

III. THE SALIDA COMMUNITY AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS

A. MARKET ANALYSIS

Community Profile/Demographic Information

Service Area and Population

The primary service area for this planning area is the City of Salida, and the Town of Poncha Springs, Colorado. Population estimates for 2000 are taken from the U.S. Census, 2005 population estimates are from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and Economic and Planning Systems, published in the Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment report in January of 2007. All population projections for the State of Colorado, the United States, as well as population projections for Salida and Poncha Springs for 2012, are taken from ESRI Business Solutions. Colorado Department of Local Affairs Economic and Planning Systems reported estimated 2005 populations for the City of Salida of 5,333, and Poncha Springs of 570.

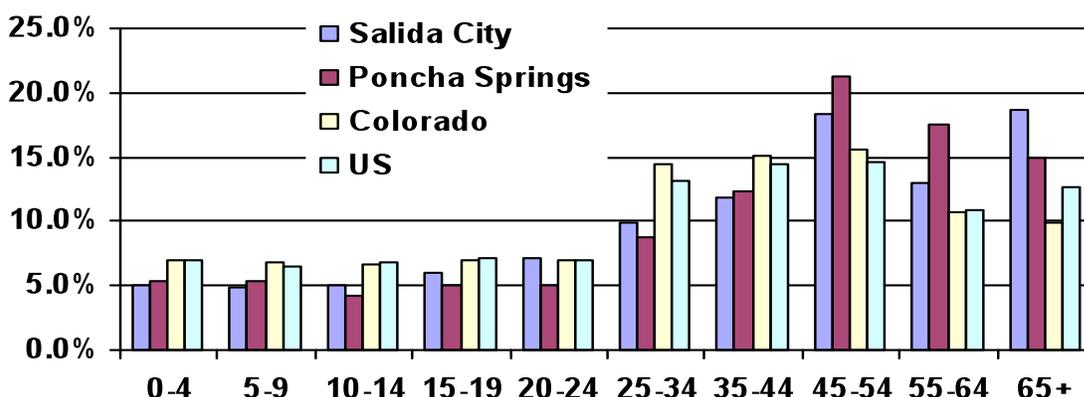
Population, Age Ranges, and Family Information

Age Distribution

The following age breakdown is used to separate the population into age sensitive user groups and to retain the ability to adjust to future age sensitive trends. Population distribution by age for the City of Salida, Poncha Springs, the State of Colorado, and the U.S. are shown in *Figure 1*.

- **Under 5 years:** This group represents users of preschool and tot programs and facilities, and as trails and open space users, are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.
- **5 to 14 years:** This group represents current youth program participants.
- **15 to 24 years:** This group represents teen/young adult program participants moving out of the youth programs and into adult programs. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers.
- **25 to 34 years:** This group represents involvement in adult programming with characteristics of beginning long-term relationships and establishing families.
- **35 to 54 years:** This group represents users of a wide range of adult programming and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters.
- **55 to 64 years:** This group represents users of older adult programming exhibiting the characteristics of approaching retirement or already retired and typically enjoying grandchildren.
- **65 years plus:** Nationally, this group will be increasing dramatically. Current population projections suggest that this group will grow almost 70% in the next 13 years. Programming for this group should positively impact the health of older adults through networking, training and technical assistance, and fundraising. Recreation centers, senior centers, and senior programs can be a significant link in the health care system. This group generally also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

Figure 1: 2007 Population Breakdowns by Age- Salida, Poncha Springs, Colorado, US



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Population Comparisons

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions, Salida and Poncha Springs have fewer persons in the younger age groups compared to the State of Colorado. In fact, Poncha Springs and Salida are lower than the State of Colorado in all age groups less than 45. In the older age groups, Salida and Poncha Springs are significantly higher than the State of Colorado. The largest population group for the State of Colorado and the U.S. is in the 24 to 54 age range. The State and U.S. differ in the 65 and older category. The U.S. has a higher population in this age range than the State although still significantly lower than Poncha Springs and Salida. According to these estimates, it is apparent that Poncha Springs and the City of Salida have populations primarily made up of older adults. Poncha Springs’ largest population is in the 45 to 54 age group while the City of Salida is in the 65 and older age group. These are important elements to take into consideration while looking at the parks and recreation needs of the community.

Gender (2006)

According to ESRI Business Solutions, the 2007 population estimate for Salida is 49.3% males and 50.7% females, for Poncha Springs it is 48.7% males and 51.3% females. The State of Colorado is 50.3% males and 49.7% females.

Race (2006)

Statistics gathered from ESRI Business Solutions provide the race breakdown for Salida, Poncha Springs, and Colorado. As shown in *Table 1*, the race with the largest population is White for all three regions. On average, the White Alone population for the two regions is 20.5% higher than that of the U.S. and 12.2% higher than that of Colorado. Salida has a Hispanic population of 12.3%. Although still lower than the U.S. and State percentages, it is the second largest race population in the area.

Table 1: Race Comparisons for 2007- Salida, Poncha Springs, Colorado, and the U.S.

Race	Salida	Poncha Springs	Colorado	US
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White Alone	91.8%	94.7%	81.1%	72.7%
African American Alone	0.1%	0.0%	3.8%	12.6%
American Indian Alone	1.5%	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander Alone	0.4%	1.5%	3.1%	4.5%
Some Other Race Alone	4.2%	1.3%	9.0%	6.5%
Two or More Races	2.1%	1.7%	3.1%	2.8%
Hispanic/Latino Origin (<i>Any Race</i>)*	12.3%	5.7%	21.4%	15.0%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

*Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. This number reflects the percentage of the total population.

Education

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions, both Salida and Poncha Springs have higher percentages in the “Some College, No Diploma” category than Colorado and the U.S. Both Salida and Poncha Springs have lower percentages in the Associate Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, and Master’s/Professional/Doctorate categories compared to the State and U.S. (Salida has equal percentages as the U.S. in the Associate Degree category). Twenty-one percent of the population of Salida and 15.6% of Poncha Springs’ population has a bachelor’s or master’s degree, compared to 32.7% in Colorado and 24.4% of the U.S. The high percentage of older adults in Salida and Poncha Springs may be part of the reason for the lower education levels, as advanced degrees have become much more common in recent generations.

Table 2: Educational Attainment – 25 Years and Older (2000)

Level of Education Attained	Salida	Poncha Springs	Colorado	US
Less than 9 th Grade	3.9%	5.2%	4.8%	7.5%
9 th -12 th Grade, No Diploma	9.6%	15.0%	8.2%	12.1%
High School Graduate	32.4%	25.7%	23.2%	28.6%
Some College, No Diploma	26.6%	33.6%	24.0%	21.0%
Associate Degree	6.3%	4.9%	7.0%	6.3%
Bachelors Degree	14.8%	11.7%	21.6%	15.5%
Masters/Prof/Doctorate	6.3%	3.9%	11.1%	8.9%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions (2000 U.S. Census Data)

Household Income

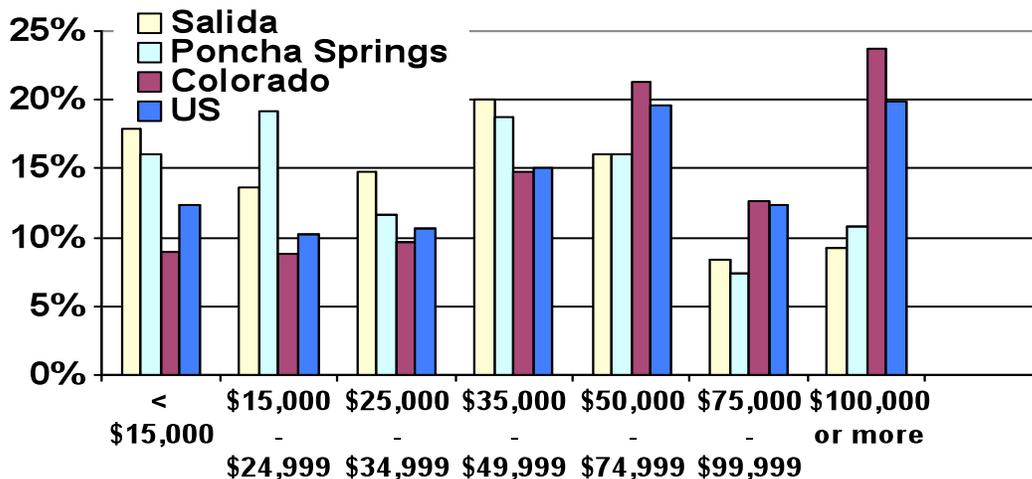
Median household incomes for Salida and Poncha Springs are significantly less than Colorado and the U.S. Likewise, per capita incomes for the two communities are well below Colorado and the U.S. Salida's median household income is 39% lower than the median household income for the State of Colorado and 30% lower than the median for the U.S. It is 31% lower than the state's per capita income and 21% lower than that of the U.S. Poncha Springs is 41% lower than the state's median household income and 30% lower than that of the U.S. Poncha Springs is 32% lower than the state's per capita income and 21% lower than the U.S.

Table 3: Median and Per Capita Income (2007)

	Salida	Poncha Springs	Colorado	US
Median Household Income	\$37,639	\$36,225	\$60,976	\$53,154
Per Capita Income	\$22,157	\$21,557	\$31,684	\$27,916

Compared with the U.S. and Colorado, both Salida and Poncha Springs have a high percentage of the population in lower income categories. Compared with Colorado, Salida has 9.4% more households in the below \$15,000 category and Poncha Springs has 7.7% more in this category. Poncha Springs has the highest percentage of households earning in the \$15,000 to \$24,999 category at 19.1%, followed by 18.1% in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 category. Salida has the highest percentage of households earning in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 category at 20.0%, followed by the \$15,000 to \$24,999 category at 17.8%.

Figure 2: 2007 Household Income Distribution- Salida, Poncha Springs, Colorado, US



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Household Size and Units

Table 4: Housing Units

Housing Units	Salida	Poncha Springs	State of Colorado	United States
Owner Occupied Housing Units	60.2%	64.1%	62.5%	61.3%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	27.5%	16.4%	26.4%	28.8%
Vacant Housing Units	12.3%	19.5%	11.1%	9.9%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions 2007

Employment

Both Poncha Springs and Salida have similar employment percentages when compared to Colorado and the U.S. According to ESRI, 2007 estimates of civilians aged 16 and older, 94.4% in Salida are employed, 93.7% in Poncha Springs, 94.3% in Colorado, and 93.4% in the U.S. The largest percentage of the population works in the services industry (Salida 45.2%, Poncha Springs 43.4%), followed by retail trade (Salida 13.9%, Poncha Springs 16.0%), construction (Salida 10.7%, Poncha Springs 11.4%), and public administration (Salida 7.7%, Poncha Springs 12.5%).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (CO Department of Labor and Employment Economic and Planning Systems) 2005, the industry sector in which the highest percentage of the population of Chaffee County is employed is government (24.9%), followed by accommodation and food services (16.6%), retail trade (15.7%), and construction (8.9%).

Additional Information

Health and Obesity

The United Health Foundation has ranked Colorado 17th in its 2005 State Health Rankings. It was 13th in 2004. The State's biggest strengths include:

- low prevalence of obesity at 16.7 percent
- low rate of cardiovascular deaths
- low percentage of children in poverty
- low rate of cancer deaths

Some of the challenges the State faces include:

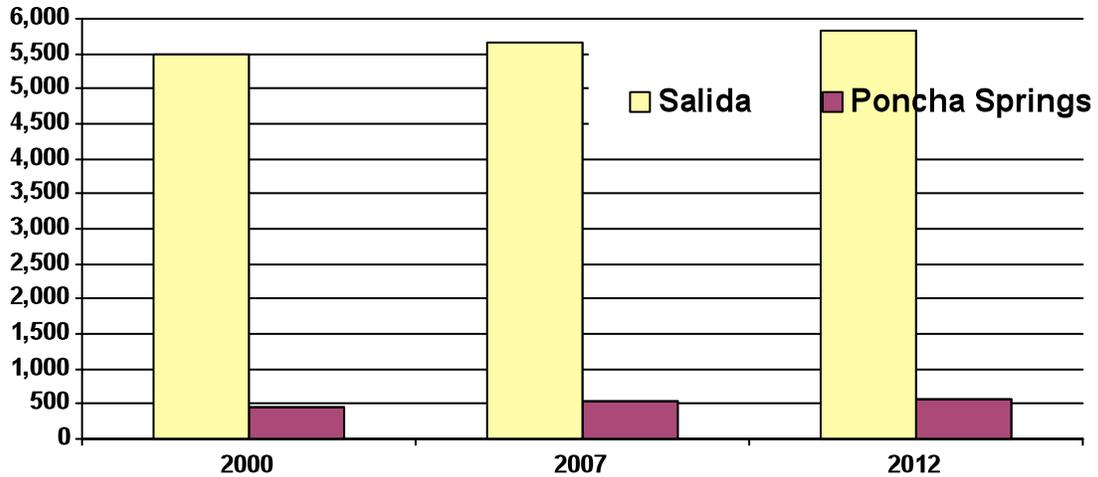
- low per capita public health spending
- limited access to adequate prenatal care
- low immunization coverage

Source: <http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/shr2005/states/Colorado.html>

Population Forecasts

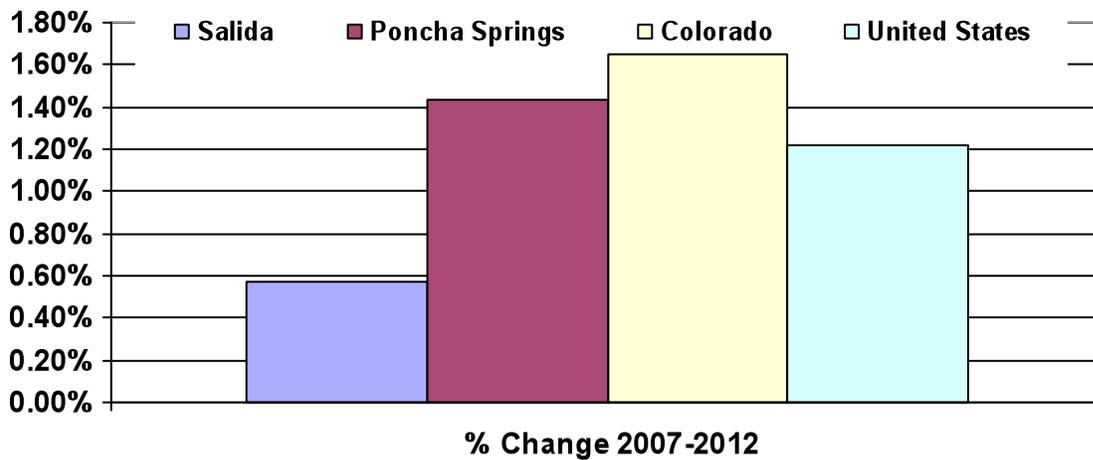
Although we can never know the future with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it for economic reasons. 2000 populations are from the 2000 US Census. 2007 and 2012 projections for Salida, Poncha Springs, Colorado, and the U.S are from ESRI. Poncha Springs is projected to grow at a slightly slower rate (1.43%) annually between 2007 and 2012 than Colorado and the U.S. (1.65% and 1.22% respectively). Salida is projected to experience more modest population growth over the next five years (.57%).

Figure 3: Population Forecasts and Projections



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Figure 4: Projected Annual Rate of Growth 2007-2012



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

B. COLORADO AND NATIONAL TRENDS



Tourism

Colorado Trends

The following trends pertaining to Colorado tourism are taken from the *Colorado Mountain Town Trends* report published in 2004:

- Colorado is perceived as a dream destination and ranks in the top ten places people “would really like visiting,” behind Florida, California, Hawaii and New York.
- In terms of people’s image of sightseeing in Colorado, the largest interest areas are: beautiful scenery 86%, beautiful gardens and parks 71%, wildlife/birds 75%, and interesting small towns and villages 66%.
- Visiting friends and relatives continues to be one of the main reasons for an overnight vacation in Colorado, with one in four trips originating in Colorado.
- Outdoor trips remain popular with visitors, accounting for more than 2.2 million visitors to Colorado in 2004.
- An increasing number (44%) of vacationers are using the internet to plan their vacation.
- Communities have room for improvement in the areas of arts and culture as a visitor attraction and for community residents.

Tourism is a vital cog in Salida’s economy. The City’s location and ample outdoor recreation opportunities and small town feel draw tourists looking for something different than what a “resort community” might offer. In addition, the high level of cost recovery seen by the Hot Springs Pool, can be partially attributed to the high number of tourist visits.

Aging

Colorado Trends

Colorado has the seventh fastest growing aging population in the U.S. In the year 2010, there will be more than 770,000 seniors age 60 and over in Colorado. From the years 2000 - 2010, the numbers of these seniors will increase 39%. Currently, there are about 600 Coloradans 100 years old or older. In 2010, there will be approximately 700 Coloradans 100 years or older.

National Trends

The following are trends related to the aging population in the United States:

- America is aging and it is estimated that by 2010, the median age will be 37 years, and by 2030 the median age will be 39 years.
- The current life expectancy at birth in the United States is 77.9 years.
- There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that aging has more to do with lifestyles and health behaviors than genetics.

Seniors control more than 70 percent of the disposable income and have more than \$1.6 trillion in spending power, according to Packaged Facts, a division of MarketResearch.com, which publishes market intelligence on several consumer industries.

Seniors also are the fastest growing segment of health club memberships, according to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA).

The top three sports activities for persons 65 years and older in 2004 were: exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming. (NSGA)

Baby Boomers are made up of adults born between 1946 and 1964. This generation makes up approximately 25% of the total population in the United States. The following are trends of this generation:

- According to International, Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association data for 2003, 91% of Boomers feel the need to take measures to ensure their future health.
- Also, Boomers claim 37.6% of all health club memberships.
- 80% of Boomers in a study by American Association of Retired Persons believe they will continue to work either full- or part-time into their retirement years.

The City of Salida population has a higher percent age of “seniors” and “Baby Boomers” than the State of Colorado or the nation. Salida has become a prime second home owner location as these age groups begin planning retirement from the work force. The new aging population is more active and seeks more recreational opportunities than previous generations and will create new challenges and opportunities for the City.



Athletic Recreation

Colorado Trends

Colorado’s largest interest areas in terms of Sports and Recreation are: hiking/backpacking 83%, mountain climbing 85%, camping and mountain biking 76%, rafting 73%, hunting 72%, fishing 66% and walking/strolling 61%. Salida offers all of these opportunities in abundance.

National Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association Survey on sports participation found the top ten activities ranked by total participation included many outdoor activities that are consistent with the Colorado Trends mentioned above. The top five activities are: walking, swimming, bicycle riding, hiking, and fishing. Additionally, the following active, organized, or skill development activities still remain popular: field sports, skateboarding and inline skating, golf, aerobic exercise and working out, yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, and Martial Arts.

Youth Sports

- According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), six of the 15 most popular activities for children are team sports.
- Participation in out-of-school activities and programs offer support for youth and working families; and benefit the youth socially, emotionally, and academically. (*trendSCAN*)
- According to the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association, health clubs could play a key role in providing the missing fitness and exercise in students' lives. Organized, after-school activities, club sports, and programs targeted to school-age children in communities around the country could fill the fitness void that is growing wider in United States schools.
- Specific offerings for kid's fitness are slowly increasing in health and fitness facilities. (*IDEA*)
- In 2005 the top three activities that youth ages 12 to 17 years old participated in are: basketball, bicycle riding, and fishing. (*NSGA*)
- For youth 7 to 11 years of age, bicycle riding has the highest number of participants. The fastest growing activity by change in participation rate is skateboarding (219%), followed by snowboarding (91%) between 1995 and 2005. (*NSGA*)

Meeting the recreational needs of the youth in the City and surrounding areas is a priority of the City. It will be important for the City to define its role in providing youth activities and seek partnerships in those areas it cannot or does not want to do.

Aquatics

National Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association, swimming ranked second in terms of participation in 2005. Outdoor pools in Colorado are only open for approximately three months out of the year. There is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional amenities like "spray pads" are becoming increasingly popular as well.

Natural Environments and Open Space

Outdoor Recreation and Wildlife

National Trends

- Eighty-two million United States residents, about 39% of the population 16 years and older, participated in wildlife-related recreation activities in 2001.
- Since 1995 fishing and camping have had the highest number of participants (*NSGA*)
- The most popular outdoor recreation activities are camping and hiking. The growth areas are kayaking, snowboarding, and wakeboarding.
- More wildlife related participants are between the ages 35 to 54 years than any other age category.
- The top three active outdoor recreation activities in terms of participation are: wildlife watching, bicycle-based and trail-based. (*OIA*)

Nature Programming

National Trends

In April 2007, the NRPA sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public park and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature. A summary of the results follow:

- 68 % of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61% have nature-based facilities. More than 30% of public agencies offer no nature programming, and slightly less than 40% have no nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90% indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies listed funding as most important followed by presence of wildlife and community support.



Trails and Specialty Parks

National Trends

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home, according to a 2002 survey of recent homebuyers by the National Association of Home Builders and National Association of Realtors. (*Pack & Schunuel*)
- Two of the emerging specialty parks include skate parks and dog parks. (*van der Smissen et al.*)
- The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association estimates there are about 1,000 skateboard parks in the United States.

The citizen survey identified expansion of the trails as the top priority of the City.

Facilities

National Trends

Regarding Recreation Facilities, the following national trends are relevant to the City of Salida. The current national trend is toward a “one-stop” facility to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the U.S. are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Amenities that are becoming “typical” as opposed to alternative include:

- Multi-purpose, large regional centers (65,000 to 125,000+ sq. ft.) for all ages/abilities with all amenities in one place. This design saves on staff costs, encourages retention and participation, and saves on operating expenses due to economies of scale.
- Leisure and therapeutic pools
- Interactive game rooms
- Nature centers/outdoor recreation and education centers
- Regional playground for all ages of youth
- In-line hockey and skate parks
- Partnerships with private providers or other government agencies
- Indoor walking tracks
- Themed décor

Amenities that are still considered “alternative” but increasing in popularity:

- Climbing walls
- BMX tracks and Indoor Soccer
- Cultural art facilities
- Green design techniques and certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). A recent BCA survey indicated that 52% of the recreation-industry survey respondents indicated they were willing to pay more for green design knowing that it would significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants.

The citizen survey identified increasing indoor recreation opportunities as a top priority for the City. The City is currently conducting a feasibility study that would expand the Hot Springs Pool to include some additional amenities.

Recreation and Park Administration

National Trends

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Agencies are hiring consultants for master planning, feasibility, and strategic/policy plans.
- Recreation programmers and administrators are involved at the beginning of the planning process.
- Information technology allows for tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often done by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.
- Organization is structured away from specific geographic units into agency-wide sections for athletics, youth/teen sports, seniors, facilities, parks, planning, etc.

Master Planning Process

National Trends

Most parks and recreation master planning and other long-range planning processes consider a 20 year, or longer, horizon to assure an adequate vision to move from existing conditions to a desired future. However, the plan itself is most often written for a five year period requiring a major update at that time interval. In this age of information, mobility, and ever changing advancements in technology, it is impossible with any acceptable degree of reliability to predict demographics, interests, and how technology will change the way

we live work and play, much beyond the five year timeframe. The five year timeframe also coincides with a typical timeframe for an agency's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Most parks and recreation master planning and other long-range planning processes rely on the mission and vision statements developed as a result of the development of the plan and its public process to guide and drive the facilities, programs and operation of the organization.

Traditional master planning efforts relied heavily on national level of service standards for the provision of parks and facilities (number of acres or number of facilities/1000 population). Due to unique circumstances in most communities (including but not limited to, things such as climate, other providers, exposure to trends, demographics, etc.) today's master planning efforts rely much less on pre-determined standards, and much more on fresh citizen input. This input is often gathered through community surveys that reach current users, as well as non-users of park and recreation systems, supplemented by community open houses, focus groups and stakeholder interviews.

Early master planning efforts did a good job identifying the initial one-time costs associated with capital improvements. Today's master plans consider the ongoing operating costs and potential revenue generation of equal importance. In addition, plans are identifying traditional and alternative funding sources for projects.

C. PUBLIC INPUT

Community and Stakeholder Input

During the week of May 29 -31, 2007, numerous meetings were conducted with public focus groups, various stakeholders, City Council Members, and representatives of the City of Salida. Some key stakeholders who participated included representatives from:

- Salida area Parks, Open Space and Trails (SPOT)
- Greater Arkansas River Association
- Chaffee County
- Salida Tennis Association
- Poncha Springs
- Local Churches
- Chaffee Ball and Bat Association
- Salida Soccer

In addition, information gathering and staff interviews were held with Parks and Recreation and City staff to identify key organizational and planning issues.

The City of Salida invited a wide variety of organizations to participate in the focus groups. Participants were asked a series of questions and contributed to a group discussion about their organization's current relationship with the City, as well as their perspectives on the challenges, strengths, and opportunities facing the City. The following is a summary of the general feedback provided in these focus groups.

Focus Group/Public Meeting Findings

In order to hear from as many residents as possible, City personnel arranged several opportunities to gather input. Highlights of this process include:

- A total of five, one and one half hours focus group meetings
- Focus groups consisted of 36 people representing approximately 28 organizations and special interest groups
- Public meeting attendance consisted of over 20 residents and stakeholders
- A presentation to City Council to describe the planning process and to seek their input was also conducted.

The consultant facilitated the discussions and led the participants through a **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis** and a series of questions to gain input on a broad range of issues about or affecting the parks and recreation services. The following are summaries of participant responses.

For a summarized listing of the categories that were identified as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats through the exercise, please review the information in **Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8**. A detailed list of focus group and public input can be found in *Appendix A*.

Strengths

Without a doubt, residents of Salida value the majestic views and outdoor recreation opportunities that surround them. This value is demonstrated by the high level of involvement citizens have in parks and recreation issues. Focus group participants also identified the parks as major strength along with existing park amenities, trails and programming offered by the City.



Table 5: Strengths of Salida Parks and Recreation

Strengths	
City Characteristics	Beautiful surroundings
	Arkansas River
	Surrounding public lands
	Friendly place to live
	Involved citizens in parks and recreation issues
Parks and Recreation	Great parks especially Alpine, Riverside & Centennial
	Parks maintained well despite budget constraints
	Expanding trail system
	Variety of programming
	Lighted ballfields
	Special events
	Hot Springs Pool

Weaknesses

As with many communities in the State of Colorado and across the country, funding to provide City services that include parks and recreation is limited. Being a “Statutory” City, funding issues are compounded by the limit of the amount of taxation (approved by voters) the City can seek to create revenues for expansion and improvement of services. Additionally there is resistance to any additional taxation. Another weakness identified by focus group participants was the disconnection between City and the recreational needs of the community. Not having a defined parks and recreation mission and vision was identified as contributing to this issue. The Hot Springs Pool was identified as a strength but also identified as a weakness. Recent water temperature problems (not hot) and internal physical conditions of the facility are sources of frustration for many residents.

Table 6: Weaknesses of Salida Parks and Recreation

Weaknesses	
City Issues	Lack of Funding
	No more tax mentality
	No stated goals for preservation
	Railroad
	City is not Home Rule
	Disconnect between City and organizations, special interests
	Hwy 50 is barrier
Parks and Recreation	Providing for a much larger service area than Salida
	Unresolved or over demand for certain activities
	Aging and rundown park amenities
	Inconsistent access to park restrooms
	Lack of quality playground equipment
	Lack of a defined mission and vision
	Dog Issues
	Hot Springs Pool

Opportunities

To combat the limitation of being a “Statutory ” city, the City of Salida has an opportunity to become a Home Rule city which would allow them to have greater control over increasing revenues through increased taxation (by voter approval). The existing City-owned land such as the hot springs source, parcels at or near Marvin Parks, and newly purchased Vandaveer property, provide opportunities for expanding parks and recreation opportunities. With the enthusiasm and passion residents have for parks and recreation needs and their willingness to volunteer their time, the City has a tremendous resource available to them. Coordinating and prioritizing these efforts through a parks and recreation commission or advisory board exist as an opportunity for the City.

Table 7: Opportunities for the Salida Community

Opportunities	
City Wide	Become a Home Rule City
	Ability to demand more from developers
	Hot Springs resort on property at water source
	Coordinated efforts with agencies, organizations and special interest groups
Parks & Recreation	New opportunities at Vandaveer property
	Interconnecting trail system
	Coordinated efforts with agencies, organizations and special interest groups
	Creation of a parks and recreation commission or advisory board
	Consolidation of parks and recreation operations
	Available land at Marvin Park (behind athletic fields and across river)

Threats

When posed with the question about threats that should be considered, there were very few mentioned that had not been mentioned from previous questions. Lack of communication and collaborative effort between the City, agencies, organizations and individuals is seen as a major threat to progress. Additionally, demographic changes in the community, a fragile economy and control of future development were seen as threats by focus group participants.

Table 8: Threats to the Salida Community

Threats	
City Wide	Lack of communication and collaborative efforts
	Growing 2 nd homeowner demographic
	Real estate values are high but wages are low
	County development strains City services
	Fragile economy
	Development changing access to public lands
Parks and Recreation	Fear of not enough of renewable volunteer base

Goals for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Focus group participants were asked: What should be the goals for this Master Plan? or What needs to be the result of the plan and process in order to consider this project a success? Participants primarily expressed that there are high expectations for this plan and that it is providing realistic priorities and an Action Plan for parks and recreation.

For a complete listing of the goals that were identified for the Master Plan, please review the information in *Table 9*.

Table 9: Goals for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Goals for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan	
Feasible and Realistic	Create priorities for parks and recreation improvements and development
Master Plan	Implementable action plan
	Maximizing existing and potential partnerships
	Maximizing existing facilities
	Long range planning
	Stop band-aid solutions

Park and Recreation Priority Voting Exercise

At the end of each stakeholder meeting and public meeting, participants were asked to participate in a voting exercise that would determine their top priorities for:

- New Facilities and/or Improvements
- Outdoor Amenities and Facilities
- Recreation Programming

Table 10 shows the top choices “by order of importance” how participants prioritized their needs and the number of votes each item received.

Table 10: Prioritization of Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programming

New Facilities or Improvements (Choose top Two)		Outdoor Amenities or Facilities (Choose Top Three Priorities)		Programming (Choose Top Three Priorities)	
Bike/Walking Trails	31	Restrooms	22	Adult Sport & Fitness	26
Indoor Active Rec.	21	Natural Areas	18	Youth Sport & Fitness	25
Open Space Areas	15	Playground Equip	16	Special Events	19
BMX Course	13	Walking Loop	12	Youth non-sport	12
Tennis Courts	11	Public Art	12	Non school day	10
Dog Parks	11	Changing Area	9	Senior activities	8
Skate Park Exp	9	Tree Maintenance	6	Ice rink	8

New Facilities and Improvements

Bike/walking trails rank as the top priority. This corresponds to the many comments that it is the preference of the community to use non motorized means of transportation. Furthermore, exercise walking ranks as the number one fitness activity people participate in nationally. Indoor active recreation space ranked second in importance. This is probably due to fact that there are very few indoor active recreation opportunities in the City.

Outdoor Amenities or Facilities

Restrooms ranked as the highest priority. Needing access to restrooms is very important to this outdoor minded community. Natural areas and playgrounds followed in importance.

Programming

Adult sport and fitness rank as the highest priority. This reflects what was heard frequently in that there are very few organized opportunities for adults and very few indoor fitness providers in the City. Youth programming ranked the second highest in priority for this category as keeping youths busy and out of trouble is a concern. Special events ranked third demonstrating the understanding that special events bring the community together and tourists into the City. Non-school programming ranked fourth once again showing the importance of keeping kids occupied and out of trouble.

D. STAFF INPUT

As part of the input process, key staff members gathered to provide internal insight into the status of overall recreation services provided by the City and by others in the community. Staff members included:

- City Manager
- City Finance Director
- Public Works Director (Park Maintenance)
- Aquatics and Recreation Director
- Recreation Coordinator

A summary of staff input follows.

What are the department goals?

- Enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Salida
- Need to develop a consistent mission so everybody is heading in the right direction
- Need to determine what our core services are
- Programming may attract visitors but the citizens of Salida are the priority
- Keep things clean and maintained

What is working well?

- Park turf is well maintained
- Trail planning and expansion
- Some of the parks have great amenities (Riverside – band shell, Alpine – new playground, Centennial – pavilion)
- Increased participation in recreation programs
- Perception that departments work well together

What is not working well?

- Some disconnect between departments
- Low staffing levels
- Controlling vandalism
- Small town feeling of entitlement – “don’t want rules”
- Low budget levels due to being a “Statutory” City and not a “Home Rule” City
- High turn over in city staff has created some mistrust
- Some user groups their feel needs are not being met

How can this plan help?

- Plan needs to provide guidance for the community and be a document that can be referred to as City leadership changes
- Plan needs to be implementable
- Plan must have community “buy-in”

Summary of Staff Input

City staff is dedicated to doing the best they can with the resources they have. However, limited budgets mainly allow them only to address the most critical issues. Despite these limitations, City staff has done very well to provide services, considering the circumstances. However, it is recognized that unless more funding and staffing is acquired, the current level of service will not be able to be maintained, or more importantly, increased.

The lack of an understanding of what their mission is and what the core services they should provide also create conflicts between departments and how funding should be allocated. Creating a mission that provides consistent direction will be key in the successful implementation of this plan.

E. STATISTICALLY-VALID SURVEY FINDINGS

RRC associates, in conjunction with GreenPlay, administered a statistically-valid Needs Assessment Survey. A total of 3500 surveys were mailed with a return of 535, representing a respectable and valid response rate of approximately 15 percent.

In appreciation of those who responded and in the effort to increase participation in the survey, recipients were informed that they would be eligible for several prizes including Salida Hot Springs Pool passes.

Key Findings

Overall survey respondents mirrored focus group participants in how strong they feel about the about the leisure and recreation opportunities that currently exist and what should be expanded or developed in the future. Some general key findings include:

- 86% of the households who responded has visited or used at least one City of Salida parks, trails, recreation facilities or program in the last 12 months
- On average respondents used trails 58 times a year, Riverside Park 24 times a year, and the Salida Hot Springs Pool 15 times a year
- 52% or more of the respondents rated all of the parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs as important to the community
- Teen activity areas ranked as the most important indoor recreation facility that should be added, expanded or improved
- Paved recreation trails ranked as the most important outdoor recreation facility that should be added, expanded or improved
- Restroom maintenance and trash pick up and removal ranked as the most important maintenance priorities for parks, athletic fields and trails
- 60% of City of Salida residents would “definitely” or “probably” vote yes on a increase in property tax for building and operating recreation facilities

Note: Detailed Survey results can be found in Appendix B

Meeting the Community Needs

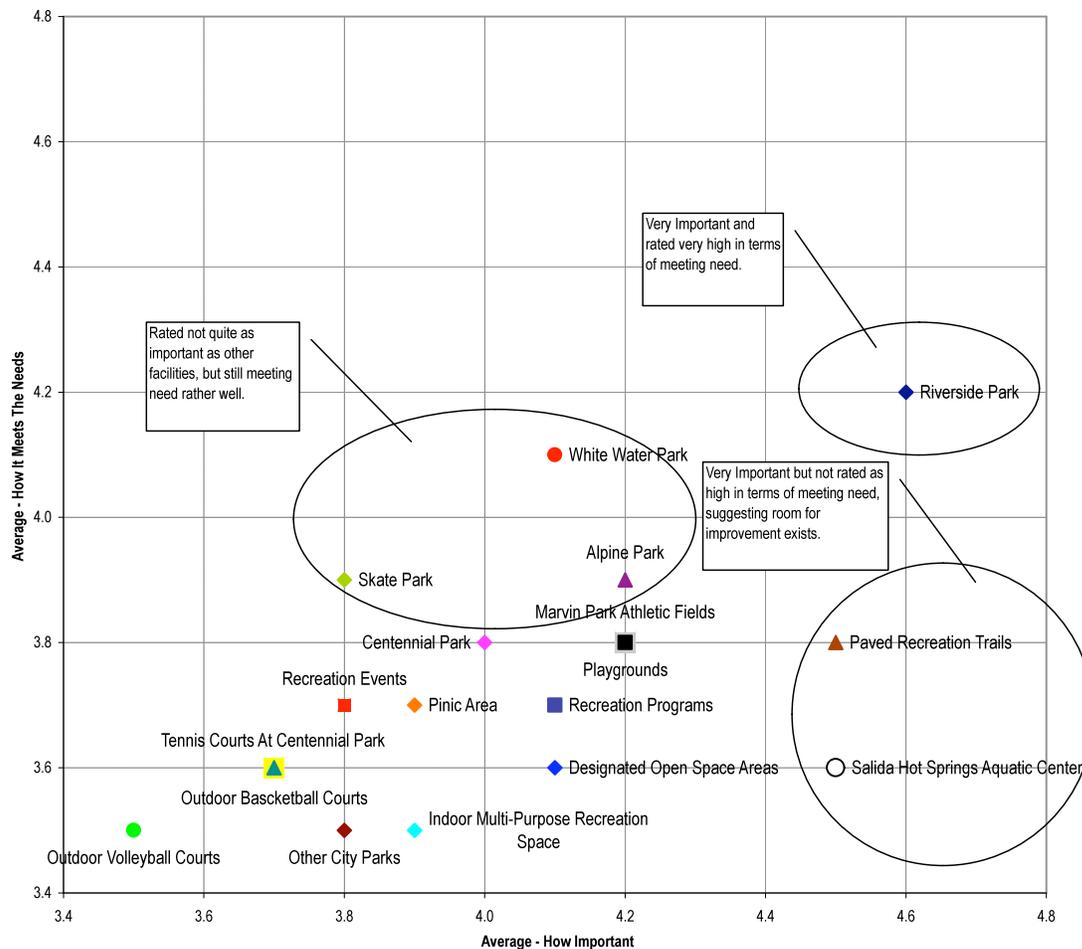
According to the respondents, most of the larger or major recreation facilities operated by the City of Salida are meeting the needs of the community. Respondents felt that facilities such as Riverside Park (85%), the Whitewater Park (62%), Alpine Park (64%), the Skate Park (56%), Centennial Park (56%) and Paved Recreation Trails (61%) are meeting the needs of the community.

Respondents felt that facilities were meeting 50% or less of the communities needs included the Salida Hot Springs Pool (50%), Marvin Park Athletic Fields (49%), Tennis Courts (41%), Recreation Programs (47%) and Indoor Multi-Purpose Recreation Space (36%) to name a few.

Importance vs. Meeting the Community Needs

According to the survey respondents, all City-owned and operated parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs have importance to the community. However, some facilities such as Riverside Park ranks high in both meeting the community needs and importance, while the Salida Hot Springs Pool and Paved Recreation Trails rank high in importance but lower in meeting the community’s needs. The Importance-Performance matrix in *Figure 5* shows how all facilities rated in these categories.

Figure 5: Survey Importance-Performance Matrix



Funding for Development and Maintenance

A far greater number of respondents from the City of Salida felt that “Too little” (36%) was being spent when developing new parks, recreation facilities and trails than those feeling that spending is “About right” (20%) or “Too much” (6%). There were also a high number of respondents who did not know whether spending was at the right levels or not (38%). Respondents living outside the city limits (Poncha Springs residents and other non City residents) lean towards saying the City is spending “Too little” (21% and 36% respectively) or “About right” (16% and 19% respectively). The balance of the respondents (58% and 40% respectively) said they “Don’t know” if spending levels are correct or not.

When asked to determine if maintenance spending levels were correct, City of Salida residents felt, to a greater degree, that spending levels were “About right” (46%) but also showed concern that spending levels were “Too little” (27%) for maintenance. Still many City residents “Don’t know” (22%) if spending levels for maintenance are the right levels or not. A very small percentage felt that spending levels were “Too much” (4%).

Respondents living outside of the City limits responded closely to what City residents said but with a higher number saying they “Don’t know” if the spending level for maintenance is at the right levels or not.

New Taxes, Special District and Home Rule

Three questions were asked to determine respondents’ opinions on potential funding options to support the development of recreation facilities. The questions dealt with increasing property taxes, the creation of a Special District and moving the City from a Statutory to a Home Rule City. The questions dealing with increasing property taxes and going to Home Rule would be determined by Salida City Residents while the question dealing with the creation of a Special District would be determined by both residents in and out of the Salida City Limits. A summary of the findings of the questions are:

- Increase in Property Tax
 - 60% of City of Salida residents would “definitely vote yes” (28%) or “probably vote yes” (32%) to an increase in property taxes
 - 9% of City of Salida residents would probably vote no to an increase in property taxes
 - 14% of City of Salida residents would definitely vote no to an increase in property taxes
 - The “definitely vote yes” to “definitely vote no” **voter ratio** is exactly 2.0 to 1. Most often a voter ratio of 2.0 or higher in preliminary polling leads to a successful referendum
 - 17% are uncertain of how they would vote to an increase in property taxes
- Creation of a Special District
 - Of the City of Salida residents, 42% would vote yes, 23% would vote no and 34% did not know how they would vote. The “definitely vote yes” to “definitely vote no” **voter ratio** for a creation of Special District is 1.82 to 1.
 - Of Poncha Springs residents, 32% would vote yes, 42% would vote no and 26% did not know how they would vote. The “definitely vote yes” to “definitely vote no” **voter ratio** for a creation of Special District is .76 to 1.

- Of the other respondents, 39% would vote yes, 26% would vote no and 35% did not know how they would vote. The “definitely vote yes” to “definitely vote no” **voter ratio** for a creation of Special District is 1.5 to 1.
- Home Rule
 - 56% of City of Salida residents definitely would vote yes (20%) or probably vote yes (36%) to going to Home Rule
 - 4% of City of Salida residents would probably vote no to going to Home Rule
 - 7% of City of Salida residents would definitely vote no to going to Home Rule
 - 33% are uncertain of how they would vote on going to Home Rule
 - The “definitely vote yes” to “definitely vote no” **voter ratio** of going to Home Rule is 2.85 to 1

The Importance of Recreation Services in Comparison to Other City Services

Survey respondents were asked to allocate \$100 towards City services based on their personal priorities. Parks and recreation ranked 4th and 5th respectively in spending behind other City services. The results are as follows:

- \$27 - Sidewalks/Street Maintenance
- \$18 - Fire & Emergency Services
- \$17 - Law Enforcement
- \$13 - Parks, Trails and Open Space
- \$10 - Recreation / Aquatics
- \$9 - Code Enforcement
- \$7 - Public Administration/Planning

Importance of Indoor Recreation Facilities to be Added, Expanded or Improved

Respondents were asked to determine what the most important indoor recreation facilities were to be added, expanded or improved. Not surprisingly the top indoor facilities identified focused around what the City currently does not operate on its own. The top five are:

- Teen activity area (34%)
- Indoor walk/jog track (30%)
- Weight room & cardio fitness facility (27%)
- Multi-purpose gymnasium (23%)
- Multi-purpose space (23%)



Importance of Outdoor Recreation Facilities to be Added, Expanded or Improved

Respondents were asked to determine what the most important outdoor recreation facilities were to be added, expanded or improved. Not surprisingly trails (paved and unpaved) ranked the highest. This is common among surveys done across the county. The top five are:

- Paved recreational trails (31%)

- Unpaved trails (28%)
- Open space/natural areas (28%)
- Outdoor swimming pool (23%)
- Dog park (19%)

Recreation Programs

Participation levels are high in individual activities such as hiking, biking and skiing which reflects the environment the respondents live in. Special events also rank high in participation along with cultural arts programs and leisure and fitness swimming. Participation in athletic leagues, youth swim lessons and golf rounded out the top activities respondents participate in.

The programs identified as the highest in participation also were identified as program areas that need to be expanded or added. Additionally, more general education classes were identified as a need. All other program areas showed about the same amount of need for expansion, improvement or additional offerings.

Maintenance

During the public input process (focus groups and public meetings) participants express frustration over restroom availability, operation hours and cleanliness. So it is not surprising that restroom maintenance along with litter control rank as the top maintenance priorities. Turf care rated as a lower priority but this may be due to the fact that respondents don't see this as an issue as park turf is already maintained at a high level.

Most Important Concerns for the City of Salida

To get an overall look at what the priorities should be for the City in regards to Salida Parks and Recreation facilities, respondents were asked to identify what their top three concerns were. The priorities were identified as:

- More trails
- Additional indoor recreation facilities
- Awareness of programs
- Better pedestrian/bike access
- More/better restrooms

Summary of Public Input

The results of the public input process should provide a base for decision making when determining future recreational needs for the community. For the most part, the survey results were consistent with what was learned in the focus groups and public meetings. Trails and indoor recreation opportunities ranked as the highest priority for new facilities. Restrooms ranked high as a park amenities need. Recreation programs differed slightly but were primary focused around fitness and special events in both the survey and focus/public meetings.

In some cases, focus group participants came to voice a need for a specific facility or activity such as tennis or youth sports. The survey did not always agree with their needs but that does not mean these areas are not important to the community. Proper facilities and

program development could be a catalyst in creating interest in those recreation activities that ranked lower in need or importance.

Salida residents seem willing to explore options such as increasing property taxes or becoming a Home Rule City to increase funding for leisure and recreation opportunities. Should the City choose to move in this direction it will be important to have a clear vision of what funds will be used for in order to have community support. Salida residents also seem open to the idea of a Special District as a way to fund and expand leisure and recreation opportunities. However, survey respondents from outside the Salida City limits seemed less receptive to this idea.