly, identify the various sources to finance the necessary maintenance.

## Methods

Developing a comprehensive maintenance strategy will require considering various surface types, locations, responsible parties, and available funding.

## Anchor Routes and Shared Use Paths

Anchor Routes and shared use paths located within street rights-of-way are typically maintained by the corresponding jurisdiction. One challenge is achieving consistent maintenance expectations and standards between the City, County, and State.

## Connector Paths

The maintenance of Connectors not only depends on the responsible party but also on the surface type for each route.

## Neighborhood Trails

Despite being smaller, trails require a considerable amount of maintenance depending on location, the quality of construction, and the amount of use. Neighborhood trails are typically maintained by neighborhood associations, HOAs, the City, or GVLTA.

## Regulations

The ability of the City to regulate maintenance of active transportation routes is limited. The City should consider ways to require routes owned or managed by private parties to be maintained according to established standards.

The following actions are recommended.

- ◇ Strengthen requirements for residential subdivisions, commercial developments, and other privately held routes to be adequately maintained according to standards adopted by the City.

## Policies

Maintenance of active transportation routes in Bozeman is currently managed through a variety of resources, including private property owners, homeowner associations, community groups, non-profit partners, the City, and the Montana Department of Transportation. Clarifying responsibilities for maintenance and establishing standards will help ensure the financial investment

developing a complete network is protected and enhanced in future years.

The following actions are recommended.

- ◇ Establish a comprehensive maintenance plan that includes minimum standards for upkeep, repairs, and replacement
- ◇ Conduct a comprehensive deferred maintenance analysis of each route identifying the current condition, upkeep and repair needs, and sections needing to be rebuilt
- ◇ Establish a maintenance template for the City, property owners, and partners to develop schedule tasks and estimate costs
- ◇ Review and clarify how the Bozeman Parks and Trails District can support the maintenance of the network
- ◇ Identify priority routes for winter transportation. These routes will require regular snow removal and other maintenance to create a year-round active transportation network.

## Standards

General maintenance standards for evaluating needs for surface care, repairs, safety precautions, and managing adjacent landscaping should be developed for and consistently applied to all network typologies. In addition to annual and long-term tasks, seasonal maintenance of shared use paths is essential to accommodating year-round active transportation. Paved paths must have the snow removed frequently during the winter and be swept of grit and debris each spring.

The following actions are recommended.

- ◇ Develop a comprehensive maintenance plan including detailed standards by typology that ensure a high-level of safety, accessibility, and utilization.

Below are recommended routine and periodic maintenance tasks based on surface type.

Paved Surfaces—Routine maintenance activities:

- ◇ Regular sweeping to remove debris, gravel, and other hazardous items
- ◇ Regular snow removal during winter months
- ◇ Inspect and repair pavement surface problems (seal cracks, grind down ridges, cut back tree roots, repair pavement)
- ◇ Prune adjacent and overhanging vegetation to reduce encroachment or cause sight distance problems
- ◇ Treating noxious weeds along corridor
- ◇ Mowing trail edges if applicable (keep vegetation height low along trail)
- ◇ Clearing drainage features to ensure proper function

Paved Surfaces—Periodic maintenance activities:

- ◇ Coordinate and schedule pavement overlays as part of adjacent road maintenance
- ◇ Addition of surfacing material depending on condition (2-3 years)
- ◇ Re-grading to improve cross-slope or out-slope for improved drainage

- ◇ Improvement of transitions with sidewalks or streets, restripe crosswalks and other markers
- ◇ Repair or replace wayfinding, stop control signs and other elements
- ◇ Restripe crosswalks and other markers

Natural Surfaces—Routine maintenance activities:

- ◇ Removing encroaching vegetation from trail tread (grading, chemical treatment)
- ◇ Prune adjacent and overhanging vegetation to reduce encroachment or cause sight distance problems
- ◇ Treating noxious weeds along corridor
- ◇ Mowing trail edges if applicable (keep vegetation height low along trail)
- ◇ Clearing drainage features to ensure proper function
- ◇ Flood or rain damage repair: silt clean up, culvert clean out, etc.
- ◇ Bridge/culvert inspection, clearing/repair
- ◇ Map/signage post condition inspection, and vandalism repair
- ◇ Assessing need for sign/map updates or replacement

Natural Surfaces—Periodic maintenance activities:

- ◇ Yearly trail evaluation to determine the need for minor repairs, identification of erosion damage, need for improved drainage
- ◇ Addition of surfacing material depending on condition (2-3 years)

- ◇ Re-grading to improve cross-slope or out-slope for improved drainage
- ◇ Improvement of transitions with sidewalks or streets, restripe crosswalks and markers
- ◇ Repair or replace wayfinding, stop control signs and other elements
- ◇ Restripe crosswalks and other markers

- ◇ Allocate an annual portion of the City’s street maintenance budget to repair shared use paths and paved connector paths
- ◇ Include Bozeman’s active transportation network and plan into the future Metropolitan Planning Organization budget

## Funding

Like construction, the maintenance of Bozeman’s active transportation is funded by a variety of entities including the City, Montana Department of Transportation, non-profit partners, and private property owners. There are more maintenance needs than committed funding which leads to a backlog of repairs and overall degradation of accessibility and utilization.

According to the Rails to Trail Conservancy, annual maintenance costs on average range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per trail mile, depending upon the surface. Therefore, average annual funding required to maintain Bozeman’s 178 miles of paths and trails is approximately \$267,000.

The funding needed to adequately maintain the network will only increase as new extensions and routes are constructed. To meet this financial commitment, the City and its partners must proactively account for the necessary funding to execute the annual and long-term maintenance plans and aggressively commit the dollars.

The following actions are recommended.

- ◇ Ensure that a significant portion of the Parks and Trails District funds are dedicated to path and trail maintenance

## Prioritization

Addressing the maintenance backlog of existing active transportation network will take years and considerable funding. Therefore, it is important to develop and utilize a method to prioritize the needed upkeep and repair projects.

The following actions are recommended.

Develop a methodology for prioritizing potential maintenance projects based on the following criteria:

- Area of deferred maintenance that poses a public safety risk
- Area of deferred maintenance that restricts equitable access
- Area of deferred maintenance that reduces utilization
- Highly utilized routes
- Ability to partner and/or leverage creative funding opportunities

## Recommended UDC Revisions

If the PRAT Vision – centered around five goals - is to become a reality, several strategies will have to be codified in Bozeman’s Municipal Code, a portion of which is referred to as the Unified Development Code (UDC).

Since a UDC overhaul is taking place at the time of this writing, this PRAT Plan cannot suggest specific UDC language. Instead, we have consolidated UDC revision recommendations to be incorporated into the UDC at the earliest opportunity, including but not limited to strategies in the following areas:

### Equitable Access:

- ◇ Support an equitable distribution of elements, park types, and facilities, especially in communities of color, low income communities, and in places where there are gaps in safe, walking access.

### Programs, Places and Partnerships:

- ◇ Prioritize the collocation of parks with areas of natural resource value in Department investments and throughout the subdivision and site plan review process.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities:

- ◇ Consider requirements for new developments to infill the active transportation system as is currently required for roads.

- ◇ Make adjustments to the watercourse setback requirements to allow all trail types, on a limited basis.
- ◇ Allow certain active transportation elements to count towards a new development project’s parkland requirements.

### Natural Resources:

- ◇ Allow natural areas deemed to have high natural resource value to count towards a new development project’s parkland requirements.
- ◇ Require qualified staff to conduct a site inspection early in the planning stage (Conceptual or Pre-app stage) to identify opportunities for natural resource preservation and protection.
- ◇ Strengthen the General Standard for protecting the Natural Environment in proposed new developments (currently BMC 38.410.010)
- ◇ Strengthen the community tree ordinance ( BMC 16.05.330) to increase the number of trees entering into the public domain.

In 2024, the implementation of the PRAT Plan in the UDC should be prioritized and it should be reviewed periodically to ensure 1) the above are being consistently applied in the Planning Review process and 2) the above continue to support the vision of the PRAT Plan.

# LOOKING FORWARD

The PRAT plan sets forth an ambitious vision and series of goals for the growth of the system that are driven by community voices. These goals are the product of rigorous community conversations, multiple surveys, in-depth analysis by subject matter experts, and stakeholder visioning. Going forward, the City should use the plan as a tool to assist in decision making as it relates to investment strategies and resource allocation to ensure barriers to participation are removed and create a more equitable system. Finally, the PRAT plan should serve as a unifying document that helps align the needs of the community with the priorities and actions of the City in order to continue to grow an inclusive, loved, and connected park system.

## **Amendments to the Parks, Recreation, and Active Transportation Plan**

The PRAT Plan should be reviewed and revised as needed every 5 years. Because the PRAT Plan is coordinated with the growth policy, Bozeman Strategic Plan and other city documents, the City's growth policy, and in light of the time and effort invested in the preparation of this plan, staff should follow the procedures for growth policy amendments and other relevant state laws for revisions.

## **Amendments to Individual Park Master Plans**

Since adoption of the PROST in 2007, there has been a goal to update park master plans for existing individual parks within the system. With the adoption of the PRAT, this effort should be undertaken on a neighborhood or other sub-area level

to forecast improvement needs for the Department, partners and new developments to implement the recommendations in the PRAT and changing community needs. The individual park master plans should be conceptual in nature and will be used to:

- ◇ implement new design guidelines as identified in the PRAT Design Manual for the individual park type
- ◇ analyze site-specific potential and existing conditions
- ◇ forecast what types of improvements are needed in individual parks to improve the balance of offerings across all neighborhoods and to eliminate access barriers.
- ◇ target appropriate grant funds and partners.

Using neighborhood-level or other subareas, such as Urban Renewal Districts, as the boundary for these amendments, this type of assessment will not only guide investments in existing parks, it will illustrate needs that parks in new developments can meet.

Parks and Recreation staff should work with the Urban Parks and Forestry Board and the City's Communications and Engagement staff to design appropriate community engagement for the scale and scope of these amendments.

Cash-in-lieu of Parkland (CILP) funding can be used for design efforts that result in capital improvements and would be an appropriate source of funding for Park Master Plan Amendments because it would set up future CILP and Improvements-in-Lieu of Parkland (IILP) investments.

# TOP 10 PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT

## RECREATION FACILITIES

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

ON-ROAD BIKE LANES OR  
FACILITIES

POOLS, INDOOR

POOLS, OUTDOOR

TRAILS, PAVED

NATURE CENTERS

COMMUNITY GARDENS

WATER ACCESS FOR RECREATION

SPRAYGROUNDS/SPLASH PAD

PAVILIONS AND PICNIC AREAS

## PROGRAMS

AQUATICS OR SWIMMING

ARTS AND CULTURE

WINTER RECREATION

FITNESS

ETIQUETTE PROGRAMS FOR  
PARKS AND TRAIL USERS

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

HISTORY

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

SENIORS/ACTIVE AGING

SPECIAL EVENTS

# TOP 10 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Parks and Recreation Department should center equity in all department decisions; strive to provide universal access to parks and programs; and provide a consistent set of basic elements across neighborhoods.
2. The Parks and Recreation Department should explore alternative funding methods to leverage existing City funding for future facility improvements and program development; alternative methods may include, but are not limited to philanthropic sources and grants.
3. The Parks and Recreation Department should develop sub-area plans to evaluate existing city parkland facilities and their recreational opportunities and to engage neighborhoods in planning for growth and infill development; sub-area plans should guide future city parkland acquisition, facility improvements, and active transportation route planning.
4. The Parks and Recreation Department should contribute to and invest in the community's city-wide active transportation network.
5. The Parks and Recreation Department should establish a formal process for partnering with affiliate groups, advocacy groups, and non-profit partners; institute policies and guidelines for partnering with non-city organizations; and promote continued collaboration with existing organizations and grow new partner relationships.
6. The Parks Division should maintain the current level of parkland per resident by continuing to acquire parkland through the development review process, working with partner organizations, private donors, and through policies to enable strategic acquisitions.
7. The Parks Division should promote the sustainable use of natural resources within city parkland areas; identify, acquire, protect, manage and enhance key intact, contiguous sensitive land areas; and adopt comprehensive design standards and specifications that encourage natural resource protection, enhancement, and sustainable and resilient park designs and increase the amount of drought tolerant and native vegetation and trees in the park system.
8. The Recreation Division should explore the expansion of existing and addition of new program offerings to provide year-round recreational opportunities for all residents; create new program offerings and elements that respond to identified community needs; and increase safe evening and night time access at designated facilities.
9. The Parks and Recreation Department should advocate for programmatic and regulatory revisions and develop a philosophy and policies for cost recovery and revenue generation.
10. The Parks and Recreation Department should develop a dashboard to routinely share successes and communicate with the public how resources are being allocated.