6 Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space

This Chapter highlights the recreational opportunities available to City residents including access to parks, recreational facilities and programs, trails, and other open spaces and facilities that serve the City and the region. It identifies existing programs and facilities and discusses recreational needs and opportunities in the future.

PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING GOALS

The 1999 "City of Rawlins Master Plan Update" identified the following Goals and Policies for parks and recreation, which were used as a starting point and basis.

Additionally, the City has established "Goals and Objectives 2012-2013" which address key action items and interest areas in the City that evolved from the City's visioning process. Several of these address parks, recreation and open spaces, as follow:

- *Sustainability*:
    - Maintain green spaces – including, cemetery, parks and athletic fields.
- *Quality of Life*:
    - Maintain a budget and encourage those organizations that the City supports to engage in community trash clean-up efforts

Park and Recreation Goals and Policies
(1999 Master Plan Update)

GOAL: Provide a full range of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities to all residents of Rawlins in a safe, convenient and economical manner.

A. Policy:	*Recreation opportunities shall be made available to the total population regardless of age, sex, creed, race or economic status.*
B. Policy:	*Consideration shall be given to existing and accepted principles, procedures and standards in the formation of a Master Plan.*
C. Policy:	*Recreation and park facilities shall be planned on a neighborhood, community, City and county-wide basis as integral parts of a cohesive, well-balanced system, to provide maximum recreation opportunities for all persons residing within the planning jurisdiction.*
D. Policy:	*Park and playground provisions, where feasible, should be made in each neighborhood, preferably adjacent to school facilities.*
E. Policy:	*Facilities shall be planned and designed to reflect probable future needs as well as current demand.*
F. Policy:	*Maximum efforts shall be made to coordinate planning in the public and private sectors.*
G. Policy:	*Link expansion of green belts and park areas to maintenance capabilities of the community. Emphasize low maintenance xeriscaping in design.*
H. Policy:	*Continue development of pedestrian and bicycle trails that can accommodate all ages, in and around Rawlins.*

and green belt, park enhancements.

- Provide quality Recreation Services for wellness, entertainment, education in a safe, hands-on creative environment for youth, adults and seniors.
- Support Sustainable Attractions and Special Events of community-wide benefit involving product/hosting of History/Art/Cultural Programs including musical and theatrical events.
- Support the establishment of a City/County Events Center for large events.

- *Service*:
  - Public works – provides public service and facility needs for the City. The department is managed by the Public Works Director with the support of a City Engineer, this department includes seven operating division, each headed by a division superintendent. Some divisions are further subdivided depending upon need and specialty, including the Cemetery and Grounds Maintenance.

These goals, policies and vision statements provide a framework for future planning and establish the important qualities that recreational programs and facilities provide for a well-rounded and healthy community.

"Music in the Park" event

Park and Recreation Facilities

The City of Rawlins Recreation Services Department manages recreation facilities and provides programs for wellness, entertainment, and education in a safe, hands-on, and creative environment for youth, adults, and seniors. The programs are varied, tailored to community interests, and include a "Music in the Park" series during the summer. Recreation programs are offered at the Recreation Center and in facilities located in various parks throughout the community. The Department includes approximately 15 full-time employees and at least that many seasonal employees during summer months.

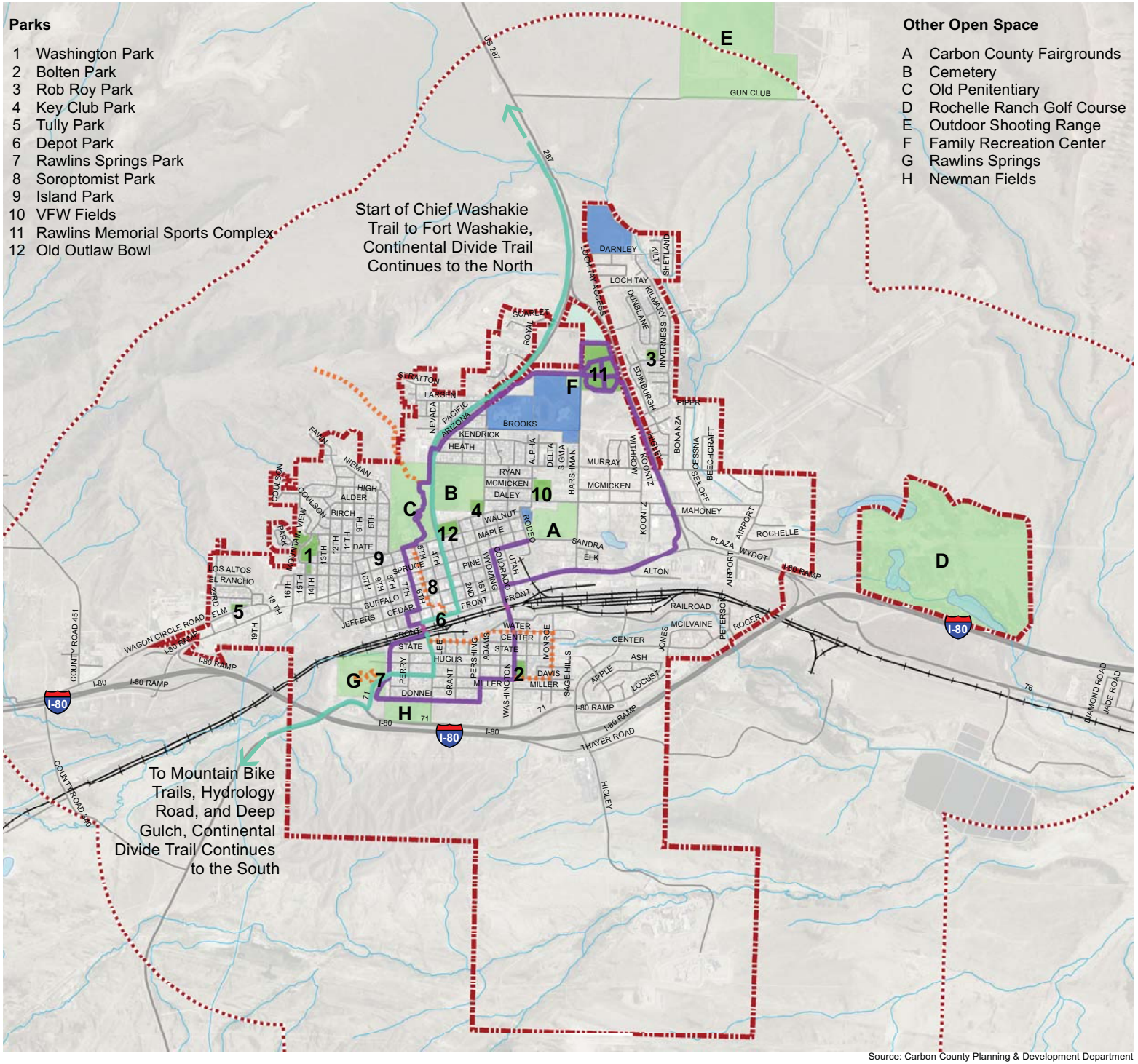
The City's Grounds (Parks) Division is a part of the Public Works Department and is responsible for maintenance and care of park facilities, the cemetery, and other open spaces that are city-owned. Department staff also plant and maintain city trees.

CITY-OWNED AND MAINTAINED PARKS

The City of Rawlins includes 63.7 acres of park land ranging in size from under one acre to over 30 acres. The parks located in neighborhoods generally serve the residential areas and provide a range of amenities including pavilions, restrooms, picnic tables, grill units, drinking fountains, and playground equipment along with tennis and basketball courts and horseshoe pits. They are generally within walking distance. Three additional parks are primarily devoted to sports fields. Table 6.1 identifies the Existing City-owned Parks and the range of facilities provided in each. Map 6.1 illustrates the location of each park, as well as the locations of other recreational facilities and schools.

Table 6.1: Existing Parks

Park Name	Address	Acreage	Pavilion	Restroom	Portable Toilet	Picnic Tables	Grilling Units	Drinking Fountains	Playground Equipment	Benches	Tennis Courts	Basketball Court	Baseball Fields	Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Horseshoe Pits	Other
			Amenities														
Washington Park	Mountain View Dr. and Park Dr.	10.15	1	X		X	X	X	x		X					X	Pavilion has electricity; Frisbee golf.
Bolten Park	Washing St. and E. Davis St.	3.32	2	1		X	X		X			X					One pavilion with electricity.
Rob Roy Park	Glasgow Blvd. and Kilmary Dr.	2.06			X	X	X	X	X			X					Half basketball court.
Key Club Park	800 Block Colorado St.	3.09	1				X	X			X	X					Basketball hoop.
Tully Park	W. Elm St. and El Rancho Dr.	1.70	1			X		X	X								Railroad engine
Depot Park	4th St. and W. Front St.	0.51	1			X	X		X								Water feature (non-potable); pavilion has electricity.
Rawlins Springs	W. Davis St. and Bennett St.	0.69				X											Railroad caboose and future trailhead.
Soroptimist Park	400 Block W Buffalo St.	0.08								X							
Island Park	W. Walnut St. and Date St.	0.09	1														Roadway island.
VFW Fields	Rodeo and Daley	6.83											4				1 lighted.
Rawlins Memorial Sports Complex	Harshman	30.24											2	2	3		Baseball and softball fields are lighted; as is one soccer field.
Old Outlaw Bowl	Walnut and 3rd	4.94													4		Cinder walking path.
TOTAL		**63.70**															



City of Rawlins General Plan Update

Map 6.1

Existing Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space

November 2012

0.5 0.25 0 Miles

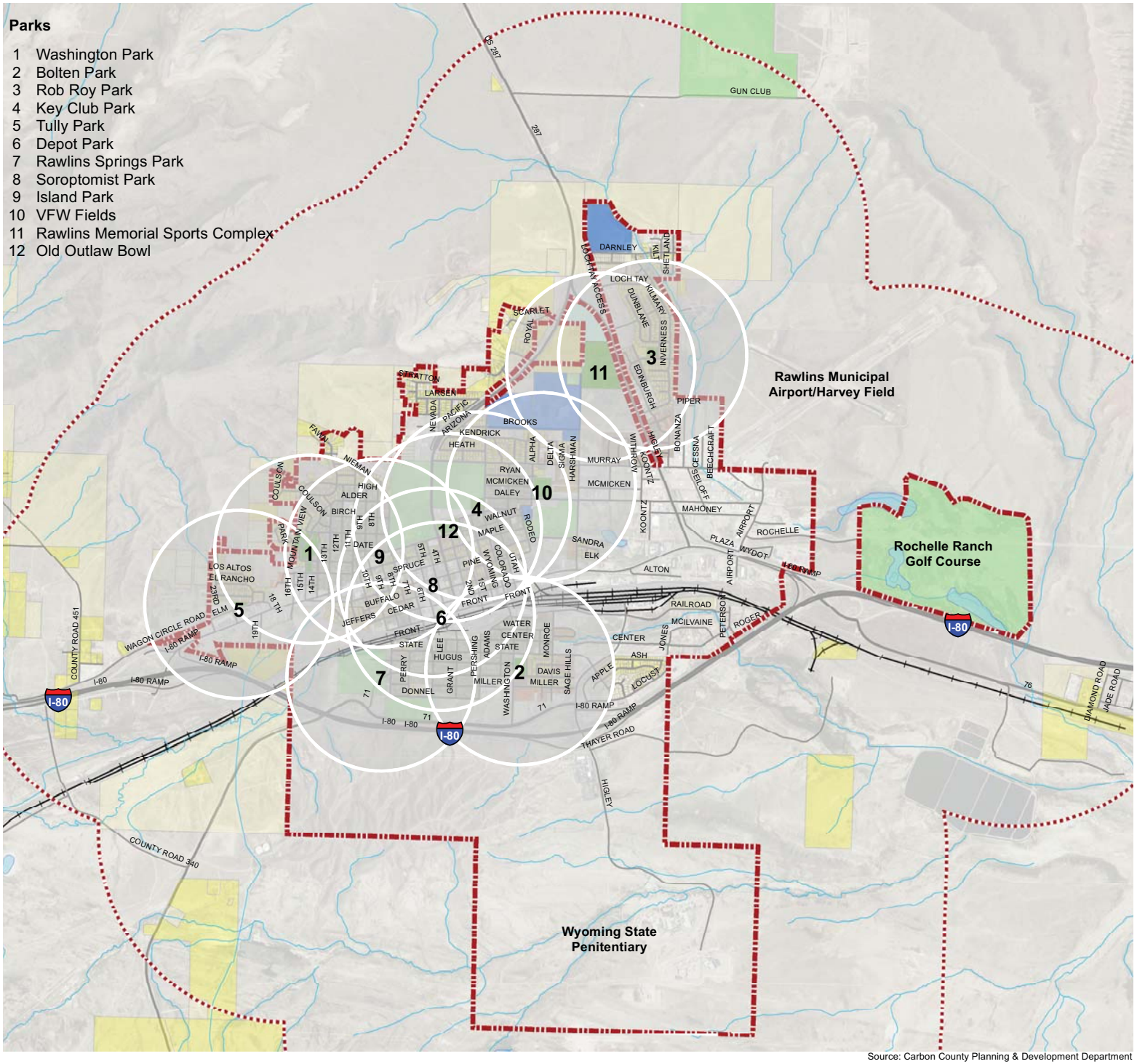
Source: Carbon County Planning & Development Department

Rawlins Memorial Sports Complex

Playground at Washington Park

Washington Park

Most existing residential areas appear to be well-served by parks. The circles on Map 6.2 show a one-half mile radius centered on each park facility. This distance is generally considered to be within walking distance. The larger sports complex serves the community at large and the surrounding region.



Source: Carbon County Planning & Development Department

City of Rawlins General Plan Update

- Park Service Area (1/2 Mile Radius)
- Park
- Other Open/Recreational Space

Residential Land Use

- Single Family Residential
- Single Family Residential (Mobile Home)
- Multi-Family Residential (Duplex, Triplex, Townhouse, and Higher Density)
- Undeveloped Residential Land

- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Roads
- Railroads
- 1-Mile Priority Area
- City of Rawlins Boundary

Map 6.2

Park Distribution

November 2012

0.5 0.25 0 Miles

Level of Service for Parks

Current Level of Service

The estimated current population in the City of Rawlins for 2012 is 9,262 persons. This includes approximately 468 (2,000 estimate) inmates at the Wyoming State Prison. For purposes of calculating the current level of service (LOS) for the City, the prison population has been excluded from the population estimate because the prison population does not use parks and recreation facilities in Rawlins. Therefore, the population used in calculating the current LOS is established at 8,794, and assumed to be residents of the City who have access to City-owned parks and recreation facilities. Based on that population number, the current LOS for parks in Rawlins is 7.24 acres of park land per each 1,000 in population.

Table 6.2: 2012 Level of Service for Parks

YEAR	2012 POPULATION	PARK ACRES	PARK ACRES PER 1000 POPULATION
2012 Rawlins City Parks	8,794	63.7	7.24

Note: Population does not include inmate population at the State Prison. Inmate population = 468 (2000 Census).

Level of service is a guide that some communities use to determine how much additional park land will be needed in the future due to growth in population. As a community grows, it may wish to establish a goal to maintain the current LOS into the future and plan additional park land acquisitions on that basis. The analysis of Future Park Need that follows assumes that the City of Rawlins wishes to at least maintain its current LOS for parks.

Future City Park Needs

Population projections for the City of Rawlins indicate that in the next 20 years, the community will grow slightly from 9,262 to 10,179 – an increase of 917 persons, and decline slightly by 2030 to a population of 10,123. Again, these growth projections include the prison population, which is not included in the calculations for future park need. Therefore, population projects for future park need are based on growth to 9,711 in 2022 and decline to 9,655 by 2030.

Based on these population projections, the City of Rawlins will not need to add additional park acreage to maintain its current LOS (see Table 6.3.) In that case, it is recommended that the City use its resources toward upgrading existing parks, improving park maintenance, and adding additional facilities and recreation opportunities in parks. As additional residential neighborhoods are added, the City may wish to look at its distribution of parks and assure that neighborhoods have good access to parks – preferably with a one-half mile walking distance.

Table 6.3: Park Land Needs Analysis – 2022 and 2030

YEAR	POPULATION	EXST. ACRES	PARK ACRES PER 1000 POPULATION	NEEDED TO MAINTAIN CURRENT	ACRES NEEDED
2022	9,711	63.7	6.56	63.70	0.00
2030	9,655	63.7	6.60	63.34	-0.36

Note: Population does not include inmate population at the State Prison.

Inmate population = 468 (2000 Census).

Other Recreation and Open Spaces

In addition to the 63.7 acres of City-Owned and Maintained Parks, residents of Rawlins have access to an impressive variety of other recreational opportunities, including a recreation center, golf course, and shooting ranges totaling nearly 817 acres. These facilities complement the vast amount of public lands surrounding the City. Table 6.4 identifies these additional facilities, including their ownership and acreage.

Table 6.4: Other Open Spaces/Recreational Spaces

Facility	Ownership	Acreage
County Fairgrounds	Carbon County	27.30
Cemetery	Rawlins City	39.90
Old Penitentiary	Joint Powers Commission	60.60
Rochelle Ranch Golf Course	Rawlins City	348.70
Outdoor Shooting Range	Rawlins City	255.40
Family Recreation Center	Rawlins City	2.99
Newman Fields	BLM/leased to the City	45.00
Rawlins Springs	Board of County Commissioners	37.03
TOTAL		816.92

In addition to the facilities listed in Table 6.4, a temporary hockey rink and a runway for a radio controlled model airplane complex are located in the open areas just south of Rawlins Memorial Sports Complex. The property where these facilities are located is not intended to be developed for recreational purposes. When a future use for the property has been determined, the model airplane complex will likely move to another, undetermined site.

Rawlins Family Recreation Center

The Rawlins Family Recreation Center is city-owned and includes locker rooms with showers and provides activities at the Kids Corral for children under 5-years old during selected hours of operation. The facility is managed by the Recreation Services Department which provides for a variety of programs, fitness classes, activities, and leagues for children and adults. Facilities include fully equipped fitness rooms with a broad variety of exercise and fitness equipment and a multi-purpose room. It includes three gyms, three racquetball courts, a walking track, and a weight room. It is open from early morning through evening, Monday through Friday, with less extensive hours of operation on weekends and in the summer.

Indoor and Outdoor Shooting Ranges

Located within the Rawlins Family Recreation Center, the indoor shooting range has ten 25-meter lanes that handle small bore rifles, archery, black powder and hand guns up to 44 magnum. A rifle cone allows hunters to sight in high-powered rifles. The shooting range is open November 1st to April 30th and features an automated target retrieval system. Open shooting is encouraged. Targets, ammunition and safety equipment are available for sale or use, and pistols and .22 rifles are available for rent. The facility holds safety classes and is the site of training exercises for several law enforcement agencies.

The Outdoor Shooting Range is located at 2201 East Gun club road, just north of the city. The range is open to the public at least five days a

week. The facility accommodates trap, skeet and 5-stand shotgun shooting, and includes a 15 shooting position 300 yard rifle range, a 1,000 yard black powder rifle cartridge range, and a 10 position pistol range. Open to the public**,** it also accommodates archery.

Rawlins Outdoor Shooting Range

Rochelle Ranch Golf Course

Rochelle Ranch Golf Course is a championship 18-hole municipal golf course that is currently the longest golf course in the state of Wyoming. It was a gift to the City by Curt and Marian Rochelle, local sheep ranchers. *Golf Digest Magazine* identified it as the 29th toughest golf course in America, and in *Golf Magazine* called it one of the top five courses in Wyoming. The course has essentially no rough, only grass fairways bordered by native sagebrush and scrub. Facilities include a practice area, restaurant, and lounge.

Rochelle Ranch Golf Course

Wyoming Frontier Prison (Old Pen)

The Old Pen occupies over 60 acres near the center of town, and is overseen by a seven member Board made up of representatives of the City of Rawlins and Carbon County. The Board's main responsibility is to preserve and operate the Wyoming Frontier Prison Historic Site. The site operates for community service through its historic significance, tourism, education, and recreational activities. Tours of the facility are available most times of the year and are scheduled regularly; larger groups may book special tours.

In addition to tours of the Old Pen the facility includes a museum, and it houses the Wyoming Peace Officers' Museum, an exhibit on the current Wyoming State Penitentiary, a gift shop, and a walking path that connects it to other community trails and facilities. Special community

events are held at the Old Pen on holidays, and facilities may be rented for weddings and other events. The structures and land associated with the Old Pen are an opportunity for increased tourism, recreational and cultural facilities and events, and community gathering.

Old Pen

Cemetery

The Rawlins Cemetery occupies 40 acres and is maintained by the City's Cemetery Division. The cemetery is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight.

Carbon County Fairgrounds

Owned and maintained by Carbon County, the fairgrounds are home of the Carbon County Fair which takes place annually in late summer where 4H and FFA (Future Farmers of America) members show their animal husbandry projects, and where multiple exhibits and demonstrations take place. The year-round facilities include an arena, exhibit hall, and the Carbon County Multiplex facility. Small user fees are charged for some facilities, others are available at no charge.

Carbon County Fair Parade

Rawlins Springs

This small park memorializes the fresh water spring discovered by General John A. Rawlins while serving on a scouting party for the Transcontinental Railroad. With reliable sources of water a rarity in the thirsty desert, the spring was a strategic resource that led to the site being established as a division point for the railroad. Soon after a fledgling settlement was established, and eventually grew to become the City of Rawlins. The property on which the spring is located includes a small interpretive area; the remainder is planned for a future museum.

Interpretive Sign at Rawlins Springs

School Fields and Recreation Facilities

While school fields and recreation facilities are not normally part of a public parks and recreation profile, they regularly serve as places for sports and recreation. This is true in Rawlins, where non-school sports are played on school fields, and where indoor recreation facilities are occasionally used for non-school events. Likewise, students regularly use City facilities, even though no formal agreement exists with the Carbon County School District 1. For example, the golf course is regularly used for physical education classes, and the Rawlins Recreation Center is used for racquetball, volleyball, and basketball games. Similarly, school clubs and teams use both school facilities and the recreation center.

Even though the schools frequently use City facilities, they pay no fees to assist the City with maintenance and repairs. The City may wish to enter into some agreement with the School District to negotiate the use of school facilities for local residents and to receive some compensation for wear and tear on park facilities that are used by school groups.

Trails

The City of Rawlins has developed 7.88 miles of trail within the City boundary, with an additional 2.8 miles proposed as part of expanding the Walking Path and the Rawlins Springs Interpretive Trail. As illustrated in Map 6.1, the trail system will encompass 10.68 miles of trail upon completion. Many of the City's trails also connect to regional trails in the surrounding area, including the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the 1849 Cherokee Trail, and the Rawlins-to-Fort-Washakie stage road (also known as the Chief Washakie Trail.)

Existing Walking Path

Existing Walking Path

The City has an Existing Walking Path that traces a loop through downtown. The trail connects Rotary Park, the Family Recreation Center and the Old Penitentiary, passing under the railroad in two locations and winding through residential neighborhoods before ending at Rawlins Springs. It is primarily a paved pathway along City streets, and is 7.88 miles long.

Proposed Walking Path

An expansion of the Existing Walking Path is proposed on the south side of the railroad tracks along Water Street, Monroe Street, and Davis Street. It forms a shorter loop south of the tracks and adds 1.11 miles to the system.

Proposed Rawlins Springs Interpretive Trail

This trail will run from Rawlins Springs through downtown to Rawlins Peak on the northern edge of the city, utilizing the existing walking path and adds 1.69 miles of trails. The plan includes interpretive signing, small way-finding and interpretive signs, and possibly two kiosks. Improvements to the 6th Street Union Pacific Pedestrian Underpass are also desired. A group including local City, State, and Federal partners has formed to apply for funding.

Existing Regional Trails

Many regional trails with historic importance either pass directly through the City of Rawlins or are very close by and readily accessible. The most prominent is the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Extending 3100 miles between Mexico and Canada, the trail terminates in the north at Glacier National park and extends to the Mexican border in New Mexico. The trail traverses landscapes primarily on public lands within 50 miles of the geographic feature, and was established in 1978 through the authority of the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543).

In Wyoming, the trail passes through Yellowstone National Park; the Bridger/Teton, Shoshone, and Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests; and public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It traverses through Rawlins along U.S. Highway 287 on the north and along U. S. Highway 71 heading south. Much of the trail from Rawlins, south to Colorado occurs on the roadway. Within Rawlins, the trail generally follows existing City walking paths along 3rd St. (U.S. Hwy. 287), through the Old Penitentiary, along 6th Street and under the underpass, and along Front and Bennett Streets to Rawlins Springs.

Chief Washakie Trail

The Chief Washakie Trail, which parallels the eastern side of the Wind River Mountains was a trade route for the Eastern Shoshone and is named in honor of their great chief, Washakie. It extends from Fort Washakie to Rawlins via U.S. Hwy. 287. Chief Washakie was a Tussawehee (White Knife) Shoshoni by birth, and eventually became the head chief of the Eastern Snakes. He was known for his willingness to cooperate with the white pioneer settlers, and is the only Native American for whom a fort is named. A sign outside of Rawlins indicates the beginning of the Chief Washakie Trail heading north toward Fort Washakie.

Other Regional Trails

Several other regional trails are nearby. Highway 71 heading south leads to two mountain bike trails – Hydrology Road and Deep Gulch. The Mormon Trail, California Trail, and Oregon Trail cross to the north about 50 miles from Rawlins, the 1849 Cherokee trail roughly traverses the current UP railroad route, and the Overland Stage Route and Pony Express Trail pass approximately 10 miles to the south.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS AND RECREATION

The City and its residents appear comfortable and satisfied with the quantity and locations of existing parks. If the majority of future growth takes place within the existing City boundary, based on population projections, it will not be necessary to add additional parks in the next twenty to twenty-five years. If residential neighborhoods are developed outside of the current City boundary, then the City should be assured that those new residents have access to a neighborhood park within walking distance.

It will also be important to establish a standard for park development, such as the following:

> *Neighborhood Parks shall include at a minimum, a restroom, pavilion, playground structure, picnic tables, walking path, open fields for play, and trees. Additional facilities may also be provided depending on the resources available at the park locations and the desires of local residents.*

Rather than new parks, the City should focus its resources on improving and upgrading existing parks (based on the determination of a standard as above), providing additional facilities in the parks, and working with residents to determine a broader range of recreational programs that take place in parks and other recreational facilities. Ideas that surfaced during the public process included more programs for youth and more activities and events during the winter. A "Winter Fest" might be planned to complement the summer "Music in the Park", a sports field might be flooded for ice skating, or other special activities could take place indoors at the Recreation Center or the Old Penitentiary, or even in cooperation with schools.

Additionally, the City should begin negotiations with the School District to provide off-hours use of school facilities for local residents and to receive some compensation or shared responsibility for maintenance of City parks that are used for school activities. Similarly, the City, Carbon County and School District should consider the development of expensive joint facilities in the future as the need arises, such as swimming pools and water parks.

PARK MAINTENANCE

Resources are often limited, which affects park maintenance and the ability to upgrade facilities. When a community has budgeted all that it can for park maintenance and upgrades, communities often turn to their residents for help. Many communities initiate "Adopt a Park" programs where local neighborhoods take responsibility for special clean-up activities and events, and generally keep a close eye on their particular neighborhood park. Such groups can also be involved in other volunteer activities that support parks and improve maintenance and safety, and help to determine additional facilities based on community needs.

NEW PARK OPPORTUNITIES

While the addition of new parks is not necessarily needed, there are two opportunities that could be explored further and incorporated into the existing system – each with unique characteristics.

The most obvious is the Old Pen and the acreage attached. Multiple recreational and tourism opportunities could take place there to add to the already scheduled tours and other events. The grounds might be used as a "Wyoming Wildlife Heritage Reserve" featuring the native wildlife of the region on large open tracts of open space that appear natural and complement the local landscape. This would offer educational opportunities for local schools and recreational opportunities for local residents, but would also be an additional attraction to the city for tourists interested in the West, its landscape and wildlife.

A second location is the natural drainage area and wetland on the east end of town near what is known as "Tin Can Hill". With limited development potential, this site could become a "Wetland Park" which offers less intense recreational opportunities such as hiking a trail or boardwalk, interpretive exhibits related to the wetland environment, and picnicking and wildlife viewing. With little intense development, an attractive, interesting, unique, and highly educational environment could become a local and regional attraction, and another reason for tourists to stay longer in Rawlins.

Both of these ideas are derived from the landscape and environment surrounding Rawlins, and provide an opportunity for the City to celebrate its unique and beautiful setting in the central, high plains of Wyoming.

Tin Can Hill

Trails

When the Proposed Trails are developed, in conjunction with good sidewalks and pedestrian ways, the City will have a good trail system that could only be complimented with additional trails that might travel through and connect the Wetland Park discussed above, and be connected to the City's planned trail system.

The City already has a group of interested residents who are pursuing and planning for more trails – particularly trails which have a historical or cultural interest that goes beyond the City of Rawlins. With the many historic regional trails nearby, the City could create opportunities for regional hikes, runs, or rides along historic trails originating in the City and connecting to the regional trails. If well advertised, walk, runs, and bicycle rides are increasingly attractive to locals as well as the broader sporting community.

Just as some communities initiate "Adopt a Park" programs, "Adopt a Trail" programs are also very popular and help communities monitor trail use and activity to assure they are safe, well maintained, and promoted.

Goals and Policies

Goal: To continue the provision of a full range of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities in a safe, convenient and economical manner.

Policy: Continue to provide recreation opportunities regardless of age, sex, creed, race or economic status.

Policy: Continue to provide and maintain neighborhood, parks throughout the residential districts and adjacent to school facilities.

Policy: Continue efforts to link existing parks and recreation facilities using trails and open space systems.

Policy: Continue to develop pedestrian and bicycle trails that can accommodate all ages and make Rawlins a more walkable and bikeable community.

Policy: Continue to use and promote low-maintenance, water-wise and resource-conserving techniques and methods.

Goal: To focus on the maintenance and enhancement of existing parks and recreation resources .

Policy: Establish clear and appropriate standards for park development.

Implementation Measure: Upgrade existing parks, provide new facilities, and establish new programs and services to meet existing and future needs.

Implementation Measure: Provide new facilities and programs for winter use and activity.

Implementation Measure: Provide new facilities and programs to meet the needs of youth, young families and aging segments of the population.

Implementation Measure: Establish "Adopt-a-Park" and similar programs to help meet maintenance and use demands.

Policy: Provide adequate resources to maintain and upgrade existing parks and recreation facilities.

Implementation Measure: Complete work at the golf c ourse to correct existing drainage issues.

Policy: Provide new parks in future annexed areas to maintain the existing level of service.

Policy: Develop underutilized parks and sites into special park facilities.

Implementation Measure: Develop the Old Pen grounds and Tin Can Hill area into special park facilities.

Implementation Measure: Develop new parks as needed in future annexation areas that maintain the existing levels of service citywide.

Policy: Develop underutilized parks and sites into special park facilities.

Implementation Measure: Develop the Old Pen site and Tin Can Hill area into special park facilities.

Goal: To provide a full range of parks and recreation services in Rawlins.

Policy: Establish agreements with The Carbon County School District 1 to formalize shared use and maintenance relationships.

Policy: Consider the establishment of shared use and cooperative agreements with Carbon County, Carbon School District and others for the development of future parks and recreation facilities and upgrades.

Goal: To continue efforts to create a more walkable and bikeable community .

Policy: Establish clear and appropriate standards for trails development.

Implementation Measure: Complete existing and proposed trail systems

Implementation Measure: Provide additional trails and trail systems to meet future needs and demand.

Implementation Measure: Establish special events, and develop marketing materials to promote knowledge of local and regional trails.

Implementation Measure: Establish "Adopt--Trail" and similar programs to help meet maintenance and use demands.