

**City of Valdez
Parks and Recreation
Master Plan Draft
May 2020**



This DRAFT Report will not be formatted until all edits are implemented into the Final Report. Please review for content, typos, etc. and not formatting issues.

Final formatting will include:
Cover page
Table of Contents
Spacing
Page breaks
Table numbers added and linked
Figure numbers added and linked
Photographs inserted
Page numbers
Footers
Etc.

Appendices may remain as appendices or may become stand-alone documents.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Table of Figures	3
Table of Tables	3
Acknowledgements	5
Parks and Recreation Master Plan.....	6
Executive Summary	6
Purpose of this Plan.....	6
Planning Process Summary	6
Key Issues and Opportunities Synopsis	6
Inventory Assessment and Level of Service Summary.....	7
Recommendations and Action Plan Summary Table.....	7
I. The Planning Context.....	8
A. Purpose of this Plan.....	8
B. History Valdez Parks and Recreation	8
C. Other Related Planning Efforts and Integration	9
D. Methodology of the Planning Process	9
E. Community Outreach	9
II. Community and Identified Needs.....	11
A. Demographic Profile.....	11
B. Community Survey Summary	18
C. Parks and Facilities Inventory and Assessment	24
D. Parks and Recreation Influencing Trends	49
E. Financial Analysis	12
F. Organizational Analysis.....	17
G. Program Analysis.....	19
III. Key Opportunities.....	24
A. Implementation.....	24
B. Recommendations	24
C. Action Plan, Cost Estimates and Prioritization	28
APPENDIX LIST	35
Level of Service Analysis and Methodology.....	35
Valdez Trails Map	11
Information Gathering Trip Memo	20

Valdez Master Plan Survey Report	21
--	----

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Valdez Demographic Overview	11
Figure 2: Valdez Population Projected Annual Growth Rates (2010 – 2019)	11
Figure 3: Projected Population Trends from 2000 to 2032	12
Figure 4: Median Age of Valdez between 2010 and 2024	12
Figure 5: 2019 Age Distribution in Valdez.....	13
Figure 6: 2019 Racial/Ethnic Diversity of Valdez	14
Figure 7: Median Household Income Distribution in Valdez	15
Figure 8: Employment Overview in Valdez, Alaska.....	16
Figure 9: County Health Ranking Model	17
Figure 10: Top Findings from the Community Survey	18
Figure 11: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents	19
Figure 12: Top Communication Methods	20
Figure 13: System Map.	26
Figure 14: Example of GIS inventory map and datasheet.....	26
Figure 15: GRASP® Level of Service.....	34
Figure 16: Valdez Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation	34
Figure 17: Walkability barriers.....	39
Figure 18: Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation	40
Figure 19: Walkable Access Gap Identification.....	42
Figure 20: Walkable Access Gap Identification Enlargements.....	42
Figure 21: Neighborhood Access to Indoor Recreation.....	44
Figure 22: Park System Benefits provided to People.....	2
Figure 23: Fitness and Wellness Participation of Valdez compared to the State of Alaska	3
Figure 24: Outdoor Recreation Household Participation in Valdez compared to State of Alaska	6
Figure 25: Team Sport Household Participation in Valdez compared to State of Alaska.....	9
Figure 26: FY16-FY20 Year Over Year Comparison	14
Figure 27: Operating Expenditures per Capita, FY16 through FY20	15
Figure 28: Pyramid Methodology	15
Figure 29: Department Organization Chart	17

Table of Tables

Table 1: Goals and Objectives.....	7
Table 2: Valdez Gender Distribution Compared to State and National Averages	12
Table 3: 2019 Valdez Educational Attainment.....	14
Table 4: VPR Familiarity	20
Table 5: VPR Satisfaction.....	21
Table 6: Facility and Program Importance.....	21
Table 7: Opinions on Trails.....	22
Table 8: Facility and Program Needs in the next 5 to 10 years	23
Table 9: Values and Vision for VPR	24
Table 10: Valdez Outdoor Locations.....	28
Table 11: Indoor Facility Inventory	30

Table 12: Park Ranking.....	31
Table 13: Indoor Ranking	32
Table 14: Map statistics for Image 3.....	35
Table 15: GRASP® Comparative Data.....	38
Table 16: Statistics for Image 5	41
Table 17: Three-Component Parks	41
Table 18: Valdez Capacities.....	46
Table 19: Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities, Median Population Served per Facility	47
Table 20: Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents.....	48
Table 21: Recreational Expenditures in Valdez, Alaska	49
Table 22: Generation by Age	10
Table 23: FY16-20 General Fund Budget	13
Table 24: Department FTE Count.....	19
Table 25: Sample Programs by Category	20
Table 26: Participation by Program Category	22
Table 27: Number of Uses by Location	22

Acknowledgements

City of Valdez

City Council

Mayor Jeremy O'Neil

Mayor Pro Tempore Sharon Scheidt

Council Member Ron Ruff

Council Member Christopher Moulton

Council Member Darren Reese

Council Member Dennis Fleming

Council Member Alan Sorum

Park and Recreation Commission

Michael Britt

John Kinstrey

Scott McCumby

Pete Carter

Amy Goold

Sarah Jorgenson-Owen

Brian Teale

City Manager

Mark Detter

Parks and Recreation Staff

Nicholas Farline, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director

Marcie Robertson, Park Maintenance Supervisor

Krystal Moulton, Recreation Center Coordinator

Bridget Irish, Adult & Youth Activities Coordinator

Nikki Duhamel, Office Manager

Jared Lustig, Recreation Manager

Consultant Team

GreenPlay, LLC

Corvus Designs

RRC Associates

For more information about this document please contact:

Valdez Parks and Recreation Department

314 Clifton Dr.

P.O. Box 307

Valdez, AK 99686

(907) 835-2531

www.valdezak.gov

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Executive Summary

Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide a 10-year, comprehensive analysis of the recreational resources and needs of the Valdez community. This information helps to clarify the community's vision for recreation facilities and services and guides future decision-making. This Master Plan has been created as a blueprint for providing quality recreation services, parks, trails, facilities, and programs throughout the City of Valdez.

Planning Process Summary

The project team which included City staff has guided this project. This team provided input to the consultant team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort creates a plan that fully utilizes the consultants' expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. The project consisted of the following tasks:

- Community/Stakeholder Engagement and Statically-Valid Survey
- Comprehensive Facility Inventory and Level of Service Analysis
- Assessment and Analysis of Existing Conditions
- Demographics, Trends, and Operational, Financial and Program Analysis
- Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

It is important to utilize various methods for gathering input and assessing community needs while developing a master plan. Each piece is vital to the process but should be looked at collectively. Communities that gather input via open forums, statistically valid surveys, and national standards tend to get a more accurate depiction of needs.

Key Issues and Opportunities Synopsis

Key challenges and opportunities were identified using several tools including review of existing plans and documents, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, a community survey, asset inventory, and level of service analysis. The information gathered from these sources was analyzed and evaluated, and the following key opportunities were identified:

- Increasing trails and pathway connectivity
- Building a field house or recreation center
- Maintaining what the City has / level of service and quality
- Sustaining the current system
- Branding, wayfinding, and marketing
- Maintaining and expanding partnerships
- Growing programs: Natural environment provides opportunities to grow outdoor recreation
- Increasing staff to continue to provide the current level of service as facilities are added

These key opportunities served as the basis of the recommendations and action plan that were developed to guide VPR for the next ten years.

Inventory Assessment and Level of Service Summary

Parks and facilities were inventoried and assessed for function and quality in October 2019 using the **GRASP®-IT** audit tool. This tool classifies park features into one of two categories: components and modifiers. A component is a feature that people go to a park or facility to use, such as a tennis court, playground, or picnic shelter. Modifiers are amenities such as shade, drinking fountains, and restrooms that enhance the comfort and convenience of a site. Find further definitions and discussions in **Appendix A**.

GRASP® (Geo-referenced Amenities Standards Process) is the proprietary name for an approach that has been applied in more than one hundred communities across the country to evaluate level of service (LOS) for park and recreation systems. With GRASP®, information from the inventory of parks and facilities described in Section C. was used in combination with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software to produce analytic maps and data that show the quality and distribution of park and recreation services across the District.

Recommendations and Action Plan Summary Table

The Department is on a good path and has, through this process, identified actions to continue the forward momentum. The Table below summarizes the improvements that can be made in the coming years. Goals, Objectives and Action Steps are outlined in the main document to help create a process to move forward. The detailed action plan included in section III identifies specific actions to address for the following goals and objectives:

Table 1: Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies
Objective 1.1: Continue to enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding department activities and services
Objective 1.2: Staff appropriately to meet current demand and maintain established quality of service
Objective 1.3: Build on existing and look for opportunities to increase appropriate partnerships
Goal 2: Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery
Objective 2.1: Develop additional recreational programs and services
Goal 3: Improve and Expand Facilities and Amenities
Objective 3.1: Expand trail connectivity
Objective 3.2: Continue to maintain and improve existing facilities and amenities
Objective 3.3: Make improvements to or replace some existing facilities and amenities or develop new amenities at existing parks based on current level of service analysis
Objective 3.4: Upgrade convenience and customer service amenities at existing facilities
Objective 3.5: Staff appropriately to meet current demand and maintain established quality of service.

Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities
Objective 4.1 Review existing fees and restructure to meet current and future funding realities
Objective 4.2 Explore alternative funding opportunities
Objective 4.3: Explore developing and implementing a cost recovery and pricing philosophy and policy
Objective 4.4 Implement use of the City's asset management software system

I. The Planning Context

A. Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this project is to provide a 10-year, comprehensive analysis of the recreational resources and needs of the Valdez community. This information helps to clarify the community's vision for recreation facilities and services and guides future decision-making. This Master Plan has been created as a blueprint for providing quality recreation services, parks, trails, facilities, and programs throughout the City of Valdez.

The plan identifies the current Level of Service (LOS) as well as the upgrades for the recommended LOS. The costs associated with these LOS improvements and the site-specific enhancements are included in the Plan in 2020 figures. An analysis of programs/services and organizational structure with recommendations as well as costs is also included in the Plan.

B. History Valdez Parks and Recreation

The City of Valdez is located in South Central Alaska on the northeast tip of Prince William Sound. Surrounded by water and mountains it is an oasis to its residents and to those who are lucky enough to visit. For over 150 years, since Valdez's earliest days as a mining town, access to nature and parks and recreation have played a vital role in the community. Today, the city's system of parks, trails, facilities, programs, and special events are major contributors to the City of Valdez quality of life.

Valdez Parks and Recreation provides inclusive, high quality parks and programs that utilize our unique resources for a fun and healthy community.

Valdez's parks and recreation system has developed into a vibrant network of parks and trails as a direct result of decades of work, leadership, and investment by community members and leaders. The City's parks and recreation system is a major community asset that repays those investments every day. The system improves Valdez by enhancing lives and job performance as individuals exercise, play and relieve stress.

Valdez Parks and Recreation (VPR) manages a vast system of nearly 200 acres of parkland (number of acres does not include Glacier View Campgrounds or the recently acquired Meals Hill) . The Department offers more than 75 programs to community members annually, oversees 18 parks, 50 miles of summer trails and 12 miles of winter trails. This includes 6 athletic fields, 9 playgrounds, 9 park shelters, 3 tennis

courts, 1-disc golf course and 3 basketball courts. In addition, the Department manages the Valdez Swimming Pool, two campgrounds and the Ike "Woody" Woodman Recreation Center.

C. Other Related Planning Efforts and Integration

The following documents were reviewed and used to inform this planning process and assure that issues and recommendations regarding parks, recreation, open space, and trails are all well integrated:

- The Valdez Comprehensive Waterfront Master Plan 2020
- The Draft Valdez Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2017
- The Draft Community Trails Plan
- Parks and Recreation Survey 2016
- City of Valdez Annual Operating Budget 2020

D. Methodology of the Planning Process

The project team which included City staff has guided this project. This team provided input to the consultant team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort creates a plan that fully utilizes the consultants' expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. The project consisted of the following tasks:

- Community/Stakeholder Engagement and Statically-Valid Survey
- Comprehensive Facility Inventory and Level of Service Analysis
- Assessment and Analysis of Existing Conditions
- Demographics, Trends, and Operational, Financial and Program Analysis
- Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

It is important to utilize various methods for gathering input and assessing community needs while developing a master plan. Each piece is vital to the process but should be looked at collectively. Communities that gather input via open forums, statistically valid surveys, and national standards tend to get a more accurate depiction of needs.

E. Community Outreach

As part of this planning effort, a complete parks, recreation, and trails needs assessment was conducted. Activities included obtaining community input through focus groups, stakeholder meetings, community wide public meetings, and a comprehensive statistically-valid community survey.

In November 2019 three Focus Group meetings with key community members, a SWOT analysis with staff, and a public forum were conducted. The focus group meetings and public forum included an informational presentation and an interactive question and answer session. Over 100 community members participated over the three days. The summary of focus groups and public forum can be found in **Appendix F**.



RRC Associates designed a statistically-valid citizen survey based upon the information gathered from the focus groups, open forum, and City staff. The survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist Valdez Parks and Recreation in developing a plan to reflect the community's desires, needs, and priorities for the future. The goal was to ensure all residents had a chance to voice their opinion in this process.

A total of 1,815 surveys were sent to Valdez residents. Two 219 invite surveys were completed. A sample size of 219 completed invite surveys leads to a margin of error of +/- 6.2%, or a 94% confidence level. Results of the survey are referenced in this Plan in appropriate places. More detailed information can be found in the Citizen Survey Report provided as **Appendix F**.

II. Community and Identified Needs

A. Demographic Profile

By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space management. This demographic profile was compiled in February 2020 from a combination of sources including the ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey, and U.S. Census. The following topics will be covered in detail in this report:



Figure 1: Valdez Demographic Overview

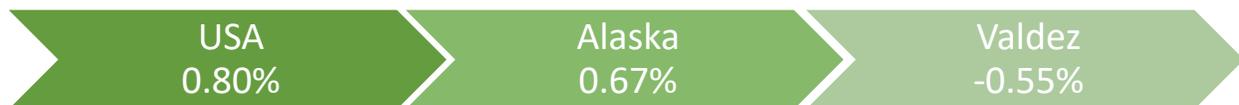


Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Population

Growth rates can be a strong comparative indicator of an area’s potential for economic development. From 2010 to 2019, the population of Valdez on average declined in growth by -0.55 percent annually each year. Both the State of Alaska and the United States had positive growth rates, at 0.67 and 0.80 percent.

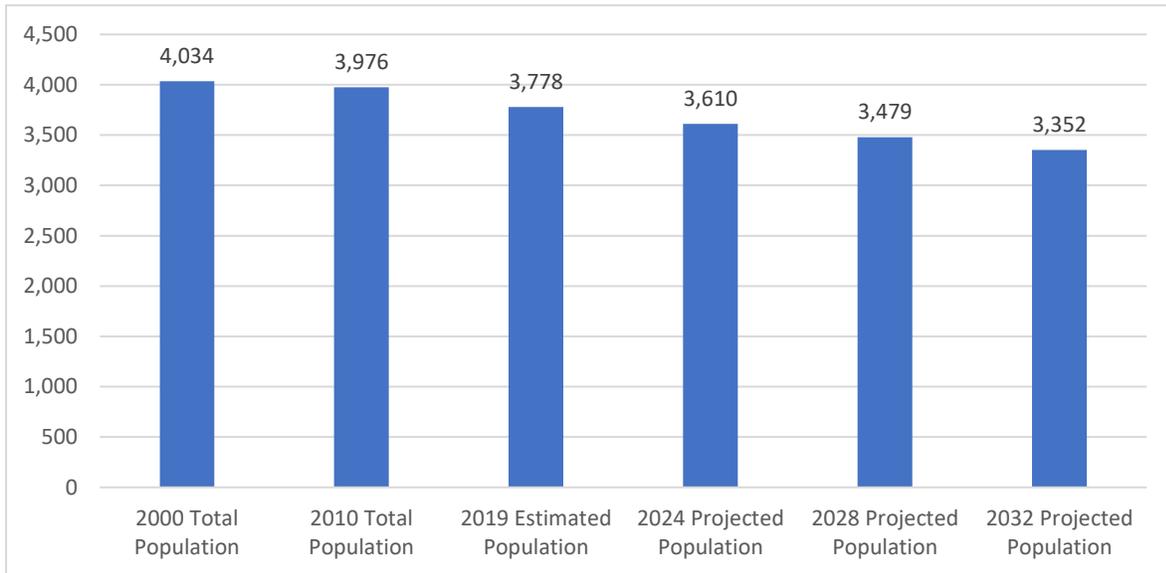
Figure 2: Valdez Population Projected Annual Growth Rates (2010 – 2019)



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

It is expected that Valdez will continue to see a decline in population between 2019 and 2024, with a projected -0.91 percent annual growth rate.

Figure 3: Projected Population Trends from 2000 to 2032



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Age & Gender Distribution

Valdez is made up of 47.4 percent female, and 52.8 percent male, which is roughly the same as Alaska. The United States is more equally distributed across genders.

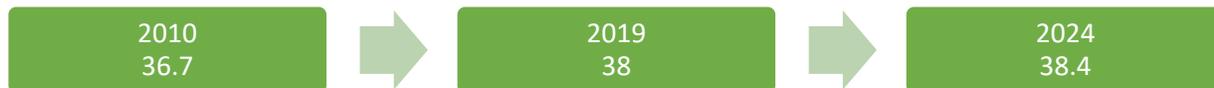
Table 2: Valdez Gender Distribution Compared to State and National Averages

	Valdez	Alaska	USA
2019 Female Population (%)	47.41%	48.15%	50.75%
2019 Male Population (%)	52.81%	51.85%	49.25%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

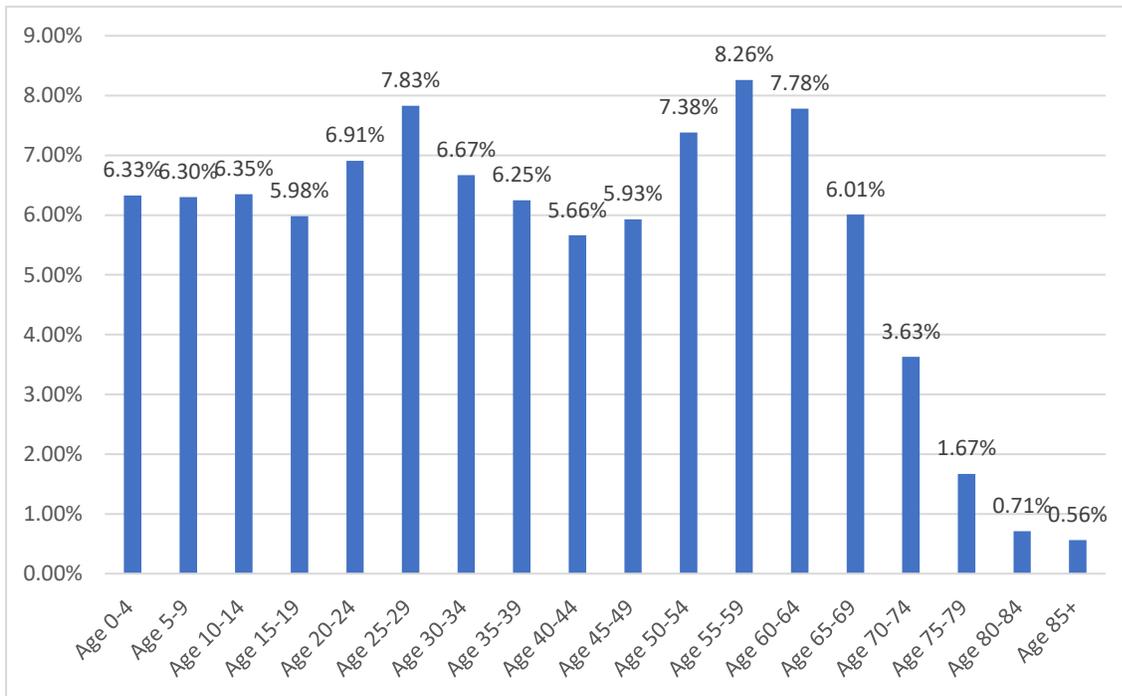
The median age in Valdez in 2010 was 36.7 years old, older than the State of Alaska with a median age of 33.9 years old. The median age in 2019 was 38 years old, and that number is projected to increase in the City to 38.4 years old in 2024.

Figure 4: Median Age of Valdez between 2010 and 2024



Looking at the population age breakdown by five-year increments in the Figure below, there are a few key conclusions. The most populous age groups in Valdez are those between 55 and 59 years old (8.26%) and those between 25 and 29 (7.83%).

Figure 5: 2019 Age Distribution in Valdez



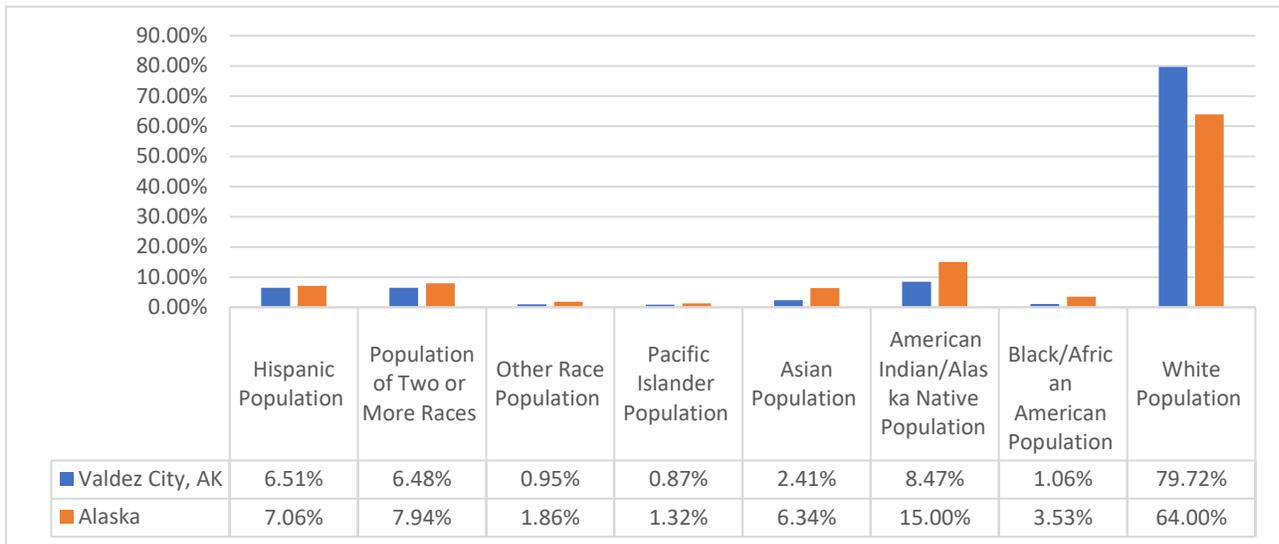
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Race/Ethnic Character

In the United States, communities are generally becoming more diverse. Before comparing this data, it is important to note how the U.S. Census classifies and counts individuals who identify as Hispanic. The Census notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish are included in all of the race categories. **Figure X** reflects the approximate racial/ethnic population distribution.

- Valdez has a roughly 8.5 percent of residents that identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. About 6.5 percent identify with being of Hispanic Origin, irrespective of race.
- The City is made up of 79 percent White/Caucasian residents while the State of Alaska is made up of approximately 65 percent White/Caucasian.

Figure 6: 2019 Racial/Ethnic Diversity of Valdez



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Educational Attainment

Analyzing the highest levels of educational attainment indicates that Valdez had a higher percentage of those who earned an Associate’s degree (25.7%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (26.7%) compared to Alaska and the United States. Only one percent of Valdez residents had not completed high school or their GED, compared to the national average of 12 percent.

Table 3: 2019 Valdez Educational Attainment

Level of Education	Valdez	Alaska	USA
Less than 9th Grade (%)	0.58%	2.94%	4.90%
9-12th Grade/No Diploma (%)	0.54%	5.42%	6.74%
High School Diploma (%)	18.28%	21.75%	23.13%
GED/Alternative Credential (%)	4.04%	5.85%	3.90%
Some College/No Degree (%)	25.74%	25.98%	20.23%
Associate's Degree (%)	13.51%	9.17%	8.58%
Bachelor's Degree (%)	26.86%	17.74%	19.98%
Graduate/Professional Degree (%)	10.44%	11.15%	12.54%

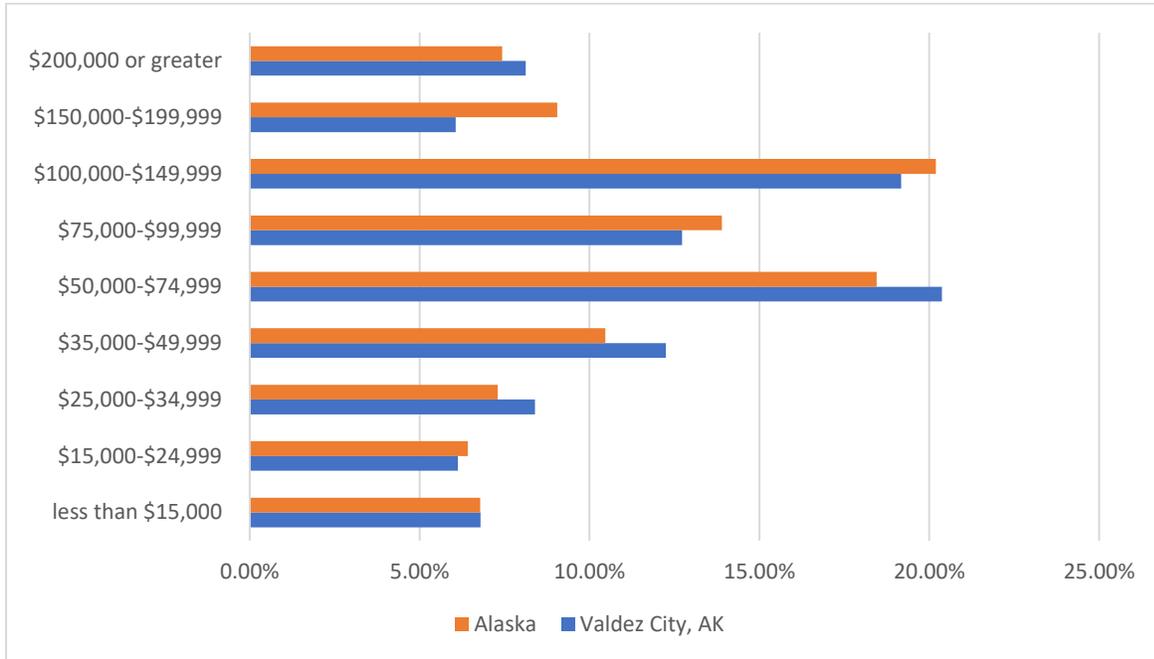
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Household Data

- The median household income in Valdez in 2019 was \$68,504.
- The median home value in Valdez was \$218,908, lower than the median home value of Alaska (\$282,066) as well as the United States (\$234,154).
- The average household size was 2.4 in Valdez, compared to 2.7 in Alaska, and 2.6 in the United States.
- Only 1.12 percent of households in Valdez received food stamps in 2019, much lower than the rate in Alaska at approximately 10.33 percent. 9.32 percent of City residents are considered below the poverty level.

- Approximately 24 percent of residents live with some sort of hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and/or independent living difficulty. This is just slightly lower than the national average (25%).

Figure 7: Median Household Income Distribution in Valdez



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Employment

- Roughly 49 percent of the population is employed in white collar positions, which typically performs managerial, technical, administrative, and/or professional capacities. Approximately 28 percent were employed by blue collar positions, such as construction, maintenance, etc.
- About 3.9 percent of the population was unemployed in 2019, compared to the rate of Alaska (6.5%) and the United States (4.6%).

Figure 8: Employment Overview in Valdez, Alaska



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Health Rankings

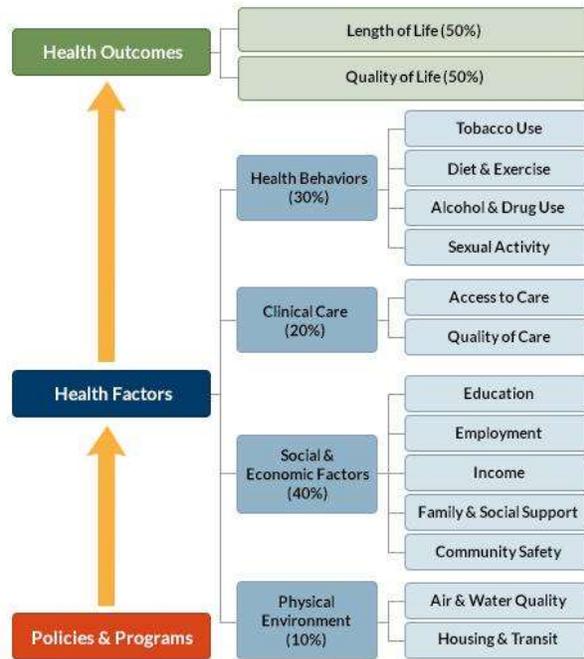
Understanding the status of the community’s health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps* provide annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations. The 2019 *Rankings* model shown in **Figure 9** highlights the topic areas reviewed by the Foundation.

The health ranking for gauged the public health of the population based on “how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive,” coupled with ranking factors including healthy

Valdez-Cordova County ranked 3rd of 25 Alaska Counties for Health Outcomes.

behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors.¹

Figure 9: County Health Ranking Model



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

State Health Ranking

In 2019, the United Health Foundation’s *America’s Health Rankings Annual Report* ranked Alaska as the 27th healthiest state nationally. The health rankings consider and weigh social and environmental factors that tend to directly impact the overall health of state populations.

Challenges of Alaska health include:

- Low percentage of high school graduation
- High occupational fatality rate
- High percentage of uninsured population

Strengths of Alaska health include:

- Low prevalence of low birthweight
- High rate of dentists
- Low prevalence of frequent mental distress

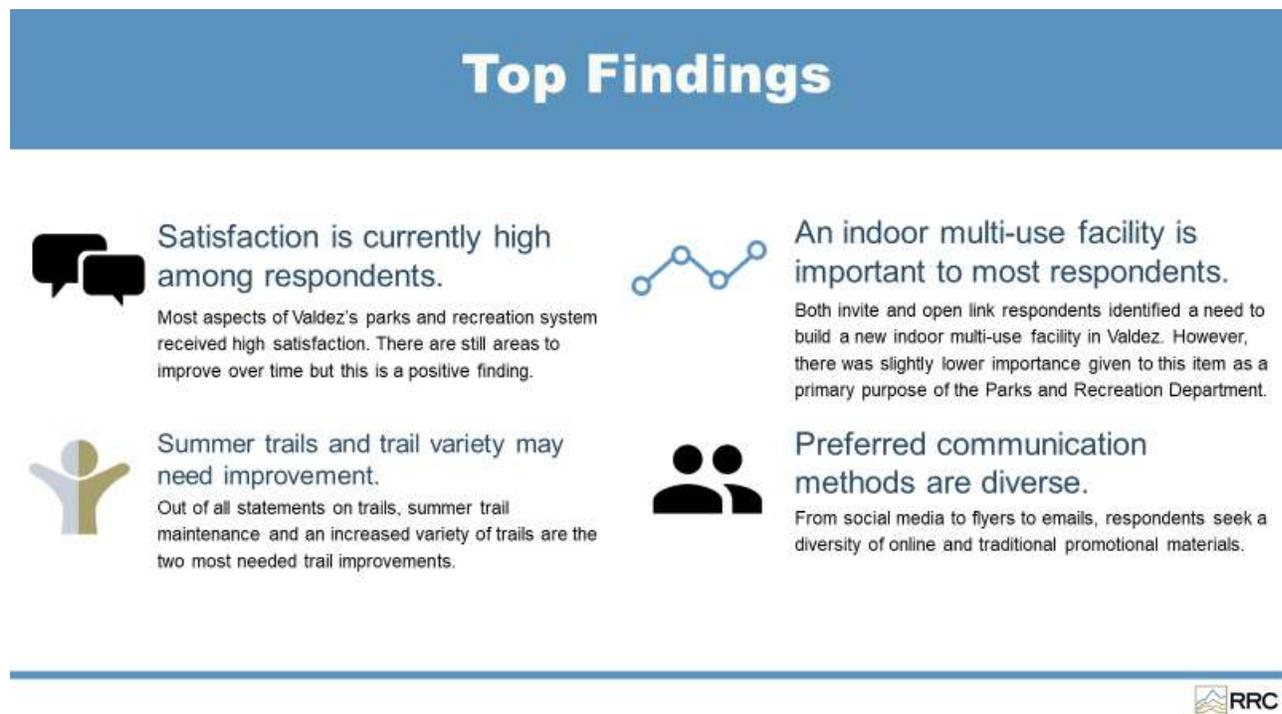
¹ University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *County Health Rankings 2019*, <http://www.Countyhealthrankings.org>

B. Community Survey Summary

As part of the project, a statistically-valid survey was conducted to assess the opinions, desires, and needs of residents in Valdez. The survey was conducted using three primary methods: 1) a mailed survey to 1,815 households in the City, 2) an online, password protected invitation website, 3) an open link survey for all other residents who were not included in invitation sample. Invitation or invite respondents were given a unique password to participate through the online survey. Approximately two weeks after the mailed surveys began arriving in mailboxes, the open link survey was made available to all residents who did not receive an invitation survey. Results are kept separate to maintain the statistical validity of the invitation sample. The invitation sample contains 219 completed surveys with the open link closing with 45 completed surveys. The Valdez Citizen Survey report in its entirety is provided as **appendix G**.

After reviewing all data received through the survey the consultant team summarized key findings which are below in Figure 11. These findings present a quick overview of the survey outcomes.

Figure 10: *Top Findings from the Community Survey*



Top Findings

 Most support around sponsorships and bonds for funding.
Invite respondents are most likely to support sponsorships and naming rights for facilities. Bond referendums received support too.

 Additional bike paths and trail connectivity important for the future.
In addition to the indoor facility, bike paths and trail connectivity are important to respondents. This is a common theme seen in other areas of the country too.

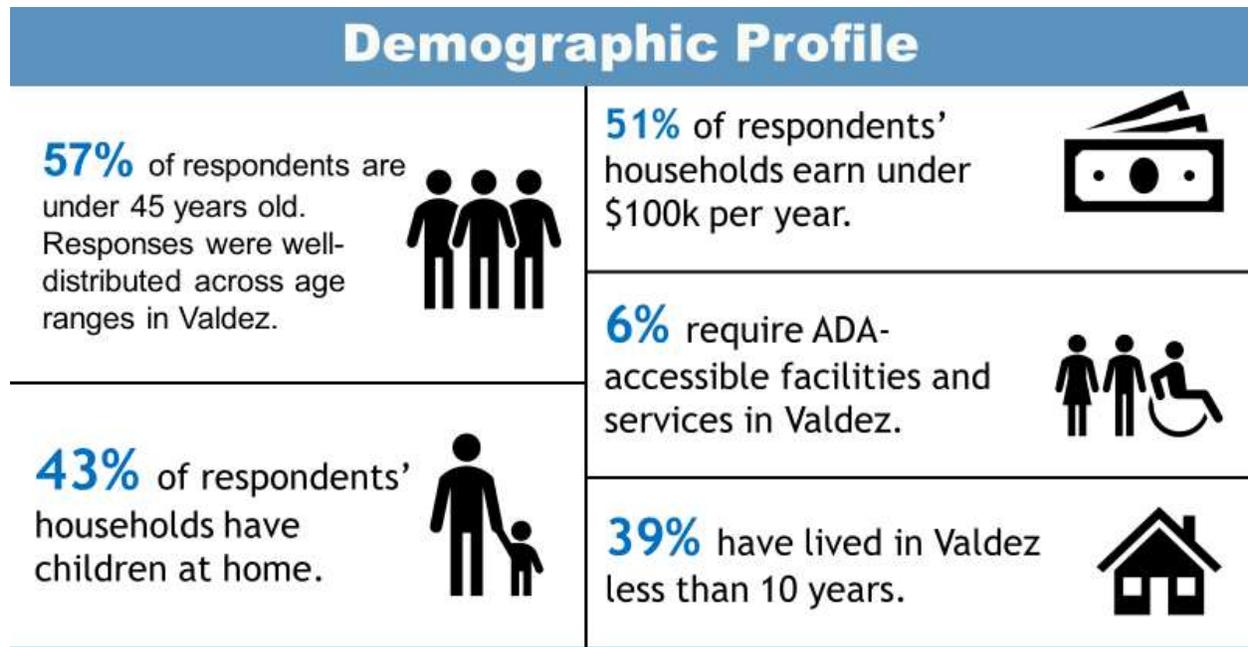
 Shoup Bay Trail and Special Events may be priorities to improve.
Both of these amenities/services received a lower than average needs-met rating while having a higher than average importance to invite households.

 Mineral Creek Trail and Dock Point Trail receive most use.
Over 80% of invite respondents used these two trails over the past 12 months. The swimming pool also is frequently used by residents in Valdez.



Other findings from the survey are listed below and were integrated into the development of recommendations and actions for the Master Plan.

Figure 11: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents



Communication Methods

When asked which method of communication is the best, most respondents highlighted social media, followed by flyers at local businesses and the VPR website.

Figure 12: Top Communication Methods



Familiarity

When asked about facility and program familiarity invite and open link respondents are equally familiar with Valdez’s recreation facilities, trails, and programs. Facility familiarity is 83% while program familiarity is 66%. Program familiarity is typically lower as participation rates are lower. However, overall familiarity is relatively high in the community.

Table 4: VPR Familiarity



Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the quality of VPR is well above average. Trails and Recreation Facilities rated the highest, both with 86% either satisfied or very satisfied. Recreation Programs were a close second with an 83% either satisfied or very satisfied.

Table 5: VPR Satisfaction



Current Facilities and Programs

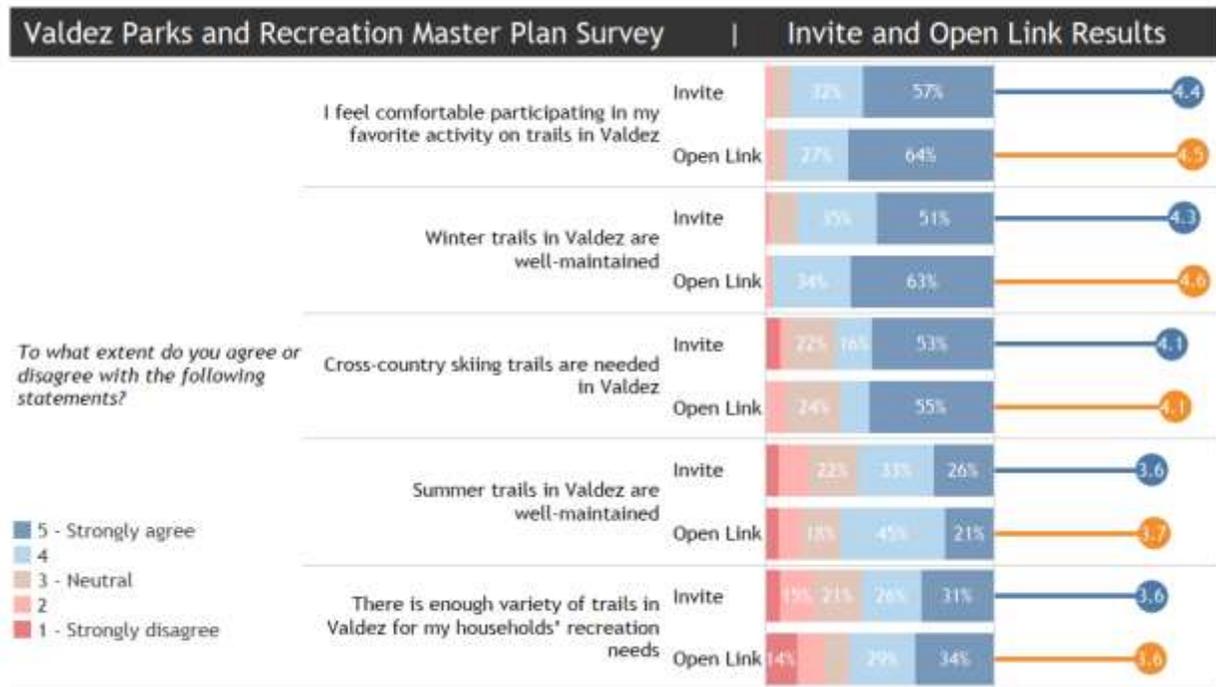
When asked how important facilities/amenities are to their household, the Mineral Creek Trail, winter trail system, Dock Point Trail, swimming pool, and Shoup Bay Trail rose to the top. The Overlook Trail and Keystone Canyon Pack Trail are also important to respondents.

Table 6: Facility and Program Importance



Several statements were developed based on trails in Valdez and were rated on agreement by respondents. Most respondents feel comfortable participating on trails in Valdez, feel winter trails are well maintained, and believe cross-country ski trails are needed. A more mixed opinion was found on two statements related to summer trail maintenance and variety of trails.

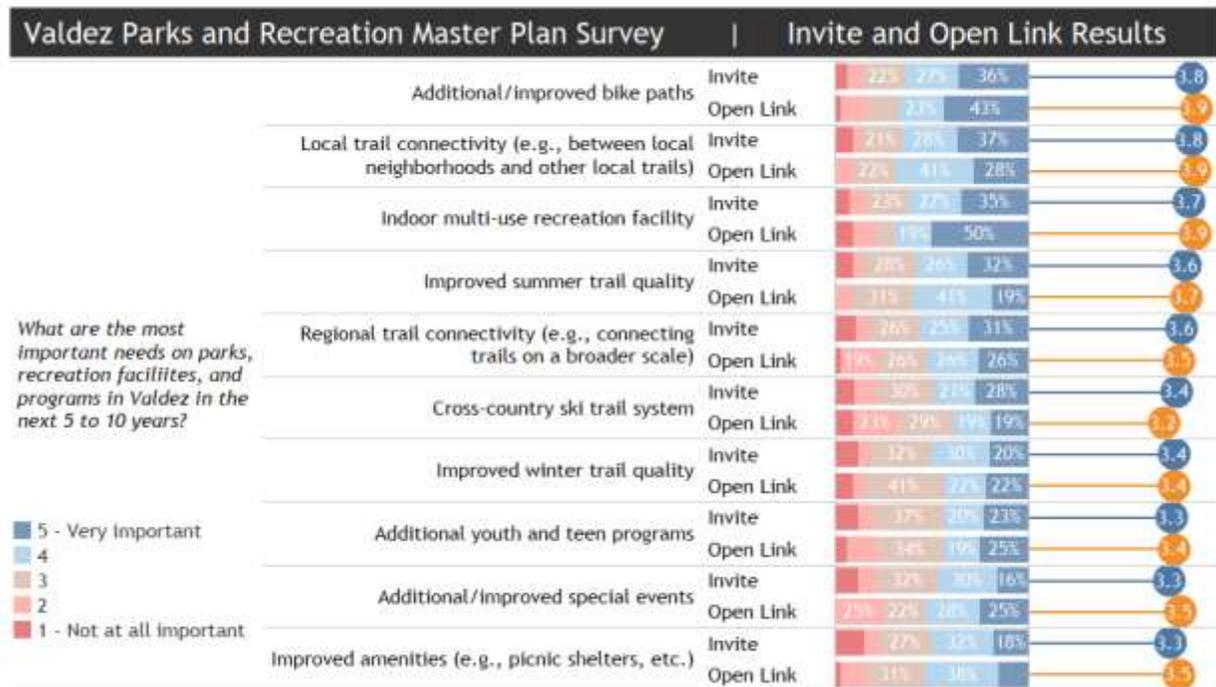
Table 7: *Opinions on Trails*



Need to Address Over Next 5 to 10 Years

When asked what are the most important needs for VPR to be address over the next 5 to 10 years, additional/improved bike paths, local trail connectivity, and an indoor multi-use facility were the most important needs to respondents.

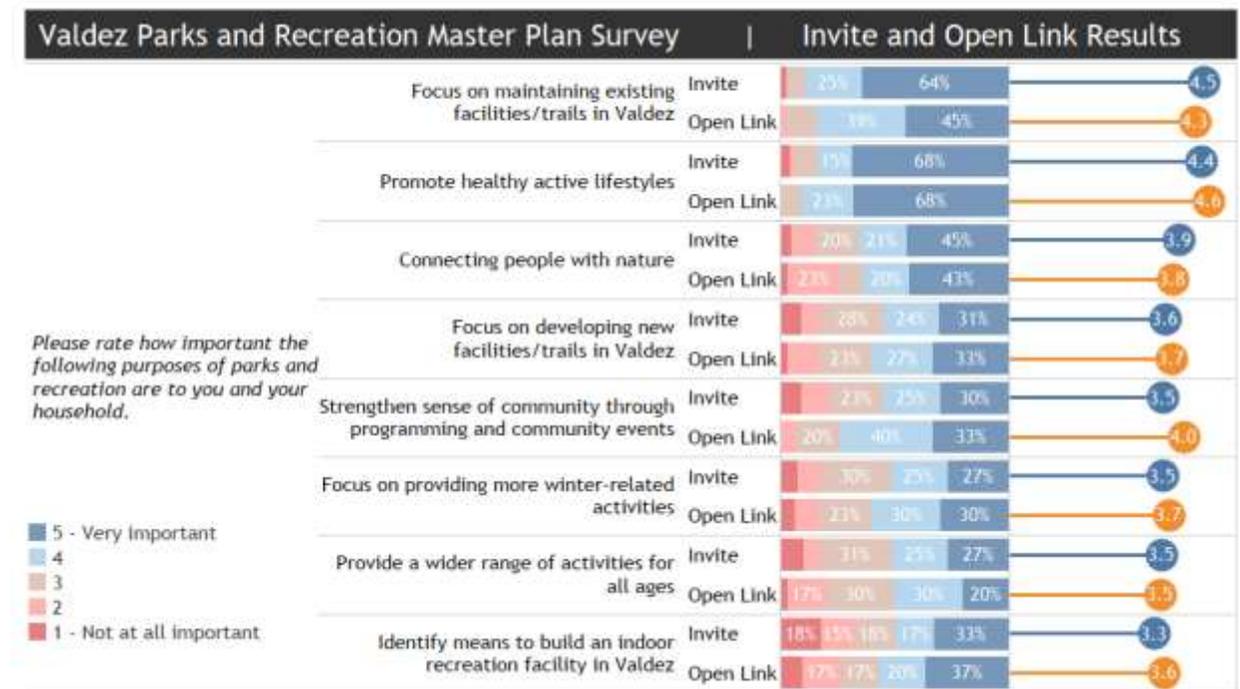
Table 8: Facility and Program Needs in the next 5 to 10 years



Values and Vision for Future

Maintaining existing facilities/trails in Valdez and continuing to promote healthy active lifestyles rated the highest in terms of importance for the VPR to focus on.

Table 9: Values and Vision for VPR



C. Parks and Facilities Inventory and Assessment

Parks and facilities were inventoried and assessed for function and quality in October 2019 using the GRASP®-IT audit tool. This tool classifies park features into one of two categories: **components** and **modifiers**. A **component** is a feature that people go to a park or facility to use, such as a tennis court, playground, or picnic shelter. **Modifiers** are amenities such as shade, drinking fountains, and restrooms that enhance the comfort and convenience of a site. Find further definitions and discussions in **appendix A**. A formula was applied that combines the assessments of a site's components and modifiers to generate a score or value for each component and the entire site. The study uses the resulting values to compare sites to each other and to analyze the overall performance of the park system.

Assessment Summary

Summary of site visits to each park or facility include the following:

- Diversity of park types and sizes from a large regional camping facility to small neighborhood parks
- Well maintained parks
- Limited indoor facilities
- Playgrounds, open turf, shelters, courts, sports fields, educational experiences, and passive nodes
- Trails & trailheads, open water, water access and camping



System Map

The following map shows the park and recreation facilities. Find full-size maps in **appendix A**

Figure 13: System Map.

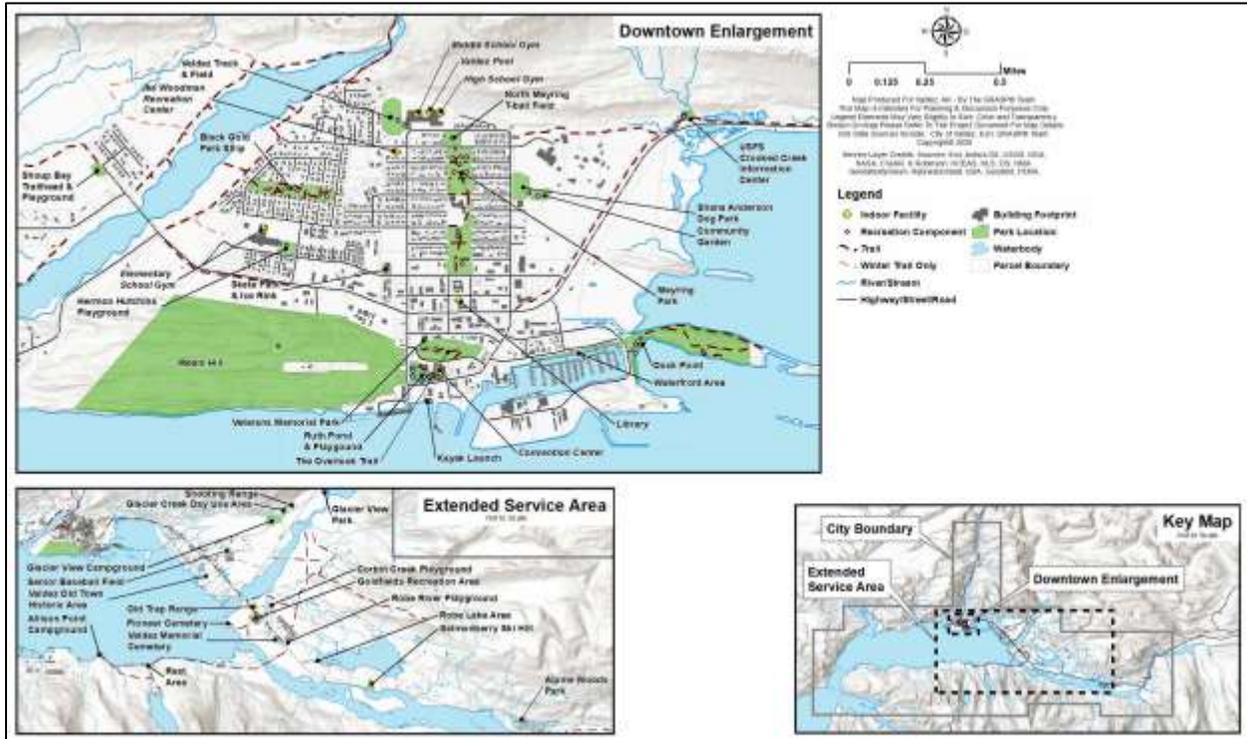
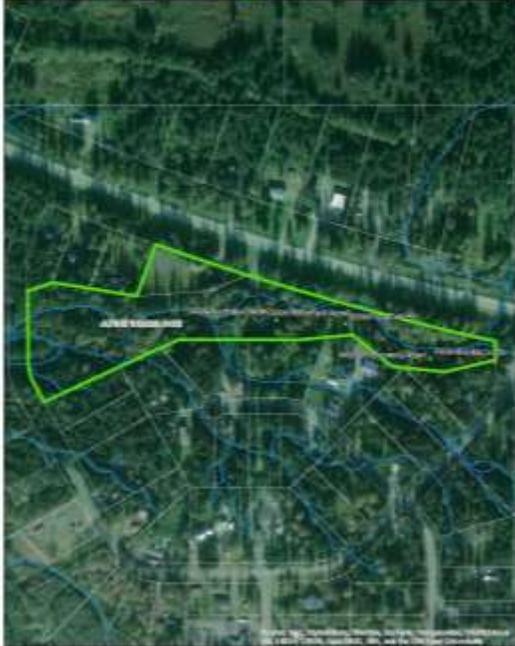


Figure 14: Example of GIS inventory map and datasheet.

A complete inventory atlas is provided as a staff-level document.

ALPINE WOODS PARK

● Components — Trails Parcels — Major
● Indoor Facilities — Gravel/Walker Trails ■ Parks



ALPINE WOODS PARK

Initial Inventory Date: 10/17/2019

30.8 Total Components (66,429 SqFt) 30.8 Total Comments (21,849) Approximate Park Acreage: 11.0
 Owner: Village

Component	Count	Category	Count	Section
Cracking Foundations	0	Shade	3	Design and Appearance
Seating	3	Trial Connection	4	
BBO Cells	0	Park Access	3	2
Dog Pick-Up/Select	0	Parking	3	
Security Lighting	0	Seasonal Plantings	4	
Site Planting	0	Ornamental Plantings	4	
Restrooms	0	Picnic Tables	3	

General Comments

Components with Score

SWPD Component	Quantity	Light Score	Neighborhood Score	Community Score	Comments
044 PARCEL	1	1	1	1	
018 Pathway	1	1	1	1	Lighted to enhance park interior for park entrance of the trail area. Provides excellent access.
024 Volleyball Court	1	1	1	1	
020 Tennis Court	1	1	1	1	
022 Basketball Court	1	1	1	1	
024 Playground Court	1	1	1	1	Recently replaced
026 Shade Large	1	1	1	1	

Summary of Valdez Outdoor Locations
 Table 10: Valdez Outdoor Locations

Park or Location	Basketball Court	Basketball, Practice	Camping, Defined	Climbing, Designated	Climbing, General	Diamond Field	Diamond Field, Complex	Disc Golf	Dog Park	Educational Experience	Game Court	Garden, Community	Loop Walk	Multi-Use Pad	Natural Area	Open Turf	Passive Node	Picnic Ground	Playground, Local	Rectangular Field, Large	Shelter, All Sizes	Skate Park	Target Range	Tennis Court	Track, Athletic	Trailhead	Volleyball Court	Water Access, Developed	Water, Open	Winter Sport	Total Components per Park	Unique Components per Park
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND			29																									2	1		32	3
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 30-36			7																									1			8	2
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 37-40			4																						1						5	2
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 41-49			9																												9	1
ALPINE WOODS PARK	1																		1	1			1		1	1					6	6
BLACK GOLD PARK STRIP														1		1			1												3	3
COMMUNITY GARDEN											1																				1	1
CORBIN CREEK PLAYGROUND																			1												1	1
DOCK POINT									1								3			1					1		1	1			8	6
GLACIER CREEK DAY USE AREA															1																1	1
GLACIER VIEW CAMPGROUND			108		1																1										110	3
GLACIER VIEW PARK																		1										1	1		3	3
GOLDFIELDS RECREATION AREA						4	1	1											1				1				1	1			11	8
HERMON HUTCHINS PLAYGROUND																			1												1	1
HIGHWAY ACCESS				5																						5					10	2
KAYAK LAUNCH																												1	1		2	2
MEALS HILL															1																1	1
MEYRING PARK	2													1		2			2	2				2							11	6
NORTH MEYRING T-BALL FIELD						1																									1	1
OLD TRAP RANGE																								1							1	1
PIONEER CEMETERY										1																					1	1
REST AREA																										1		1	1		3	3
ROBE LAKE AREA																												1	1		2	2
ROBE RIVER PLAYGROUND		1																	1	1											3	3
RUTH POND AND PLAYGROUND										1		1				1	1		1	2								3	1		11	8
SALMONBERRY SKI HILL																														1	1	1
SENIOR BASEBALL FIELD		1				1																									2	2
SHANA ANDERSON DOG PARK								1																							1	1
SHOOTING RANGE																								1							1	1
SHOUP BAY TRAILHEAD AND PLAYGROUND																				1						1					2	2
SKATE PARK																							1								1	1
THE OVERLOOK TRAIL																	1			1											2	2
USFS CROOKED CREEK INFORMATION CENTER										1							1			1											3	3
VALDEZ MEMORIAL CEMETERY										1																					1	1
VALDEZ OLD TOWN HISTORIC AREA										1																					1	1
VALDEZ TRACK AND FIELD	1																		1	1					1						4	4
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK																	1														1	1
Totals:	4	2	157	5	1	6	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	4	7	1	11	1	10	1	3	3	1	11	1	12	8	1		
Percent of Locations with Component	8%	5%	14%	3%	3%	8%	3%	3%	3%	14%	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%	8%	14%	3%	27%	3%	22%	3%	8%	5%	3%	19%	3%	24%	22%	3%		

Trails

It is generally accepted that a trail is a pathway that is paved or unpaved. In some cases the types of uses allowed on a specific trail is limited; these are called a single-use trail. For example, the trail may be designated for non-motorized use only or hikers only. Segregated trails separate different user groups from one another. For example, the horseback riders may use a different trail than the hikers and the bikers. There is not often enough space to accommodate user-specific trails, which means more often than not a trail is considered “multi-use” where multiple user groups must share the same space. While on the other hand, there are also single track trails where the path is just wide enough for one individual, bicyclist or equestrian at a time.

The National Park Services through its Federal Trail Data Standards have identified a continuum of trail classes with the following characteristics:

Trail Class 1: Minimal/Undeveloped Trail

Trail Class 2: Simple/Minor Development Trail

Trail Class 3: Developed/Improved Trail

Trail Class 4: Highly Developed Trail

Trail Class 5: Fully Developed Trail

The Valdez Parks and Recreation Department maintains numerous trails in and around Valdez. A trails map is included as **appendix B**. They range from short easy hikes to very long, demanding adventures. Trails, include use areas for:

- Cross Country Skiing
- Dog sleds
- ATV and Side by Sides
- Hiking
- Walkdng/Running
- Snow machines
- Mountain Biking

Various levels of GIS trails data were available for this study. Nearly 50 miles of trails and over 12 miles of winter-only trails are in the current GIS data. The consulting team added 13+ miles of known trails that staff approved for this study. The City should continue to geolocate existing trails and update GIS information as that information becomes available.

Below are some of the more common trail types. Please note, generally only one trail type can be assigned to any given trail. Here are a few examples:

Foot Path: A type of trail mainly only for people on foot (hikers, runners, backpackers, walkers, etc.).

Bikeways: A specific type of trail for use of mainly by bicyclists.

Equestrian Trail (or Bridle Path): A type of trail specific to equestrians.

ADA Trails (or Accessible Trails): A type of trail that meets the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act for use by people of varying ability levels.

Rails to Trails (or Rail Trails): A more recently developed type of trails that converts old or abandoned railroad easements to trails. These trails are generally aimed at the hiking and bicycling community.

Water Trails: Those trails found in lakes, streams, and waterways for individuals using non-motorized equipment like kayaks, canoes, and rafts.

Fire Roads: Roads that provide vehicular access for land managers and easement holders into natural areas. The public generally does not have access to these roads by vehicle. These roads provide a significant gap in the vegetation allowing fire crews to gain better access to the land and more appropriately fight wildland fires.

Motorized Trails (or Off-Highway Trails or Jeep Trails): A trail type that is not generally found locally, but allows for motorized use of the trail by dirt bikes and ATVs. Trails that receive federal funding may not permit ATV use, though in some instances, snowmobiles are acceptable. When allowed, snowmobiles can be used on multi-use trails with as little as 6 inches of snow without causing much damage to the trail surface.

As motorized users travel at much greater speeds than other users, the trail should be free of obstacles and provide good sight lines with a minimum sight distance of 400 feet. Branches and other debris should be cleared across at least 2 feet on each side of the trail with a 10-foot vertical clearance; anticipated snow levels must be factored in.

Indoor Facilities

We also inventoried and cataloged indoor facilities. Multi-purpose spaces are most prevalent in these facilities, but a variety of spaces are available. Gymnasiums and small kitchens are also available at many of the facilities.

Table 11: Indoor Facility Inventory

LOCATION	Aquatics, Lap Pool	Aquatics, Leisure Pool	Auditorium/Theater	Climbing, Designated	Food - Counter Service	Kitchen - Commercial	Multi-purpose Room	Sport Court	Wall Ball Court	Components per Location/Facility	Unique Components per Location Facility
CONVENTION CENTER			1			1	2			4	3
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM								1	2	3	2
HIGH SCHOOL GYM								1		1	1
IKE WOODMAN RECREATION CENTER					1		2			3	2
LIBRARY							3			3	1
MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM				1				1		2	2
VALDEZ POOL	1	1		1						3	3
<i>Totals:</i>	1	1	1	2	1	1	7	3	2		
<i>Percent of Facilities with Component</i>	14%	14%	14%	29%	14%	14%	43%	43%	14%	2	9

Park Ranking

In addition to locating components, assessments included the functional quality of each element. The following table displays the ranking of each park based on an overall score for its components and modifiers. In general, parks at the top of the list offer more and enhanced recreation opportunities than those ranked lower. The length of the score bar reflects its overall score in proportion to that of the highest-ranking park (Glacier View Campground).

Table 12: Park Ranking

LOCATION	GRASP®		LOCATION	GRASP®	
	Score/Rank			Score/Rank	
GLACIER VIEW CAMPGROUND	486.2		SENIOR BASEBALL FIELD	11	
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND	81.4		COMMUNITY GARDEN	8.8	
MEYRING PARK	69.6		CORBIN CREEK PLAYGROUND	8.8	
DOCK POINT	64.8		GLACIER CREEK DAY USE AREA	8.8	
RUTH POND AND PLAYGROUND	55.2		PIONEER CEMETERY	8.8	
GOLDFIELDS RECREATION AREA	48		SALMONBERRY SKI HILL	8.8	
HIGHWAY ACCESS	37.4		SHANA ANDERSON DOG PARK	8.8	
ALPINE WOODS PARK	30.8		VALDEZ MEMORIAL CEMETERY	8.8	
THE OVERLOOK TRAIL	23.1		VALDEZ OLD TOWN HISTORIC AREA	8.8	
USFS CROOKED CREEK INFORMATION CENTER	19.2		ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 37-40	7.7	
REST AREA	17.6		BLACK GOLD PARK STRIP	6.6	
GLACIER VIEW PARK	15.4		HERMON HUTCHINS PLAYGROUND	6	
ROBE RIVER PLAYGROUND	14.4		MEALS HILL	5.5	
KAYAK LAUNCH	13.2		WATERFRONT AREA	4.8	
ROBE LAKE AREA	13.2		SKATE PARK	4.4	
SHOUP BAY TRAILHEAD AND PLAYGROUND	13.2		VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK	4.4	
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 30-36	12.1		NORTH MEYRING T-BALL FIELD	3.3	
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 41-49	12.1		SHOOTING RANGE	3.3	
VALDEZ TRACK AND FIELD	12.1		OLD TRAP RANGE	2.2	

By using these scores, Valdez parks are comparable to other agencies across the county. The GRASP® National Dataset currently consists of 65 agencies, 4,455 parks, and over 23,000 components.



When comparing Valdez parks to all other agencies and parks in the dataset, Valdez had one park in the top 10 parks in terms of overall GRASP® score.



It also has three parks in the top ten percent of all parks.



Indoor Ranking

Similar to park rankings, indoor facilities also organize in order of GRASP® scoring.

Table 13: Indoor Ranking

LOCATION	GRASP® Indoor Score/Rank
CONVENTION CENTER	24
VALDEZ POOL	21.6
IKE WOODMAN RECREATION CENTER	14.4
LIBRARY	14.4
MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM	7.2
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM	6.6
HIGH SCHOOL GYM	3.6
OLD TRAP RANGE INDOOR	NA

No National GRASP® comparisons currently exist for indoor facilities.

Level of Service Analysis

Level of Service (LOS) measurements evaluate how parks, open spaces, and facilities in Valdez serve the community. They may be used to benchmark current conditions and to direct future planning efforts.

Why Level of Service?

Level of Service describes how a recreation system provides residents access to recreational assets and amenities. It indicates the ability of people to connect with nature and pursue active lifestyles. It can have implications for health and wellness, the local economy, and the quality of life. Further, LOS for a park and recreation system tends to reflect community values. It is often representative of people's connection to their communities and lifestyles focused on outdoor recreation and healthy living.

An analytical technique known as **GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standard Process)** was used to analyze Level of Service provided by assets in Valdez. This proprietary process, used exclusively by GreenPlay, yields analytical maps and data that may be used to examine access to recreation across a study area. A detailed history and description of GRASP® Methodology may be found in the **appendix A**.

GRASP® Analysis

GRASP® (Geo-referenced Amenities Standards Process) has been applied in more than 125 communities across the country to evaluate LOS for park and recreation systems. With GRASP®, information from the inventory combined with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, produces analytic maps and data that show the quality and distribution of park and recreation services across the city.

Perspectives

Perspectives are maps and data produced using the GRASP® methodology. Each perspective shows service across the study area. Data analysis also incorporates statistics. Maps, tables, and charts provide benchmarks or insights useful in determining community success in providing services. Find further discussion on Perspectives and other GRASP® terminology in the **appendix A**.

Types of Perspectives

The LOS offered by a park or other feature is a function of two main variables: what is available at a specific location and how easy it is for a user to get to it. The inventory performed with the GRASP®-IT tool provides a detailed accounting of what is available at any given location, and GIS analysis uses the data to measure its accessibility to residents. People use a variety of ways to reach a recreation destination: on foot, on a bike, in a car, or some combination. In GRASP® Perspectives, this variability is accounted for by analyzing multiple travel distances (referred to as *catchment areas*). These service areas produce two distinct types of Perspectives for examining the park system:

1. Neighborhood Access
2. Walkable Access

A **Neighborhood Access** perspective uses a travel distance of one mile to the inventory and is assumed to be a suitable distance for a bike ride or short drive in a car, or perhaps a longer walk. This catchment captures users traveling from home or elsewhere to a park or facility by way of a bike or automobile.

A **Walkable Access** perspective uses a shorter catchment distance intended to capture users within a ten to fifteen-minute walk. See **appendix A** for further discussion on walkability standards.

For each perspective, combining the service area for each component, including the assigned GRASP® value into one overlay, creates a shaded map representing the cumulative value of all features.

Figure 15: GRASP® Level of Service



Perspectives use overlapping catchment areas to yield a "heat map" that provides a measurement of LOS for any location within a study area. Orange shades represent the variation in LOS values across the map.

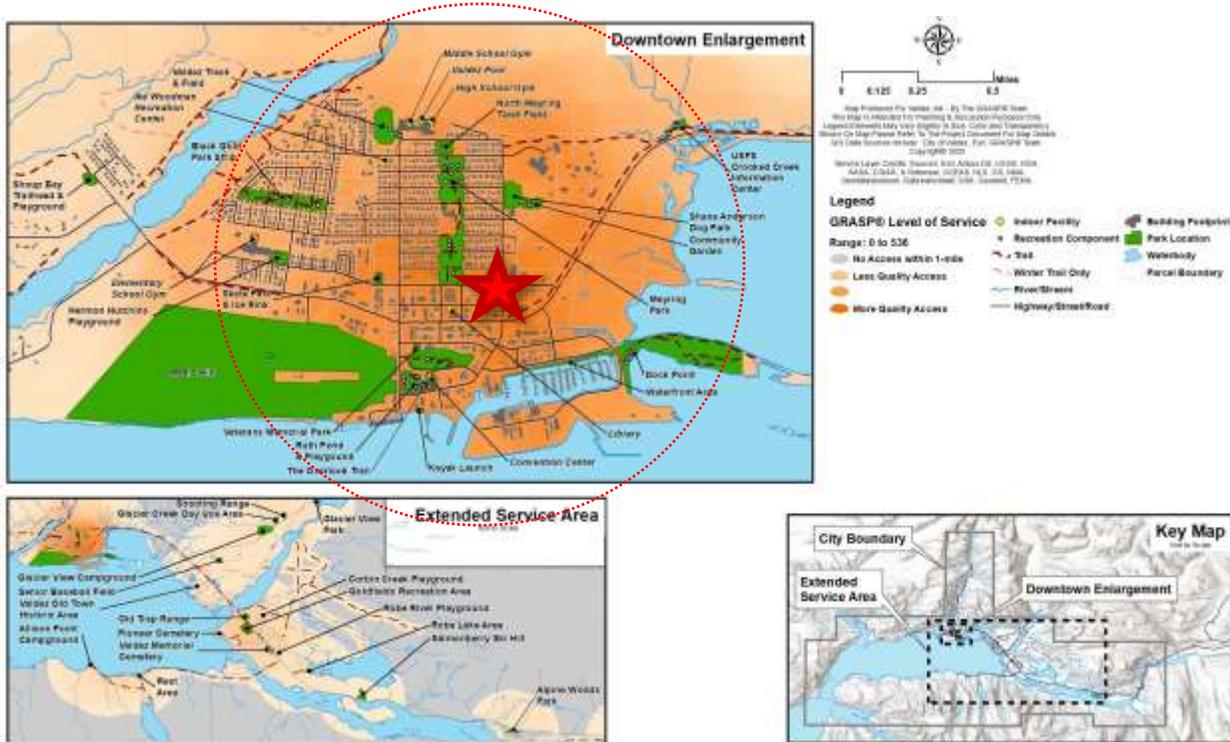
Assumptions

1. Proximity relates to access. A feature within a specified distance of a given location is considered "accessible" from that location." "Access" in this analysis does not refer to access as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. Neighborhood access relates to one-mile proximity, a drive-to or bike-to distance for many residents.
3. Walkable access relates to ½-mile proximity, a reasonable ten-minute walk.
4. Walkable access is affected by barriers, obstacles to free, and comfortable foot travel.
5. The LOS value of a map point is the cumulative value of all features accessible at that location.

Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation

A series of "heat maps" were created to examine neighborhood access to recreation opportunities. All outdoor recreation providers account for the level of service values. Darker gradient areas on the images indicate where there are more and higher quality recreation assets available based on a one-mile service area. In general, these images also show that Valdez has a variable distribution of parks and facilities. Gray areas indicate that recreation opportunities are beyond a one-mile service area.

Figure 16: Valdez Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation



Areas of higher concentration are notable near Meals Avenue and Pioneer Drive. As an example, a red star indicates the highest GRASP® value area (536) in the image above. From the red star, a resident has access to 50 outdoor recreation components in 17 different outdoor locations, 7 indoor facilities, and numerous trails.

Further analysis of this perspective indicates that most of the Valdez residents are within one mile of an outdoor recreation opportunity. Find additional statistics in the following table:

Table 14: Map statistics for Image 3

	A	B	C	D	E
	Percent of Total District with LOS	GRASP® Value Range	Average LOS per Acre Served	Average LOS Per Acre / Population per acre	GRASP® Index
Valdez	22%	0 – 536	44	8517	169

Column A: Shows the percentage of the district that has at least some service (LOS >0). Valdez has very extreme circumstances by providing services to such a large geographic area but with several different population centers.

Column B: For any location on the map, there is a numerical value that corresponds to the orange shading called the GRASP® value and results from the overlay or cumulative value of the scores of components accessible from that location. Values for different locations on the map can be compared to one another, so a person in a location with a high value (darker orange) has greater access to quality recreation opportunities than a person in a lower value (lighter orange) area. Valdez GRASP® values range from a low of 0 to a high of 536.

Column C: Valdez's value of 44 seems reasonable, considering the limited comparable data. The very high value of 246 for Brush, CO, is likely an unusual circumstance and not a good comparable in this case (see table 14).

Column D: Shows the results of dividing the number from Column C by the population density of the area. Compared to agencies of a similar total population for which GRASP® data is available, Valdez's population density is far lower than the other agencies. Valdez's score of 8517 is significantly higher than the other agencies, which highlights the overall impact of population density on this measure.

Column E: The GRASP® Index, effectively the GRASP® value per capita, involves dividing the total value of all the components in the system by the population of Valdez. These last two numbers (column C & D) differ in two ways. First, the GRASP® Index does not factor in population density. Second, the GRASP® Index is derived using all components and does account for vital regional resources residents may access outside those limits. Valdez's score of 169 is above the average in the comparable list.

GRASP® Comparative Data

The table below provides comparative data from other communities of similar population to Valdez across the country. Because every community is unique, there are no standards or "correct" numbers. However, there are several interesting similarities and differences when making these comparisons.

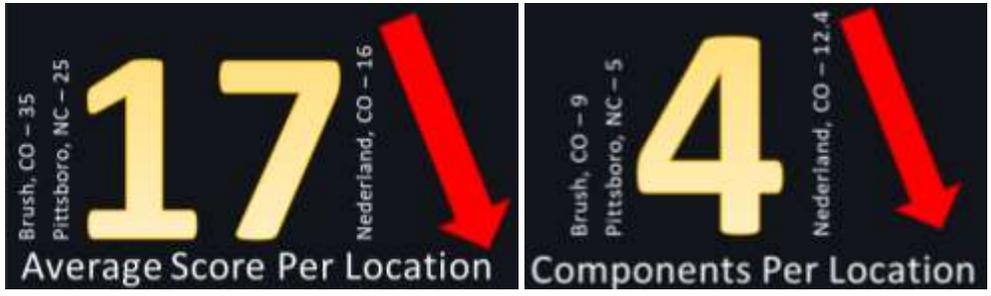
First, comparing the total number of locations, Valdez is at the top when compared to similar agencies.



In the parks per capita and components per capita, Valdez is also towards the top of the lists.



In contrast, though, the parks do have fewer components and therefore score lower than similar agency parks.



In the end, these comparisons would indicate that Valdez residents have access to more parks and components, but the parks may be less developed than other agencies' parks.

STATE	CITY	YEAR	POPULATION	STUDY AREA SIZE (Acres)	# OF SITES (Parks, Facilities, etc.)	TOTAL # OF COMPONENTS	AVG. # COMPONENTS per SITE	TOTAL GRASP® VALUE (Entire System)	GRASP® INDEX	AVG. SCORE/SITE	% of TOTAL AREA w/LOS >0	AVG. LOS PER ACRE SERVED	NUMBER OF COMPONENTS PER POPULATION	AVERAGE LOS/POP DEN PER ACRE	Population Density (per acre)	% of Population with Walkable Target Access	People per Park	Park per 1k People
CO	Nederland	2012	3,074	46,142	38	142	4	620	202	16	NA	NA	46.2	NA	0.1	NA	81	12.4
AK	Valdez	2020	3,778	726,133	38	147	4	640	169	17	9%	44	38.9	8457	0.01	60%	99	10.1
NC	Pittsboro	2016	4,118	2,708	8	38	5	203	49	25	35%	40	9.2	163	0.2	7%	515	1.9
CO	Brush	2018	5,699	1,754	13	113	9	459	81	35	100%	246	19.8	76	3.2	70%	438	2.3

Table 15: GRASP® Comparative Data

Walkable Access To Recreation

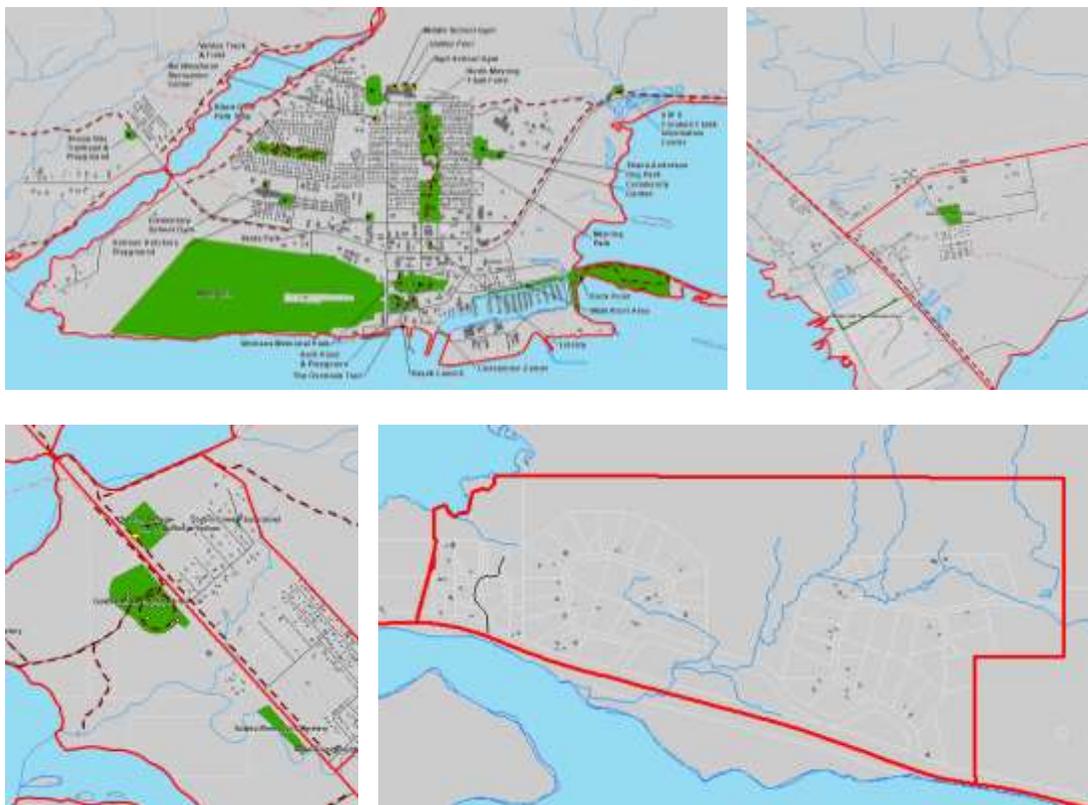
Walkability analysis measures access to recreation components by walking. One-half mile catchment radii have been placed around each component and shaded according to the component's GRASP® score. Scores are doubled within this catchment to reflect the added value of walkable proximity, allowing direct comparisons between neighborhood access and walkable access.

Walkability is a measure of how user-friendly an area is to people travelling on foot and benefits a community in many ways related to public health, social equity, and the local economy. Many factors influence walkability including the quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, and public safety considerations among others.

Pedestrian Barriers

Environmental barriers can limit walkability. The LOS in this analysis has been "cut-off" by identified barriers where applicable. Pedestrian barriers in Valdez, such as highways and rivers, significantly impact the analysis. Zones created by identified barriers, displayed as dark red lines, serve as discrete areas that are accessible without crossing a major street or another obstacle. Green parcels represent existing parks.

Figure 17: Walkability barriers

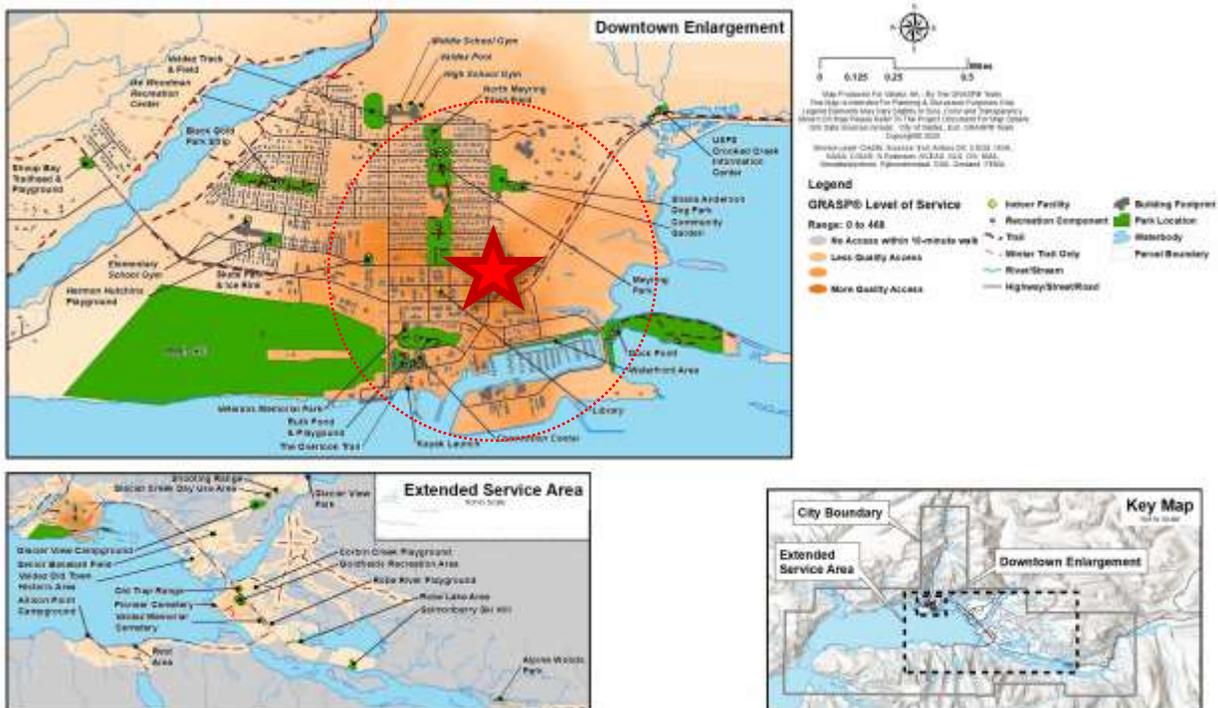




The analysis shows the LOS available across Valdez, based on a ten-minute walk. Darker gradient areas on the images indicate where there are more and higher quality recreation assets available based on a half-mile service area. Gray areas on these maps suggest that recreation opportunities are beyond a ten-minute walk. In general, these images show that Valdez has an appropriate distribution of parks and facilities.

An area of higher concentration is notable near Meals Avenue and Pioneer Drive, which is indicated by a red star on the map. The dashed circle represents approximately one-half mile or a ten-minute walk. From this point, a user could reach 48 different components at seven parks and two indoor facilities.

Figure 18: Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation



:

The following table shows the statistical information derived from perspective **Walkable Access to Recreation** analysis.

Table 16: *Statistics for Image 5*

	A	B	C	D
	Percent of Total with LOS	GRASP® Value Range	Average LOS per Acre Served	Avg. LOS Per Acre / Population per acre
Valdez	9%	0 to 468	46	8757

The numbers in each column are derived as described in neighborhood access. The GRASP® Index does not apply to the walkability analysis. The LOS value for a person who must walk to assets is similar (44 to 46) of that for someone who can drive. In more typical systems, the value is typically about 50% for walkability when compared to one-mile access.

The orange shading in the maps allows for a quick understanding of how LOS distribution across the City. Showing where LOS is adequate or inadequate is another step using GIS. First, we must determine what constitutes an appropriate level of service for Valdez residents. Using a GRASP® typical park that has three components which in Valdez could be a park in the following table:

Table 17: *Three-Component Parks*

Park or Location	Basketball, Practice	Multi-Use Pad	Open Turf	Picnic Ground	Playground, Local	Shelter, All Sizes	Water Access, Developed	Water, Open	Total Components per Park	Unique Components per Park
BLACK GOLD PARK STRIP		1	1		1				3	3
GLACIER VIEW PARK				1			1	1	3	3
ROBE RIVER PLAYGROUND	1				1	1			3	3
Totals:	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1		
Percent of Locations with Component	33%	33%	33%	33%	67%	33%	33%	33%		

A target value is a park with standard comfort and convenience features, and that has three components, all that score a two in GRASP® scoring. In the following map, this value is bracketed at 38.4 and is known as the **target** score for Valdez. GIS analysis shows where LOS is above or below the threshold value.

On the following map, purple areas indicate where walkable LOS values meet or exceed the target. Areas shown in yellow on the map can be considered areas of opportunity. These are areas where land

and assets are currently available but do not provide the target value. It may be possible to improve the LOS value in such areas by enhancing the quantity and quality of features in existing parks without the need to acquire new lands or develop new parks. Another option might be to address pedestrian barriers in the immediate area.

Figure 19: Walkable Access Gap Identification

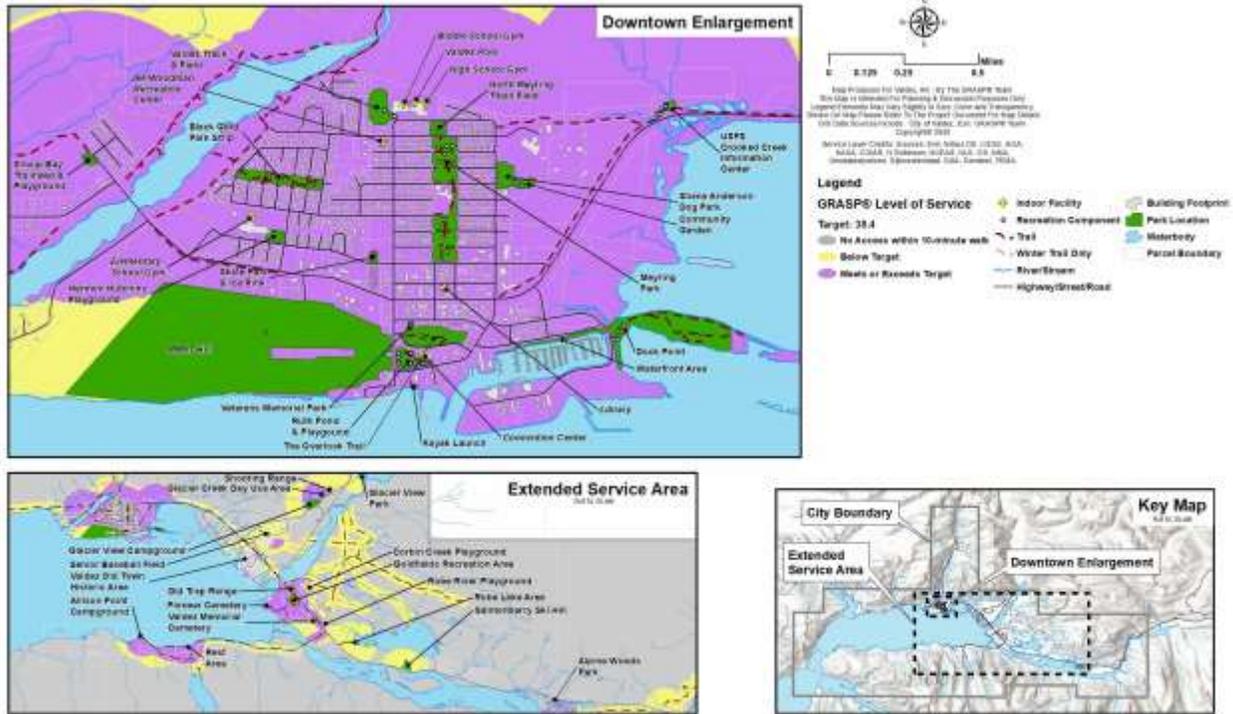
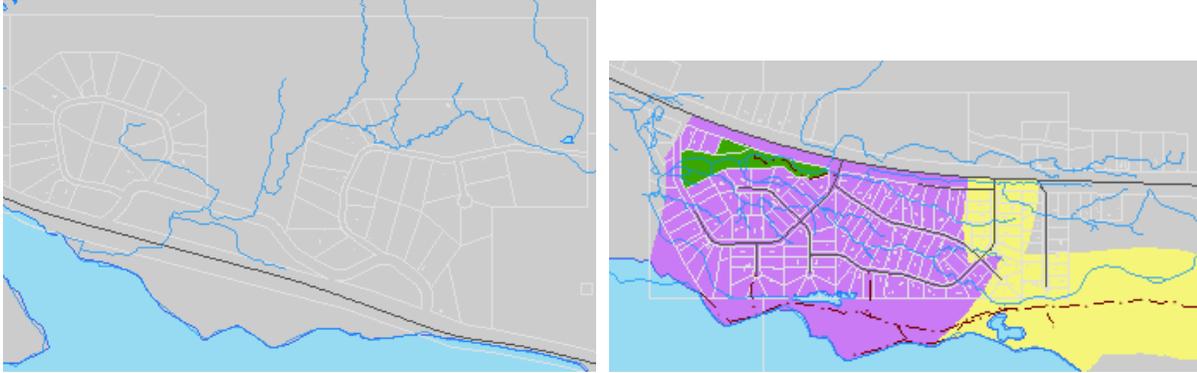


Figure 20: Walkable Access Gap Identification Enlargements





On *Image 19: Walkable Access Gap Identification*, areas shown in purple have LOS that exceeds the target value. Two percent of Valdez's land area is above the target, and 7 percent of the City drops below it. Ninety-one percent of Valdez has no service within walking distance.

Chart 1: Walkable access to assets based on the percentage of land within the city boundary that scores above threshold (purple) or below threshold (yellow), respectively.

Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation

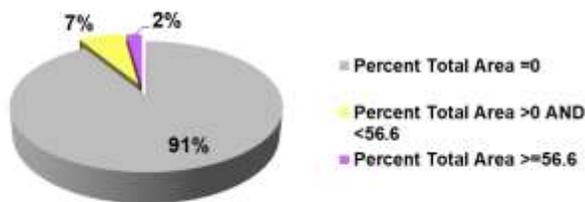
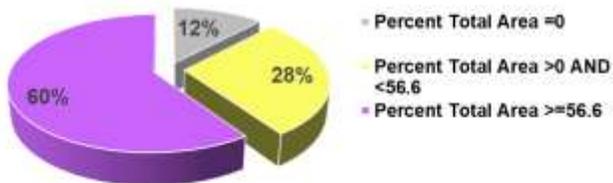


Chart 2: Walkable access to assets based on population.

% of Population with Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation

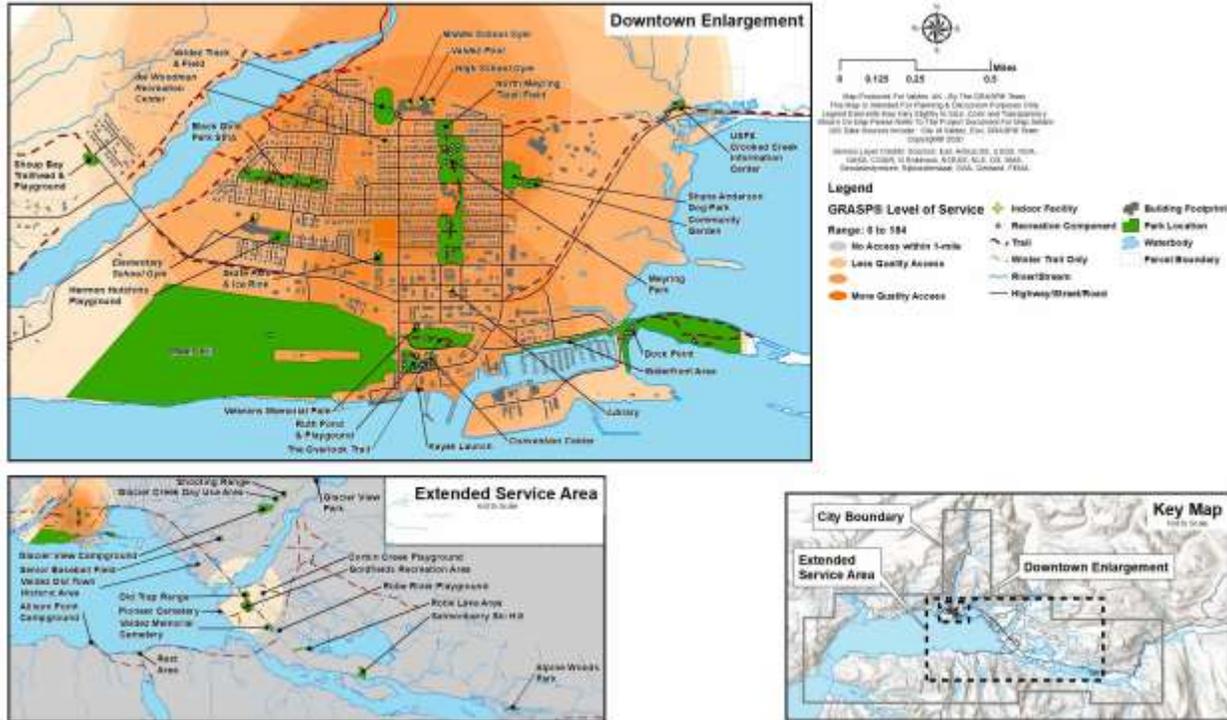


This chart displays the level of service based on where people live. Using the walkable level of service data, as compared to census data provided by Esri GIS data enrichment techniques, the analysis indicates that parks are generally well placed in or close to residential areas and capture a higher percentage of the population than land area. With 81 percent of residents within walking distance of some outdoor recreation opportunities, Valdez is better positioned than the previous analysis indicated at 60% of the population vs.2% of the land area.

Access to Indoor Recreation

As in the other analyses, a "heat map" examines access to indoor recreation opportunities. These maps show where there are indoor recreation assets available based on walkable and one-mile service areas. In general, the maps show that Valdez has a variety of indoor facilities distributed around the main downtown area.

Figure 21: Neighborhood Access to Indoor Recreation



Darker gradient areas on the images indicate where there are more and higher quality recreation assets available based on the walkable and one-mile service areas. In general, these images also show that Valdez has an appropriate distribution of parks and facilities. Gray areas on these maps indicate that recreation opportunities are beyond a one-mile service area. Areas of higher concentration are notable when residents live within walking distance of an indoor facility.

More on Utilizing GRASP® Perspectives

GRASP® perspectives evaluate the level of service throughout a community from various points of view. Their purpose is to reveal possible gaps in service and provide a metric to use in understanding a recreation system. However, it is not necessarily beneficial for all parts of the community to score equally in the analyses. The desired level of service for a location should depend on the type of service, the

Used in conjunction with other assessment tools such as community needs surveys and a public input process, perspectives can be used to determine if current levels of service are appropriate in a given location. Plans can then be developed that provide similar levels of service to new, developing neighborhoods. Or it may be determined that different Levels of Service are adequate or suitable and therefore a new set of criteria may be utilized that differs from existing community patterns to reflect these distinctions.

characteristics of the site, and other factors such as community need, population growth forecasts, and land use issues. For example, commercial, institutional, and industrial areas might reasonably have lower Levels of Service for parks and recreation opportunities than residential areas. GRASP® perspectives focus attention on gap areas for further scrutiny.

Other Types of Analysis

Traditional analyses may also evaluate the recreational level of service.

Capacities Analysis

A capacity analysis is a traditional tool for evaluating service. It compares the number of assets to population and projects future needs based on providing the same ratio of components per population (i.e., as the population grows or declines over time components may need to be added to maintain the same proportion). The issue or limiting factor is that the population of Valdez projects to decrease over time, thus limiting the usefulness of this table. **Table 17** shows the current capacities for selected components in Valdez. While there are no correct ratios for these components, this table can be used in conjunction with other information, such as input from focus groups, staff, and the general public, to determine if the current capacities are adequate or not for specific components.

Table 18: Valdez Capacities

	Population	Basketball Court	Basketball, Practice	Camping, Defined	Climbing, Designated	Climbing, General	Diamond Field	Diamond Field, Complex	Disc Golf	Dog Park	Educational Experience	Game Court	Garden, Community	Loop Walk	Multi-Use Pad	Natural Area	Open Turf	Passive Node	Picnic Ground	Playground, Local	Rectangular Field, Large	Shelter, Large	Shelter, Small	Skate Park	Target Range	Tennis Court	Track, Athletic	Trailhead	Volleyball Court	Water Access, Developed	Water Access, General	Water, Open	Winter Sport	
INVENTORY																																		
City of Valdez		3	2	157		1	6	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	1	9		5	4	1	3	3		5	1	5	5	6	1	
Schools		1																	2	1						1								
Alternative Providers					5						1						1					1					6		1	1	2			
System Totals:		4	2	157	5	1	6	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	4	7	1	11	1	5	5	1	3	3	1	11	1	6	6	8	1	
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION																																		
CURRENT POPULATION 2019	3,778																																	
Current Ratio per 1000 Population		1.06	0.53	41.56	1.32	0.26	1.59	0.26	0.26	0.26	1.32	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.53	0.53	1.06	1.85	0.26	2.91	0.26	1.32	1.32	0.26	0.79	0.79	0.26	2.91	0.26	1.59	1.59	2.12	0.26	
Population per component		945	1,889	24	756	3,778	630	3,778	3,778	3,778	756	3,778	3,778	3,778	1,889	1,889	945	540	3,778	343	3,778	756	756	3,778	1,259	1,259	3,778	343	3,778	630	630	472	3,778	
PROJECTED POPULATION - 2024	3,610																																	
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population		4	2	150	5	1	6	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	4	7	1	11	1	5	5	1	3	3	1	11	1	6	6	8	1	
Number that should be added by all providers to achieve current ratio at projected population		0	0	-7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The usefulness of the capacity table to project future facility needs based on population growth, if the future population's interests and behaviors are the same as today's, and that today's capacities are in line with today's needs. The capacities table bases its analysis on the number of assets without regard to distribution, quality, or functionality. Higher LOS is achieved only by adding assets, regardless of the location, condition, or quality of those assets. In theory, the LOS provided by assets is more accurately a combination of location and quality as well as their quantity, which is why this table should be used with discretion, and only in conjunction with the other analyses presented here.

Table 19: Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities, Median Population Served per Facility

2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks			
Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities			
Outdoor Facility	Agencies Offering this Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility	Current Residents per Facility
Residents Per Park*	NA	1,231	99
Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents*	NA	11.8	9
Basketball Courts	86.1%	10,048	945
Community Gardens	46.3%	20,502	3,778
Dog Park	59.3%	45,751	3,778
Playgrounds	94.4%	7,334	343
Swimming pools (outdoor only)	52.3%	43,500	NA
Skate Park	26.2%	20,000	3,778
Tennis Courts	79.7%	5,462	1,259
Diamond Fields: baseball - youth	77.9%	6,890	630
Diamond Fields: softball fields - youth	60.9%	12,000	
Diamond Fields: softball fields - adult	66.5%	16,298	
Diamond Fields: baseball - adult	54.7%	16,184	
Rectangular Fields: multi-purpose	66.1%	7,812	3,778
Rectangular Fields: soccer field - youth	48.1%	7,656	
Rectangular Fields: soccer field - adult	40.9%	12,767	
Rectangular Fields: football field	38.0%	19,235	
<i>*Comparison based on median for less than 20,000 population comparison</i>			
The remaining comparisons are based on similar residents (3.3) per square mile (less than 500)			

Comparing Valdez to recent national statistics published in the "2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks", the agency meets or exceeds the median standard in all categories except outdoor swimming pools.

Similar calculations can also be made based on acres of land and parks per 1,000 residents. The following table includes all the properties included in the GIS mapping. An estimate of the acreage consists of only current Valdez parks. Residents per park in Valdez exceed comparable agencies, but acres of parks per 1,000 people are better than NRPA published benchmarks for similar size cities or density.

Table 20: Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents

		2019 GIS Acres*
INVENTORY		
City of Valdez		423
Valdez Schools		6
Alternative Providers		17
System Total		446
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION		
CURRENT POPULATION 2019	3,778	
Current Ratio per 1000 Population		112.0
Population per acre		9
PROJECTED POPULATION - 2024	3,610	
Total acres needed to maintain current ratio of City of Valdez existing facilities at projected population		404
<i>Acres that should be added to maintain current ratio at projected population</i>		-19

This capacity table indicates that Valdez provides approximately 112 acres per 1000 people or 9 people per acre of "park" and does not include other provider parks and schools.

Key Conclusions from the Inventory and Level of Service Analysis

Proximity and availability of transportation are relevant factors affecting Valdez's levels of service. The provision of assets is reasonably equitable across Valdez, assuming resident's access to motorized transportation. The analysis would indicate that Valdez is currently providing a variety of recreation opportunities with the supplement of schools and alternative providers when compared to other similar cities. The vast scale of Valdez may significantly hinder walkable access outside of the central part of town.

The most obvious way to increase overall LOS is to add assets in any area with lower service or acquire land in areas lacking current service. Significant gaps in walkable service exist throughout Valdez, although most residential areas appear to have walkable access to some recreation opportunities. Some residential areas have less access to quality recreation opportunities, while other regions have no walkable access. Additional analysis and a review of the information received from surveys, focus groups, and other sources, including staff knowledge, contribute to identify the best locations for future improvements further.

D. Parks and Recreation Influencing Trends

The changing pace of today’s world requires analyzing recreation trends from both a local and national level. Understanding the participation levels of district residents using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, combined with research of relevant national recreation trends, provides critical insights that help to plan for the future of parks and recreation. These new shifts of participation in outdoor recreation, sports, and cultural programs are an important component of understanding and serving community.

Local Recreational Expenditures

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides insights about consumer expenditures per household in 2019. The following information was sourced from ESRI Business Analyst, which provides a database of programs and services where Valdez residents spend their money. The table below shows the average dollars spent on various recreational products/services. Money spent on fees and admissions related to entertainment and recreation generated the highest revenues of \$1.2 million in Valdez.

Table 21: Recreational Expenditures in Valdez, Alaska

Variable	Individual	Total
Entertainment/Recreation - Fees & Admissions	\$815.07	\$1,222,603
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Civic Clubs	\$273.33	\$409,988
Entertainment/Recreation - Sports/Rec/Exercise Equipment	\$233.30	\$349,955
Fees for Recreational Lessons	\$164.61	\$246,916
Entertainment/Recreation - Toys/Games/Crafts/Hobbies	\$126.78	\$190,172
Camp Fees	\$71.68	\$107,520
Pet Services	\$78.12	\$117,177
Bicycles	\$33.17	\$49,749
Hunting & Fishing Equipment	\$79.54	\$119,314
Camping Equipment	\$21.99	\$32,987
Water Sports Equipment	\$9.23	\$13,847
Winter Sports Equipment	\$6.43	\$9,647

Source: ESRI Business Analysis

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

In 2017, the Outdoor Industry Association estimated that national consumer spending on outdoor recreation generated \$887 billion in consumer spending, and directly supported 7.6 million jobs.

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
- U.S. Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.²
- Nearly half of active Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.³

The *Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*, a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space⁴:

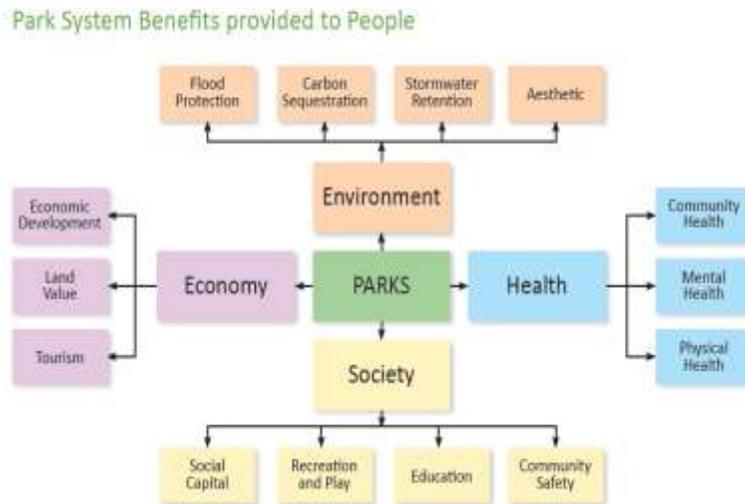
- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

² Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report

³ *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016*

⁴ Paul M. Sherer, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space," The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006

Figure 22: Park System Benefits provided to People



National Healthy Lifestyle Trends

The population of the United States is becoming more diverse. As demographics are experiencing an age and ethnic shift, so too are landscapes, daily lifestyles and habits changing. The number of adults over the age of 65 has increased, and lifestyle changes have encouraged less physical activity; collectively these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Below are examples of trends and government responses. More and more, local governments are accepting the role of providing preventative health care through park and recreation services. The following facts are from an International City/County Management local government survey⁵:

- 89% of respondents' parks and recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- 84% had already implemented recreation programs that encourage active living in their community.
- The highest priority selected for the greatest impact on community health and physical inactivity was a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

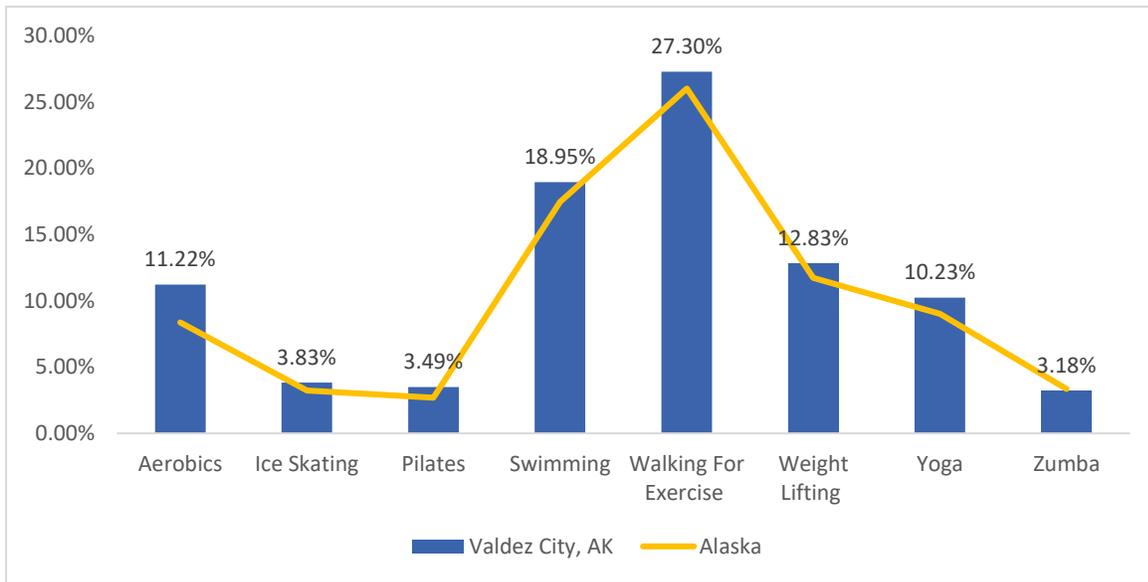
Fitness and Health Behavior

The figure below shows household participation in various fitness activities. Participation was highest for the following activities:

- Walking for Exercise (27.30%)
- Swimming (18.95%)
- Weightlifting (12.83%)

5 "Active Living Approached by Local Government: Survey," International City/County Management Association, <http://bookstore.icma.org/freedocs/Active%20Living%20and%20Social%20Equity.pdf>, 2004.

Figure 23: Fitness and Wellness Participation of Valdez compared to the State of Alaska



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst

Winter Recreation

Winter sports are gaining popularity in the United States, and their economic contributions are being tracked and monitored. According to a report in collaboration with POW (Protect Our Winters) and REI, in February 2018, snow sports such as snowboarding, skiing, and snowmobiling generated an estimated \$20.3 billion in economic value in the United States, primarily through ski resorts, hotels, bars, restaurants, grocery stores, and gas stations⁶. More than 20 million people participated in downhill skiing, snowmobiling, and snowboarding between 2015 and 2016. One sport that is on the rise is cross country skiing, which saw a 12 percent increase in popularity. The numbers from the Outdoor Recreation Topline Report show that cross country skiing is on the rise.⁷



A study from the United States Forest Service demonstrated the impact that non-motorized winter recreation sports can have on local economies. In their study, the USFS analyzed the Gallatin National Forest in Montana. Results indicated that cross country skiing generated an economic impact of over \$400,000 and supported 30 local jobs. Another study of visitor use data showed that people who travel to National Forests spent on average \$97 per day, while locals spent approximately \$27 per day for day

⁶ Protect Our Winters, REI CoOp, The Economic Contributions of Winter Sports in a Changing Climate; Accessed April 2019; https://g2g764m8l73gtwxg366onn13-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/POW_2018_economic_report-1.pdf

⁷Outdoor Foundation, Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report (2016); Accessed January 2019, https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Topline-Report_FINAL.pdf

trips. For overnight trips, that estimate increased to \$537 for visitors. In this study, snowshoeing and ski touring were considered as part of the category of cross-country skiing.⁸

From 2015 to 2016, cross country skiing saw a 12 percent increase in popularity. In just three years (from 2014 to 2016), the total change in participation was 40.3 percent (compare to alpine/downhill skiing at 12.4%). These numbers from the Outdoor Recreation Topline Report show that cross country skiing is on the rise.⁹

Motorized Vehicles

The increase in popularity of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) has provided trail managers the challenge of designing, planning, and maintaining sustainable future recreational opportunities. An OHV is a motor vehicle “designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain.” An OHV can refer to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles, off-road vehicles, and four-wheel-drive vehicles, and similar motorized vehicles. According to data from the United States Forest Service, from 1972 to 2004, OHV users increased ten-fold from five million to 51 million users. This prompted former Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth to proclaim that unmanaged recreation is one of the Four Threats to the U.S. forests and grasslands. “We believe that off-highway vehicles are a legitimate use of the National Forest System. But it’s a use that should be managed carefully. That’s what our new rule for OHV use on national forest system lands is all about: providing access that can be used and enjoyed into the future. And if we want to sustain that use, then we’ve got to work together.”

In order to ensure long-term viability of the trails, a detailed framework was developed to provide guidance for sustainable management of OHV trails. These guidelines, outlined in the United States Department of Agriculture’s report titled, “Designing Sustainable Off-Highway Vehicle Trails” was developed and tested in Alaska. A sustainable trail can be defined as:

“A trail that has been designed and constructed to such a standard that it does not adversely impact natural and cultural resources, can withstand the impacts of the intended user and the natural elements while receiving only routine cyclic maintenance and meets the needs of the intended user to a degree that they do not deviate from the established trail alignment.”

There are six key principles of sustainable OHV trail design which are:

OHV trail managers should consider these sustainable trail guidelines and research in more detail best practices for design and maintenance by reading the detailed report. Using this framework, trail managers can better understand opportunities for improvement in their current and future trails. The popularity of OHVs is projected to continue to grow according to a report published in January 2019 from Global Market Insights. The U.S. Off-Road Vehicles Market was valued at approximately 9 billion dollars in 2017, and the compound annual growth rate is anticipated at 5 percent from 2018 to 2024. It is estimated that as of January 2019, there were approximately 150,000 miles of trails and 439 wilderness areas that supported OHV adaption. In addition, from 2015 to 2016, OHV participation grew by 2 million. There is also a correlation in participation with other outdoor activities, such as hunting.

⁸ Winter Wildlands Alliance, Human Powered Snowsports Trends and Economic Impacts, Accessed January 2019, <https://winterwildlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Economic-Impact-2016.pdf>

⁹ Outdoor Foundation, Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report (2016); Accessed January 2019, https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Topline-Report_FINAL.pdf

A limiting factor in the participation of OHVs is the rising number of fatalities. Education for drivers, safety gear for those under 16, and policies prohibiting road riding are just a few of the safety measures that are being enacted to reduce injuries and fatalities.

Ice Skating

Ice skating has declined in participation over the last 5 years according to the 2018 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities (SFIA) Topline Report. The number of casual ice skaters – those that participate between 1 and 12 times per year – was estimated to be roughly 9.4 million in 2012, declining to 8.5 million in 2017. Core participation – those that participate in the sport over 13 times per year, declined 5.9 percent from 2018 to 2017. Overall, ice skating has seen a 2.3 percent decline in participation over the past five years.

Outdoor Recreation Participation

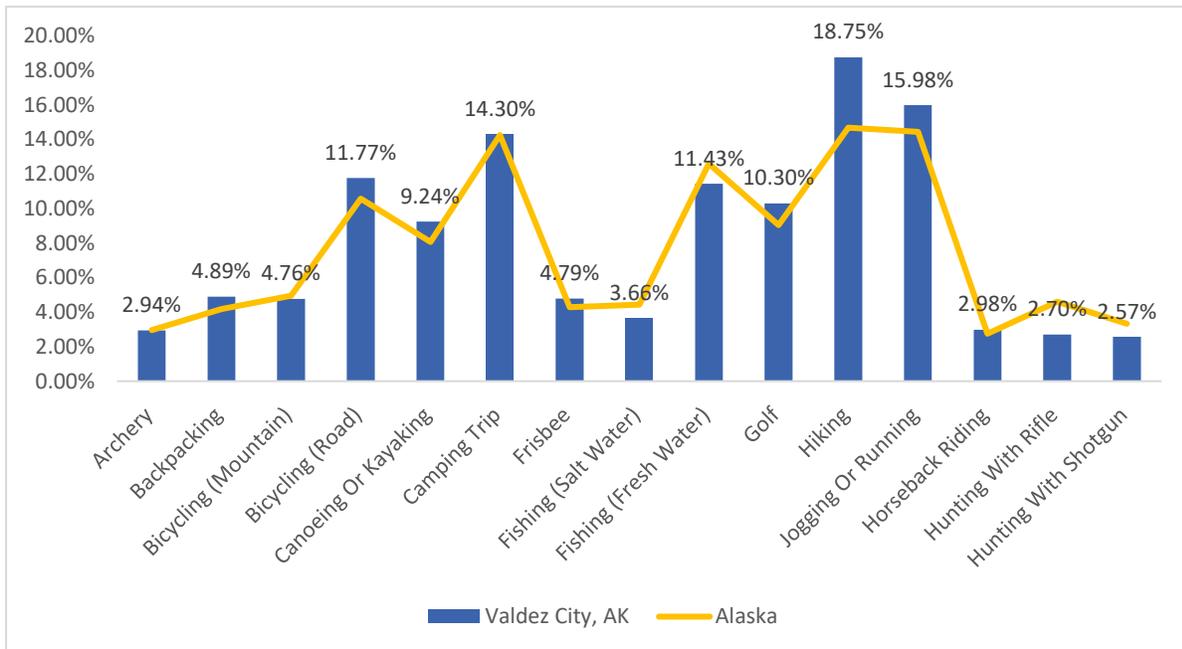
Outdoor recreation has become a thriving economic driver, creating 7.6 million jobs in 2018 and generating \$65.3 billion in federal tax revenue. Close to half of the US population six and older participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2017. The most popular activity was running – which included both jogging and trail running.

In the State of Alaska, the outdoor recreation economy generates:

- 72,000 direct jobs
- \$7.3 billion in consumer spending
- \$2.3 billion in wages and salaries
- \$337 million in state and local tax revenue

According to census data, households in Valdez had the highest participation in hiking (18.75%), jogging/running (15.98%), and camping trips (14.30%).

Figure 24: **Outdoor Recreation Household Participation in Valdez compared to State of Alaska**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst

Adventure Programming

Many people used to look to travel or tourist agencies for adventurous excursions. However, more municipalities have started to offer exciting experiences such as zip lining, challenge/obstacle courses, and other risk-taking elements on a local level. These agencies may form partnerships with specialized companies to provide adventure packages. One example of an effective partnership for outdoor adventure is in Castle Rock, Colorado. Philip S. Miller Park offers an incredible example to how an adventure park can be effectively maintained and operated through a public private partnership. While the park is owned and operated by the Town of Castle Rock Parks and Recreation Department, one of its largest attractions, complete with zip line tours, the EPIC Sky Trek, and the EPIC Adventure Tower, is owned and operated by a company called Royal Gorge Zip Line Tours. This company hires and trains its own staff, maintains its own equipment, and does an impressive job at marketing the park through videos, social media, and other promotional tactics. The lease agreement grants the town five percent of the gross revenues.



Figure X: Castle Rock Zip Line Tours Epic Tower Element

As for the adventure elements themselves, the zip line tours offer up to ten different flying courses, some reaching 50 miles per hour. The second feature, the Epic Sky Trek, has three different levels, each for various abilities, ideal for team building. It even features some of the most popular Ninja Warrior elements. Beyond the adventure features offered through the partnership, there are also adventure elements throughout the park, managed by the parks and recreation department. On top of the 7.4 miles of single-track trails, the Challenge Hill outdoor staircase puts walkers and runners to the test with 200 timber steps to the top of the mountain. From the trails, you'll probably notice the impressive adventure playground that takes advantage of the topographic landscape.

Castle Rock, CO, isn't the only agency capitalizing on adventure programming. Roanoke County Parks and Recreation in Virginia recently redeveloped "Explore Park" – an outdoor adventure attraction with trails, camping, zip lines, and challenge obstacles. A number of programs take place at the park – such as introductions to paddle boarding, stargazing and astronomy, wildlife classes, and much more. Riverfront access provides fishing, boat launches, and tubing – managed by a local concessionaire. "Treetop Quest" is the aerial park that gives participants four and up the chance to fly on "tarzan swings," climb cargo nets, and balance on tight ropes.



Figure X: Roanoke County Parks and Recreation "Explore Park" Cargo Net

Nature Play

Playing in nature is an educational opportunity that has numerous benefits, from increasing active and healthy lifestyles, to developing a conservation mindset, to understanding the ecosystems and wildlife that depend on them.¹⁰ According to the report, "Nature Play & Learning Places: Creating and Managing Places where Children Engage with Nature" there is a genuine need in today's society for learning spaces that spark creative play with natural materials, such as plants, vines, shrubs, rocks, water, logs, and other elements.

Richard Louv introduced the term, "Nature-Deficit Disorder" in 2005, which describes the effects of urbanization, technological advances, and social changes. Scientific evidence suggests that this disorder contributes to emotional and physical illnesses, including attention difficulties, obesity, nature illiteracy, and an "epidemic of inactivity." Environmental education, provided by non-profits and parks and recreation agencies, can help combat nature-deficit disorder by sparking curiosity in the outdoors either through structured nature programming or through unstructured nature play. Nature Play is defined as "A designated, managed area in an existing or modified outdoor environment where children of all ages and abilities play and learn by engaging with and manipulating diverse natural elements, materials, organisms, and habitats, through sensory, fine motor and gross motor experiences."

Nature Play spaces can provide valuable lessons for children, not only in regard to learning their natural environment and appreciation for nature, but also for personal development. These spaces, similar to playgrounds, provide safe spaces to take risks and understand behavioral outcomes. One of the most essential elements in planning Nature Play spaces is to conduct a risk assessment to reduce the unnecessary potential of injury. For instance, natural objects such as logs, and boulders may be placed strategically for climbing but consider where the child might land if he or she were to fall or jump off. Similarly, trees can be used as natural climbing features, with consideration to removing shrubs and nearby smaller trees below. Nature Play can happen in forest-based schools, play zoos, gardens, and summer camps. American Camp Association reported that there are approximately 5,000-day camps that currently operate in the U.S.¹¹

¹⁰ Moore, R. (2014). Nature Play & Learning Places. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation

¹¹ Moore, R. (2014). Nature Play & Learning Places. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation

Aquatics and Water Recreation Trends

In 2018, the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) ranked swimming second nationwide in sports participation.¹² However, in the past several years, a number of different aquatics trends have emerged that offer a new take on the traditional rectangle pool. Nationally, there is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. This is important, as swimming for fitness was the top aspirational activity for “inactives” in all age groups, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) 2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report. Lazy rivers have become more common as a leisure pool element, but also for swim lessons, therapeutic reasons, and sports conditioning work.¹³

To add a fun aquatics element, agencies are experimenting with using large inflatables in pools. Most of these inflatables are related to challenge course elements, with slides, rock climbing elements, and other obstacles. In regard to pool design, zero-depth entry is considered more accessible for young children, seniors, and those with disabilities. Splash pad elements are also becoming more common in shallow waters. In addition, sometimes volleyball nets and basketball hoops can be installed to encourage play.¹⁴

Team Sport Participation

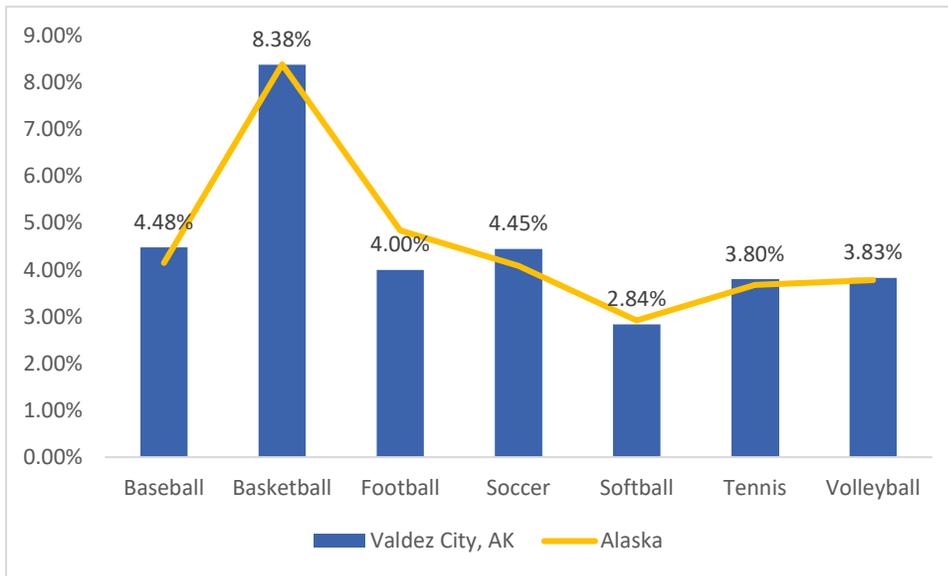
According to census data, households in Valdez had the highest participation in basketball (8.38%), soccer (4.45%), and baseball (4.48%).

¹² “2018 Sport Participation Snapshot,” National Sporting Goods Association, 2018.

¹³ “Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report,” Sports and Fitness Industry Association, 2016.

¹⁴ “Swim with the Current: What’s Trending in Aquatics,” Campus Rec, 2018. <https://campusrecmag.com/swim-current-trending-aquatics/>

Figure 25: Team Sport Household Participation in Valdez compared to State of Alaska



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst

Dog Parks

Dog parks continue to see high popularity and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. They help build a sense of community and can draw potential new community members and tourists traveling with pets.¹⁵

In 2014, a new association was formed dedicated to providing informational resources for starting and maintaining dog parks, the National Dog Park Association. *Recreation Magazine*¹⁶ suggests that dog parks can represent a relatively low-cost way to provide a popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few. Even “spraygrounds” are being designed just for dogs. Dog parks are also places for people to meet new friends and enjoy the outdoors.

The best dog parks cater to people with design features for their comfort and pleasure, but also with creative programming.¹⁷ Amenities in an ideal dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade and water – for dogs and people
- At least one acre of space with adequate drainage
- Double gated entry
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags
- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas
- Custom designed splashpads for large and small dogs

¹⁵ Joe Bush, “Tour-Legged-Friendly Parks, *Recreation Management*, February 2, 2016.

¹⁶ Emily Tipping, “2014 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation,” *Recreation Management*, June 2014.

¹⁷ Dawn Klingensmith “Gone to the Dogs: Design and Manage an Effective Off-Leash Area”, *Recreation Management*, March 2014. (http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02).

- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

Generational Preferences

Activity participation and preferences tend to vary based on a number of demographic factors but can also differ based on generational preferences. According to the Pew Research Center, the following birth years identify generations into the categories below.

Table 22: *Generation by Age*

<i>Silent Generation</i>	1928 – 45
<i>Baby Boomers</i>	1946 – 64
<i>Generation X</i>	1965 - 80
<i>Millennial</i>	1981 – 96
<i>Generation Z</i>	1997 - Present

Source: *Pew Research Center*

Baby Boomers

As Baby Boomers enter and enjoy retirement, they are looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults. Boomers are second only to Generation X and Millennials in participation in fitness sports in 2019.¹⁸

Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to provide opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports. When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes are important. Recreation trends are shifting from games and activities that boomers associate with senior citizens. Activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because boomers relate these activities with old age.

Generation X

Many members of Generation X are in the peak of their careers, raising families, and growing their connections within the community. As suggested by the *2017 Participation Report* from the Physical Activity Council, members of Generation X were “all or nothing” in terms of their levels of physical activity; with 37 percent reported as highly active, and 27 percent reported as completely inactive. As further noted in the Report, over 50 percent of Generation X was likely to have participated in fitness and outdoor sports activities. An additional 37 percent participated in individual sports.

The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation is generally considered those born between about 1981 and 1996, and in April 2016, the Pew Research Center reported that this generation had surpassed the Baby Boomers as the nation’s most populous age group¹⁹.

¹⁸Physical Activity Council, Participation Report, 2019: <http://www.physicalactivitycouncil.com/pdfs/current.pdf>

¹⁹ Richard Fry, “Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America’s Largest Generation”, *Pew Research Center Fact Tank*, April 25, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/>, accessed May 2015

As Millennials tend to be more tech-savvy, socially conscious, achievement-driven age group with more flexible ideas about balancing wealth, work and play. They generally prefer different park amenities, and recreational programs, as opposed to their counterparts in the Baby Boomer generation. Engagement with this generation should be considered in parks and recreation planning. In an April 2015 posting to the National Parks and Recreation Association's official blog, *Open Space*, Scott Hornick, CEO of Adventure Solutions suggests the following 7 things to consider to make your parks millennial friendly²⁰:

1. Group activities are appealing.
2. Wireless internet/Wi-Fi access is a must – being connected digitally is a millennial status-quo and sharing experiences in real time is something Millennials enjoying doing.
3. Having many different experiences is important – Millennials tend to participate in a broad range of activities.
4. Convenience and comfort are sought out.
5. Competition is important, and Millennials enjoy winning, recognition, and earning rewards.
6. Facilities that promote physical activity, such as trails and sports fields, and activities like adventure races are appealing.
7. Many Millennials own dogs and want places they can recreate with them.

In addition to being health conscious, Millennials often look for local and relatively inexpensive ways to experience the outdoors close to home; on trails, bike paths, and in community parks²¹.

Generation Z

As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population. Nationwide, nearly half of the youth population is ethnically diverse, and 25 percent is Hispanic.

Characteristics cited for Generation Z, the youth of today, include²²:

1. The most obvious characteristic for Generation Z is the widespread use of technology.
2. Generation Z members live their lives online and they love sharing both the intimate and mundane details of life.
3. They tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.
4. Generation Z tend to be independent. They don't wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions, they Google it.

With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University noted that the prevalence of obesity in Generation Z (which they describe as individuals born since the year 2000) is triple that of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1981). It suggests that due to increased use of technology, Generation Z spends more time indoors, is less physically active, and more obese compared to previous generations. The researchers noted that Generation Z seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation. This is the most competent generation from a

²⁰ Scott Hornick, "7 Ways to Make Your Park More Millennial Friendly", *Parks and Recreation Open Space Blog*, August 19, 2015, <http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-ways-to-make-your-parks-millennial-friendly>, accessed May 2016

²¹ "Sneakernomics: How The 'Outdoor' Industry Became The 'Outside' Industry", *Forbes*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2015/09/21/sneakernomics-how-the-outdoor-industry-became-the-outside-industry/2/#50958385e34d>, accessed May 2016

²² Alexandra Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z", *New York Times*, March 28, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html>, accessed May 2016

technological standpoint, but Generation Z also tends to fear, and often struggles with, some basic physical activities and sports. The 2019 Physical Activity Council Participation Report found that team sport participation in Generation Z declined over the past six years a 0.2 percent annually.²³

Signage and Wayfinding

To increase perception and advocacy, a parks and recreation professional needs to prioritize opportunities that impact the way the community *experiences the system*. This can start with signage, wayfinding, and park identity. The importance of signage, wayfinding, and park identity to encourage awareness of locations and amenities cannot be understated. A park system impacts the widest range of users in a community, reaching users, and non-users, across all demographic, psychographic, behavioral, and geographic markets. In a more narrow focus, the park system is the core service an agency can use to provide value to its community (ex. partnerships between departments or commercial/residential development, high-quality and safe experiences for users, inviting community landscaping contributing to the overall look or image of the community). Signage, wayfinding, and park identity can be the first step in continued engagement by the community, and a higher perception or awareness of a park system, which can lead to an increase in health outcomes.

Agency Accreditation

Parks and recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency's commitment to 150 standards. Accreditation is a distinguished mark of excellence that affords external recognition of an organization's commitment to quality and improvement.

The National Recreation and Parks Association administratively sponsors two distinct accreditation programs: The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT) approves academic institutions and the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) approves agencies. It is the only national accreditation of parks and recreation agencies and is a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community.

E. Financial Analysis

Current Circumstance

The City of Valdez budgets are adopted annually and are based on a calendar-year. The General Fund is the primary operating fund, which accounts for all financial and general government revenues and expenditures.

The City's primary revenue source is property tax levied on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). The TAPS property tax represents over 80% of General Fund revenues, total revenues will be stable through 2020. A 5-year settlement period for the valuation of the TAPS will end in 2020. In 2021, a new valuation for TAPS will be established and the City of Valdez will need to reassess fiscal priorities based on the newly established evaluation of the pipeline.

²³ ²³Physical Activity Council, Participation Report, 2019: <http://www.physicalactivitycouncil.com/pdfs/current.pdf>

Provided below is a snapshot of the Department of Parks and Receptions most recent general fund budget information.

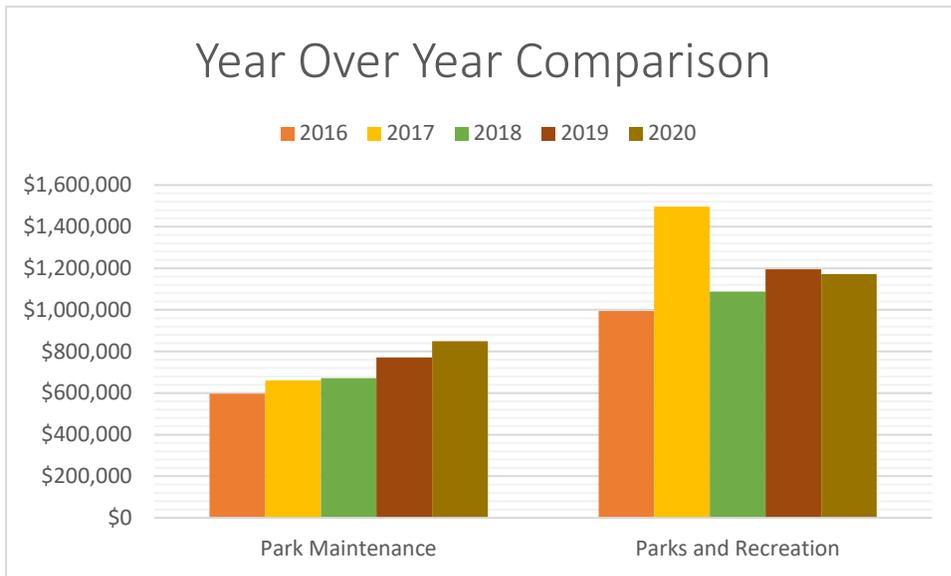
Table 23: FY16-20 General Fund Budget

Adopted Budget	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Parks Maintenance	\$597,045	\$661,382	\$671,141	\$771,415	\$849,547
Park and Recreation	\$994,527	\$1,495,726	\$1,088,081	\$1,194,410	\$1,171,281

The Park Maintenance Division has seen budget growth during the past five budget cycles. Since 2016, the Park Maintenance Division budget has increased by 30 percent. Most recent growth includes a 13 percent increase in 2019 and an additional 9 percent increase for 2020.

Fluctuations in the Parks and Recreation Division budget have occurred the past 5 budget cycles; however, the 2020 budget has increased by 15 percent over the 2016 budget. A fifteen percent increase over 5 years is equivalent to maintaining a 3 percent cost of living increase. Three percent can be used as a standard if no new programs or amenities are added.

Figure 26: FY16-FY20 Year Over Year Comparison



Cost Per Maintenance Task

The Department currently does not track maintenance costs per task. Developing a system to track maintenance costs would help in more accurate budget projections and provide historic data that could be used to determine potential maintenance costs for future parks and trails.

Life Cycle Costing Assessment (Maintenance Equipment and Park Amenities)

The Department does not have a life cycle costing assessment program for park amenities and maintenance equipment. Developing life cycle costing assessment program will assist in future maintenance and CIP budget projections.

Revenue-to-Operating Expenditures

According to 2019 NRPA Agency Review the typical parks and recreation agency in the United States recover 27.3 percent of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenues. This measurement is also known as cost recovery. During the past four years the Parks and Recreation division has maintained cost recovery at between 2 percent and 4 percent.



The City’s tax structure is highly dependent on property tax revenues and currently does not burden taxpayers with sales tax and substantial fees on City operated utilities. The Department of Parks and Recreation follows suite in maintaining mostly free programming.

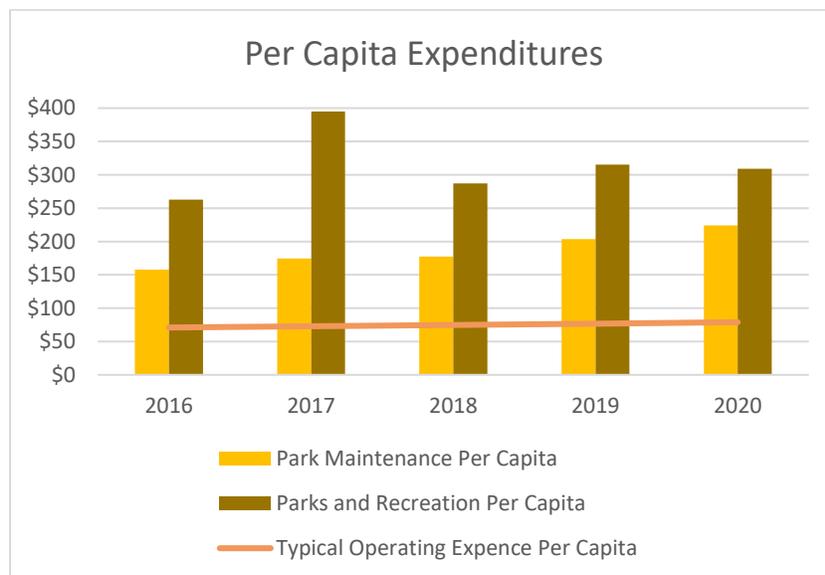
Operating Expenditures per Capita

Another metric NRPA aggregates and reports on annually in its Agency Performance Review is typical operating expenditures per capita. This measurement marks non-capital dollar spending for each person living in Valdez. In 2019, the typical parks and recreation agency spent \$78.69 for each person within their service boundary. VPR, Park Maintenance Division and Parks and Recreation Division have both spent twice the national average per community member. In 2019 VPR spent \$519 for each person within their service boundary. In 2021, a new valuation for TAPS will be established and the City of Valdez will need to reassess fiscal priorities based on the newly established evaluation of the pipeline. Both the fairness and the sustainability of the Valdez tax and fee system will be a challenge and focal point for the community looking forward.



It is important to acknowledge the high per capita spending is attributed to the vast number of acres of parkland and miles of trails the Park Maintenance Division maintains and the volume of programs the Recreation Division provides as one of the only service provider in the community.

Figure 27: *Operating Expenditures per Capita, FY16 through FY20*

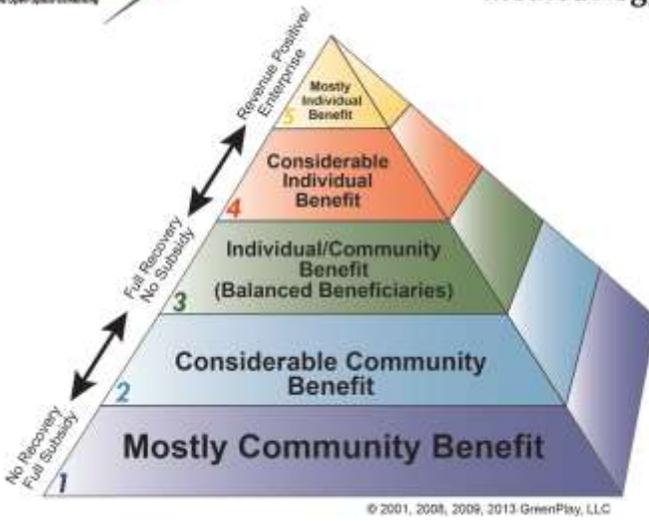


Financial Sustainability for Program Delivery

It is important for the City to develop a Resource Allocation and Pricing Philosophy that reflects the values of the community and the responsibility it has to the community. This philosophy will be especially important if the City moves forward in the development of new programs and additional and/or expanded facilities, and as it strives for sustainability and determines how much it is willing to subsidize operations with tax dollars.

One means of accomplishing this goal is applying a process using an industry tool called the "Pyramid Methodology." This methodology develops and implements a refined cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy based on current "best practices" as determined by the mission of the agency and the program's benefit to the community and/or individual.

Figure 28: *Pyramid Methodology*



Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and understanding of elected officials, and ultimately, citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the agency wants to be certain that it is philosophically aligned with its residents. The development of the cost recovery philosophy and policy is built on a very logical foundation, using the understanding of who is benefitting from recreation services to determine how the costs for that service should be offset.

Recreation programs and services are sorted along a continuum of what delivers the greatest individual benefit to what delivers the greatest community benefit. The amount of subsidy for each level (not necessarily each individual program) is then determined to create an overall cost recovery philosophy.

Developing effective ongoing systems that help measure success in reaching cost recovery goals and anticipate potential pitfalls are dependent on the following:

- Understanding of current revenue streams and their sustainability.
- Tracking all expenses and revenues for programs, facilities, and services to understand their contributions to overall Department cost recovery.
- Analyzing who is benefiting from programs, facilities, and services and to what degree they should be subsidized.
- Acknowledging the full cost of each program (those direct and indirect costs associated with program delivery) and where the program fits on the continuum of who benefits from the program or service to determine appropriate cost recovery targets.
- Defining direct costs as those that typically exist purely because of the program and the change with the program.
- Defining indirect costs as those that would typically exist anyway (like full-time staff, utilities, administration, debt service, etc.).
- Program fees should not be based on ability to pay, but an objective program should be in place that allows for easy access for lower income participants, through availability of scholarships

and/or discounts. In many instances, qualification for scholarships and/or discounts can mirror requirements for free or reduce cost lunch in schools.

Potential Funding Support

The Department should continue to pursue funding strategies that provide alternative funds from the City's General Fund:

- Explore alternative funding sources that strategically align with targeted services
- Expand alternative funding for strategic initiatives through grants
- Explore additional Community Partnerships
- Explore the opportunities for (and use of) sponsorships
- Consider a bond referendum for expanded and new facilities

A bond referendum was supported by 64 percent of survey respondents. The City should consider a bond referendum as a source of funding for updating or adding facilities that will increase patronage. Sponsorships and naming rights also received good support with 75 percent of survey respondents indicating probably or definitely supporting.

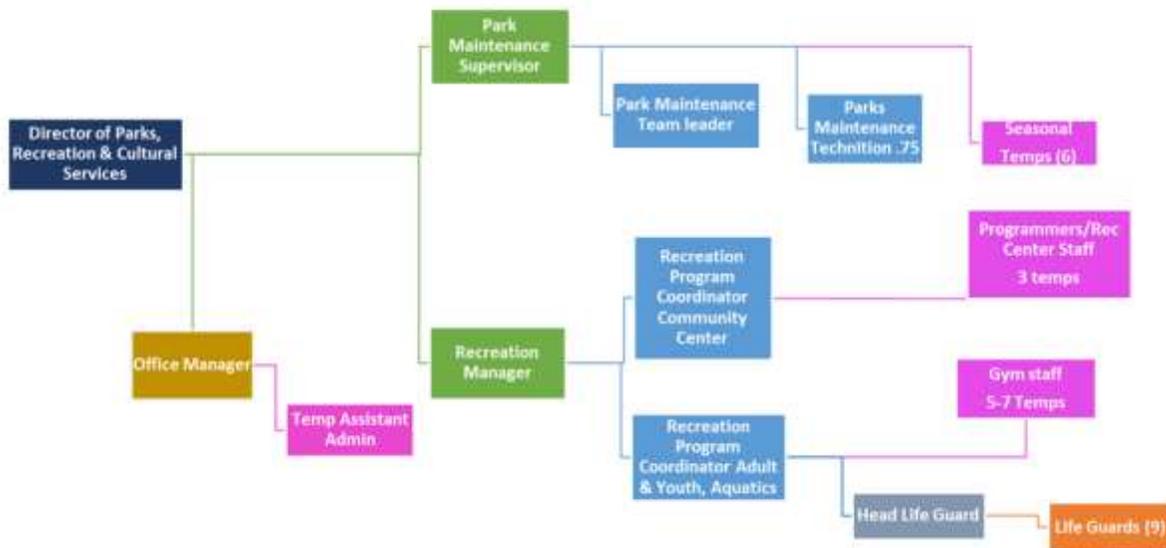
F. Organizational Analysis

Department Organization

Valdez Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of two divisions:

- **Park Maintenance Division**
The Park Maintenance Division strives to keep users - both residents and visitors - safe through year-round preventative maintenance programming while ensuring facilities support their intended functions in an effective and efficient manner.
- **Parks and Recreation Division**
The Parks and Recreation Division strives to foster community pride through high quality, intentional, and professional led programs. The Park and Recreation Division includes the Recreation Center and Valdez City Pool.

Figure 29: Department Organization Chart



Organizational Analysis

GreenPlay broadly assessed the organizational and management structure of the Parks and Recreation Department and staffing to determine effectiveness and efficiency in meeting current and future departmental responsibilities relating to the community's needs. The needs assessment – including input from staff interviews, community and key stakeholder engagement, and level of service analysis, along with the consultant's expertise – has identified a few areas for potential operational enhancement.

These key areas for operational enhancement include:

- Address deferred maintenance and the aging infrastructure
- Address wayfinding and signage at parks and trails
- Address staffing for maintenance to meet current and future demands for services
- Address staffing for events

The year over year budgeted FTE count by division is shown below. The counts below include the Parks and Recreation Director and Administrative Assistant. The actual FTE count for Park Maintenance and Parks and Recreation is .75 less per division than the numbers shown below.

Table 24: Department FTE Count

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Park Maintenance	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.75	3.20
Parks and Recreation	5.00	5.70	5.30	5.30	4.75

The City of Valdez is maintaining nearly 200 acres of parks and trails for approximately 4,000 residents. Typically, an agency with 200 acres is serving 16,000 residents and has between 4 and 6 park maintenance FTE's. It is not an apples to apples comparison; however, it highlights the 2.75 FTE allocated in FY20 is likely below what is necessary to effectively maintain the Valdez park and trail system. Detailed actions to address these areas of improvements can be found in the Recommendation section.

Staffing Considerations

Observations, analysis and staff feedback were considered to determine if the current staffing organization was satisfactory within the Department. The consultant team has determined that the Parks and Recreation Department has an inadequate number of Park Maintenance staff in place to operate its current system.

One hurdle the Department must deal with is getting an appropriate pool of qualified applicants for open positions. This is a national issue and reflects the changing workforce of both the Millennial and Baby Boomer Generations; however, this problem is amplified in Valdez, a small and remote community. To combat this trend, organizations need to be willing to allow for flexible scheduling, employee sharing between departments and benefits for three quarter time employees.

To operate more effectively in the future and to implement the Master Plan recommendations, the Department will need to hire additional positions to supplement existing staff or consider divesting from the upkeep of properties not owned by the City of Valdez. This will ensure that staffing resource levels can maintain existing facilities at or above acceptable standards.

The operational analysis does not include an analysis of FTEs needed for the recently acquired Meals Hill property or for new parks and trails, such as Water Front Park Strip, that have been identified in the Valdez Comprehensive Water Front Master Plan. FTE's above what is being recommended to maintain existing facilities, will be required.

G. Program Analysis

The City of Valdez prides itself on the quality and diversity of public recreation programs and activities the City offers and purposefully seeks to make participation affordable and financially accessible for all residents. For the size of the Valdez Parks and Recreation Department, the quantity and variety of programs provided are significant. Programs are well attended and are in high demand by the community.

Existing Recreation Programs

Department programs have been organized into the following categories.

Special Interest Classes:

- Adult Sports Leagues
- Aquatics Programs
- Drop-in Programs
- Special Events

Table 25: Sample Programs by Category

Program Category	Program Type	Age Group
Special Interest Classes	Bike Maintenance Clinic Beginner Fencing Understanding Photography Music	Youth Teen Adult Senior
Adult Sports League	Basketball	Adult Senior
Aquatics Programs	Swim Lessons Water Aerobics	Youth Teen Adult Senior
Drop-in Programs	Swim Basketball Volleyball	Youth Teen Adult Senior
Special Events	Halloween Carnival Christmas Tree Lighting Gold Rush Sunday Funday 4th of July Uncle Salmon 5k Beacon and Eggs	Youth Teen Adult Senior

Descriptions of program categories and FY 18/19 participation rates are summarized below, with key observations provided at the end of the section.

Special Interest Classes

Special Interest Classes are offered throughout the year to provide an opportunity for adults and children to experience new activities or further expand current knowledge and abilities. The range of programs offered throughout the year include music, fencing, art, and family yoga. Participants may sign up for a class that is offered on a monthly basis, 6 or 8-week session or as an individual workshop. In 2018, 18 classes were offered. Most class offerings were geared toward youth or teens.

Adult Sports Leagues

The Parks and Recreation Department offers adult sports leagues that provide recreational opportunities in basketball. The availability and size of leagues is limited due to a lack of available gym space. In 2018, 25 adults participated.

Aquatics Programs

The Parks and Recreation swim lesson program strives to provide a safe, fun and creative experience to students of all ages. On average, the City of Valdez provides group swim lessons and water fitness opportunities to nearly 100 participants annually. Additionally, the Valdez City Pool had over 4,000 drop-in visits and serves as the home to the Valdez Torpedoes Swim Club which accounted for nearly 2,000 additional uses.

Drop-in Programs

The City of Valdez offers a variety of activities that are designed for drop-in play at a scheduled time without prior registration. Drop-in opportunities including basketball, volleyball, swimming and pickleball are available. The City of Valdez does not own a gymnasium. Open gym opportunities are provided at School District facilities. Availability of gym space is not adequate; however, drop-in opportunities facilitated by the Department had over 4,000 visits.

Special Events

The Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for coordinating and managing free or low-cost family friendly events held annually throughout the community. Special Events provide community gathering opportunities for those who live in Valdez. In 2018, the Department hosted 12 community events.

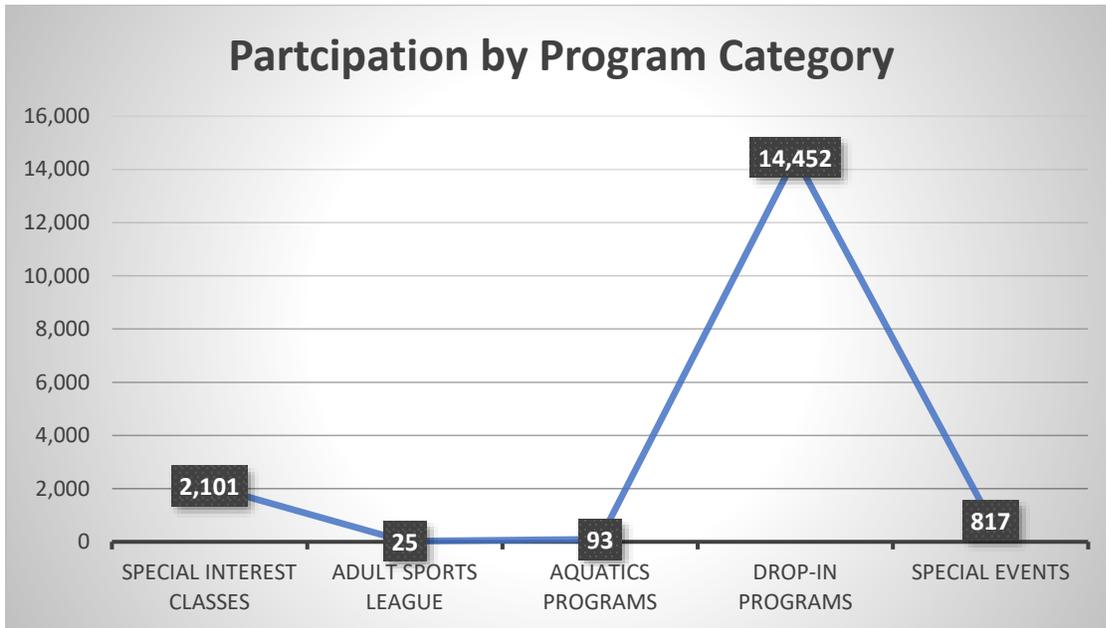
Participation Trends

For the size of the community the recreation programs serve, participation levels are high. Registration data and participation estimates for 2018 are as follows:

- 2,201 individuals registered for Special Interest Classes
- 25 adults registered for Adult Leagues
- 93 individuals registered for Aquatics programs
- 14,542 uses of drop-in opportunities (includes pool numbers)
- 817+ estimated participants at Special Events (no registration)

The participation by program category follows.

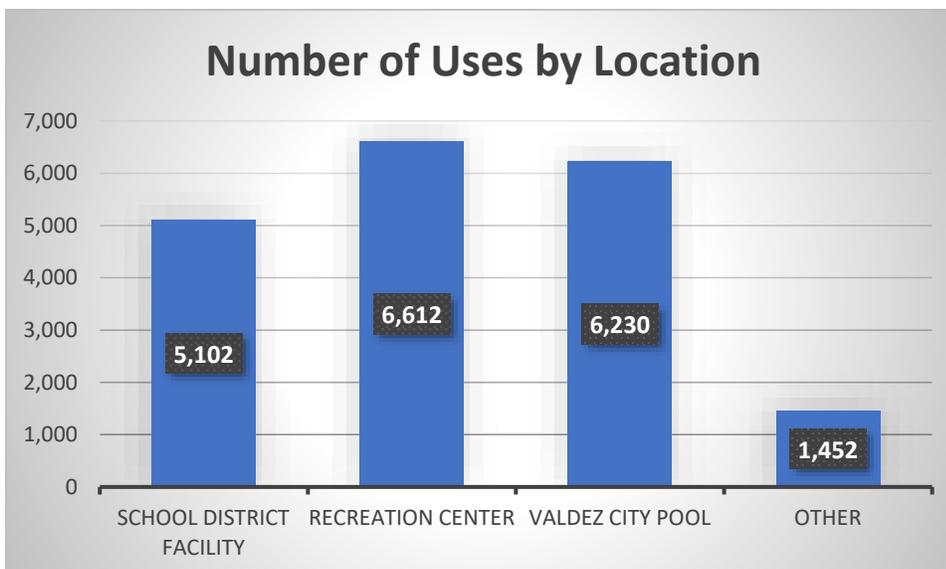
Table 26: Participation by Program Category



Program Availability

It is important that Department maintains its ability to enrich the quality of life for all Valdez residents and to deliver services at the level residents are accustomed to experiencing. A significant numbers of drop-in programs offered by the Department take place on School District property. School District activities take priority over City of Valdez programs. Gym scheduling and availability surfaced as a recoccurring challenge during Stakeholder meetings The lack of a dedicated gymnasium space limits programs and services offered by the Department. The number of uses by location is shown below.

Table 27: Number of Uses by Location



Program Development

Understanding core services in the delivery of parks and recreation services will allow the Department to improve upon those areas while developing strategies to assist in the delivery of other services. The basis of determining core services should come from the vision and mission developed by the City and what brings the greatest community benefit in balance with the competencies of the Department, current trends and the market.

The Department should pursue program development around the priorities identified by customer feedback, program evaluation process, and research. The following criteria should be examined when developing new programs.

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

Successful programs utilize continuous creative assessments, research, and planning. Maintaining the current registration data and evaluation process will help to assure success. Using historical participation levels to determine program popularity and participant feedback can be helpful in deciding if programs should be continued.

Moreover, new leisure and recreation trends may drive different needs. It is very easy to focus on programs that have worked for several years, especially if they are still drawing enough interested participants to justify each program's continuation. Starting new programs, based on community demand and/or trends, can be risky due to the inability to predict their success. If the program interest seems strong, as with those identified in the citizen survey, then the programs should be expanded. Lack of available space may hinder new or expanded opportunities in some cases.

Key Findings for Programs

- Registration data reflects high interest and participation in Special Interest Classes and Drop-in Programs.
- Few offerings are geared toward adults or seniors. Currently only 15% of programs are designed specifically for adults or seniors.
- The lack of a dedicated gymnasium limits program offerings and reach.
- The Department does not have a consistent way to evaluate the success of current program offerings.
- Feedback from the Statistically-Valid Survey indicates strong levels of satisfaction with activities provided by the Department. People genuinely enjoy and derive value from City of Valdez recreation programs and activities.

III. Key Opportunities

In April of 2020, VPR master plan project team viewed a Findings Presentation. This presentation focused on sharing summary information on demographic data, focus group, stakeholder and leadership interviews, the community needs assessment survey, and the GRASP inventory and LOS findings. The Findings presentation concluded with acknowledging a continued need for informed decision-making and provided a summary of key opportunities – resulting from analyses of the data collected. Feedback from those who viewed the Findings presentation confirmed that these themes and issues are indeed those that VPR should take into consideration in developing the 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations.

During a Visioning Workshop held in April 2020, a more in-depth review of issues allowed the VPR’s project team to respond to approximately thirty consultant-created recommended strategies. A tool known as the Key Issues Matrix identified, by category, the issues, the origin of qualitative input and quantitative data, and preliminary recommendations. Five categories of issues were identified:

- Organizational
- Programs and Services Delivery
- Facilities and Amenities
- Level of Service (LOS)
- Finance

Identifying and confirming the issues noted here with VPR staff provided direction for the development of goals, objectives, and strategies found in **Section V – Implementation**.

A. Implementation

After analyzing the recurring themes and issues, a variety of recommended goals and objectives were developed to guide the improvement of parks, recreation facilities, and trails, in Valdez. These recommendations focus on enhancing public recreation in the City through improvements to existing park facilities and recreation amenities, recommended amenities, increased organizational efficiency, improved programming and service delivery, and expanded financial opportunities.

There has been a primary focus on maintaining, sustaining, and improving VPR parks, recreation, and trails services. VPR should implement the recommendations of the 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. As conditions in the City change, and as the methods used to put the recommendations into practice evolve, these may result in the recommendations changing over time.

B. Recommendations

Goal 1: Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies

Objective 1.1 – Continue to enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding VPR activities and services

The department currently does a good job of promoting its programs and activities through its website, flyers, and social media. When asked how residents prefer to receive their information from the Department, survey respondents highlighted social media, followed by flyers at local businesses and the VPR website.

To continue to be successful, the Department should develop a marketing plan that will guide communication and promotion of its activities and facilities. Such a marketing effort will create greater awareness of City recreation offerings and should include branding of Valdez as a basecamp for outdoor and healthy living. The Department should highlight its role in creating experiences in the outdoors through the use of social media, and continued development of the Department website. Once developed, the Marketing Plan should be updated every three years, or as needed, and include marketing strategies that incorporate the efforts of partner departments and promote ongoing and completed projects.

As part of the Marketing Plan, the Department should evaluate wayfinding signage for facilities on trails, and within parks. The Department should develop signage standards for parks and trails and provide measured distances and loop maps. Improved wayfinding signage will contribute to a greater sense of connectivity.

Objective 1.2 – Staff appropriately to meet current demand and maintain established quality of service

As recommendations in the Master Plan are implemented, it will be vital for the City to increase staffing levels as the Department’s responsibilities grow. Additional or upgraded facilities and amenities will require increased maintenance intensity. This will necessitate additional manpower to maintain the current level of service. This would indicate the need for additional resources and most likely new maintenance positions within the Department. It is crucial to evaluate staffing levels to maintain current and desired performance standards. Part-time or .75 FTE are recommended to fill existing gaps.

Objective 1.3 – Build on existing and look for opportunities to increase appropriate partnerships

Seek to strengthen and grow partnerships between the Department and community organizations. Continue good working relationships with area partners; develop and lead biannual round-table meetings to discuss common goals and various planning efforts.

Goal 2: Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery

Objective 2.1 – Develop additional recreational opportunities

The city is home to an abundance of outdoor recreational amenities. The Department should continue to look for opportunities to expand recreational programs and activities based on community demand, market demand and current trends. The community would like to see outdoor adventure, nature and environmental educational programs expanded.

The Department and other service providers should develop introductory programs and access to equipment particularly for youth to become familiar with and be able to experience outdoor recreational opportunities in the city. Programs may include rock climbing, winter sports, bouldering, kayaking, mountain biking, archery, and hiking.

In addition to active recreation programming, the Department should promote passive recreation opportunities throughout the City. These activities require fewer resources from the Department and can enhance the perception of Valdez. Online information, trailhead signage, and maps can assist in promoting passive recreation.

To ensure the long-term viability of natural resources, the Department should establish principles for sustainability throughout parks, with programmatic elements to teach trail etiquette, leave no trace, and other environmentally friendly measures.

The Department should continue to monitor recreational trends and community needs to stay current with programming and demand. Additionally, the Department should conduct an annual services assessment process which evaluates which programs should be continued, modified, or divested from based on established criteria

Goal 3: Improve and Expand Facilities and Amenities

Objective 3.1 – Expand trail connectivity

A high priority from the public engagement process was the desire for improved connectivity of the existing trails system. Evaluating existing and proposed trails, along with gap analysis (the review of current trail gaps within the trail system as a whole), the Department should prioritize developing trails that link to existing and future parks and facilities.

Key concepts identified through the level of service analysis to expand trail connectivity that should be considered are:

- Focus on connecting Ruth Pond Trail, Overlook Trail, and the newly acquired Meals Hill property. Additionally, consider connecting Meals Hill to the Mineral Creek Trail.
- Consider expanding the bike path from Dayville to Keystone Canyon

Develop and implement a wayfinding program that covers signage standards, directional and distance signage, maps and the use of apps.

Objective 3.2 – Continue to maintain and improve existing facilities

The Department has done an excellent job with routine maintenance; however, some asset replacement and upgrades to amenities need addressing. The age and usage of many facilities present additional challenges in maintaining and upgrading these facilities and amenities.

The inventory from this Master Plan should be used to address the deferred maintenance backlog and create an asset replacement schedule to address the low scoring components. These plans and a park assessment should be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The Department should continue to maintain the GIS database for parks and trails assets using the current inventory from the Master Plan. As new parks, trails, and amenities are added, or existing assets are upgraded, replaced, or repurposed, update the GIS database to reflect those changes and the current condition of assets.

Objective 3.3 – Make improvements to or replace some existing facilities and amenities or develop new amenities at existing parks based on level of service analysis

Based on the level of service analysis, the Department should look for opportunities to add new components at existing parks where the level of service may be below the desired threshold. Refer to the Existing Conditions Report section of the Master Plan for those areas identified as most in need of improvement on a park by park basis.

Some areas of focus identified during the information-gathering phase of the master plan were:

- Adding a Recreation Center/Fieldhouse: The Department currently is running out of space to conduct programs at existing facilities. Focus group and survey respondents rated these a high priority to develop in the Department.
- Capital improvements to Ruth Pond Park and Black Gold Park Strip

Objective 3.4: Upgrade convenience and customer service amenities at existing facilities

As the Department upgrades and improves existing facilities, it should explore opportunities to add shelters at parks, and upgrade trail head amenities. Consider adding trailhead marker, maps, dog waste station, bear proof trash can, and benches at trailheads.

Objective 3.5: Staff appropriately to meet current demand and maintain established quality of service.

As the new conceptual plans are implemented and as parks and facility upgrades are made, it is important to ensure that staffing levels are adequate to maintain current performance standards. The intensity of maintenance practices required for upgraded facilities and amenities requires additional manpower be focused in this area. This would indicate additional resources and most likely new maintenance positions within the Department. It is important to evaluate staffing levels to maintain current and desired performance standards.

Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities

Objective 4.1 – Review existing fees and restructure to meet current and future funding realities

The Department should review current program and rental fees on an annual basis to ensure they are equitable, and that the collection of fees is resulting in the appropriate cost recovery. As part of the master planning process, revenue and expenses were evaluated to determine current subsidies.

Objective 4.2: Explore alternative funding opportunities

As the demand for services and amenities continues to increase, it is important for the Department to seek alternative funding mechanisms. Consideration should be given to the development of a non-profit foundation for parks and recreation system wide. A foundation can pursue other funding options including donations, grants, and sponsorships.

A foundation partnership is a joint-development funding source or operational funding source between a foundation and a government agency. The foundation operates as a non-profit organization, working on behalf of the public agency to raise needed dollars to support its vision and operational needs. The dollars raised by the conservancy are tax-exempt. Foundations promote specific causes, activities, or issues that a park-and-recreation system needs to address. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of park-related memorabilia, etc.

Private donations may be received in the form of cash, securities, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art, or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors of events or facilities should be pursued.

Friends associations are a foundation that typically are formed to raise money for a single purpose, such as a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and, at the same time, meet special interests.

Objective 4.3 Explore Developing and Implementing a Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy and Pricing Policy and Practice

The Department should pursue a formal resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy that is grounded in the values, vision, and mission of Valdez. The Department should consider developing a pricing methodology that reflects the community’s values, while generating revenues to help sustain Valdez facilities, parks, programs, and services.



Objective 4.4 Implement use of the City’s asset management software system

Following the completion of the District Asset Management Plan the department should actively pursue the use of the City’s workorder system to manage and track equipment and inventory and to improve budget planning by ensuring a coordinated approach to the optimization of costs, risks, service/performance and sustainability of VPR assets

C. Action Plan, Cost Estimates and Prioritization

The following tables represent a summary of the previous goals and objectives, with the addition of action items. These items provide tangible actions that the City can employ to complete the desired goals and objectives. All cost estimates are in 2020 figures where applicable. Most capital and operational cost estimates are dependent on the extent of the enhancements and improvements determined.

Timeframe designations recommended to complete tasks are noted as:

- Short-term (up to 3 years)
- Mid-term (4-6 years)
- Long-term (7-10 years)
- Ongoing (occurs on a continuous basis)

Goal 1: Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies

Objective 1.1: <i>Continue to enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding department activities and services</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.1.a Develop a marketing plan for the Department that includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding of the Department • Wayfinding and signage standards • Increased use of social media • Use and development of the Department’s website • Partnership opportunities 	\$0	Staff Time (\$7,500 - \$12,000)	Short -Term

1.1.b Continue to engage the community in current and future parks, recreation, and open space planning efforts.	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,500 - \$5,000)	Ongoing
1.1.c Continue to promote and create awareness of the programs and activities through the social media and the development of a printed program catalog.	\$0	Staff Time (\$5,000 - \$7,500)	Ongoing
Objective 1.2: <i>Staff appropriately to meet current demand and maintain established quality of service</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.2.a Increase staffing levels as the Department's responsibilities grow; new positions in maintenance are required. Consider adding 2 Part-time .75 FTE's to supplement existing staffing.	\$0	Will vary based on positions filled	Short-Term <i>Priority</i>
1.2.b Provide professional development opportunities to increase staff retention.	\$0	Will vary by opportunity	Short-Term
Objective 1.3: <i>Build on existing and look for opportunities to increase appropriate partnerships</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.3.a Seek to strengthen and grow partnerships between the Department and community organizations. Develop bi-annual round table meetings.	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,000)	Short-Term <i>Priority</i>
1.3.b Continue to ensure all existing and future partnerships are accurately portrayed in a signed agreement.	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,000 - \$5,000)	Short-Term

Goal 2: Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery

Objective 2.1: <i>Develop additional recreational programs and services</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
2.1.a Develop and implement a plan to address the needs for outdoor adventure, nature and environmental programs.	\$0	Staff time to plan with instructors conducting programs	Short-Term

		(\$8,000 - \$12,000) including required supplies	
2.1.b Explore opportunities to provide introductory programs and equipment to become familiar with and be able to experience outdoor recreational opportunities in Valdez.	Varies based on activity and equipment needed	Staff time to plan with instructors conducting programs (\$8,000 - \$12,000) including required supplies	Mid-term
2.1.d As new programs and services are developed and implemented, continue to create a balance between passive and active recreation opportunities.	\$0	None	Ongoing
2.1.e Conduct an annual services assessment process which evaluates which programs should be continued, modified, or divested from based on established criteria	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,000 - \$5,000)	Short-Term
2.1.f Keep current with trends in recreational programming and develop new programs based on current trends and community needs and demand.	\$0	Staff time to plan with instructors conducting programs (\$8,000 - \$12,000) including required supplies	Ongoing

Goal 3: Improve and Expand Facilities and Amenities

Objective 3.1: <i>Expand trail connectivity</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
3.1.a Continue working with other City Departments, agencies and community partners to provide trail connectivity.	Multimodal Paths \$87 per linear foot	Additional staff for maintenance of new trails	Short-Term <i>Priority</i>
3.1.b Plan and construct multi-use trails that link to existing and future facilities.	TBD	Additional staff for maintenance of new trails	Short-Term
3.1.c Develop and maintain a priority list for improving and adding multi use trails and pathways.	\$0	Staff time	Ongoing

<p>3.1.d Develop and implement a wayfinding program that covers signage standards, directional and distance signage, maps and the use of apps.</p>	<p>Major trailhead / trail junction signage: \$10,000 per sign Secondary and directional signage: \$3,000 – \$5,000 / sign.</p>	<p>Staff Time (\$5,000)</p>	<p>Mid-Term</p>
<p>Objective 3.2 <i>Continue to maintain and improve existing facilities and amenities</i></p>			
<p>Actions</p>	<p>Capital Cost Estimate</p>	<p>Operational Budget Impact</p>	<p>Timeframe to Complete</p>
<p>3.2.a Address the deferred maintenance backlog and create an asset replacement schedule that addresses the low scoring components from the Master Plan inventory.</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Staff time (\$5,000)</p>	<p>Ongoing <i>Priority</i></p>
<p>3.2.b Keep and maintain updated the GIS database of parks and amenities assets using the current GRASP® inventory. Conduct annual component-based inventory and assessment to identify low scoring components and add new components or amenities.</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>Staff time (\$3,500)</p>	<p>Ongoing <i>Priority</i></p>
<p>3.2.c Address low scoring components and amenities from the Master Plan inventory by upgrading, replacing, or repurposing components or amenities where appropriate.</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Staff time (\$3,500)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Objective 3.3: <i>Make improvements to or replace some existing facilities and amenities or develop new amenities at existing parks based on current level of service analysis</i></p>			
<p>Actions</p>	<p>Capital Cost Estimate</p>	<p>Operational Budget Impact</p>	<p>Timeframe to Complete</p>
<p>3.3.a Conduct a feasibility study for a new recreation center/fieldhouse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop priorities for a community recreation center along with conceptual plans, financial projections for construction, O&M budget projections, and pro-forma for operations. 	<p>\$35,000 - \$50,000</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	<p>Short-Term</p>

3.3.b Look for opportunities to develop a new recreation center/fieldhouse to meet community demand.	\$380 per SF 30K-70K SF \$11.5M to \$26M	Will vary based on the final project	Short-Term
3.3.c Capital improvement plans, costs, and phasing recommendations and implementation plans should continue to be developed • Appropriate funding should be provided to address the capital improvement plans at Black Gold Park Strip and Ruth Pond. Site specific plans provided in appendix C and D .	TBD	Ongoing maintenance costs	Short-term
Objective 3.4: <i>Upgrade convenience and customer service amenities at existing facilities</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
3.4.a Explore opportunities to add shelters at Black Gold Park Strip, Meyring Park and Ruth Pond Park. parks, and upgrade trail head amenities.	15x30 \$80,000 - \$140,000	Ongoing maintenance costs	Short-Term
3.4.b Develop and implement trail head standards. Consider adding trailhead marker, maps, dog waste station, bear proof trash can, and benches at trailheads. Cost detail provided in appendix E .	\$20,000	Ongoing maintenance costs	Short-Term
3.4.c Develop management plan for shooting range and explore options to formalize access.	Will vary based on plan recommendations	Staff time (\$5,000)	Short Term <i>Priority</i>
3.4.d Explore community run and operated outdoor uncovered replacement ice rink with other COV departments.	Will vary based on plan recommendation	Staff time (\$5,000)	Short term <i>Priority</i>
Objective 3.5: <i>Staff appropriately to meet current demand and maintain established quality of service.</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete

<p>3.5.a As the new conceptual plans are implemented and as parks and facility upgrades are made, it is important to ensure that staffing levels are adequate to maintain current performance standards. The intensity of maintenance practices required for upgraded facilities and amenities requires additional manpower be focused in this area. This would indicate additional resources and most likely new maintenance positions within the Department. It is important to evaluate staffing levels to maintain current and desired performance standards.</p>	N/A	Additional FT or PT or seasonal staff	Ongoing
<p>3.4.b Work with Human Resource Department to develop a volunteer program and identify volunteer opportunities.</p>	N/A	Staff Time (\$3,000 - \$5,000)	Mid-Term

Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities

<p>Objective 4.1</p>			
<p><i>Review existing fees and restructure to meet current and future funding realities</i></p>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<p>4.1.a Review program and rental fees on an annual basis to ensure they are equitable, and that the collection of fees is resulting in the appropriate cost recovery</p>	\$0	Staff Time	Ongoing
<p>Objective 4.2</p>			
<p><i>Explore alternative funding opportunities</i></p>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<p>4.2.a Explore the feasibility of a bond referendum for capital building projects.</p>	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,000 - \$5,000)	Long-Term
<p>4.2.b Develop a non-profit foundation for parks and recreation to pursue grant opportunities and philanthropic donations.</p>	\$0	Staff Time (\$2,000 - \$2,500)	Short-Term
<p>4.2.c Seek increased General Fund allocations to address recommendations from the Master Plan and increased capital funding.</p>	Will vary based on projects recommended	Staff Time (\$2,000 - \$2,500)	Short-Term
<p>4.2.d Pursue grant opportunities and philanthropic donations.</p>	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,000 - \$5,000)	Mid-Term

4.2.e Explore sponsorship and naming rights opportunities.	\$0	Staff Time (\$3,000 - \$4,000) Potential increased revenue or decreased expenses	Ongoing
Objective 4.3: <i>Explore developing and implementing a cost recovery and pricing philosophy and policy</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
4.3.a Develop a resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy that reflects community values	\$45-\$65K if contracted	Staff Time	Mid-Term
Objective 4.4 <i>Implement use of the City's asset management software system</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
Begin using City's existing workorder system to manage and track equipment and inventory and to improve budget planning	\$0	Staff Time (\$7,500 - \$12,000)	Mid-Term

APPENDIX LIST

Appendix A. Level of Service Analysis and Methodology

A. GRASP® Glossary

Buffer: see catchment area

Catchment area: a circular map overlay that radiates outward in all directions from an asset and represents a reasonable travel distance from the edge of the circle to the asset. Used to indicate access to an asset in a level of service assessment

Component: an amenity such as a playground, picnic shelter, basketball court, or athletic field that allows people to exercise, socialize, and maintain a healthy physical, mental, and social wellbeing

Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process® (GRASP®): a proprietary composite-values methodology that takes quality and functionality of assets and amenities into account in a level of service assessment

GRASP® Level of service (LOS): the extent to which a recreation system provides community access to recreational assets and amenities

GRASP®-IT audit tool: an instrument developed for assessing the quality and other characteristics of parks, trails, and other public lands and facilities. The tested, reliable, and valid tool, is used to conduct inventories of more than 100 park systems nationwide.

Low-score component: a component given a GRASP® score of “1” or “0” as it fails to meet expectations

Lower-service area: an area of a city that has some GRASP® level of service but falls below the minimum standard threshold for the overall level of service

Modifier: a basic site amenity that supports users during a visit to a park or recreation site, to include elements such as restrooms, shade, parking, drinking fountains, seating, BBQ grills, security lighting, and bicycle racks among others

No-service area: an area of a city with no GRASP® level of service

Perspective: A perspective is a map or data quantification, such as a table or chart, produced using the GRASP® methodology that helps illustrate how recreational assets serve a community

Radius: see catchment area

Recreational connectivity: the extent to which community recreational resources are transitionally linked to allow for easy and enjoyable travel between them.

Recreational trail: A recreation trail can be a soft or hard-surfaced off-street path that promotes active or passive movement through parklands or natural areas. Recreational trails are typically planned and managed by parks and recreation professionals or departments.

Service area: all or part of a catchment area ascribed a particular GRASP® score that reflects the level of service provided by a particular recreational asset, a set of assets, or an entire recreation system

Threshold: a minimum level of service standard typically determined based on community expectations

Trail: any off-street or on-street connection dedicated to pedestrian, bicycle, or other non-motorized users

Trail network: A trail network is a functional and connected part of a trail system within which major barrier crossings, including such things as crosswalks, pedestrian underpasses, or bridges. Different networks are separate from other trail networks by missing trail connections or by such barriers as roadways, rivers, or railroad tracks.

Trail system: all trails in a community that serve pedestrian, bicycle, and alternative transportation users for purposes of both recreation and transportation

Transportation trail: A transportation trail is a hard surface trail, such as a city sidewalk, intended for traveling from one place to another in a community or region. These trails typically run outside of parklands and are managed by Public Works or another city utility department.

B. GRASP® Components and Definitions

GRASP® Outdoor Component List	
GRASP® Outdoor Component Type	Definition
Adventure Course	An area designated for activities such as ropes courses, zip-lines, challenge courses. The type specified in the comments.
Amusement Ride	Carousel, train, go-carts, bumper cars, or other ride-upon features. The ride has an operator and controlled access.
Aquatics, Complex	An aquatic complex has at least one immersion pool and other features intended for aquatic recreation.
Aquatics, Lap Pool	A human-made basin designed for people to immerse themselves in water and intended for swimming laps.
Aquatics, Leisure Pool	A human-made basin designed for people to immerse themselves in water and intended for leisure water activities. May include zero-depth entry, slides, and spray features.
Aquatics, Spray Pad	A water play feature without immersion intended for interaction with moving water.
Aquatics, Therapy Pool	A therapy pool is a temperature-controlled pool intended for rehabilitation and therapy.
Basketball Court	A dedicated full-sized outdoor court with two goals.
Basketball, Practice	A basketball goal for half-court play or practice that includes goals in spaces associated with other uses.
Batting Cage	A batting cage is a stand-alone facility that has pitching machines and restricted entry.
Bike Complex	A bike complex accommodates various bike skills activities with multiple features or skill areas.
Bike Course	A designated area for non-motorized bicycle use, constructed of concrete, wood, or compacted earth. May include a pump track, velodrome, skills course.
Camping, Defined	<u>Defined</u> campsites may include a variety of facilities such as restrooms, picnic tables, water supply. Use the official agency count for quantity if available.
Camping, Undefined	Indicates allowance for users to stay overnight in the outdoors in <u>undefined</u> sites. Undefined camping receives a quantity of one for each park or location. Use this component when the quantity of sites is not available or for dispersed camping.
Climbing, Designated	A designated natural or human-made facility provided or managed by an agency for recreation climbing not limited to play.
Climbing, General	Indicates allowance for users to participate in a climbing activity. Use a quantity of one for each park or other location.
Concession	A facility used for the selling, rental, or other provision of goods and services to the public.
Diamond Field	Softball and baseball fields, suitable for organized diamond sports games. Not specific to size or age-appropriateness.

Diamond Field, Complex	Many ballfields at a single location suitable for tournaments.
Diamond Field, Practice	An open or grassy area used for the practice of diamond sports. Distinguished from ballfield in that it doesn't lend itself to organized diamond sports games and from open turf by the presence of a backstop.
Disc Golf	A designated area for disc golf. Quantities: 18 hole course = 1; 9 hole course = .5
Dog Park	An area explicitly designated as an off-leash area for dogs and their guardians.
Educational Experience	Signs, structures, or features that provide an educational, cultural, or historical experience. Assign a quantity of one for each contiguous site. Distinguished from public art by the presence of interpretive signs or other information.
Equestrian Facility	An area designated for equestrian use. Typically applied to facilities other than trails.
Event Space	A designated area or facility for an outdoor class, performance, or special event, including an amphitheater, bandshell, stage.
Fitness Course	Features intended for personal fitness activities. A course receives a quantity of one for each complete grouping.
Game Court	Outdoor court designed for a game other than tennis, basketball, volleyball, as distinguished from a multi-use pad, including bocce, shuffleboard, lawn bowling. The type specified in the comments. Quantity counted per court.
Garden, Community	A garden area that provides community members a place to have a personal vegetable or flower garden.
Garden, Display	A garden area that is designed and maintained to provide a focal point or destination, including a rose garden, fern garden, native plant garden, wildlife/habitat garden, an arboretum.
Golf	A course designed and intended for the sport of golf. Counted per 18 holes. Quantities: 18 hole course = 1; 9 hole course = .5
Golf, Miniature	A course designed and intended as a multi-hole golf putting game.
Golf, Practice	An area designated for golf practice or lessons, including driving ranges and putting greens.
Horseshoe Court	A designated area for the game of horseshoes, including permanent pits of regulation length. Quantity counted per court.
Horseshoes Complex	Several regulation horseshoe courts in a single location suitable for tournaments.
Ice Hockey	Regulation size outdoor rink explicitly built for ice hockey games and practice. General ice skating included in "Winter Sport."
Inline Hockey	Regulation size outdoor rink built specifically for in-line hockey games and practice.
Loop Walk	Opportunity to complete a circuit on foot or by non-motorized travel mode. Suitable for use as an exercise circuit or leisure walking. Quantity of one for each park or other location unless more than one distinct circuit is present.
Multi-Use Pad	A painted area with games such as hopscotch, 4 square, tetherball found in schoolyards. As distinguished from "Games Court," which is typically single-use.

Natural Area	Describes an area in a park that contains plants and landforms that are remnants of or replicate undisturbed native regions of the local ecology. It can include grasslands, woodlands, and wetlands.
Open Turf	A grassy area that is not suitable for programmed field sports due to size, slope, location, or physical obstructions. May be used for games of catch, tag, or other informal play and uses that require an open grassy area.
Other	An active or passive component that does not fall under any other component definition. Specified in comments.
Passive Node	A place that is designed to create a pause or particular focus within a park and includes seating areas, plazas, overlooks. Not intended for programmed use.
Pickleball Court	A designated court designed primarily for pickleball play.
Picnic Ground	A designated area with a grouping of picnic tables suitable for organized picnic activities. Account for individual picnic tables as Comfort and Convenience modifiers.
Playground, Destination	A destination playground attracts families from the entire community. Typically has restrooms and parking on-site. May include special features like a climbing wall, spray feature, or adventure play.
Playground, Local	A local playground serves the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Includes developed playgrounds and designated nature play areas. Park generally does not have restrooms or on-site parking.
Public Art	Any art installation on public property. Art receives a quantity of one for each contiguous site.
Rectangular Field Complex	Several rectangular fields in a single location suitable for tournament use.
Rectangular Field, Large	Describes a specific field large enough to host one adult rectangular field sports game such as soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey. The approximate field size is 180' x 300' (60 x 100 yards). The field may have goals and lines specific to an individual sport that may change with the permitted use.

Rectangular Field, Multiple	Describes an area large enough to host one adult rectangular field sports game and a minimum of one other event/game, but with an undetermined number of actual fields. This category describes a large open grassy area arranged in any manner of configurations for any number of rectangular field sports. Sports may include but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey. The field may have goals and lines specific to an individual sport that may change with the permitted use.
Rectangular Field, Small	Describes a specific field too small to host a regulation adult rectangular field sports game but accommodates at least one youth field sports game. Sports may include but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey. A field may have goals and lines specific to a particular sport that may change with a permitted use.
Shelter, Large	A shade shelter or pavilion large enough to accommodate a group picnic or other event for a minimum of 13 seated. Address lack of seating in scoring.
Shelter, Small	A shade shelter, large enough to accommodate a family picnic or other event for approximately 4-12 persons with seating for a minimum of 4. Covered benches for seating up to 4 people included as a modifier in comfort and convenience scoring and should not be included here.
Skate Feature	A stand-alone feature primarily for wheel sports such as skateboarding, in-line skating. The component may or may not allow freestyle biking. May be associated with a playground but is not part of it. Categorize dedicated bike facilities as Bike Course.
Skate Park	An area set aside primarily for wheel sports such as skateboarding, in-line skating. The park may or may not allow freestyle biking. May be specific to one user group or allow for several user types. It can accommodate multiple abilities. Typically has a variety of concrete or modular features.
Target Range	A designated area for practice or competitive target activities. The type specified, such as archery or firearms, in comments.
Tennis Complex	Multiple regulation courts in a single location with amenities suitable for tournament use.
Tennis Court	One standard regulation court is suitable for recreation or competitive play. Quick Start or other non-standard types specified in comments.
Tennis, Practice Wall	A wall intended for practicing tennis.
Track, Athletic	A multi-lane, regulation-sized running track appropriate for track and field events.
Trail, Multi-Use	A trail, paved or unpaved, is separated from the road and provides recreational opportunities or connection to walkers, bikers, rollerbladers, and equestrian users. Paths that make a circuit within a single site are Loop Walks.
Trail, Primitive	A path, unpaved, located within a park or natural area that provides recreational opportunities or connections to users. Minimal surface improvements that may or may not meet accessibility standards.
Trail, Water	A river, stream, canal, or other waterway used as a trail for floating, paddling, or other watercraft.
Trailhead	A designated staging area at a trail access point may include restrooms, an information kiosk, parking, drinking water, trash receptacles, and seating.

Volleyball Court	One full-sized court. May be hard or soft surface, including grass and sand. May have permanent or portable posts and nets.
Wall Ball Court	Walled courts associated with sports such as handball and racquetball. The type specified in the comments.
Water Access, Developed	A developed water access point includes docks, piers, kayak courses, boat ramps, fishing facilities. Specified in comments, including quantity for each unique type.
Water Access, General	Measures a user's general ability to access the edge of open water. May include undeveloped shoreline. Typically receives a quantity of one for each contiguous site.
Water Feature	This passive water-based amenity provides a visual focal point that includes fountains and waterfalls.
Water, Open	A body of water such as a pond, stream, river, wetland with open water, lake, or reservoir.
Winter Sport	An area designated for a winter sport or activity such as a downhill ski area, nordic ski area, sledding hill, toboggan run, recreational ice. The type specified in the comments.

GRASP® Indoor Component Type	Definition
Arts and Crafts	A room with a non-carpeted floor, built-in storage for materials, and a sink. Often adjacent to a kiln room.
Auditorium/Theater	A large room explicitly designed as a performance/lecture space that includes a built-in stage, seating and can accommodate stage lighting and sound amplification.
Childcare/Preschool	A room or space with built-in secure entry and cabinets, a small toilet, designated outdoor play area. Intended for short-term child watch or half or full-day preschool use.
Fitness/Dance	A room with resilient flooring and mirrors.
Food - Counter Service	Staffed food service with a commercial kitchen and no waiter services.
Food - Full Service	Staffed food service with a commercial kitchen and dining room with waiter services.
Food - Vending	A non-staffed area with vending machines or self-service food options.
Gallery/Exhibits	A space intended for the display of art, interpretive information, or another type of exhibit. Typically has adequate lighting, open wall space, and room for circulation.
Sport Court	An active recreation space such as a gymnasium that can accommodate basketball, volleyball, or other indoor court sports with one or more courts designated in quantity.
Track, Indoor	Course with painted lanes, banked corners, resilient surface, and marked distances suitable for exercise walking, jogging, or running.
Kitchen - Kitchenette	Area for preparing, warming, or serving food.
Kitchen - Commercial	A kitchen meeting local codes for commercial food preparation.
Lobby/Entryway	An area at the entry of a building intended for sitting and waiting or relaxing.
Multi-Purpose Room	A multi-purpose room can host a variety of activities, including events, classes, meetings, banquets, medical, or therapeutic uses. It also includes rooms or areas designated or intended as games rooms, libraries, or lounges. Rooms may be dividable.
Patio/Outdoor Seating	Outdoor space or seating area designed to be used exclusively in conjunction with indoor space and primarily accessed through an indoor space.
Retail/Pro-shop	An area for retail sales of sporting equipment, gifts. Typically has direct access from outdoors and can be secured separately from the rest of a building or facility.
Sauna/Steam Room	A facility with built-in seating and a heat source intended for heat therapy. May be steam or dry heat.
Specialty Services	Any specialty services available at an indoor location.
Specialty Training	Any specialty training available at an indoor location that includes gymnastics and circuit training.
Weight/Cardio Equipment	A room or area with weight and cardio equipment, resilient or anti-bacterial flooring, adequate ventilation, and ceiling heights appropriate for high-intensity workouts.
Woodshop	A room with wood-working equipment that contains an adequate power supply and ventilation.
Note: Include any component from the outdoor component list as an indoor component	

C. Inventory Methods and Process

To complete a detailed GIS (Geographic Information System) inventory, the planning team first prepared a preliminary list of existing components using aerial photography and GIS data. Components identified in aerial photos were located and labeled.

Next, field teams visited sites to confirm or revise preliminary component data, make notes regarding sites or assets, and develop an understanding of the system. The inventory for this study focused primarily on components at public parks. Evaluations include assessments to ensure a component was serving its intended function, noting any parts in need of refurbishment, replacement, or removal. The inventory also included the recording of site comfort and convenience amenities such as shade, drinking fountains, restrooms, called *modifiers*.

Collection of the following information during site visits:

- Component type and geo-location
- Component functionality
 - Based assessment scoring on the condition, size, site capacity, and overall quality. The inventory team used the following three-tier rating system to evaluate these:
 - 1 = Below Expectations
 - 2 = Meets Expectations
 - 3 = Exceeds Expectations
- Site modifiers
- Site design and ambiance
- Site photos
- General comments

Asset Scoring

All components were scored based on condition, size, site capacity, and overall quality as they reflect the expected quality of recreational features. Beyond quality and functionality of components, however, GRASP® Level of Service analysis also considers important aspects of a park or recreation site. Not all parks are created equal, and their surroundings may determine the quality of a user's experience. For example, the GRASP® system acknowledges the essential differences between identical playground structures as displayed in the following images:



In addition to scoring components, GRASP®-IT assesses each park site or indoor facility for its comfort, convenience, and ambient qualities. These qualities include the availability of amenities such as

restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery. These *modifier* values then serve to enhance or amplify component scores at any given location.

Compiled GIS information collected during the site visit includes all GIS data and staff input. This review packet consists of the most recent GIS data displayed by location on an aerial photograph. An accompanying data sheet for each site lists modifier and component scores as well as observations and comments.

Analysis of the existing parks, open space, trails, and recreation systems often determine how they are serving the public. Level of Service (LOS) in parks and recreation master plans defines the capacity of the various components and facilities to meet the needs of the public in terms of the size or quantity given a population or user group.

D. Addressing Low-Scoring Components

Components whose functionality ranks below expectations are identified and scored with a “one.” Find a list of these as extracted from the inventory dataset below. When raising the score of a component through improvement or replacement, the Level of Service is raised as well. The following is an outline strategy for addressing the repair/refurbishment/replacement or re-purposing of low-functioning components.

- I. Determine why the component is functioning below expectations.
 - Was it poorly conceived in the first place?
 - Is it something that was not needed?
 - Is it the wrong size, type, or configuration?
 - Is it poorly placed, or located in a way that conflicts with other activities or detracts from its use?
 - Have the needs changed in a way that the component is now outdated, obsolete, or no longer needed?
 - Has it been damaged?
 - Or, has the maintenance of the component been deferred or neglected to the point where it no longer functions as intended?
 - Does component scores low because it is not available to the public in a way that meets expectations?
 - Is the component old, outdated, or otherwise dysfunctional, but has historical or sentimental value? An example would be an old structure in a park such as a stone barbecue grill, or other artifacts that are not restorable to its original purpose, but which has historical value.
- II. Depending on the answers from the first step, a select a strategy for addressing the low-functioning component:
 - If the need for that type of component in its current location still exists, then the component should be repaired or replaced to match its original condition as much as possible.
 - Examples of this would be many of the existing shelters that need shingles or roof repairs. Other examples could be playgrounds with old, damaged, or outdated equipment, or courts with poor surfacing or missing nets.

- If the need for that type of component has changed to the point where the original one is no longer suitable, then it should be replaced with a new one that fits the current needs.
- If a component is poorly located or poorly designed to start with, consider relocating, redesigning, or otherwise modifying it.
- Remove a component because of changing demands, unless it can be maintained in good condition without excessive expense or has historical or sentimental value. Inline hockey rinks may fall into this category. If a rink has been allowed to deteriorate because the community has no desire for inline hockey, then maybe it should be repurposed into some other use.

III. It is possible that through ongoing public input and as needs and trends evolve, there is the identification of new demands for existing parks. If there is no room in an existing park for the requests, the decision may include removal or re-purpose a current component, even if it is quite functional.

- As the popularity of tennis declined and demand for courts dropped off in some communities over recent decades, perfectly good courts became skate parks or inline rinks. In most cases, this was an interim use, intended to satisfy a short-term need until a decision to either construct a permanent facility or let the fad fade. The need for inline rinks now seems to have diminished. In contrast, temporary skate parks on tennis courts are now permanent locations of their own. They become more elaborate facilities as skateboarding, and other wheel sports have grown in popularity and permanence.
- One community repurposed a ball diamond into a dog park. The ball diamond is well-suited for use as a dog park because it is already fenced, and the combination of the skinned infield where the dogs enter and natural grass in the outfield where traffic disperses is ideal. In time this facility either becomes a permanent facility or is constructed elsewhere. Or, it could turn out that dog parks fade in popularity like inline hockey rinks are replaced with some other facility that dog owners prefer even more than the current dog park model. Meanwhile, the use of the ball diamond for this purpose is an excellent interim solution.

E. List of Low-Scoring Components and Modifiers

Outdoor Low Scoring Components

GIS ID	Park or Location	Component	Quantity	Neighborhood Score	Community Score	Comments
C058	ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND	Camping, Defined	29	1	1	29 spots. Limited ammenities.
C146	ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 30-36	Camping, Defined	7	1	1	7 spots. Limited ammenities.
C123	ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 37-40	Trailhead	1	1	1	Limited
C126	ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 37-40	Camping, Defined	4	1	1	4 spots. Limited ammenities.
C145	ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 41-49	Camping, Defined	9	1	1	9 spots. Limited ammenities.
C065	BLACK GOLD PARK STRIP	Playground, Local	1	1	1	Old and limited
C066	BLACK GOLD PARK STRIP	Multi-Use Pad	1	1	1	Surface and paint in poor condition
C135	GLACIER VIEW CAMPGROUND	Climbing, General	1	1	1	Unofficial climbing area
C080	GLACIER VIEW PARK	Picnic Ground	1	1	1	Limited
C082	GOLDFIELDS RECREATION AREA	Playground, Local	1	1	1	Not as nice as might be expected for a destination park
C083	GOLDFIELDS RECREATION AREA	Diamond Field, Complex	1	1	1	Component is dated and has limited use because of the two types of different fields
C138	GOLDFIELDS RECREATION AREA	Diamond Field	2	1	1	All gravel fields
C090	NORTH MEYRING T-BALL FIELD	Diamond Field	1	1	1	Gravel field
C163	OLD TRAP RANGE	Target Range	1	0	0	No longer used and overgrown
C095	ROBE RIVER PLAYGROUND	Playground, Local	1	1	1	Small play. Limited swings
C129	ROBE RIVER PLAYGROUND	Basketball, Practice	1	1	1	Surface worn and needs paint
C154	RUTH POND AND PLAYGROUND	Playground, Local	1	1	1	Limited
C101	SENIOR BASEBALL FIELD	Diamond Field	1	1	1	Consider repurposing
C103	SHOOTING RANGE	Target Range	1	1	1	Tends to be littered by users. Needs intervention.
C110	VALDEZ TRACK AND FIELD	Playground, Local	1	1	1	Limited to swings

Low Scoring Outdoor Modifiers

In scoring inventory locations, basic site amenities, called *modifiers*, were evaluated. Modifiers are things that support users during their visit, such as design and ambiance, drinking fountains, seating, BBQ grills, security lighting, bike racks, restrooms, shade, access, and parking among others. These elements help inform overall GRASP® scoring. Modifiers that do not meet expectations receive lower scores. See below for a list of low scoring modifiers.

Red highlighted modifiers scored low. Modifiers, in yellow that was not present at the time of site visits, scored a zero. These scores do not imply that all parks and facilities should have all modifiers but instead that the presence of modifiers positively impacts the user experience.

Park or Location	Design & Ambiance	Drinking Fountains	Seating	BBQ Grills	Dog Stations	Security & Lighting	Bike Racks	Restrooms	Shade & Trees	Trail Connections	Park Access	Parking	Seasonal Plantings	Ornamental Plantings	Picnic Tables
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 30-36	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 37-40	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
ALLISON POINT CAMPGROUND 41-49	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
ALPINE WOODS PARK	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	2
BLACK GOLD PARK STRIP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	2
COMMUNITY GARDEN	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	1
CORBIN CREEK PLAYGROUND	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
DOCK POINT	3	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	2	3	2	2	0	0	2
GLACIER CREEK DAY USE AREA	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
GLACIER VIEW CAMPGROUND	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	2
GLACIER VIEW PARK	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	1
GOLDFIELDS RECREATION AREA	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	2
HERMON HUTCHINS PLAYGROUND	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	2
KAYAK LAUNCH	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	2
MEALS HILL	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0
MEYRING PARK	2	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	2
NORTH MEYRING T-BALL FIELD	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
OLD TRAP RANGE	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0
PIONEER CEMETERY	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0
REST AREA	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
ROBE LAKE AREA	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
ROBE RIVER PLAYGROUND	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	2	3	2	2	0	0	2
RUTH POND AND PLAYGROUND	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	2
SALMONBERRY SKI HILL	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
SENIOR BASEBALL FIELD	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
SHANA ANDERSON DOG PARK	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
SHOOTING RANGE	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
SHOUP BAY TRAILHEAD AND PLAYGROUND	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	1
SKATE PARK	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
THE OVERLOOK TRAIL	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	2
USFS CROOKED CREEK INFORMATION CENTER	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	2
VALDEZ MEMORIAL CEMETERY	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	0	0
VALDEZ OLD TOWN HISTORIC AREA	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
VALDEZ TRACK AND FIELD	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2

There were no low scoring indoor components identified during the site visits.

Low Scoring Indoor Modifiers

Red highlighted modifiers scored low. Modifiers, in yellow that was not present at the time of site visits, scored a zero. These scores do not imply that all indoor facilities should have all modifiers but instead that the presence of modifiers positively impacts the user experience.

Indoor Facility or Location	Design & Ambiance	Site Access	Aesthetics	Entry	Entry Aesthetics	Building Condition	Entry Desk	Office Space	Overall Storage	Restrooms	Locker Rooms
CONVENTION CENTER	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	0
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM	2	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	0
HIGH SCHOOL GYM	3	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	2	2
IKE WOODMAN RECREATION CENTER	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	0
LIBRARY	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	0
OLD TRAP RANGE INDOOR	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VALDEZ POOL	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2

F. Composite-Values Level of Service Analysis Methodology

Level of Service (LOS) measures how parks, open spaces, trails, and facilities serve the community. They may be used to benchmark current conditions and to direct future planning efforts.

Why Level of Service?

LOS indicates the ability of people to connect with nature and pursue active lifestyles. It can have implications for health and wellness, the local economy, and the quality of life. Further, LOS for a park and recreation system tends to reflect community values. It is often representative of people's connection to their communities and lifestyles focused on outdoor recreation and healthy living.

Analysis of the existing parks, open space, trails, and recreation systems determine how the systems are serving the public and the capacity of the various components and facilities to meet the needs of the users or residents.

An analytical technique known as **GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standard Process)** was used to analyze the level of service provided by assets. This proprietary process, used exclusively by GreenPlay, yields analytical maps and data that may be used to examine access to recreation across a study area.

GRASP® Score

Each park or recreation location, along with all on-site components, has been assigned a **GRASP® Score**. The GRASP® Score accounts for the assessment score as well as available modifiers and the design and ambiance of a park. The following illustration shows this relationship. A basic algorithm calculates scoring totals, accounting for both component and modifier scores, every park, and facility in the inventory. The resulting ratings reflect the overall value of that site. Scores for each inventory site and its components may be found in the GRASP® Inventory Atlas, a supplemental document. **Figure X:** GRASP® Score calculation.

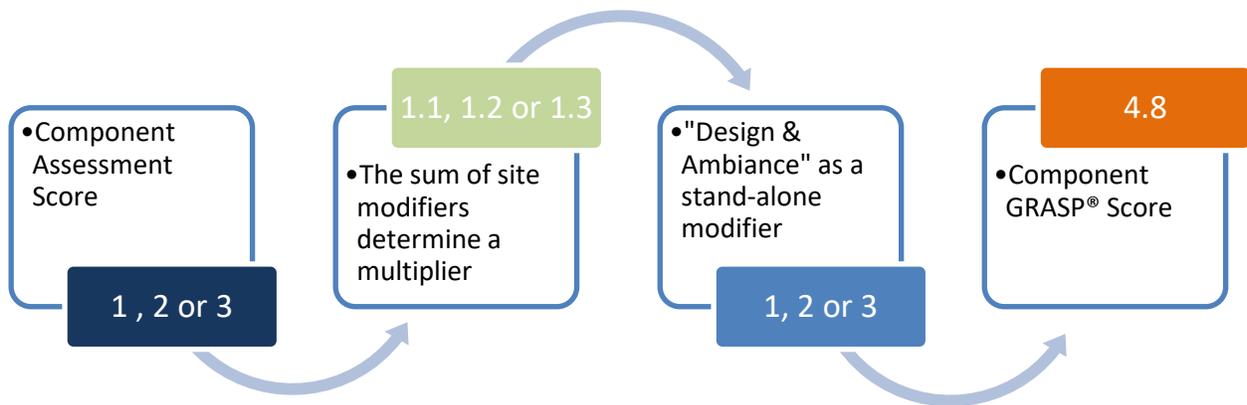


Figure X: GRASP® Score calculation.

Catchment Areas

Catchment areas, also called buffers, radii, or service area, are drawn around each component. The GRASP® Score for that component is then applied to that buffer and overlapped with all other component catchment areas. This process yields the data used to create perspective maps and analytical charts.

Perspectives

Maps and data produced using the GRASP® methodology are known as *perspectives*. Each perspective models service across the study area. The system can be further analyzed to derive statistical information about service in a variety of ways. Maps are utilized along with tables and charts to provide benchmarks or insights a community may use to determine its success in delivering services.

Plotting service areas for multiple components on a map produces a picture that represents the cumulative level of service provided by that set of elements in a geographic area.

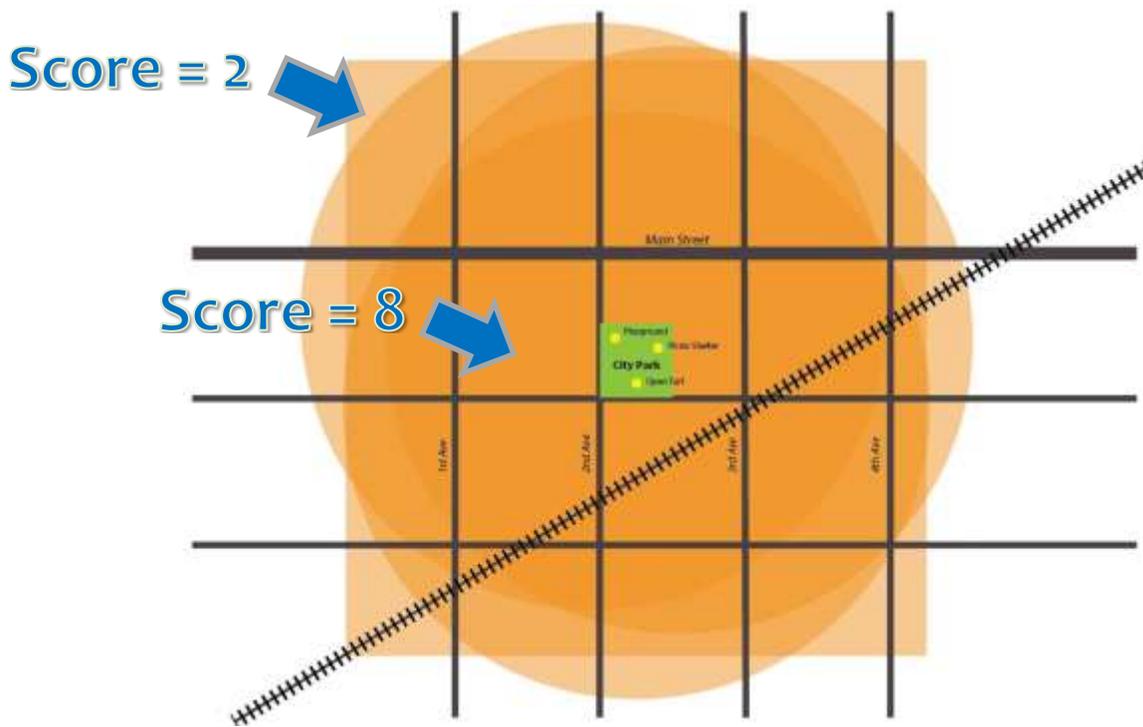


Figure X: This example graphic illustrates the GRASP® process, assuming all three components and the park boundary itself, is scored a “2”. The overlap of their service areas yields higher or lower overall scores for different parts of a study area.

On a map, darker shades result from the overlap of multiple service areas and indicate areas served by more or higher quality components. For any given spot, there is a GRASP® Value for that reflects cumulative scoring for nearby assets. **Image A,** below, provides an example.

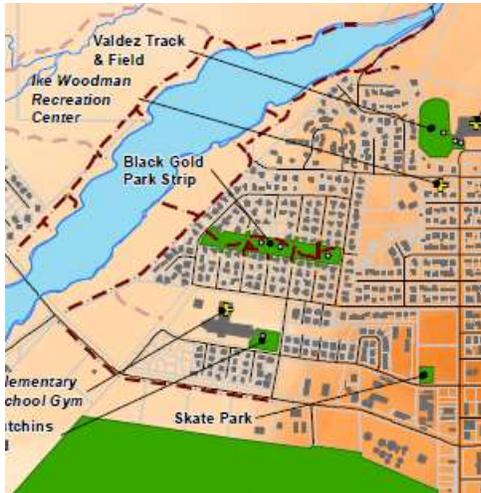


Image A: Example of GRASP® Level of Service (LOS)

More on Utilizing GRASP® Perspectives

GRASP® perspectives evaluate the level of service throughout a community from various points of view. Their purpose is to reveal possible gaps in service and provide a metric to use in understanding a recreation system. However, it is not necessarily beneficial for all parts of the community to score equally in the analyses. The desired level of service for a location should depend on the type of service, the characteristics of the place, and other factors such as community need, population growth forecasts, and land use issues. For example, commercial, institutional, and industrial areas might reasonably have a lower level of service for parks and recreation opportunities than residential areas. GRASP® perspectives should focus attention on gap areas for further scrutiny.

G. Brief History of Level of Service Analysis

To help standardize parks and recreation planning, universities, agencies, and parks & recreation professionals have long been looking for ways to benchmark and provide “national standards” for how much acreage, how many ballfields, pools, playgrounds, a community should have. In 1906 the fledgling “Playground Association of America” called for playground space equal to 30 square feet per child. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the first detailed published works on these topics began emerging (Gold, 1973, Lancaster, 1983). In time “rule of thumb” ratios emerged with 10 acres of parklands per thousand population becoming the most widely accepted norm. Other normative guides also have been cited as traditional standards but have been less widely accepted. In 1983, Roger Lancaster compiled a book called, “Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines,” which was published by the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA). In this publication, Mr. Lancaster centered on a recommendation “that a park system, at minimum, be composed of a core system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population (Lancaster, 1983, p. 56). The guidelines went further to make recommendations regarding an appropriate mix of park types, sizes,

Perspectives used in conjunction with other assessment tools such as community needs surveys and a public input process to determine if current levels of service are appropriate in a given location. Plans provide similar levels of service to new, developing neighborhoods. Or it may be determined that different Levels of Service are adequate or suitable. Therefore a new set of criteria may be utilized that differs from existing community patterns to reflect these distinctions.

service areas, and acreages, and standards regarding the number of available recreational facilities per thousand population. While published by NRPA, the table became widely known as “the NRPA standards,” but these were never formally adopted for use by NRPA.

Since that time, various publications have updated and expanded upon possible “standards,” several of which have been published by NRPA. Many of these publications benchmarked and other normative research to try and determine what an “average LOS” should be. NRPA and the prestigious American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, as organizations, have focused in recent years on accreditation standards for agencies, which are less directed towards outputs, outcomes, and performance, and more on planning, organizational structure, and management processes. The popularly referred to “NRPA standards” for LOS, as such, do not exist. Today, NRPA has shifted to an annual Agency Performance Review publication. The following three tables provide similar but updated information to the table of commonly referenced LOS capacity standards included in the 2006 document. “The 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents the data and key insights from 1,075 park and recreation agencies collected by the Agency Performance Survey. This annual report provides critical park and recreation metrics on budgets, staffing, facilities, and more.”

<https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf>

In conducting planning work, it is critical to realize that the above standards can be valuable when referenced as “norms” for capacity, but not necessarily as the target standards for which a community should strive. Each city is different, and many factors that are not addressed by the criteria above. For example:

- Does “developed acreage” include golf courses”? What about indoor and passive facilities?
- What are the standards for skateparks? Ice Arenas? Public Art? Etc.?
- What if it’s an urban land-locked community? What if it’s a small town surrounded by open Federal lands?
- What about quality and condition? What if there’s a bunch of ballfields, but they are not maintained?
- And many other questions.

H. GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Program)

A new methodology for determining the level of service is appropriate to address these and other relevant questions. It is called composite-values methods is applied in communities across the nation in recent years to provide a better way of measuring and portraying the service provided by parks and recreation systems. Primary research and development on this methodology were funded jointly by GreenPlay, LLC, a management consulting firm for parks, open space, and related agencies, Design Concepts, a landscape architecture, and planning firm, and Geowest, a spatial information management firm. The trademarked name for the composite-values methodology process that these three firms use is called **GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Program)**. For this methodology, capacity is only part of the LOS equation. Consider other factors, including quality, condition, location, comfort, convenience, and ambiance.

Parks, trails, recreation, and open space are part of an overall infrastructure for a community made up of various components, such as playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, passive-areas. Explanations and characteristics listed above affect the amount of service provided by the parts of the system follow.

Quality – The service provided by a component, whether it is a playground, soccer field, or swimming pool, is determined in part by its quality. A playground with a variety of features, such as climbers, slides, and swings, provides a higher degree of service than one with nothing but an old teeter-totter and some “monkey-bars.”

Condition – The condition of a component also affects the amount of service it provides. A playground in disrepair with unsafe equipment does not offer the same function as one in good condition. Similarly, a soccer field with a smooth surface and well-maintained grass provide more service than one that is full of weeds, ruts, and other hazards.

Location – To be served by something, you need to be able to get to it. The typical park playground is of more service to people who live within walking distance than it is to someone living across town. Therefore, service is dependent upon proximity and access.

Comfort and Convenience – The service provided by a component, such as a playground, is increased by having amenities such as shade, seating, and a restroom nearby. Comfort and convenience enhance the experience of using a component and encourages people to use an element. Easy access and the availability of drinking fountains, bike rack, or nearby parking are examples of conveniences that enhance the service provided by a component.

Design and Ambiance – Simple observation proves that places that “feel” right, attract people. A sense of safety and security, as well as pleasant surroundings, attractive views, and a sense of place impact ambiance. A well-designed park is preferable to a poorly designed one, and this enhances the service provided by the components within it.

The GRASP® methodology records a geographic location of components as well as the capacity and the quantity of each element. Also, it uses comfort, convenience, and ambiance as characteristics that are part of the context and setting of a component. They are not characteristics of the element itself, but when they exist in proximity to a component, they enhance the value of the component.

By combining and analyzing the composite values of each component, it is possible to measure the service provided by a parks and recreation system from a variety of perspectives and for any given location. Typically, this begins with a decision on “**relevant components**” for the analysis, collection of an accurate inventory of those components, analysis. Maps and tables represent the results of the **GRASP®** analysis.

I. Making Justifiable Decisions

GRASP® stores all data generated from the GRASP® evaluation in an electronic database that is available and owned by the agency for use in a variety of ways. The database tracks facilities and programs and can be used to schedule services, maintenance, and the replacement of components. In addition to determining LOS, it is useful in projecting long-term capital and life-cycle costing needs. All portions of the information are in available standard software and can be produced in a variety of ways for future planning or sharing with the public.

It is important to note that the GRASP® methodology provides not only accurate LOS and facility inventory information, but also integrates with other tools to help agencies make decisions. It is relatively easy to maintain, update, and creates an easily understood graphic depiction of issues. Combined with a needs assessment, public and staff involvement, program, and financial assessment, GRASP® allows an agency to defensibly make recommendations on priorities for ongoing resource allocations along with capital and operational funding.

Findings of the GRASP® LOS analyses guide improving parks and recreation in Valdez. This section describes ways to enhance the level of service through the improvement of existing sites and the future development of new facilities.

Note: Any reference to the level of service scoring throughout this recommendation discussion refers to the walkable level of service analysis. The level of service scoring from a driving standpoint was high, so no recommendation for improving it are being made. While walkable coverage is generally good, improvements may be necessary for some areas.

Level of Service Improvements

Addressing Lower and No Service Areas

One way of using the GRASP® Perspectives is to consider prioritization of identified gap areas. For example, in the walkable access analysis, several areas with low or no service were identified. Further analyses of these areas can help when prioritizing future improvements or recreation opportunities. Prioritization of improvements may consider multiple factors, including providing maximum impact to the highest number of residents. Social equity factors, such as average household income, could also influence priorities.

Component Inventory and Assessment

Maintaining and improving existing facilities typically ranks very high in public input. Existing features that fall short of expectations should be improved to address this concern. Features have been assessed based on condition and functionality in the inventory phase of this plan. Identify and address those with low scores as explained below. The assessment should be updated regularly to assure the upgrade or improvements of components as they are affected by wear and tear over time.

Addressing Low-Scoring Components

Low scoring components were addressed previously in section D.

Booster Components

Another way to enhance the level of service is through the addition of **booster components** at specific park sites or recreation facilities. These are most effective in low-service areas where parks exist that have space for additional components.

High Demand Components

The statistically-valid survey asks respondents to rank facilities by importance based on those they felt the city needed to add or improve. Consider these **high demand components** when adding new components to the system.

The highest priority for added, expanded, or improved outdoor activities listed by survey respondents are:

1. Adding trails or making trail and pathway connections
2. Indoor Facilities

Many of these needs may be addressed by upgrading facilities, retrofitting lesser used assets, and by adding components that could serve as future program opportunities:

Trends in Parks and Recreation

Trends to consider when deciding what to do with low-functioning facilities, or improving existing parks to serve the needs of residents, include things like:

- Dog parks continue to grow in popularity and may be related to an aging demographic in America, with more “empty-nesters” transferring the attention they once gave to their children, to their pets. It is also an essential form of socializing for people who may have once socialized with other parents in their child’s soccer league, and now that the kids are grown, they are enjoying the company of other dog owners at the dog park. And for singles, a dog park is an excellent place to meet people.
 - Currently, Valdez has a developed dog park and is in the process of expansion of this facility.
- Skateboarding and other wheel sports continue to grow in popularity. Making neighborhood parks skateable and distributing skating features throughout the community provides greater access to this activity for younger people who cannot drive to a more extensive centralized skate park.
 - Valdez currently has a skate park.
- A desire for locally-grown food and concerns about health, sustainability, and other issues is leading to the development of community food gardens in parks and other public spaces.
 - The city may consider an opportunity for farmer’s markets, community gardens, and community orchards. Valdez has one community garden.
- Events in parks, from a neighborhood “movie in the park” to large festivals in regional parks, are growing in popularity to build a sense of community and generate revenues. Providing spaces for these could become a trend.
- Spraygrounds are growing in popularity, even in colder climates. An extensive and growing selection of products for these is raising the bar on expectations and offering new possibilities for creative facilities.
- New types of playgrounds are emerging, including discovery play, nature play, adventure play, and even inter-generational play. Some of these rely upon movable parts, supervised play areas, and other variations that are different from the standard fixed “post and platform” playgrounds found in the typical park across America. These types of nature-based opportunities help connect children and families to the outdoors.
- Integrating nature into parks by creating natural areas is a trend for many reasons. These include a desire to make parks more sustainable and introduce people of all ages to the natural environment.

J. Walkability and Recreational Connectivity

Walkability is an essential consideration in recreation. Various walkability metrics and methodologies have emerged to assist park and recreation managers and planners in understanding this dynamic. These include:

- Walk score
- Walkability TM
- Walkonomics
- RateMy Street
- Walkability App
- Safe Routes to Parks
- Safe Routes to Play
- Safe Routes to School
- Sidewalk and Walkability Inventory

It is vital to take bicycles and public transportation users into account as well as pedestrians. The concept of “complete streets” refers to a built environment that serves various types of users of varying ages and abilities. Many associations and organizations guide on best practices in developing walkable and bikeable complete streets infrastructure. One such entity, the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP, www.apbp.org) actively promotes complete streets in cities around the country. Another such organization, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO, www.nacto.org), recently released the *NACTO Urban Street Design Guide*, which provides a full understanding of complete streets based on successful strategies employed in various North American cities. This most comprehensive reference on the topic is a valuable resource for all stakeholders involved in city planning. It proves to be a critical reference in building the cities of tomorrow.

See appendix H:

Layton, R. (2014). Walkability standards: a test of common assumptions related to walkable access. GP RED Research Brief #1. 1-7.

The infrastructure available to get people to and from destinations is increasingly vital as many people prefer a leisurely walk or bike ride to a trip in the car. Users expect easy access to parks, recreation centers, and other community resources. Employing different modes of travel to include walking and bicycling may be referred to as *recreational connectivity*.

Recreational connectivity is the ability to access a variety of recreational opportunities or amenities by multiple modes of transportation. In addition to recreational trails, this may also include city sidewalks, bicycle paths, bicycle routes, and public transit infrastructure. Of course, the scope of creating and maintaining such a network is a substantial undertaking that involves many players. Along with a community expectation for this type of user-friendly network infrastructure comes the hope that stakeholders work together in the interest of the public good. At the municipal level, this might include public works, law enforcement, private land-owners, public transit operators, and user groups, as well as the local parks and recreation department.

The concept of recreational connectivity is essential within the scope of parks and recreation planning but also has more profound implications for public health, the local economy, and public safety, among other considerations. As more people look for non-automotive alternatives, a complete network of various transportation options is in higher demand. Other elements of this infrastructure might consist of street/railroad crossings, sidewalk landscaping, lighting, drainage, and even bike-share and car-share availability.

Where to Start?

Recognizing that trail development occurs at a variety of scales, many trails serve park users only while others are citywide or regional extent. Also, people with a destination in mind tend to take the most direct route, while recreationists tend to enjoy loop or circuit trails more than linear pathways. An exemplary trail system provides multiple opportunities for users to utilize trail segments to access different parts of the city directly or enjoy recreational circuits of various sizes. By employing park trails, city trails, and regional trails, users should ideally be able to select from several options to reach a destination or spend time recreating. Simple, early steps such as creating preferred routes and loops on city sidewalks or low traffic streets are a great place to start.

Connecting People to Trails

As the trail system develops, additional resources are desirable to support users. It is worthwhile to consider signage and wayfinding strategies, trailheads and access points, public trail maps, and smartphone applications as strategies to connect people to trails and affect positive user experience.

Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding strategies enhance a system by promoting ease of use and improving access to resources. Branding is an essential aspect of adequate signage and wayfinding markers. A hierarchy of signage for different types of users assists residents and visitors as they navigate between recreation destinations. Further, a strong brand can imply investment and commitment to alternative transit, and which can positively impact city identity and open economic opportunities.

Trailheads & Access Points

It is also vital to provide users access to trails. There are two ways to approach this. First, the development of formal trailheads to include parking, bike racks, signage, restrooms, drinking water, a trail map, and other amenities. A trailhead provides access to trails that serve a higher volume of users at destinations reached by automobile. The second approach involves providing a trail access point, usually without the extensive amenities found at a trailhead. Trail access points are appropriate in residential or commercial areas where users are more likely to walk or ride a bicycle to reach the trail. Trailheads and access points should be primary points of interest on any trails mapping.

Map & App Resources

Another way of trail mapping is through web-based smartphone technologies. Maps made available on this type of platform are more dynamic for users, always on hand, and can be easily updated. Upfront investment needed for this type of resource may be cost-prohibitive at present. However, it is likely as technologies advance; these costs become more manageable in the future. It may be worth considering the development of web-based maps in long term planning decisions.

K. School Partnerships

City staff should review current IGA's with the school system and how it's benefitting the parks and recreation dept. Maximizing potential should be a vital goal of any agreement. There are currently several school facilities and sports fields that provide valuable recreation access to the community. However, many of these facilities seem to have limited open public access. One way to address this issue is to increase partnerships with schools to promote the use of school facilities through on-site community programming and environmental cues to make them easier to use and more inviting. School partnerships are already valuable throughout the Valdez community. Strengthening existing alliances because school assets improve the level of service provided to city residents.

There are several examples of communities, such as San Antonio, TX, that have taken school partnerships to the next level. "San Antonio isn't the first city to have such an initiative, but it's ahead of the curve of a national trend of municipalities and school districts unlocking their schools' park gates. Hundreds of schools in New York and Philadelphia have signed on, and pilot programs will soon be deployed at 10

schools over the next three years in Atlanta, according to Iris Dimick in “Partnership Has Opened Dozens of Enhanced School Parks to the Public” Rivard Report, July 2019.

Learning Landscapes, a program developed by faculty and students at the University of Colorado at Denver engages the local community to envision, plan, build, and maintain custom playgrounds at neighborhood schools. The intention is to extend learning opportunities beyond the school walls and into the community. These redeveloped school grounds typically include demonstration gardens, yard games, art, shade features, and outdoor classroom facilities as well as play equipment. The result is a sense of community investment and ownership in these assets because volunteers work in the planning and construction alongside emerging professionals and school personnel. This program serves to foster stronger ties between schools and neighbors by open lines of communication and a commitment to shared resources. Such a program has a positive impact on the role that school ground facilities play in neighbors’ daily lives, and elevates the level of service for the area.

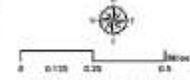
The Learning Landscapes webpage (<http://www.learninglandscapes.org/>) describes the in this way:

Learning Landscapes leads UCD students, elementary schools, and community members in the redesign of schoolyards into fun, multi-use parks designed to reflect the culture of the surrounding community. The Learning Landscapes project helps reconnect communities with neighborhood schools by listening and actively involving the school community throughout the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the Learning Landscape schoolyard. Each school forms a Learning Landscape team to help inform design and programming decisions as well as keep a watchful eye for vandalism and maintenance issues after construction is complete. The Learning Landscapes team recruits students, parents, and the surrounding community to help build, maintain, and improve the Learning Landscape. Each new Learning Landscape has a volunteer build day where the school and community volunteers develop a sense of ownership and civic pride by creating outdoor artwork planting gardens, laying sod, or building play equipment. We document and distribute site-specific resources for educators and community members on the outdoor educational elements unique to each Learning Landscape schoolyard. Promoting the programmatic use of the Learning Landscape is critical for the long-term viability and sustainability of these projects.

L. ADA Transition Plan and Compliance

According to the ADA.gov website, “Access to civic life by people with disabilities is a fundamental goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To ensure meeting this goal, Title II of the ADA requires State and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities.” “One important way to ensure conformity in Title II's requirements in cities of all sizes is through self-evaluation, which is required by the ADA regulations. Self-evaluation enables local governments to pinpoint the facilities, programs, and services that must be modified or relocated to ensure that local governments are complying with the ADA.” The city should continue to monitor access issues within parks and address issues.

Parks and Recreation System Map
Valdez, Alaska

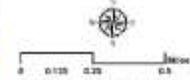


Map Prepared For Valdez, AK - By The GRASP Team
This Map is prepared for Planning & Decision Support Only
Legend Therefore May Vary Slightly In This Data set To Represent
Best-Of-Map Please Refer To The Report Document For Map Details
©2015 GRASP Services, Inc. City of Valdez, AK - 20150101 Team
Completed: 2020

- Legend**
- Industrial Facility
 - Recreation Component
 - Trail
 - Winter Trail Only
 - River/Stream
 - Highway/Overhead
 - Building Footprint
 - Park Location
 - Waterbody
 - Parcel Boundary

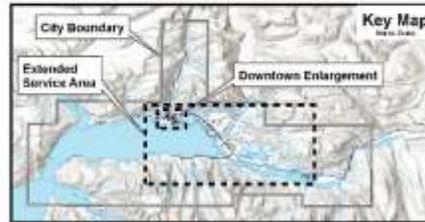
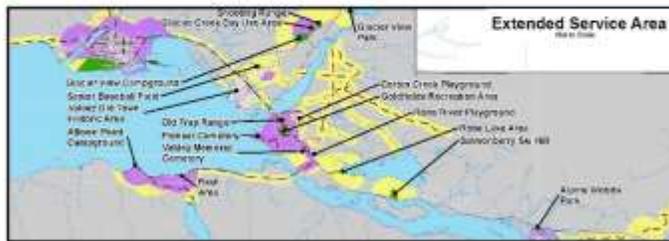


Walkability GAP Analysis (Target Values)
Valdez, Alaska



Map Prepared For Valdez, AK - By The GRASP Team
This Map is prepared for Planning & Decision Support Only
Legend Therefore May Vary Slightly In This Data set To Represent
Best-Of-Map Please Refer To The Report Document For Map Details
©2015 GRASP Services, Inc. City of Valdez, AK - 20150101 Team
Completed: 2020

- Legend**
- GRASP Level of Service**
- Target: 35.4**
- No Access Within 1000meters walk
 - Below Target
 - Meets or Exceeds Target
 - Industrial Facility
 - Recreation Component
 - Trail
 - Winter Trail Only
 - River/Stream
 - Highway/Overhead
 - Building Footprint
 - Park Location
 - Waterbody
 - Parcel Boundary



10-minute Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
Valdez, Alaska



Map prepared for Valdez, AK, by The GRASP Team. This map is intended for planning & discussion purposes only. Legend items are only valid if they apply to the project. To request a custom map, please contact the project manager for map details. 800 Data Service Network, City of Valdez, Inc. 2014/01/15 Team Concept 2013

Service Level Credits: 100000, 200000, 300000, 400000, 500000, 600000, 700000, 800000, 900000, 1000000, 1100000, 1200000, 1300000, 1400000, 1500000, 1600000, 1700000, 1800000, 1900000, 2000000, 2100000, 2200000, 2300000, 2400000, 2500000, 2600000, 2700000, 2800000, 2900000, 3000000, 3100000, 3200000, 3300000, 3400000, 3500000, 3600000, 3700000, 3800000, 3900000, 4000000, 4100000, 4200000, 4300000, 4400000, 4500000, 4600000, 4700000, 4800000, 4900000, 5000000, 5100000, 5200000, 5300000, 5400000, 5500000, 5600000, 5700000, 5800000, 5900000, 6000000, 6100000, 6200000, 6300000, 6400000, 6500000, 6600000, 6700000, 6800000, 6900000, 7000000, 7100000, 7200000, 7300000, 7400000, 7500000, 7600000, 7700000, 7800000, 7900000, 8000000, 8100000, 8200000, 8300000, 8400000, 8500000, 8600000, 8700000, 8800000, 8900000, 9000000, 9100000, 9200000, 9300000, 9400000, 9500000, 9600000, 9700000, 9800000, 9900000, 10000000

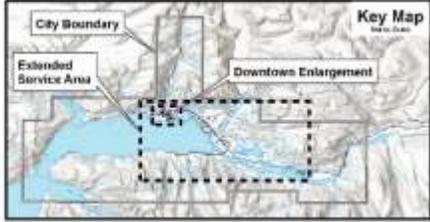
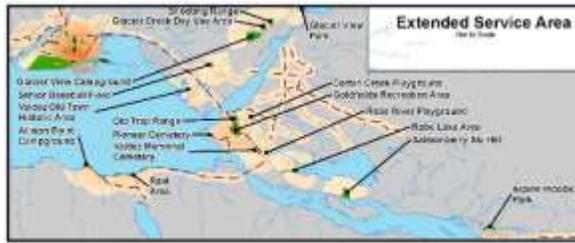
Legend

GRASP Level of Service

Range: 0 to 600

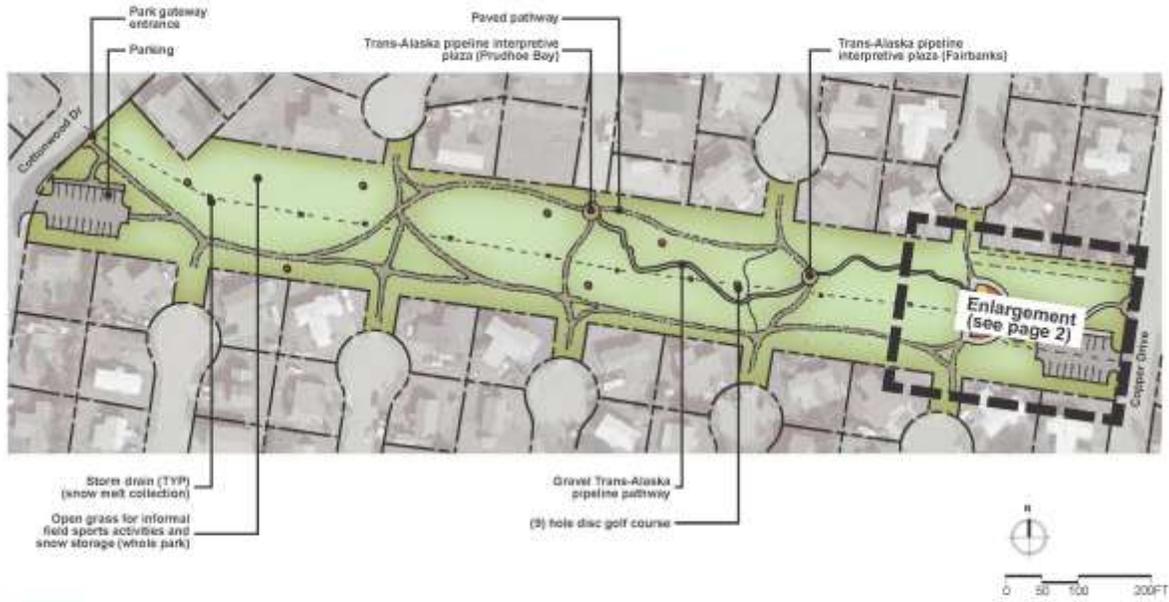
- No Access within 10-minute walk
- Low Quality Access
- High Quality Access

- Indoor Facility
- Recreation Component
- Park Location
- Waterbody
- Facet Boundary
- Trail
- Minor Trail Only
- River/Stream
- Highway/Street/Road



Appendix B. Valdez Trails Map

Appendix C. Black Hills Gold Site Plan



1 Black Gold Park Concept Valdez Parks & Recreation Master Plan

REV: 06/09/2020





2 Black Gold Park Concept – Enlargement
 Valdez Parks & Recreation Master Plan
 RPN 06/09/2020  



3 Black Gold Park – Precedent Images
 Valdez Parks & Recreation Master Plan
 RPN 06/09/2020  

Appendix D. Ruth Pond Site Plan



1 Ruth Pond Concept Valdez Parks & Recreation Master Plan



Park Gateway



Park gateway



Secondary park entry

Facilities



Cabin



Day-use recreation area

Activities



Raised boardwalk



Fishing platform



Dock/clipping platform



Beach

2 Ruth Pond – Precedent Images Valdez Parks & Recreation Master Plan



Appendix E. Typical Trailhead Cost

Typical Trailhead

Construction Costs				
Item	Units	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total
Dog Bag Dispenser and Post	LS	1	\$600	\$600
Bear Proof Trash Can	EA	1	\$1,600	\$1,600
Bench	EA	1	\$4,000	\$4,000
Boulders - Type A (9' to 12' circumference)	EA	5	\$400	\$2,000
Trailhead Sign w/ Map	EA	1	\$7,000	\$7,000
Misc Earthworks and Revegetation	LS	1	\$1,000	\$1,000
Sub Total				\$16,200
Mobilization	10%	LS	\$16,200	\$1,620
Sub Total				\$17,820
Estimating Contingency	10%	%	\$17,820	\$1,782
Sub Total				\$1,782
Total				\$19,602

Appendix G. Valdez Citizen Survey Report

Valdez Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey Final Report

April 2020



Table of Contents

- Intro, Methodology & Key Findings
- Demographics
- Current Usage & Satisfaction
- Communication
- Current Facilities and Programs
- Priorities for the Future
- Financial Choices & Visions
- Suggestions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather community feedback on the Valdez's facilities, trails, amenities, programs, future planning, communication, and more.

This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist Valdez Parks and Recreation in developing a plan to reflect the community's desires, needs, and priorities for the future. The goal was to ensure all residents had a chance to voice their opinion in this process.



Methodology

Primary methods:

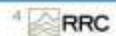
1 = Statistically Valid (Invitation Survey)
Mailed survey with an option to complete online

2 = Open Link Survey
Online survey available to all residents

1,815 Mailings Sent to Valdez Residents



The Invite Survey represents the randomly sampled representative of Valdez residents. A sample size of 219 completed invite surveys leads to a margin of error of +/- 6.2%. The Open Link Survey allows for all other residents to share their opinion and are compared throughout the report. Despite a lower sample size for the Open Link survey, results are presented separately and should be interpreted with caution.



Weighting the Data

1

The underlying data from the invitation survey were weighted by age and homeownership status to ensure appropriate representation of the City of Valdez residents across different demographic cohorts in the sample.



2

Using U.S. Census Data, the age distribution in the sample were adjusted to more closely match the population profile of Valdez residents.

Top Findings



Satisfaction is currently high among respondents.

Most aspects of Valdez's parks and recreation system received high satisfaction. There are still areas to improve over time but this is a positive finding.



Summer trails and trail variety may need improvement.

Out of all statements on trails, summer trail maintenance and an increased variety of trails are the two most needed trail improvements.



An indoor multi-use facility is important to most respondents.

Both invite and open link respondents identified a need to build a new indoor multi-use facility in Valdez. However, there was slightly lower importance given to this item as a primary purpose of the Parks and Recreation Department.



Preferred communication methods are diverse.

From social media to flyers to emails, respondents seek a diversity of online and traditional promotional materials.

Top Findings



Most support around sponsorships and bonds for funding.

Invite respondents are most likely to support sponsorships and naming rights for facilities. Bond referendums received support too.



Shoup Bay Trail and Special Events may be priorities to improve.

Both of these amenities/services received a lower than average needs-met rating while having a higher than average importance to invite households.



Additional bike paths and trail connectivity important for the future.

In addition to the indoor facility, bike paths and trail connectivity are important to respondents. This is a common theme seen in other areas of the country too.



Mineral Creek Trail and Dock Point Trail receive most use.

Over 80% of invite respondents used these two trails over the past 12 months. The swimming pool also is frequently used by residents in Valdez.

Demographics



Demographic Profile

57% of respondents are under 45 years old. Responses were well-distributed across age ranges in Valdez.



51% of respondents' households earn under \$100k per year.



6% require ADA-accessible facilities and services in Valdez.



43% of respondents' households have children at home.

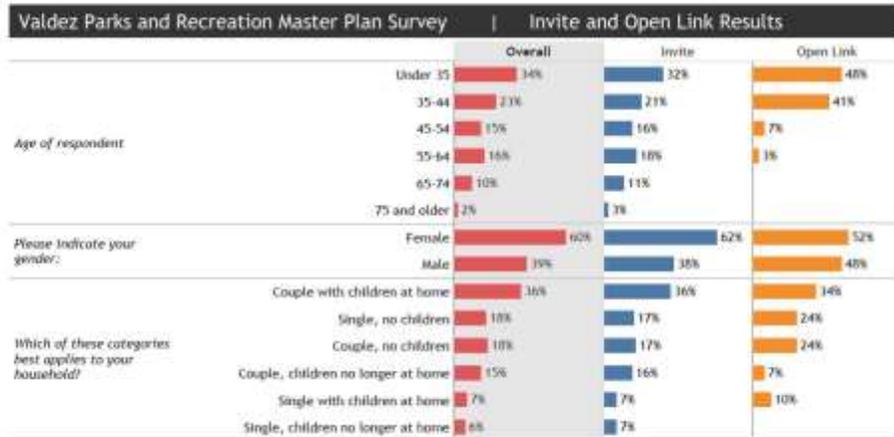


39% have lived in Valdez less than 10 years.



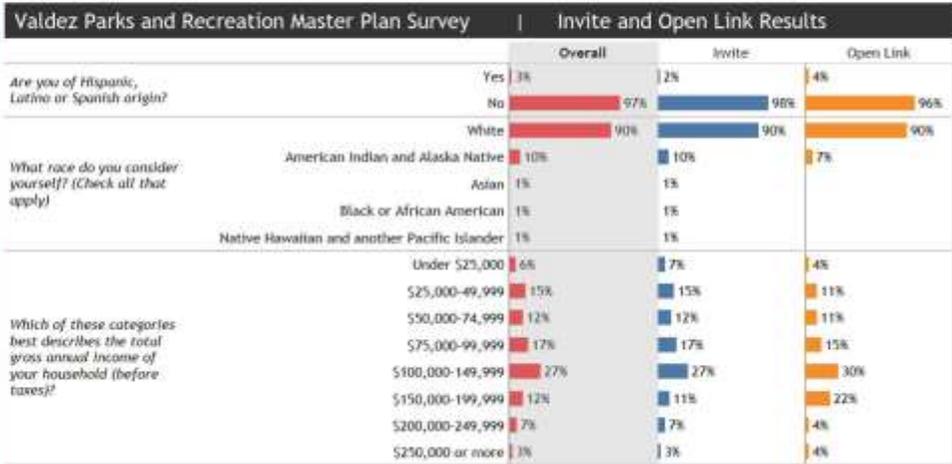
Demographic Profile

Age, a weighted variable, is well distributed across all ranges in Valdez. The open link results represent a younger age demographic than the invite results. Invite respondents were more likely to be female (62%), a common finding in survey research. Most respondents to the invite survey were couples with children at home (36%) followed by singles without children (17%). In total, approximately 43% of invite households have children at home.



Demographic Profile

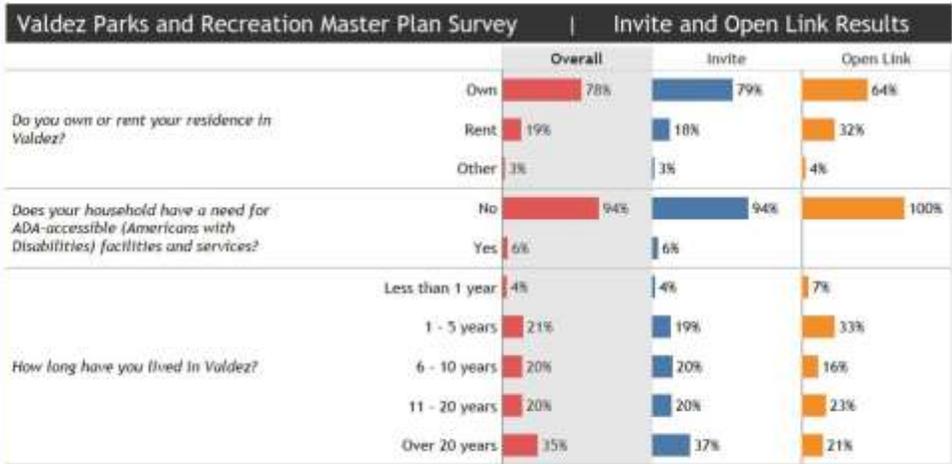
Approximately 2% of invite respondents identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin, compared to 4% of open link respondents. Furthermore, 90% of invite respondents identified as White with 10% as American Indian and Alaska Native, 1% Asian, 1% Black or African American, and 1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Further, most invite households earn under \$100k (51%), but the largest single category is \$100,000-\$149,999 (27%).



11  RRC

Demographic Profile

Of invite respondents, 79% own their home with 18% renting, and 3% with some other setup. Approximately 6% of invite respondents require ADA services. Further, most invite respondents have lived in Valdez for under 10 years (43%). However, 37% have lived in Valdez for more than 20 years. Open link respondents were more likely to rent than own their home compared to invite respondents.



12  RRC

Current Usage and Satisfaction



Familiarity

Invite and open link respondents are equally familiar with Valdez's recreation facilities, trails, and programs. Respondents have a familiarity of 4.4 out of 5.0 for facilities and trails and 3.9 out of 5.0 for programs. Program familiarity is typically lower as participation rates are lower. However, overall familiarity is relatively high in the community.



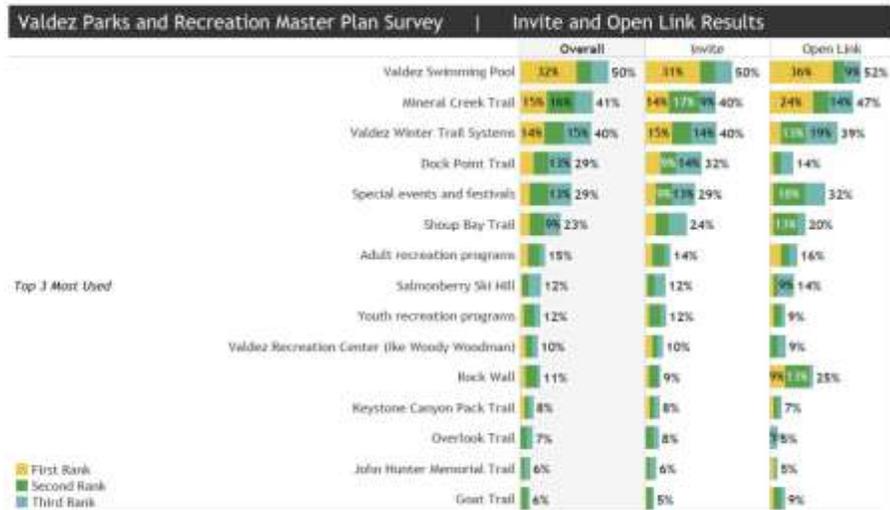
Current Usage

When asked which facilities/amenities they have used in the past 12 months, all facilities and amenities listed had at least 25% usage by respondents. Dock Point Trail was used by 83% of invite respondents followed by the Mineral Creek Trail (82%), special events and festivals (76%), and winter trail systems (70%).



Current Usage - Top 3

When forced to choose only three most used facilities/amenities, the most frequently used facility is the Valdez swimming pool (50%), the Mineral Creek Trail (40%), and the Valdez Winter Trail Systems (40%). The Dock Point Trail (32%), special events and festivals (29%), and Shoup Bay Trail (24%) followed in usage.



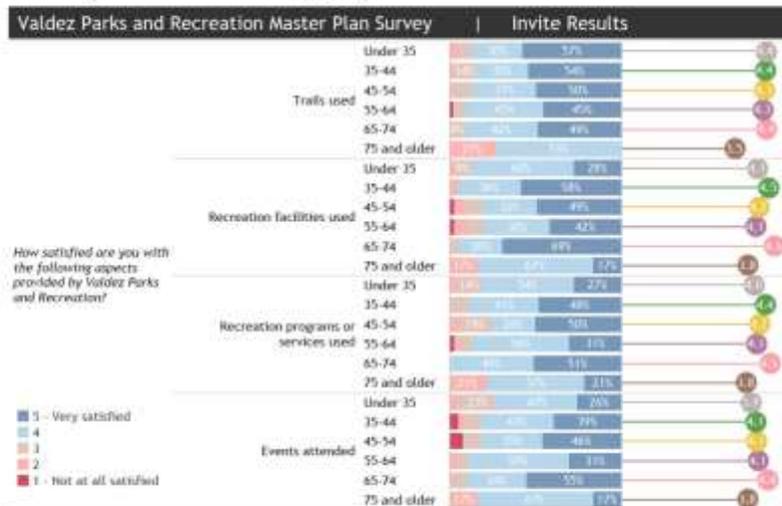
Satisfaction

Respondents rated how satisfied they were with a variety of aspects in Valdez. As shown, invite respondents are slightly more satisfied on every aspect except for events. However, all aspects received positive ratings by both groups. Trails (4.3) was the highest rated aspect followed by recreation facilities (4.2), programs and services (4.1), and events attended (4.0).



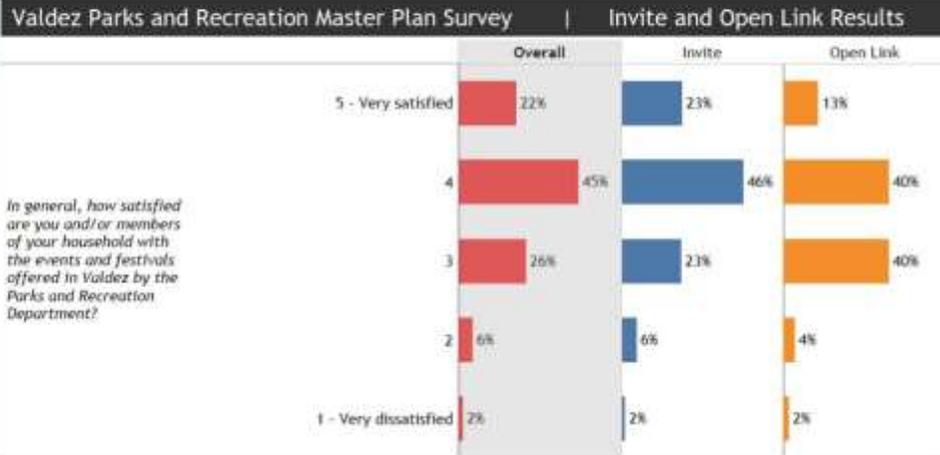
Satisfaction - By Age (Invite)

Satisfaction remains rather high for most groups, but there are slight differences. Those 75 and older (small sample) were less satisfied overall; however, they are less likely to use all offerings. For events and programs/services, those under 35 years old are less satisfied than age ranges 35 and up. This is a slight difference but worth paying attention to in the future.



Event Satisfaction

Events have become a popular addition by many Parks and Recreation departments across the country. Both invite and open link respondents are mostly satisfied with the events offered in Valdez. There may be areas to improve at points. More invite respondents provided a 4 out of 5 rating (46%) than a 5 out of 5 rating (23%). Furthermore, 31% rated either 3 or lower. While the rating is still positive, events may have some room to improve in the future.



Communication



Communication Effectiveness

Valdez's communication effectiveness is moderate-to-mostly effective among both invite and open link respondents. Approximately 43% of invite respondents rated the City's communication effectiveness either a 4 or 5 out of 5. An additional 31% rated it slightly lower at 3/5. Only 16% rated the effectiveness either 1 or 2, a positive finding. There may be room to generate more awareness among those who are in the middle of the scale.



Communication Effectiveness - By Age (Invite)

By age, the communication does not change drastically. For instance, those who are 75 and older perceive the communication to be less effective, but it is a small sample again. However, most age ranges gravitate toward rating either a 3 or 4 out of 5. Similarly, it's likely that each group has a different preference for their method of communication.

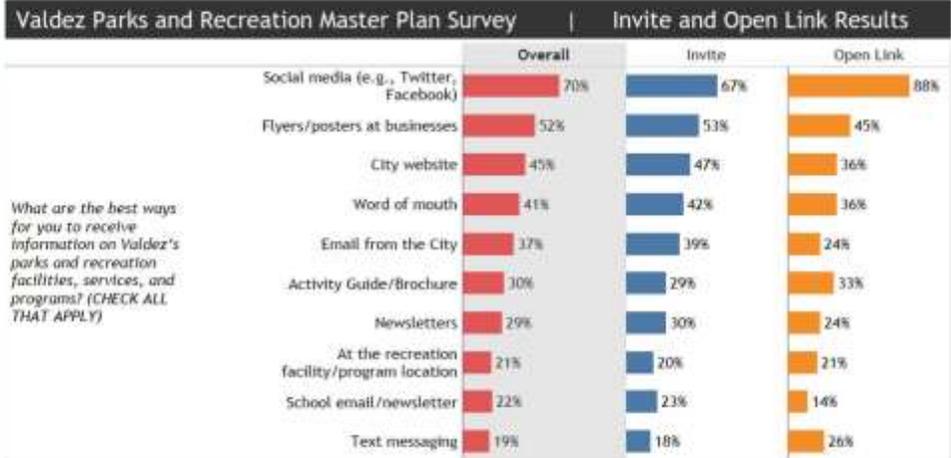


Top Communication Methods (Invite)



The best ways to receive communication is a mix of online and traditional promotional material. Social media (67%) is the best way for most respondents. Following are flyers/posters at businesses (53%), the City website (47%), word of mouth (42%), and emails (39%). Overall, it's clear that a mixed approach to communication is preferred for many respondents.

Communication Methods



Communication Methods – By Age (Invite)

For invite results by age, there is a large discrepancy in the preferred methods of communication by age. As age increases, the preference for social media drops from 80% to 53%. Further, newsletters rises from 18% to 56% of 65-74 and 100% of those 75 and older (small sample). These results further reinforce the need to diversify communication methods.

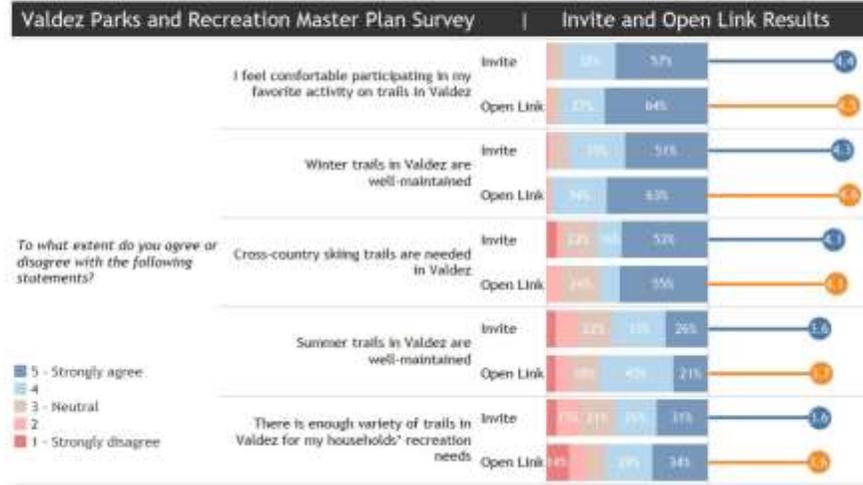
Valdez Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey		Invite Results						
		Overall	Under 35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and older
<i>What are the best ways for you to receive information on Valdez's parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)</i>	Social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)	67%	80%	77%	73%	49%	53%	
	Flyers/posters at businesses	52%	50%	57%	56%	54%	47%	45%
	City website	43%	46%	52%	34%	45%	56%	
	Email from the City	38%	36%	44%	35%	40%	37%	39%
	Word of mouth	43%	52%	43%	30%	26%	56%	67%
	Newsletters	30%	18%	26%	22%	38%	56%	100%
	Activity Guide/Brochure	29%	20%	28%	28%	39%	41%	45%
	At the recreation facility/program location	19%	7%	34%	25%	15%	27%	17%
	School email/newsletter	22%	31%	24%	22%	17%	8%	
	Text messaging	19%	24%	23%	22%	14%	8%	
	Other	7%	3%	6%	7%	14%	8%	

Current Facilities and Programs



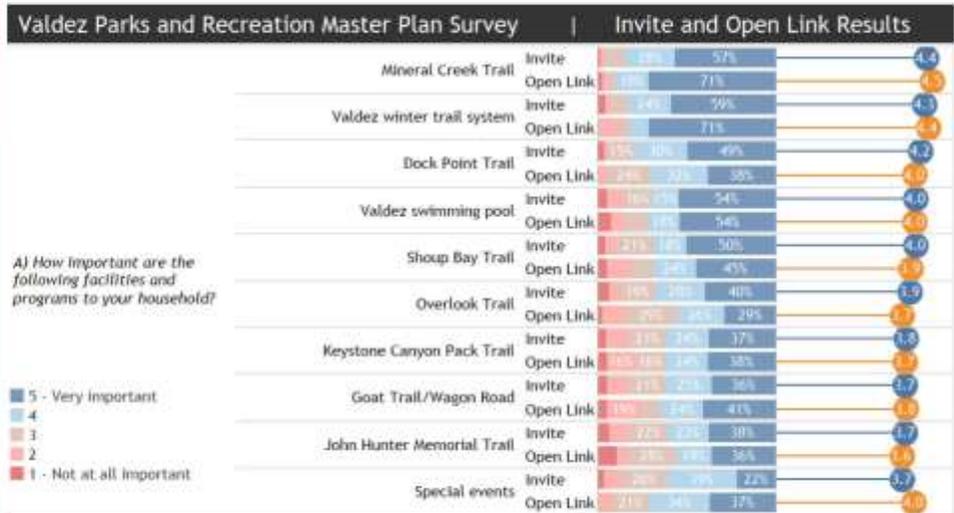
Trail Statements

Several statements were developed based on trails in Valdez and were rated on agreement by respondents. As displayed, most respondents feel comfortable participating on trails in Valdez (4.4), feel winter trails are well maintained (4.3), and believe cross-country ski trails are needed. A more mixed opinion was found on two statements related to summer trail maintenance and variety of trails (3.6 each).



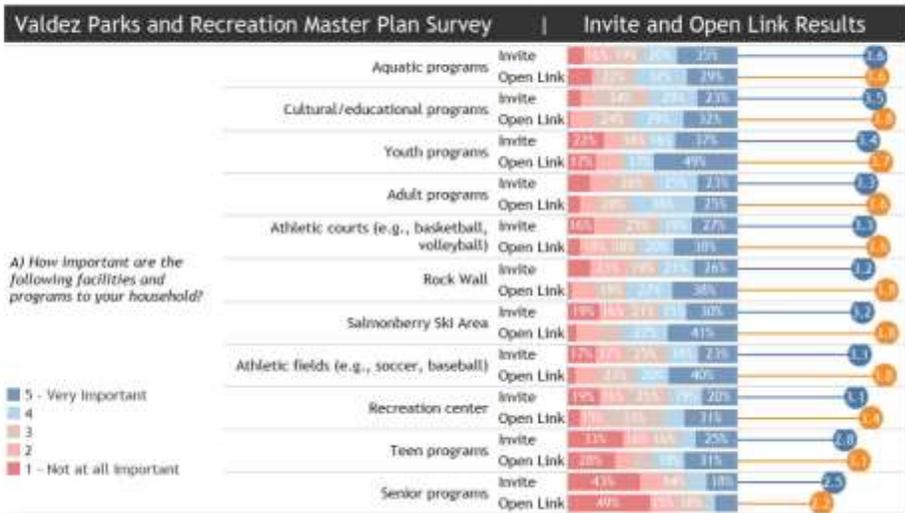
Facility / Program Importance - Top of the list

When asked how important facilities/amenities were to their household, the Mineral Creek Trail (4.4), winter trail system (4.3), Dock Point Trail (4.2), swimming pool (4.0), and Shoup Bay Trail (4.0) were most important. The Overlook Trail (3.9) and Keystone Canyon Pack Trail (3.8) are also important to respondents.



Facility / Program Importance – Bottom of the list

Towards the middle-to-bottom of the list, programs fell further into this category. This is normal as programs are generally lower in importance. Most programs are only important to those who use them which is smaller than those who use facilities.



Facility / Program Needs Met – Top of the list

Further, respondents were asked how well these facilities/programs meet the needs of Valdez. The winter trail system (4.4), Dock Point Trail (4.4), Mineral Creek Trail (4.4), and swimming pool (4.4) meet the needs of the community the best. This is positive as these same facilities/trails are of highest importance to respondents too.



Facility / Program Needs Met – Bottom of the list

The following slide contains facilities/programs that are more moderately meeting the needs of the community. Although programs received low importance, they are still bottom of the list for needs met too. The Recreation Center (4.0) is also lower than most other facilities. However, respondents are generally more neutral on these facilities than they are negative. They may just be lower importance to most households.



Facility / Program Importance / Performance Matrix – Invite



Future Needs – Top of List

When asked to rate the future priorities of Valdez, invite and open link respondents generally agree on the overall rankings. The top of the list includes additional/improved bike paths (3.8 invite), local trail connectivity (3.8), indoor multi-use recreation facility (3.8), improved summer trail quality (3.6), and regional trail connectivity (3.6). A second tier of importance includes cross-country ski trail system (3.4) and improved winter trail quality (3.4).



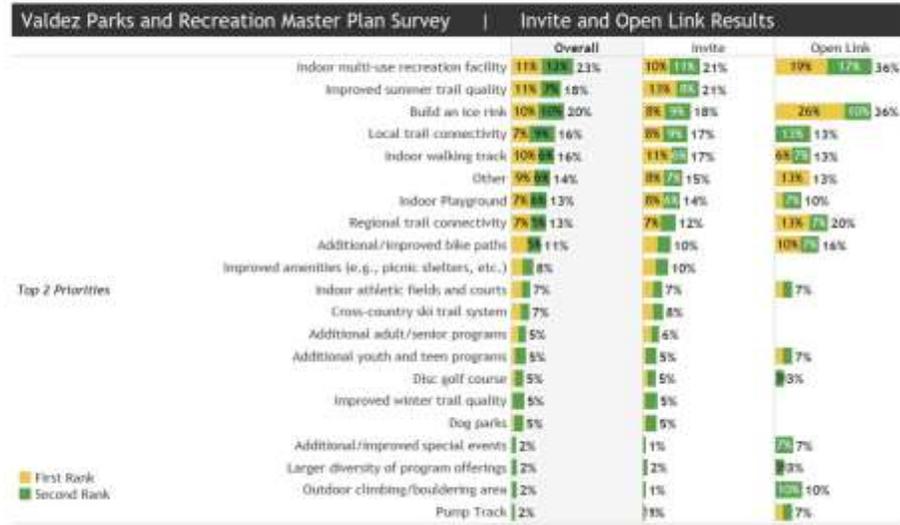
Future Needs – Bottom of List

The least important needs for the future include a pump track (2.4), disc golf course (2.7), dog parks (2.9), and an outdoor climbing/bouldering area (2.9). While these do have much lower importance compared to other needs, they likely have a smaller userbase. Furthermore, more niche facilities do still have passionate users, but it may not appeal to as wide of a demographic.



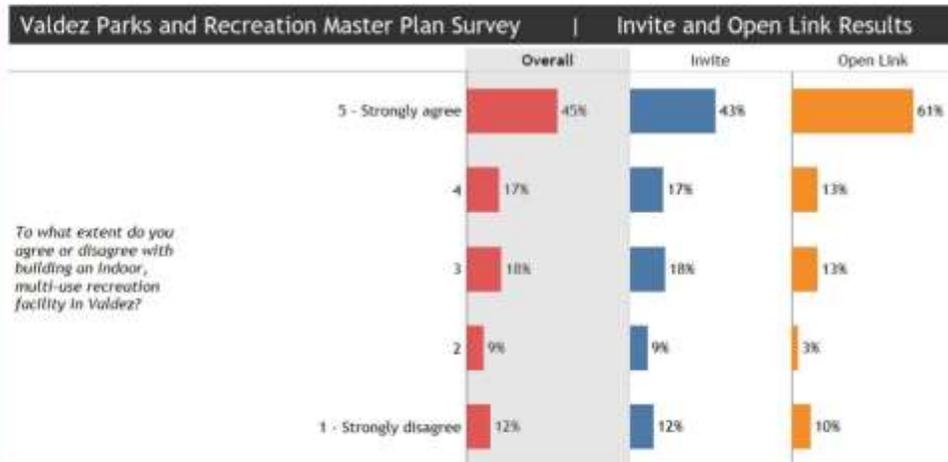
Balancing for the Future

When prioritized to the top two needs, an indoor multi-use recreation facility (21%) and improved summer trail quality (21%) are the top two priorities for invite respondents. Furthermore, building an ice rink (18%), local trail connectivity (17%), and an indoor walking track (17%) followed in priority.



Indoor Facility Importance

Respondents were asked about the need to build an indoor, multi-use facility in Valdez. Invite respondents were quite favorable with 43% saying they 'strongly agreed' and an additional 17% rating it as 4 out of 5. Only 21% of invite respondents did not agree about building a facility. Thus, there appears to be support for an indoor facility among many in Valdez.



Indoor Facility Importance – By Age (Invite)

Interestingly, the age of the respondent is important when gauging support for a potential future indoor facility. Those who are under 35 years old are much more likely to agree (73% either 4 or 5) compared to those 55-64 (47% agree). Thus, if there's interest in trying to build an indoor facility, it may take more convincing of older demographics to fund/utilize the facility.



Suggestions about Trails In Valdez

Below is a word cloud and examples of suggestions on trail improvements found through open-ended comments in Valdez. Shoup Bay Trail received a variety of comments about needing improvement along with comments referencing summer trail maintenance. These comments align with several of the quantitative ratings too. A full listing of comments are provided in the appendix document.

More summer trail maintenance! This would provide some part time jobs to locals as well for trail maintenance! It is much needed on the Shoup Bay Trail and goat/pack trails!

More multi-use trails, specifically loop trails. Trails that offer scenic view points and or scenic ends (lake, rivers, peak summits, etc.) Bear proof trash bins and restrooms at trail heads.

Better summer maintenance of Shoup Bay Trail (all others are great!). Is Shoup Bay City run or maintained by another organization? Longer/more bike paths.

Connect trails, open longer trails. Everything in Valdez takes about an hour to walk. Better signage for winter trails explaining multi use and trail etiquette for example do not snowshoe or walk over freshly made ski track and many more.



Financial Choices and Vision



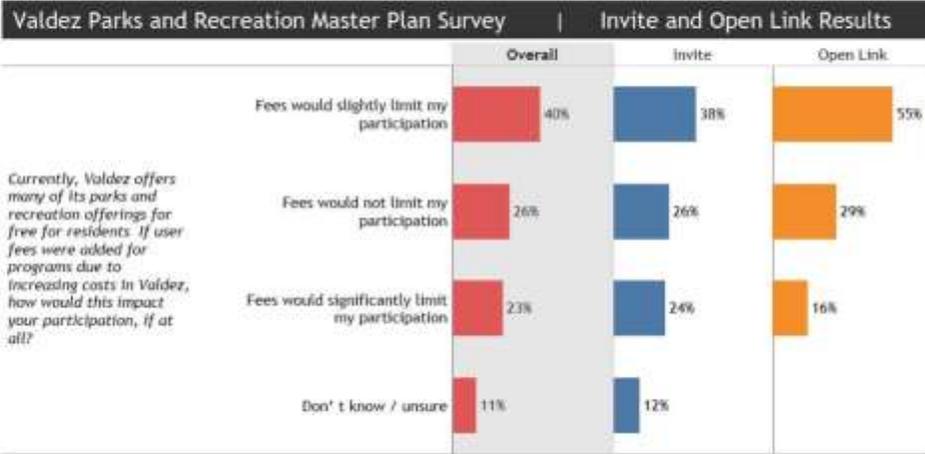
Funding Mechanisms

Funding is an essential topic to improve parks and recreation services. Respondents were most supportive of park and facility sponsorships/naming rights (75% probably or definitely support), but most respondents would possibly support a bond referendum too (64% probably or definitely support). New user fees do have over 50% support, but responses are more negative than the other two mechanisms.



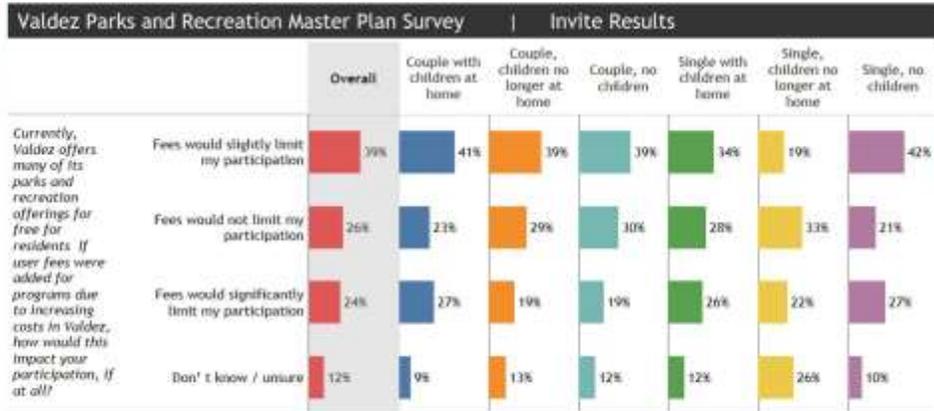
Fee Increase Impacts

If fees were added to programs due to increasing costs, approximately 62% of respondents would have their participation either slightly or significantly limited. Only 26% of invite respondents said that it would not limit their participation. About 12% of invite respondents are unsure how it would impact their participation right now.



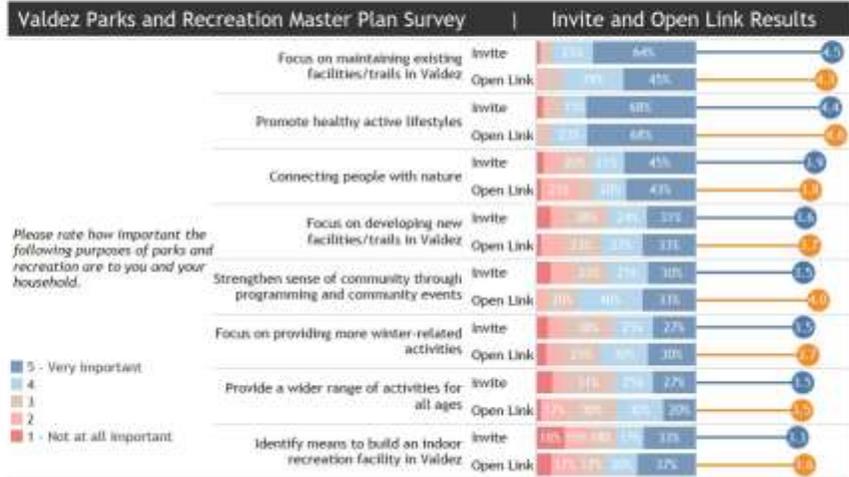
Fee Increase Impacts – By Household Status (Invite)

By household status, couples with children at home would see the most impact on their participation (68% would be impacted). Most household types would be impacted more than they would not be impacted. The lower group in terms of impact are those who are single with grown children. It's important to consider which groups would be most impacted when changing fee structures among activities/specific facilities.



Visions for the Future

The primary purposes respondents see currently revolve around maintaining existing facilities/trails in Valdez (4.5) and continuing to promote healthy active lifestyles (4.4). These are the two most important purposes that parks and recreation can serve for the near future. Connecting people with nature (3.9) is third on the list. Surprisingly, identifying means to build an indoor recreation facility received more mixed responses on this list.



Community Comments



Additional Comments

Additional comments provided by respondents give praise to Valdez, highlight needs for improvement, and reference an indoor facility, among more topics. Below is a sample of a few comments with a full listing in the appendix document.

I really appreciate the winter trail maintenance. Skiing during my lunch break is part of such an incredible quality of life in Valdez. Can't wait for Meals Hill improvements

We absolutely NEED an indoor place for small children to run around/expend energy in. The 1-6 year age range (especially 1-3) is very limited.

We love Valdez and all of the programs/events that are offered here. It really is a special town.

Multi-use facility and ice rink have been fought for all 25 years I've lived here. Good luck!

As sports and activities change with the times, the more versatile the new buildings and programs can be the better.



Appendix F. Information Gathering Trip Memo



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

Memo to: Nick Farline, Director

CC: Teresa Penbrooke, GP Principle in Charge
Dave Peterson, GP GIS Manager
Keri Konold, GP Project Consultant
Jake Jorgenson, RRC Senior Research Analyst

From: Teresa Jackson, Project Manager, GreenPlay, LLC

Date: November 8, 2019

Subject: City of Valdez, Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Focus groups, stakeholder interviews and a public forum were conducted during November 4-6, 2019. These meetings were held throughout the City. The goal of these sessions was to gather information that would guide the development of the parks and recreation needs assessment community survey. Participant contacts included:

- Users/community members (84) (6 under the age of 16)
- Parks and Recreation Commission Members (9)
- Department Staff (8)
- City Manager (2)
- City Council (4)

A summary of responses follows. Responses are not prioritized. It should be noted that some participants chose not to respond during the sessions.

How long have you been a resident of the City of Valdez?

- (23) <5 years
- (18) 5-9 years
- (25) 10 – 19 years
- (25) 20+ years
- (0) not a resident, but uses facilities and services, and participates in programs

What are the strengths of the City of Valdez Parks and Recreation System?

1. Availability and variety of facilities**
2. Youth programs and facilities are valuable because they have a safe place to visit*
3. Free access***
4. Winter trail maintenance
5. Span different ages with programs
6. Good awareness of wanting to make Valdez services better
7. Balance of indoor and outdoor programs and facilities
8. Staff does a good job getting people into programs/managing the programs
9. Strong winter trail system**
10. Facilities
11. Mineral Creek Trails
12. Hogs Back Mountain trails
13. High quality facilities for size of community*
14. All subdivisions have a park*
15. Variety of services provided**
16. Geographic setting of city



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

17. Easily accessible
18. Unbelievable skate skiing/groomed trails
19. Epic snow
20. Investment in winter maintenance and grooming
21. Surrounded by public use land
22. Well-maintained facilities and restrooms clean and user-friendly
23. Large funding from community organizations
24. People in the community
25. Flexibility of parks staff, easy to work with
26. PR works well with schools (pools, rock climbing wall)
27. Work well with volunteers (SWAN)
28. Low cost/free programs*
29. Variety of activities for abilities, ages (i.e., movement)
30. Quality employees
31. Not overcrowded
32. Strong support from local government
33. "Do you own butter" at movie theater
34. High-end facilities for the size of the town
35. Plenty of natural resources**
36. Marcy
37. Valdez is attractive to visitors
38. Indoor programs
39. Transition between seasons is strong
40. Trail system and year-round use*
41. XC system*
42. Department is focused on community needs and adjust
43. Proactive rather than reactive
44. Facilities for use by transient population
45. Responsive to requests by residents
46. Broad range of activities for families*
47. Good use of recreation center

What are the weaknesses that need to be addressed through the Parks and Recreation Master Plan?

1. Shoup Trail maintenance out to Gold Creek
2. High school trail needed (behind high school)
3. Visitors don't know what Valdez system has to offer (could work with visitor's bureau)
4. Community engagement
5. Lack of consistent standards amongst all local organizations/providers
6. Youth program sign-up has to be done in-person
7. Public restrooms at trailheads aren't always accessible
8. Facilities that are accessible during the daytime (need a daytime gym)
9. Developing the trail potential in the area (i.e., Hogs Back)
10. Maintaining existing trails (i.e., Shoup)
11. Planning (and "what's happening") calendars from community orgs are not coordinated (communication for scheduling the shared facilities)**
12. Majority of visitors are seniors and there is no access to sights beyond Valdez
13. Lights on racquetball court need fixing
14. Summer trail maintenance could be better
15. Need restroom & trash at Glacier Lake* and Robe Lake (formalize/manage these areas)**



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

16. Amenities (restrooms, trash cans) aren't available in-line with season
17. No community liaison between different groups in the city and coordinator to pull things together (no city liaison to work with outside groups)*
18. Certain facilities are weather vulnerable at (i.e., Ruth Pond and Salmonberry Ski Hill)
19. Losing the ice rink
20. No covered playgrounds
21. Lack of indoor facilities for when the weather is inclement
22. No pump track
23. No separate gym
24. No facilities for mountain biking; no skills park (with fat tire biking becoming more popular)
25. Underutilization
26. Need more/better signage for visitors to explain what's motorized/what's non-motorized
27. Need more community races (i.e., runs, biking)
28. Signage at Glacier Lake for danger of ice
29. Sledding hill has trees at base of Mineral Creek are a hazard
30. No winter camping
31. No bike path from Dayville to water falls/Keystone Canyon; on-road access
32. No tent camping outside of parking lots
33. Hiking trails (south side) at Robe Lake
34. Boardwalk to support shore excursions
35. Bridal Veil Falls improvements
36. Lack of advertisement of ski opportunities
37. Marketing of programs and facilities
38. Environmental-outdoor education opportunities (expansion of)
39. City is basically caring for unfunded state parks
40. More artificial outdoor opportunities for climbing activities
41. Opportunity to partner with non-city organizations (for communications, standards, programming, eco development, etc.)****
42. Unclear programming roles between organizations (lots of asking the city for help)*
43. Lack of gym space (competing uses of facilities and rec center is small)**
44. Lack of ice rink
45. Staff turnover
46. All restrooms were closed during recent 5K race
47. Keeping budget constraints in mind
48. Succession planning for Marcy's position
49. Lack of adequate staffing on maintenance side; balance of staff between maintenance and programs staff
50. Dog waste in parks
51. Community awareness of what's state land and what's city land
52. Communication about programs and other general matters like cancellations*
53. Lack of staffing can cause cancellation of programs
54. Have to be well-bodied to use most amenities (lack of services for people needing adaptive programming)
55. Accessibility
56. Managing the archery range is used as a dump site; have a plan for managing this parcel
57. Can't reserve the shooting range
58. Lack of coordination between those who are providing programs



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

What additional recreational activities do you feel should be offered by the City of Valdez that are currently not available?

1. Outdoor climbing facility – artificial walls
2. Shoup Bay trails maintenance
3. Pump track/trails
4. SK races (for all ages)
5. Open swim* (at night)
6. Special events
7. Real ski lift at Salmonberry Ski Hill*
8. Long distance hiking and backpacking
9. Ice skating*
10. Hockey*
11. Soccer
12. Long distance kayaking
13. Bowling
14. Jet skiing
15. Indoor walking track/course
16. Disc golf*
17. Non-rigorous exercise classes
18. Social programs
19. Challenge course
20. Bocci ball
21. Biathlon
22. Sailing
23. Outdoor skills for all ages* (i.e., winter camping, avalanche awareness)
24. X-terra challenge races
25. Intergenerational programs
26. White water introductory classes
27. Roll clinic for kayaking at a pool
28. Snowshoe races
29. A framework for organizing these things
30. Visual/cultural arts programs
31. Movie nights for younger adults (beer and food)
32. Intro clinics and classes
33. Mountain huts
34. Interpretive signage
35. More accessible nature walks (ex: boardwalks which need to consider high tides, Seldovia)
36. Moorings to expand access
37. Volunteer program
38. Robe River Park and Corbin Creek playground is due for replacement
39. Incentives to complete physical activities (i.e. 300-mile club); formerly in partnership with SWAN



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

What new or improved recreational amenities would you like to see available?

1. Solar bike trail (ex: Norway)
2. Disc golf course
3. Indoor recreation center with courts, gym, pool, walking track, lots of programs***
4. Connect trails (i.e., terminal to Mineral Creek)
5. Use the structure at Kelsey Dock better
6. Accessibility for seniors
7. A more appropriate swim platform (besides Kelsey Dock)
8. Walking track
9. Lighted trails
10. Dike Trails
11. Bird Sanctuary Trails
12. Ice rink (indoor/outdoor, covered, sheet of ice)***
13. Overnight parking facilities at kayaking ramp/launch
14. Trail access
15. Covered tennis courts
16. Real ski lift
17. Valdez moto-x track maintenance
18. Mineral Creek Trail amenities such as a covered area for resting and hanging things, restroom, warming hut
19. More motorized trails as well as signage at these
20. Signage for motorized/non-motorized and trail etiquette
21. Looped trails for motorized trails
22. Utilize Mineral Creek Trail in summer for mtn biking
23. More creative playgrounds
24. No gravel playground pads
25. Upgrade shooting range
26. Add shooting sports facilities
27. Bike path from Alpine Woods extended to Keystone Canyon***
28. Saltwater pool
29. Improve single track trails (make more accessible for mtn biking)
30. Fat tire bike stands
31. Signage at trailheads with pertinent information
32. Shoup Bay Trail** needs rebuilding (with heavy equipment)*; 1st section is getting degraded; maintain 1st section as ADA accessible; 2nd section as single track
33. Trails need to be big enough to be machine maintained
34. Use snow lots as community gardens in summer
35. Pickleball courts
36. Indoor gym** (that's not a part of the school system)
37. Kayak racks
38. Fencing around the existing community garden
39. Covered picnic areas
40. Bigger dog park/another dog park
41. Ski trails at Mineral Creek
42. Indoor playground
43. Waterfront walk with interpretive signage
44. Sea Otter RV park (now has garbage)
45. Ski resort
46. Better use park behind fire station for year-round activation (South Barney Meyring Park)



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

47. More trails
48. Access to CVEA hydro power project area (Allison project)
49. Trail to "Area 51" (west of Solomon Lake)
50. Year-round restrooms at facilities
51. More garbage receptacles along trails/trailheads
52. Kids' fishing access/platform at Ruth Pond
53. Mountain biking trails (single track and more level trails)***
54. Tent camping sites (at Sea Otter)
55. Indoor bouldering/climbing**
56. Increased designated outdoor climbing**
57. Motorized track nearer to town
58. Access, and trail to and at, Sea Otter
59. Alcohol permits at facilities
60. Improvements at Robe Lake* (water flow, restrooms)
61. Pump track (activities for young/beginning bikers)
62. Outdoor fitness trail at the Waterfront

Are there any portions of the City of Valdez that are underserved?

1. Elderly/seniors**
2. Homebound
3. Middle school summer programs*
4. People without vehicles*
5. Programs for 20-30-year-olds*** (ex: Coast Guard)
6. Residents beyond Dayville
7. People who live farther outside of town
8. Bike trail from Dayville to Keystone (for people who live in this area)
9. Pre-schoolers
10. 0-3-year-olds* and 0-5 year-olds
11. Dogs
12. People who work
13. Alpine Woods neighborhood
14. People experiencing disabilities
15. Younger Coast Guard members
16. Non-outdoor recreational enthusiasts
17. Neighborhoods by airport
18. Beginning skiers
19. Single parents with children
20. People experiencing depression

How do you believe the needs and initiatives identified in the Master Plan should be financially supported?

Focus on identifying which should be run by PR and which should not (partnership opportunities)

1. Contractors
2. Setting fees to off-set costs*****
3. Use existing funds
4. Resident/non-resident fees*
5. Scholarship program
6. Fundraising
7. Have a pass to facilities for residents (such as the pool or the ski hill) *
8. Stop planning and act



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

9. Provide \$1M additional general fund/year for operations so city can invest in the future of the city
10. Seasonal sales tax that at least a portion of which goes to P&R*****
11. Tax*
12. Need to consider O&M costs so that when oil runs out these things can be paid for
13. Build more sustainable facilities
14. Work to bring people to Valdez
15. Changes to tax structure
16. Bolster recreation services now so that when oil-based funding is no longer as reliable
17. Long-term plan to move to a scaled fee system
18. Work strategically alongside public to determine long-term projects
19. Grants** (ex: USFS)
20. City-wide volunteer corps/volunteers* (ex: trail maintenance)
21. Fees waived for volunteers after so many hours met
22. Community service of high school students (requirement to graduate)
23. Economic development funds
24. Should be subsidized but not free
25. Creative partnerships
26. Don't duplicate services
27. Redirect revenues back into the program/facility

Who are the key partners and stakeholders in the community with regards to assisting with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan?

1. Create a stakeholder list of potential partners
2. Coast Guard***
3. Prince William Sound College – Health and Fitness Center*
4. Snow machine Club**
5. Valdez Adventure Alliance**
6. Valdez Native Tribe Association*
7. Alyeska***
8. Providence Medical Center**
9. Avalanche Center
10. Fish processing company seasonal employees
11. Schools***
12. Public radio station
13. State politicians
14. Department of Transportation – Mineral Creek
15. Bureau of Land Management
16. High School A/V students
17. State of Alaska
18. Adjacent landowners
19. Native corps*
20. Recreation businesses
21. City Council
22. Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
23. Museum*
24. Book clubs
25. Utility companies
26. Edison Schouest
27. Copper Valley Community Foundation



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

28. Eagles
29. Elks
30. Free Masons
31. SWAN (Sound Wellness Alliance Network) **
32. United Way*
33. Other City Departments
34. Police Department
35. Pioneers of Alaska
36. Corporate businesses
37. Hotels
38. VCVB Arts Council
39. Community service organizations
40. University of Alaska Anchorage
41. Cruise ship operators
42. VCVB could connect with cruise ship operators
43. Little League

What are the key issues and values that the City needs to consider moving forward?

1. Healthy lifestyles
2. Community engagement
3. Education
4. Sustainability (take care of what we own)
5. Fiscal sustainability***
6. Human sustainability*
7. Cost of ongoing maintenance costs
8. Healthy lifestyle choices
9. Community investment in citizens
10. Provide stairway to achieving standards
11. Compromising with one another
12. Long-term budgetary impacts
13. Access (financial and physical) to what Valdez has to offer*
14. Stewardship of natural resources
15. Integration of all residents
16. Attract new residents and businesses
17. Maintain a broad focus on recreation opportunities
18. Take advantage of existing facilities
19. Opportunities for all people regardless of age and abilities
20. Staffing adequately*
21. Not relying on volunteers
22. Inclusion
23. Climate change (considering it as an impact to trends)
24. User groups and numbers (quantifying need)
25. City Council can vet decisions better by better understanding the impacts of decisions
26. Diversification of the economy
27. Supporting working together
28. Accessibility and equity
29. Environmental impacts
30. Remembering that not everything should be centered downtown
31. Feature and value parks and recreation services in economic vitality*



1021 E. South Boulder Road, Suite N, Louisville, CO 80027-2548 Tel: (303) 439-8369
Email: Info@GreenPlayLLC.com; Web: www.GreenPlayLLC.com

Other comments/suggestions/feedback?

1. Performance measurement system for programs and facilities (i.e., monitoring use)
2. Make it easy to make payments for services
3. Need a community calendar for city, businesses, and anyone else to post events, programs, etc.
4. City can use volunteers better; Need to train volunteers
5. Nice, safe community and quality of life isn't found many places in AK; PR plays a role in making this happen and helps keep people here
6. The City should consider PR more as an equal partner with other City Departments
7. Incentivize play and connectedness
8. State is retracting management of state lands
9. Map out the providers and find ways to partner
10. Need a community calendar (possibly with radio)
11. When working with the city to get things done barriers exist (i.e., liability concerns, planning for events)
12. Coast Guard makes up about 10% of population; 125 active duty plus families; parks help improve morale)
13. Tent camping at Gold Fields Sports Complex
14. Alyeska settlement is going to be renegotiated
15. Cost recovery exercise
16. University of Alaska Anchorage is a nearby property owner

Appendix H. GP RED Walkability Standards



Research, Education, and Development
for Health, Recreation, and Land Agencies

www.GPRED.org

RESEARCH BRIEFS

2014-#1

Walkability Standards:

a test of common assumptions
related to walkable access



Robby Layton, FASLA, PLA, CPRP

October 28, 2014

Abstract

The increasing interest in walking as a healthy and sustainable means of getting around highlights a need to fill the gaps in what is known about walking as a form of transportation. Planners have traditionally relied on normative standards rather than ones based on evidence to determine time and distance relationships associated with walkability. This paper reports the results of an activity designed to test basic assumptions about walking speed and distance in the built environment and provides suggested guidelines for use in planning for walkability.



Introduction

Determining how far apart to space things like parks, trails and transit stops has a direct bearing on the cost of providing such services to the public. Placing facilities too far away may discourage people from using them, while spacing them too close together is inefficient. It is important to get it right.

Parks are a good example. Providing parks within walking distance of people's homes has long been a basic principle of urban planning. But serious study of the relationship between walking and parks has been lacking, so planners have relied on general practices and rules of thumb, rather than standards based on research. The increasing emphasis of walking as a viable and desirable means of transportation highlights a need to fill the gaps in what is known about walking as it relates to parks and other destinations. Questions such as how far and how fast people walk; what influences their choices of when to walk and where to walk; and other behavioral aspects of walking have relevance to an expanding cadre of people interested in walking.

The purpose of this paper is to offer some insight into the principles behind planning for walkability.

Normative Standards for Walking

Planners typically use ten minutes as the duration that people are willing to spend to walk to a destination. While there is little empirical evidence to support the validity of this measure, it has nonetheless been accepted as a standard. Translating ten minutes of walking into a measure of distance brings up the question of walking speed. Obviously, speed varies depending on the physical ability of the pedestrian and any encumbrances they may have, such as pushing a baby stroller or carrying packages. Other factors, such as the nature of the route (including such things as pavement type, terrain, and impediments like busy streets or waterways) affect pedestrian speed as well. As a result there is a lack of consistency in the distances used among planners to make decisions related to walking. Distances ranging from 1/8 mile to a mile or more are found in planning studies, with 1/4 mile being the most commonly used standard for determining walkable access.

Methodology

A gathering of people interested in parks and other public spaces at the GP RED Think Tank in Estes Park, Colorado in 2014 provided an opportunity to test assumptions about walking and generate empirical data. The event was attended by approximately 50 participants from the US and Canada. The participants came primarily from the fields of parks and recreation, land management, and public health. While they ranged in age and physical condition, all were adults able to walk without the aid of mobility devices. They

agreed to take part in a quasi-experiment to study walking behaviors through a short exercise. In the exercise, the participants were divided into groups of three people (11 groups total) and given a set of maps and instructions. All of the groups were taken to a single starting point located between a community park and a high school. Figure 1. Shows the starting point and surrounding area.

Figure 1. Aerial Photo Map of Starting Point and Surrounding Area



The GP RED Think Tank in Estes Park, Colorado in 2014 provided an opportunity to test assumptions about walking and generate empirical data.

Upon a signal, the groups were asked to fan out simultaneously from the starting point. Each group was instructed to walk in a direction generally away from the starting point and away from the other groups, and to walk casually as a group for a period of exactly 10 minutes. At the 10-minute point they recorded their group's location

on the map and returned to the starting point, re-tracing their route and marking it on the map. The maps were then collected and the starting point, routes, and end points were entered into a GIS map for analysis. Figure 2 shows the end points, routes, and a radial line from the starting point for all of the groups.

Figure 2. Map of Results for All Groups



Using the GIS, three specific aspects of walking were analyzed. First the Euclidian, or straight line (radial) distance between the origin and the destinations was measured.

Second, the length of the actual routes walked were measured. Third, the speed at which the groups walked was calculated. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. - Summary of Results

Group	Radial Length (Ft.)	Radial Length (Miles)	Path Length (Ft.)	Path Length (Miles)	Speed MPH
1	755	0.14	2155	0.41	2.45
2	1576	0.30	2035	0.39	2.31
3	1846	0.35	2337	0.44	2.66
4	2184	0.41	2838	0.54	3.23
5	703	0.13	1944	0.37	2.21
6	1144	0.22	1265	0.24	1.44
7	1808	0.34	2375	0.45	2.70
8	1688	0.32	2485	0.47	2.82
9	1995	0.38	2181	0.41	2.48
10	2753	0.52	2922	0.55	3.32
11	1571	0.30	2697	0.51	3.06
Average	1638	0.31	2294	0.43	2.61
Median	1688	0.32	2337	0.44	2.66

Rounding off the results, we find that the radial distance from the starting point ranged from as little as 0.13 miles (just over 1/8 mile) to as far as 0.52 miles (just over 1/2 mile). The average of all eleven teams was 0.31 (mean of 0.32), or just under 1/3 mile.

The lengths of the routes taken by the teams ranged from 0.24 (just under 1/4 mile) to 0.55 miles (just over 1/2 mile). The speed of the teams (averaged over the 10 minute walking time) ranged from 1.44 miles per hour to 3.32 miles per hour, with an average speed of 2.62 (mean of 2.66) miles per hour.

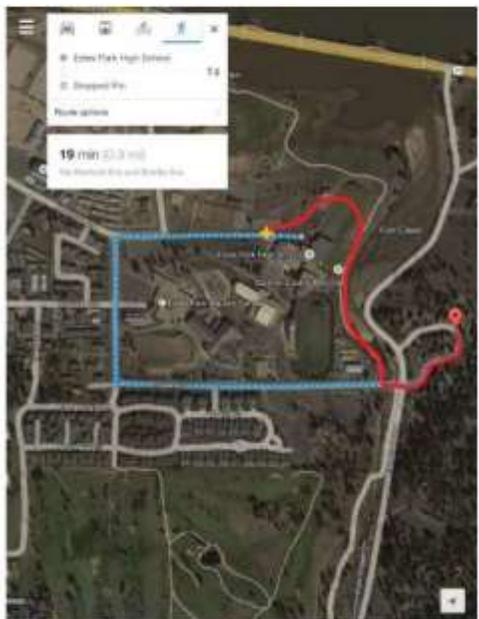
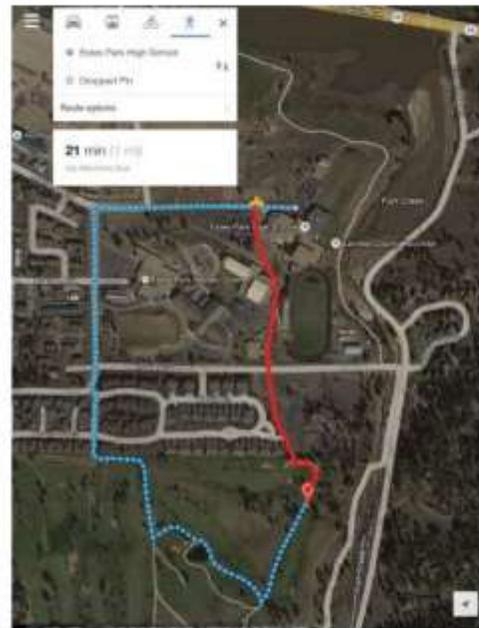
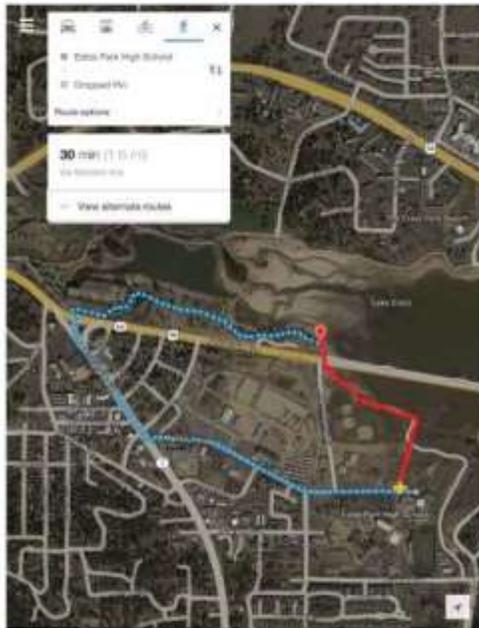
Radial vs Network Buffers

Buffers are typically used around origins or destinations to determine walkable access. Buffers are typically one of two types, although other types are sometimes used. Radial (also called Euclidian or straight-line) buffers are circular and have the travel origin or destination at their center. Network buffers are plotted along defined routes, such as streets, trails, or sidewalks. While radial buffers are commonly used and easily applied, some feel that network buffers produce more accurate results when measuring access between origins and destinations. However, to be accurate, network buffers require a GIS base map that contains all possible routes. In the case of the study area used here, it was possible for participants to take a number

of shortcuts across the park and school grounds. As a result, some groups walked across the large parking lots and/or sports fields while others stayed on designated paths.

Barriers, such as highways and water bodies, also affect the results of different buffer types. Figure 3. shows the difference between some of the routes recorded by the groups and those prescribed by Google Maps along its known network. Note that while Google Maps accurately included the trail system as part of the walking network, it did not recognize the presence of a tunnel under the adjacent highway that two groups took advantage of. The use of the tunnel made a significant difference in where the groups ended up on their prescribed 10-minute walk.

Figure 3, Network-Based Routes vs. Actual Routes Walked



Google Maps for iPad was used to see how computer-generated network maps would compare to the actual routes taken by the groups. The blue dotted lines show suggested routes from Google Maps application. The red lines show the actual routes walked by the group to that destination in 10 minutes.

(Note: the starting points are slightly different in the Google Map from the actual starting points of the groups. This is due to the way Google Maps selects starting locations. This makes the distance of the route as calculated by Google Maps approximately 0.05 miles longer than it would be if it was calculated from the true starting point.)

Limitations

This study was conducted as an exercise using volunteers. The sample size is small, and the participants were not randomly selected. They are not intended to represent the set of all pedestrians who may want to walk to a park, school, or other destination. The results described here should not be considered statistically valid nor generalizable to other places and situations. The intent was simply to test generally-held assumptions about walking patterns against empirically measured results in a specific case. It is hoped that additional studies will be conducted by others to build the base of knowledge and allow more informed decisions to be made by planners.

The location used for this case study consisted in large part of a developed park and the grounds of a public school campus and local government center. Thus, the results may apply best to situations such as university grounds; government or corporate campuses; regional shopping centers; downtowns with high proportions of public plazas and open parking lots; and large parks and open space areas. They may not apply as effectively to residential areas with gridded streets and/or cul-de-sacs.

Recommendations

The results suggest some general guidelines that may be useful to planners, keeping in mind the limitations discussed earlier. These guidelines are only suggestions, and are not intended to be final or definitive.

For Radial Distances from a Destination (such as a Park or School)

1/8 mile is the radius of a circle centered on the destination within which typical pedestrians should be able to arrive at the destination within 10 minutes. Any walk originating inside this circle and proceeding towards the destination by the most expedient route should arrive within 10 minutes in most circumstances.

1/3 mile is the average radial distance from the destination from which a walker will arrive at the destination in 10 minutes. Stated differently, the average of all possible 10 minute walks to the destination would originate this far away in a straight line.

1/2 mile is the farthest radial distance from the destination that can be covered in 10 minutes by a typical pedestrian. This distance will capture essentially all possible walkers traveling at a normal pace within 10 minutes of the destination. I.e., all possible walks of 10 minute duration at normal walking speed and ending at the destination are captured within this distance.

For Network Distances

1/2 mile should be considered the maximum distance along a network from which a destination can be reached in ten minutes. The average ten minute walk would be slightly shorter.

1/8 mile should be considered the distance along a network from which most everyone should be able to arrive at the destination within ten minutes, except in unusual situations.

Summary

The results of this study suggest that the standards in common use, including 1/8 mile, 1/4 mile, and 1/2 mile, are all useful, but should be applied with a clear understanding of how they differ and what they actually represent. It is recommended that **1/3 mile** be used as a standard for radial buffers that represent the average origin of a ten minute walk to a selected destination. A distance of **1/4 mile** should be used as the typical distance along a network from which a 10 minute walk to a selected destination would originate. Walks originating closer to the destination along the network would be likely to take less than 10 minutes.

When GIS base data is known to be complete and accurate, or if non-network shortcuts are not common within the proximate area of a destination, network buffers are recommended. However, if base data is incomplete or if there are numerous possible shortcuts, radial buffers are recommended.

It is important to note that this study does not address the validity of ten minutes as a planning standard for the duration of walks. Further tests are recommended to determine the true relationship between walk duration and people's motivation to walk.

Additional Resources

While research on walking behaviors, particularly those associated with walking to parks, seems to be lacking in the literature, there is growing interest and discussion in the subject of walking. The following examples might be useful to those interested in this topic:

Kuzmyak, Richard, & Dill, Jennifer (2012). Walking and Bicycling in the United States: The who, what, where, and why. *TR News*, 280, 4-15. PDF.

Walker, Jarrett (2011). Basics: walking distance to transit. *Human Transit: the professional blog of public transit planning consultant Jarrett Walker*. 24 July 2011. Web. 25 July 2014.

Robby Layton, FASLA, PLA, CPRP is a member of GP RED's Operating Board and a Principal at Design Concepts, CLA, Inc., a landscape architecture and planning firm. He is also a PhD student and instructor at North Carolina State University's College of Design, where he is researching the links between physical attributes of public greenspace and people's perceptions of how they are served by the public greenspace that exists in proximity to where they live.

Tags: Walkability; walking buffers; walking behaviors; walking distances; walkable access; walking studies; pedestrian standards; walking standards.



Layout and graphics provided by:

