Erie Community Park
Credit: Town of Erie

Connecting YOU to FUN Playbook

2025 Erie Parks & Recreation PROST Strategic Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1: Introduction 9

1.1. Project Overview 10
1.1.1. Purpose of the Playbook 10
1.1.2. Key Objectives of the Playbook 10
1.1.3. How to Use This Document 10

1.2. Planning Process 12
1.2.1. Project Timeline 12
1.2.2. Community Input 12
1.2.3. Needs Assessment Report 13

1.3. Mission & Vision 14
1.3.1. Mission Statement 14
1.3.2. Vision Statement 14

1.4. Playbook Goals 15
1.4.1. Goal 1: Equitable Access 16
1.4.2. Goal 2: Stewardship of Open Lands 16
1.4.3. Goal 3: Connected System 16
1.4.4. Goal 4: Community Identity 17
1.4.5. Goal 5: Fiscal Sustainability 17
1.4.6. Goal 6: Future Growth Resiliency 17

2: Community Values & Preferences 19

2.1. Community Engagement Plan (CEP) 20

2.2. Community Engagement Events and Initiatives 22
2.2.1. Community Questionnaire 22
2.2.2. Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Group Meetings 22
2.2.3. Community Open House 24
2.2.4. Public Engagement Events 26
2.2.5. Online Outreach and Communication Tools 27
2.2.6. Other Meetings and Presentations 27

2.3. Community Values & Top Preferences 28

3: Existing Conditions 33

3.1. Context, History, & Culture 34
3.1.1. Regional Context 34
3.1.2. Community History and Heritage 34
3.1.3. Schofield Farm Open Space 35
3.1.4. Wise Homestead Open Space 35

3.2. Existing Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Facilities 36
3.2.1. Key Takeaways 36
3.2.2. Existing PROST Facilities 38
3.2.3. Parks & Levels of Service (LOS) 40
3.2.4. Open Space and Levels of Service (LOS) 42
3.2.5. Trails 44
3.2.6. Future Land Use 46
3.2.7. Walkability 46
3.2.8. Trail Access 48
3.2.9. Potential Gap Areas 50
3.2.10. Recreation Facilities & Level of Service 52

3.3. Existing Recreation Facilities and Programs 54
3.3.1. Key Takeaways 54

3.4. Operations & Funding 56
3.4.1. Key Takeaways 56

4: Future Needs 59
4.1. Population Growth & Demographic Trends 60
4.1.1. Population Growth 60
4.1.2. Age Distribution 60
4.1.3. Household Growth 60
4.1.4. Household Income & Expenditures 60
4.1.5. Implications for Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails 61
4.2. Future Budget and Funding Source Implications 62
4.2.1. Park and Recreation Facilities Costs 62
4.2.2. Park and Open Space Land Acquisition Costs 63
4.2.3. Trail Development Costs 64
4.2.4. Maintenance and Operations Needs 64
5: Recommendations 67
5.1. Parks & Recreation Facilities 68
5.1.1. Recommendations 68
5.2. Open Space & Trails 70
5.2.1. Recommendations 70
5.3. Recreation Programs and Resources 71
5.3.1. Recommendations 71
5.4. Operations and Funding 74
5.4.1. Recommendations 74
5.5. Cultural Elements 84
5.5.1. Recommendations 84
5.5.2. Overall PROST Map 86
6: Implementation Plan 89
6.1. Parks & Recreation Facilities 90
6.2. Open Space & Trails 90
6.3. Recreation Programs & Resources 91
6.4. Operations & Funding 92
6.5. Cultural Elements 94
6.6. Action Plan 94
6.7. Conclusion 108
7: Appendices 111
Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report 111
Appendix B: Full Size PROST Maps 111

Figures

Figure 1. Needs Assessment Report Recommendations Process 13
Figure 2. Existing Facilities Map 39
Figure 3. Existing Parks Map 41
Figure 4. Existing Open Space Map 43
Figure 5. Existing and Future Trails Map 45
Figure 6. Walkability Map 47
Figure 7. Trail Access Map 49
Figure 8. Potential Gap Areas Map 51
Figure 9. Overall PROST Map 87

Tables

Table 1. Recommended Land Acquisition Criteria 76
Table 2. Available Grants (2025) 83
Table 3. Action Plan: Parks and Recreation Facilities 96
Table 4. Action Plan: Open Space and Trails 98
Table 5. Action Plan: Recreation Programs and Resources 100
Table 6. Action Plan: Operations and Funding 1 102
Table 7. Action Plan: Operations and Funding 2 104
Table 8. Action Plan: Cultural Elements 106

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Erie Community Center
Credit: Town of Erie

Therapeutic Recreation programming
Credit: Town of Erie

1: Introduction

The Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) 'Connecting YOU to Fun' Playbook serves as a strategic guide to enhance, expand, and sustain Erie's parks, recreation, open space, and trails system. It provides a clear roadmap for decision-making and investment over the next decade to ensure a balanced approach to growth, accessibility, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.

1.1. Project Overview

1.1.1. Purpose of the Playbook

The purpose of the Playbook is to guide the next decade of PROST development. It is an update to the 2016 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Strategic Master Plan. With Erie's rapid growth, this plan ensures high-quality services, balanced distribution of amenities, and strategic planning for operations, maintenance, staffing, and funding.

This effort aligns with, and builds upon, other key Town plans, including:

- 2016 PROST Strategic Master Plan
- 2019 Erie Trails and Open Space Wayfinding Master Plan
- 2024 Erie Economic Market Analysis
- 2024 Erie Public Art and Placemaking Plan
- 2024 Parks and Recreation Community Survey
- 2024 Town of Erie Code of Ordinances
- 2024 Town of Erie Comprehensive Plan
- 2025 Performing Arts Feasibility Study

1.1.2. Key Objectives of the Playbook

"Objectives" are actionable items that are intended to help guide the outcome of the project. The Key Objectives of the Playbook are:

Guide Future Development
Establish priorities for parks, trails, and open space expansion.

Ensure Equity & Accessibility
Provide recreation opportunities for all residents.

Enhance Community Identity
Incorporate public art, historic preservation, and placemaking.

Support Sustainable Funding
Identify long-term funding strategies and partnerships.

Foster Community Engagement
Encourage public input and collaboration in decision-making.

1.1.3. How to Use This Document

This Playbook serves as a guiding framework for Erie's future. It is intended for a broad range of users, including local government officials, developers, and residents who have a stake in Erie's future.

Residents & Stakeholders

Erie's residents and stakeholders can reference the plan to understand how their Town will develop over time. It encourages public engagement by providing a transparent roadmap for future decisions on parks, trails, open spaces, and infrastructure.

Town Leadership & Staff

The Town Council, Planning and Development and the Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) use the plan to guide decision-making, set priorities, and allocate resources. The plan informs policy updates, zoning regulations, and capital improvement projects to align with the Town's long-term goals.

Developers & Investors

Businesses, real estate developers, and infrastructure planners refer to the plan to ensure their projects align with Erie's vision for sustainable growth, transportation connectivity, and community enhancement. It provides clear expectations regarding **land use, design standards, and open space preservation.**

This Playbook will serve as a living document, evolving to meet Erie's needs while maintaining a clear vision for the future.

1.2. Planning Process

1.2.1. Project Timeline

The Playbook is developed through a collaborative process involving community input, data analysis, and alignment with national standards like the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) CAPRA accreditation.

Project Initiation
(Nov. 2024 - Feb. 2025)

Needs Assessment, Exploration, & Ideas
(Nov. 2024 - April 2025)

Draft - Final Plan Formation
(April 2025 - June 2025)

Plan Adoption
(Aug. 2025 - Sept. 2025)

1.2.2. Community Input

Community outreach and engagement plays a critical role in shaping the PROST Playbook recommendations. Input gathered as part of the community engagement and outreach efforts ensures that the Playbook reflects community values and priorities. This input will inform the Playbook recommendations, ensuring a balanced and equitable approach to PROST development.

1.2.3. Needs Assessment Report

The Playbook is supported by a comprehensive Needs Assessment Report, or Appendix A of this document.

The Needs Assessment Report (Report) provides a comprehensive evaluation of existing PROST facilities and programs, identifies current and future needs, and highlights opportunities for growth. It serves as a data-driven foundation to guide decision-making and ensure that the final plan aligns with both community priorities and future trends.

The purpose of the Report is to establish an understanding of the current PROST system and its capacity to meet the evolving needs of the community. These components work together to inform the overall direction and initial recommendations of the PROST Playbook, as shown in Figure 1.

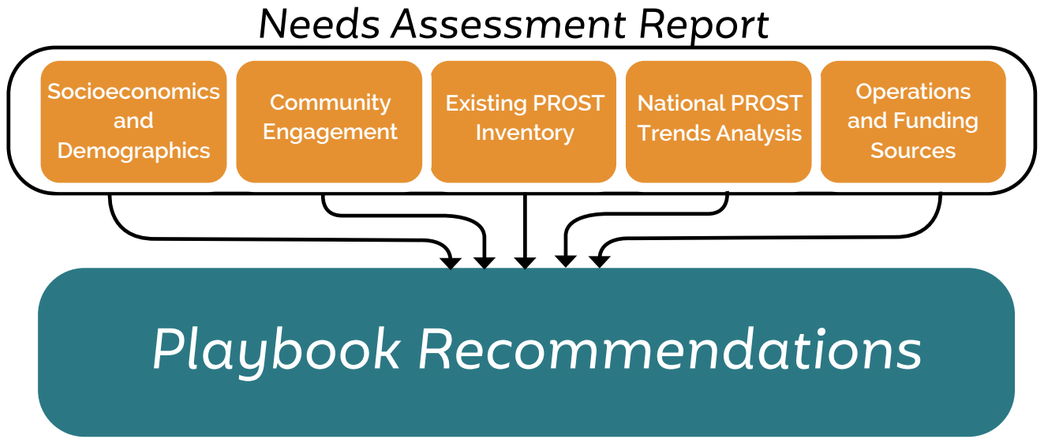


Figure 1. Needs Assessment Report Recommendations Process

1.3. Mission & Vision

1.3.1. Mission Statement

The Town of Erie Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement is:

'Building community through the delivery of exceptional parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, programs, and services.'

1.3.2. Vision Statement

The Town of Erie Parks and Recreation Department's Vision Statement is:

'Discover your ExpERIEnce'.

Erie envisions a dynamic, interconnected, and accessible network of parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and trails that enhance the Town's natural beauty, support active lifestyles, and foster a strong sense of community. Our vision is to create an inclusive and innovative PROST system that reflects the Town's values, history, and future aspirations—one that preserves Erie's unique character while adapting to the evolving needs of our growing and diverse population.

We aspire to provide high-quality recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities, ensuring that every resident has access to safe, well-maintained, and engaging outdoor and indoor spaces. By integrating sustainability, smart growth principles, and community-driven planning, we will protect and enhance our natural resources while delivering exceptional recreational experiences.

Through collaboration with residents, local organizations, and regional partners, Erie will continue to build a PROST system that promotes health, well-being, and environmental stewardship, creating a legacy of excellence for generations to come.

1.4. Playbook Goals

This Playbook contains 6 major goals with supporting strategies. "Goals" are aspirational overarching drivers. "Strategies" are measurable actions that were developed as part of the plan process and will continue to be further refined. These align with the Town of Erie 2024 Comprehensive Plan's core values of Sustainability, Livable, and Connectivity, and inform the Plan's vision and direction.

Goal 1: Equitable Access

Goal 2: Stewardship of Open Lands

Goal 3: Connected System

Goal 4: Community Identity

Goal 5: Fiscal Sustainability

Goal 6: Future Growth Resiliency

1.4.1. Goal 1: Equitable Access

Strategies

1.1. Prioritize investment in underserved neighborhoods to ensure inclusivity.

1.2. Enhance ADA accessibility across parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation centers.

1.3. Continue to build a better understanding of the community's needs to create equitable access for all and more inclusiveness.

1.4. Ensure equitable distribution of facilities, programs, and resources throughout Erie.

1.4.2. Goal 2: Stewardship of Open Lands

Strategies

2.1. Develop tools to preserve and protect natural habitats, wetlands, wildlife corridors, and other natural resources.

2.2. Implement sustainable land management and maintenance practices to reduce environmental impact.

2.3. Prioritize open space improvements to enhance habitat and sustainability.

2.4. Integrate open space conservation into long-term growth planning.

2.5. Diversify open space portfolio with additional designation categories (i.e., agricultural, wildlife habitat, natural areas, passive recreational, buffers, etc.)

2.6. Enhance land acquisition strategies by establishing clear criteria for potential land acquisition sites.

2.7. Maintain a high level of stewardship by integrating climate adaptation strategies to ensure long-term viability of parks and open spaces.

1.4.3. Goal 3: Connected System

Strategies

3.1. Strive to ensure that every Erie resident has access to an open space, park, recreation amenity, or trail within a ½ mile or a 10-minute walk from their home.

3.2. Expand the trail network to link to open spaces, parks, recreation facilities or amenities, and other major destinations of Erie such as schools, libraries, Downtown Erie, and other commercial centers.

3.3. Partner or coordinate with adjacent agencies to promote regional trail connectivity.

3.4. Integrate the recreational trail system with multi-modal transportation facilities to create an amazingly connected community.

3.5. Provide adequate signage to improve wayfinding throughout Erie.

1.4.4. Goal 4: Community Identity

Strategies

4.1. Preserve and celebrate Erie's rich history and sense of place by integrating historical resources, public art, and cultural landmarks into parks, recreation, open space, and trails facilities.

4.2. Foster strong community identity by enhancing historic sites, supporting local artists, and creating public spaces that reflect Erie's heritage while embracing its future.

4.3. Promote inclusive events, storytelling initiatives, and placemaking efforts that connect people to Erie's past, present, and evolving identity.

4.4. Provide engaging and inclusive recreation programs and events reflective of the Town's needs for all stages of life.

1.4.5. Goal 5: Fiscal Sustainability

Strategies

5.1. Ensure programs, facilities, and amenities are resilient to changing conditions.

5.2. Diversify funding sources by exploring grants, sponsorships, public-private or public-public partnerships, and impact fees to maximize resources and investment in facilities.

5.3. Develop a long-term funding strategy and implement sustainable practices to ensure cost-effective ongoing maintenance, operations, and future park and trail expansions.

5.4. Regularly assess and adjust financial strategies to align with changing community needs, economic conditions, and growth trends.

5.5. Implement an annual review of staffing needs to support sustainable staff growth.

5.6. Continue to reinvest in and maintain existing facilities and amenities.

1.4.6. Goal 6: Future Growth Resiliency

Strategies

6.1. Integrate future growth trends into the PROST system planning to ensure facilities and services meet the future needs of Erie's expanding and evolving community.

6.2. Identify and prioritize land acquisitions and park expansions in growing areas to maintain access for all residents.

6.3. Continuously evaluate and adjust recreational offerings to reflect demographic shifts, emerging trends, and community interests.

6.4. Collaborate with Town planning, transportation, and economic development agencies to align park and open space investments with Erie's broader growth strategies.

6.5. Engage residents in the future planning and development process to ensure the PROST system evolves in a way that reflects the values and desires of Erie's diverse and changing population.

6.6. Ensure that future developments of Erie contribute to the level of service for the future population growth of Erie.

2: **Community Values & Preferences**

Community outreach and engagement is a driving force behind the Playbook, ensuring that it reflects the needs, aspirations, and priorities of Erie residents and stakeholders. Through an inclusive and transparent process, public input helps shape policies, funding priorities, and the long-term vision for parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

Arbor Day Event
Credit: DTJ Design

2.1. Community Engagement Plan (CEP)

At the start of the PROST process, a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) was developed to identify a strategy to engage community stakeholders and gather diverse perspectives on needs and preferences for parks, recreation, open space, and trails facilities in Erie. The Erie Performing Arts Center Feasibility Study facilitated a separate planning process. The CEP included a variety of events and initiatives to maximize participation and ensure a well-rounded understanding of community needs.

Community Engagement Events and Initiatives included:

- **Community Questionnaire**

  Collected broad input on priorities and needs.

- **Stakeholder Interviews (4)**

  Gathered insights from key community members and organization representatives.

- **Focus Group Meetings (3)**

  Engaged specific community groups in detailed discussions.

- **Staff Focus Group (Parks and Recreation Culture Academy Event)**

  Provided internal perspectives from parks and recreation staff.

- **Public Engagement Events (2)**

  Offered direct opportunities for residents to share their input.

- **Community Open House**

  Allowed residents to review and discuss Playbook updates.

- **Social Media Outreach**

  Expanded engagement opportunities through digital platforms.

- **Other Meetings and Presentations**

  Various meetings and presentations were held as a part of the CEP process.

Community Open House
Credit: DTJ Design

Community Open House
Credit: DTJ Design

2.2. Community Engagement Events and Initiatives

2.2.1. Community Questionnaire

The Community Questionnaire was open for approximately 14 weeks, from February 21 through May 30 of 2025. The questionnaire consisted of 31 questions and had 726 responses.

2.2.2. Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Group Meetings

Multiple stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings were conducted to capture the voices of key community groups of Erie. The purpose was to gather input from diverse groups, including youth and education advocates, government and advisory boards, business and partner organizations, community representatives, accessibility advocates, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, recreation users, volunteers, and history and culture advocates. Each group provided valuable perspectives on what is important to them, what they hope to achieve through the Plan, and the key challenges Erie faces in meeting its parks, recreation, open space, and trails needs.

Stakeholder Interviews

The following stakeholder 'groups' were included as part of the Playbook's planning process. Each interview session included 3-5 participants representing various interest for the subject area.

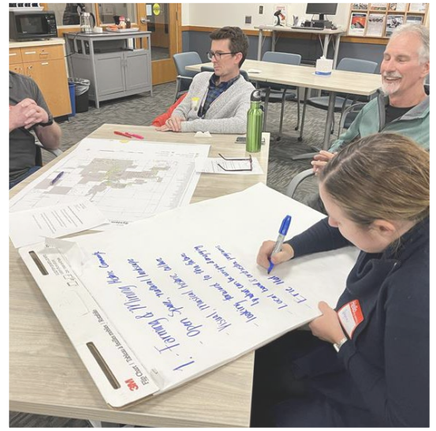
1. Youth, Adult, and Education Advocates
2. Government and Advisory Boards
3. Partner and Business Organizations
4. Community Representation (HOA and Accessibility Advocates)

Focus Group Meetings

The following focus group topics were addressed as part of the PROST process. Each focus group included 5-7 participants representing various interests for the subject area.

1. Recreation Center Users and Volunteers
2. History and Culture Advocates
3. Outdoor Enthusiasts and Advocates

More detailed information about the results and findings from the Questionnaire, Stakeholder Interviews, and Focus Groups can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.



Various Focus Group and Stakeholder Meetings
Credit: DTJ Design

Walkable Map Station
Credit: DTJ Design

2.2.3. Community Open House

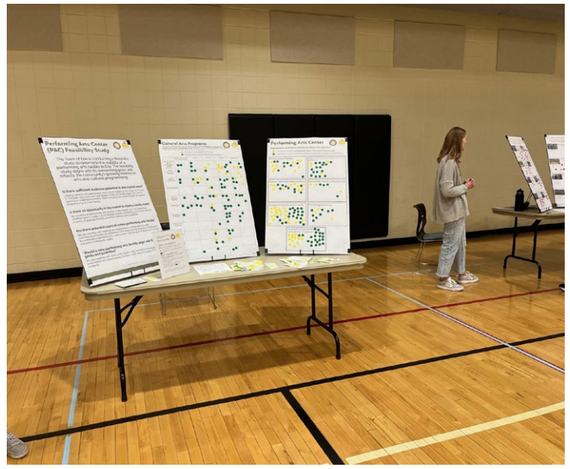
The Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) hosted a Community Open House at the Erie Community Center Gymnasium to gather public input for the Playbook and the Performing Arts Center (PAC) feasibility study. Approximately 80–100 residents of all ages attended.

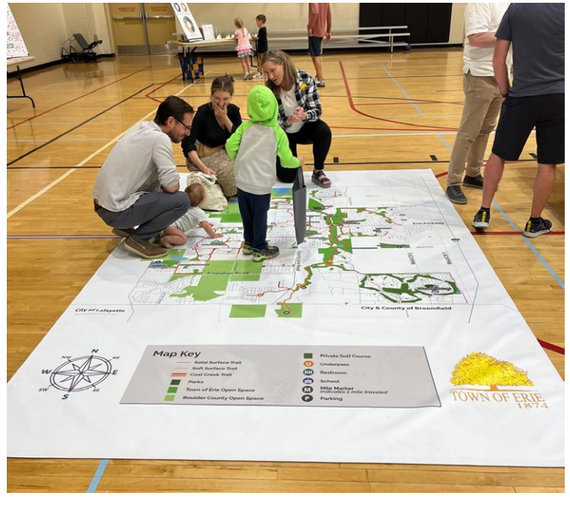
Purpose and Goals:

- **Gather Broad Community Input:** Provide an open forum for community members to share their thoughts on project goals, objectives, and vision at key project milestones.
- **Engagement and Connection:** Encourage discussions about community values and future developments.
- **Interactive Participation:** Offer various hands-on activities to make participation accessible and engaging.

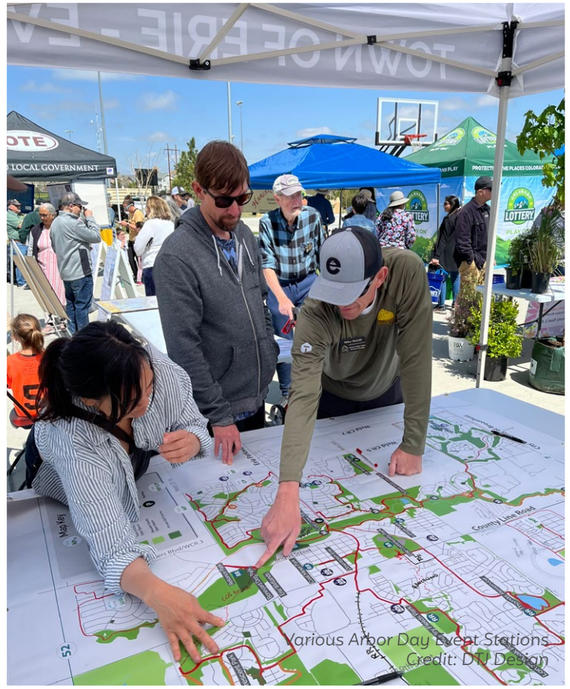
Event Highlights:

- Several interactive and informative stations covered topics such as parks and recreation programming, funding priorities, and arts and culture.
- There was community interest in expanded fitness programs, aquatics, and cultural offerings.
- Funding a new recreation center and acquiring more parks/open spaces was supported.
- Desire for enhanced trail systems, more sports courts, and affordable, inclusive facilities.
- Kids were engaged through a creative activity station.





Various Open House Stations
Credit: DTJ Design



Various Arbor Day Event Stations
Credit: DTJ Design

2.2.4. Public Engagement Events

2.2.4.1. Arbor Day

The Arbor Day Event gave residents and visitors an opportunity to provide feedback on their preferences for future parks and recreation programming and facilities in Erie. Participants used a tabletop map to identify current uses they enjoyed, as well as potential programming gaps in the Town. Participants then selected their top priorities for future parks and recreation funding.

Feedback from this event indicated that Erie user groups favored funding for enhanced trail systems and connections, new parks on vacant land owned by the Town, and continuing to address deferred maintenance of Erie's existing programs and facilities.

2.2.4.2. Town Fair

The Town Fair Event provided a platform for the community to provide feedback on their preferences for future parks and recreation programming and facilities in Erie. Community members of all ages attended the event, diversifying the opinions and values that were received. Participants used the tabletop map to identify current uses they enjoyed, as well as potential programming gaps in the Town. Participants then selected their top priorities for future parks and recreation funding. The various engagement opportunities were well-received by the community and allowed for a wide range of input on the progression of the Playbook.

More detailed information about the results and findings from engagement events can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

2.2.5. Online Outreach and Communication Tools

Several online platforms were utilized to advertise the project including a project website where participants can take the questionnaire and receive information, updates in the Town Quarterly Newsletter and existing social median channels.

2.2.6. Other Meetings and Presentations

Other meetings and presentations throughout the project included:

- Kick-Off Meeting with Staff
- Project communications Meetings with Staff (3)
- Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) Meetings (1)
- Town Council Meetings (2)
- Project Management Team Meetings with Staff (8)
- Work Session Meetings with Staff (4)

Town Fair Event
Credit: DTJ Design

2.3. Community Values & Top Preferences

Based on the questionnaire results, community input, and additional feedback of the CEP events and initiatives, the following reflect the community's needs, aspirations, and top priorities:

Expanded Recreation Facilities

There is strong demand for indoor and outdoor spaces that support activities in all seasons, including community gathering areas, aquatics, sports, and fitness spaces.

- High demand for a second multi-use recreation center with aquatics, fitness areas, sports courts, and flexible program space.
- Additional sports fields and gymnasiums to meet growing sports demand.

Aquatic Amenities

Several groups mentioned aquatics as a primary interest.

- A new outdoor pool is a top priority, especially for youth employment and recreation.
- Interest in expanded aquatics programming (swimming teams, lifeguard training, older adult aquatic fitness).

Enhanced Trail Connectivity

Residents emphasized the importance of an expanded and interconnected trail network for walking, biking, and recreation. Safe routes to parks and schools were a recurring concern.

- Fill in gaps in trail systems, improve safety and accessibility, and increase signage and wayfinding.
- Connect neighborhoods to schools, parks, commercial centers, and regional trail systems.

Preservation and Use of Open Space

Preserved open land and usable open space with trails ranked high among community desires. Many expressed strong interest in retaining Erie's unique environmental character, as well as protecting scenic views, wildlife habitat, and undeveloped land.

- Prioritize open space acquisition and habitat restoration.
- Balance development with conservation through long-term planning and updated land use policies.

Cultural and Creative Spaces

Discussions and mentions about a new performing arts center or other cultural resources were recurring.

- Strong interest in a Performing Arts Center for concerts, theater, and community gatherings.
- Support for an arts and history hub to highlight Erie's culture, heritage, and local artists.

Inclusive, Family-Friendly Parks and Recreational Opportunities

Facilities and programs that cater to children, teens, families, and older adults - especially those that promote health, wellness, and social connection - are high priorities.

- Development of accessible playgrounds, restrooms, and picnic areas.
- Expanding existing programming for teens, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- Expanding or introducing new recreation programs and services that include youth and adult sports, special events, camps, fitness and wellness, cultural arts, aquatics, teens, older adults, and therapeutic recreation.

Sustainability and Smart Growth

- Integrate green infrastructure, water-wise landscaping, and sustainable facility design.
- Ensure new developments have adequate recreational spaces and sustainable landscaping practices.

Maintenance and Facility Upkeep

Trash accumulation, deteriorating amenities, and concerns about safety and lighting were frequently cited.

- Improve cleanliness, repair timelines, and restroom access in existing parks.
- Clarify responsibilities between the Town and HOAs for shared parkland care.

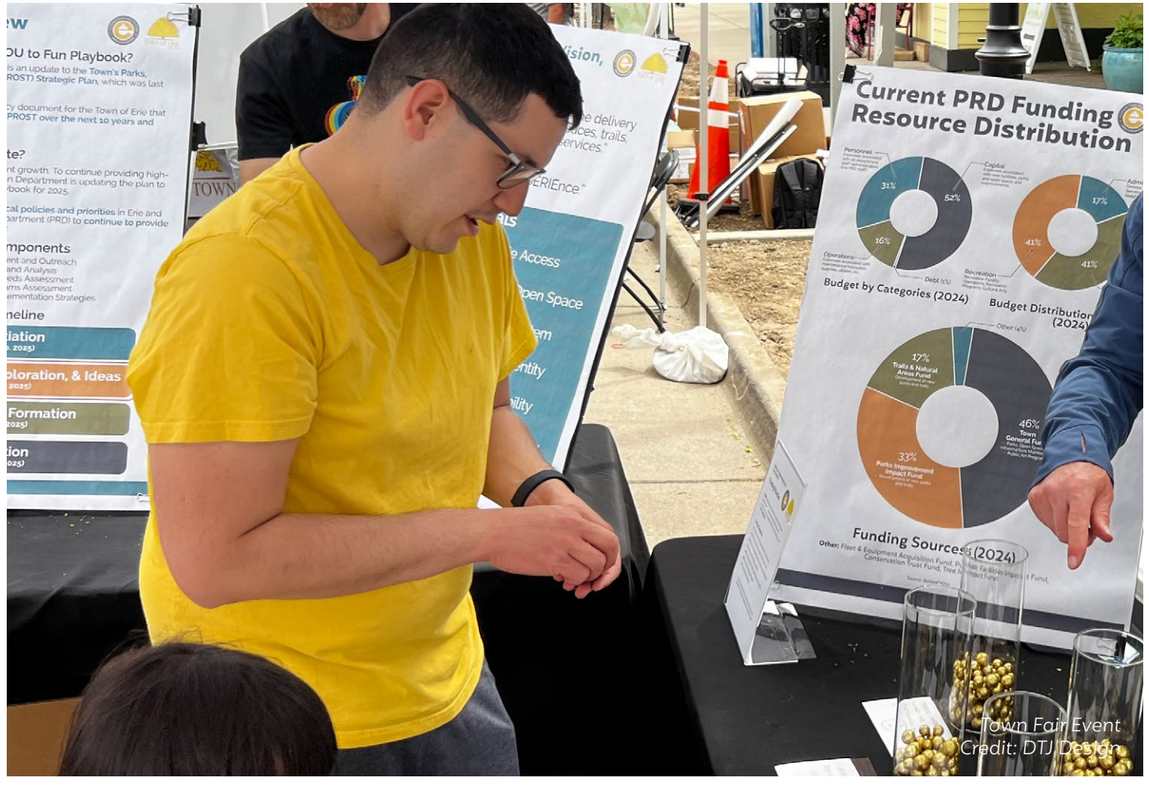
Park and Amenity Access

The community called for more neighborhood-scale parks within walking distance, especially in underserved or newer areas of Erie. Universal access, inclusive design, and diverse amenities for all age groups were frequently mentioned.

- Develop additional neighborhood parks in growth areas, particularly in areas directly west of I-25, along Highway 52, and in southwest Erie.
- Improve accessibility in design, outreach, and programming to ensure inclusivity across age, ability, and income levels.

Key Challenges Identified

- Overcapacity at the Erie Community Center and limited indoor recreation space.
- Deferred maintenance and aging facilities do not meet modern needs.
- Unequal access to parks, recreation, open space, and trail networks in newer or underserved neighborhoods.
- Funding constraints and a need for new strategies to support capital and operational costs.
- Lack of teen-focused spaces and limited inclusive programming for all age groups and abilities.
- Unclear land management roles between the Town and HOAs, affecting shared park quality.



Town Fair Event
Credit: DTJ Design

Implementation Priorities

- Explore funding and feasibility for a new recreation center to serve the growing population and reduce crowding at the Erie Community Center.
- Explore cultural arts opportunities, like a performing arts center, to support local events, arts programming, and celebrate Erie's unique cultural heritage.
- Pursue development of second community park, including a potential fieldhouse, across from Erie High School and Soaring Heights Elementary School.
- Develop a comprehensive trail plan to improve connectivity and safety.
- Expand access to aquatics and aquatic programs. Specific elements that were mentioned include an outdoor community pool, a competitive swimming pool, and expanded aquatic programs like swim teams, diving, water polo, lifeguard training, and fitness classes for youth and older adults.
- Upgrade park infrastructure with permanent restrooms, seating, lighting for sports fields and athletic facilities, general park and trail lighting for safety, and overall universal design.
- Preserve and restore open space with updated acquisition strategies and habitat protections.
- Ensure accessibility in all future projects, including ADA-compliant trails and inclusive playgrounds.
- Implement long-term maintenance plans for existing assets.
- Clarify land management roles between the Town and HOAs.
- Enhance community partnerships to support volunteer efforts, program delivery, and funding diversity.

Various Focus Groups
Credit: DTJ Design

More detailed information about the CEP events, initiatives, results, and feedback can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

Schofield and Strieby properties
Credit: Town of Erie

3: **Existing Conditions**

By taking inventory of existing Erie parks and recreation conditions, it is possible to identify where the Town has adequate facilities and programs, as well as where there are potential gaps that must be addressed. This analysis will help determine where future resources should be allocated to best serve the growing Erie community.

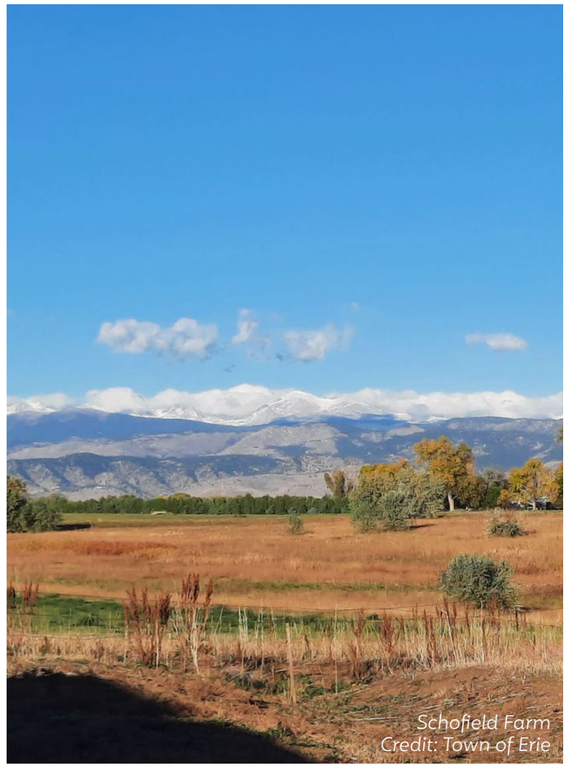
3.1. Context, History, & Culture

3.1.1. Regional Context

Erie is strategically located along the Front Range of Colorado, positioned between Boulder and Denver. Its unique setting provides access to regional recreational opportunities, economic centers, and transportation networks while maintaining a small-town atmosphere. The Town's proximity to major metropolitan areas has contributed to rapid growth and an increasing demand for parks, trails, and open space preservation.

3.1.2. Community History and Heritage

Erie has a rich history rooted in coal mining, agriculture, and rail transport. Established in the late 19th century, the Town has evolved from a mining hub into a vibrant and thriving community. Many of its historical structures, such as the Schofield property and the Wise Homestead Museum, contribute to a strong sense of place. Preserving Erie's heritage through parks, open spaces, and cultural programs remains a priority in maintaining its identity.



Schofield Farm
Credit: Town of Erie

Schofield Property Barn
Credit: Town of Erie

Wise Homestead Museum
Credit: Erie Historical Society

3.1.3. Schofield Farm Open Space

The Schofield Farm Open Space is an important existing cultural and historical resource within Erie, reflecting the community's agricultural heritage and rural character. The site includes historic structures and landscapes that offer unique opportunities for interpretation, preservation, and public enjoyment. A master plan for Schofield Farm has been completed and will serve as a valuable tool to guide future preservation and thoughtful development efforts, ensuring the site's historic significance is maintained while enhancing its accessibility and use as a community asset. Additionally, a historical structure assessment has been prepared to provide detailed guidance on the preservation needs and priorities for the site's historic buildings and features.

3.1.4. Wise Homestead Open Space

The Wise Homestead Open Space is a significant cultural and historical asset in Erie that preserves the community's agricultural heritage and rural character. Encompassing over 170 acres, the site features expansive open fields, historic structures, and scenic views that offer opportunities for both conservation and public enjoyment. Managed by the Town of Erie, the open space provides important wildlife habitat and serves as a reminder of Erie's farming roots. Adjacent to the site, the Wise Homestead Museum, operated by the Erie Historical Society, adds interpretive and educational value, celebrating the area's pioneer history. Together, these resources create a unique open space that blends historical preservation with passive recreation opportunities.

3.2. Existing Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Facilities

3.2.1. Key Takeaways

This section provides an overview of the Town of Erie's current parks, open space, trails, and recreational facilities. The findings highlight strengths in the existing system, as well as areas that will require targeted enhancements to maintain high levels of service (LOS) and equitable access.

Parks and Level of Service

- **Current Town-Owned Park Land: 162.5 acres total***
- Current LOS: **4.1 acres** per 1,000 residents
- Planned Park Expansion: There are currently 49.9 acres of Town-owned undeveloped parkland, with additional parkland dedications that are secured in development agreements in accordance with Town development code.
- Future LOS (at 64,000 residents): Taking into account future planned park expansions, the future LOS will be **3.3 acres** per 1,000 residents. This it is below the lower quartile per the 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review.

*Please note that there are an additional 257.7 acres of privately owned parks and open space areas in the Town of Erie. These areas offer amenities for specific communities or developments, but are not Town-owned.

Potential Future Facility Needs

To meet the recreation expectations of Erie's future population, the following facilities* may be considered based on LOS benchmarks and national trends:

- Diamond fields
- Rectangular fields
- Basketball and volleyball courts, standalone
- Community gardens
- Indoor and/or outdoor multi-use courts (basketball, volleyball, tennis, pickleball, etc.)
- Indoor walking loops/running tracks
- Indoor competitive swimming pools
- Outdoor swimming pools
- Indoor and/or outdoor fitness zones and exercise stations

*Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and potential other facility options may be explored.

Trail Network and Missing Gaps

- Current Trail Mileage: **82.2 miles**, 48.8 of which are Town maintained
- There are numerous future planned trails within Erie, all of which will provide excellent connectivity for current and future populations.
- The future planned trail network has gaps, barriers, and missing connections that should be addressed.

Future Park Location Considerations

To support the goal of providing a park, open space, or recreational amenity within a ½ mile or 10-minute walk for all residents, future parks may need to be located in the following areas:

- Eastern Erie along I-25
- Northern Erie near Highway 52 and Weld County Road 5
- Western Erie near Wise Homestead Open Space
- Other strategic residential areas within the Planning Boundary

Open Space Areas and Level of Service

- **Current Town-Owned Open Space: 1,365 acres total**
- Erie has a similar amount of open space in terms of acres per population when compared to other agencies in Colorado.

Current Management Plans

Parks and Recreation Maintenance and Operations (2021 Plan)

Enhancement opportunities include:

- Upgrading to smart irrigation systems for water efficiency
- Introducing xeriscaping and native plantings to reduce water use and maintenance
- Installing waste-sorting and composting infrastructure
- Adopting Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS)
- Transitioning to electric-powered maintenance equipment
- Standardizing training and onboarding for seasonal staff
- Implementing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for park service levels
- Expanding community partnerships for volunteer involvement

Coal Miner Park
Credit: Town of Erie

Open Space Management (2019 Plan)

Enhancement opportunities include:

- Expanding native habitat restoration
- Implementing sustainable trail and erosion management
- Defining access zones and seasonal closures
- Adding educational signage on ecology and stewardship
- Creating riparian buffer zones for waterway protection
- Using digital monitoring and reporting tools
- Forming community stewardship programs
- Addressing climate resilience with adaptive landscaping and fire-wise planning

Star Meadows Park
Credit: Town of Erie

3.2.2. Existing PROST Facilities

Figure 2 shows the existing PROST facilities of Erie, including the various green spaces and the Erie Community Center within the Planning Boundary per the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Residential and Non-Residential Land Use types are also shown for reference.

More detailed information can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

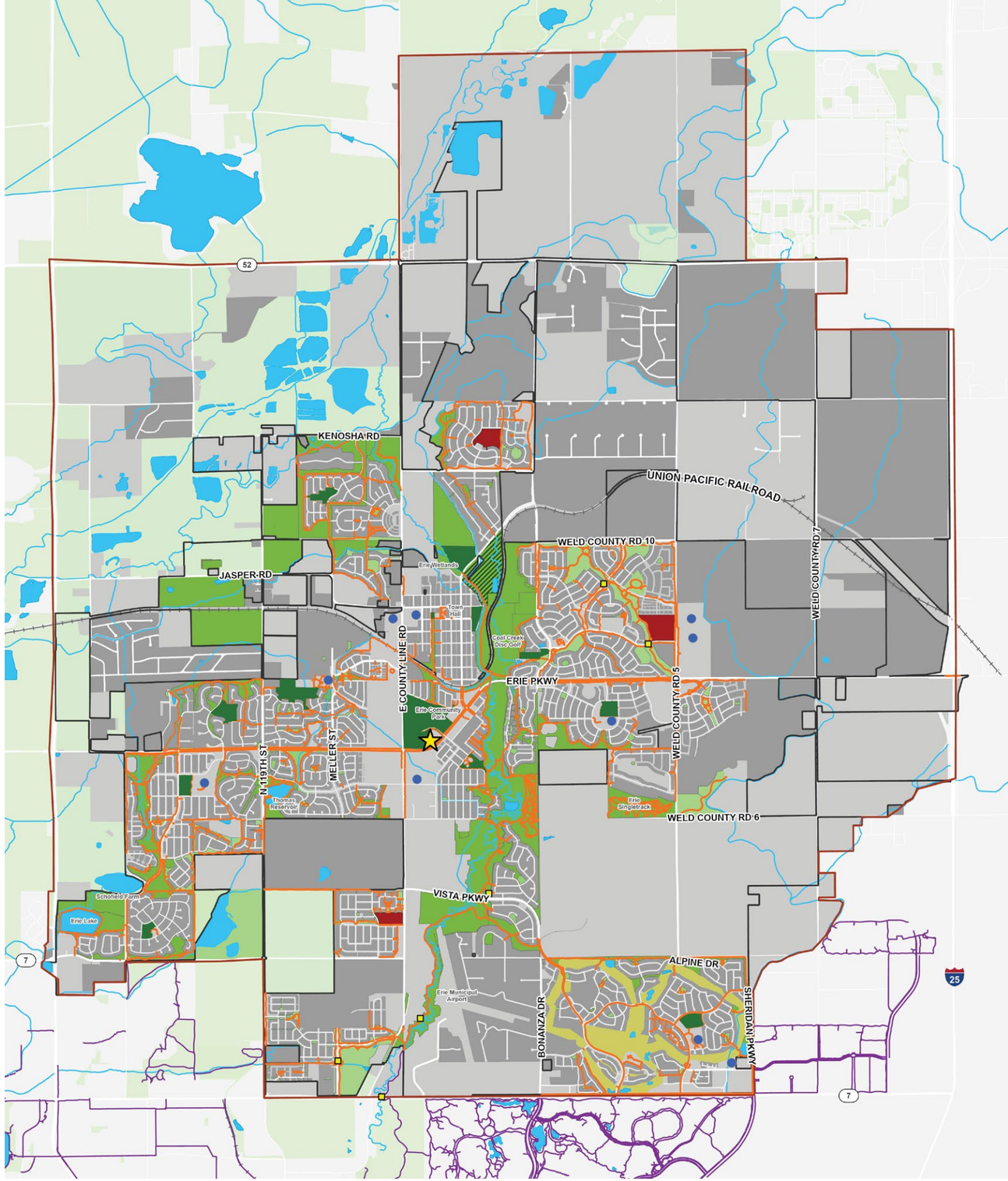


Figure 2. Existing Facilities Map

Scale: 1" - 4,500'
0' 4,500' 9,000'
north

Legend

Existing Waterways & Railroads
- Streams & Ditches
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Boundaries
- Town Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Land Use
- Residential Land Uses
- Non-Residential Land Uses

- Erie Community Center
- School Sites

Green Space
- Town Owned Parks
- Town Owned Open Space
- Private Green Space
- Other Open Space
- Golf Course
- Town Owned Undeveloped Park Sites
- Housing + Preserved Open Space

- Existing Trails
- Other Existing Trails

- Underpass

3.2.3. Parks & Levels of Service (LOS)

The Town of Erie currently owns **162.5 acres** of developed parks. There are currently **49.9 acres** of Town-owned undeveloped parkland, with additional parkland dedications that are secured in development agreements in accordance with Town development code. Erie owned parks are categorized as either Community Parks or Neighborhood Parks.

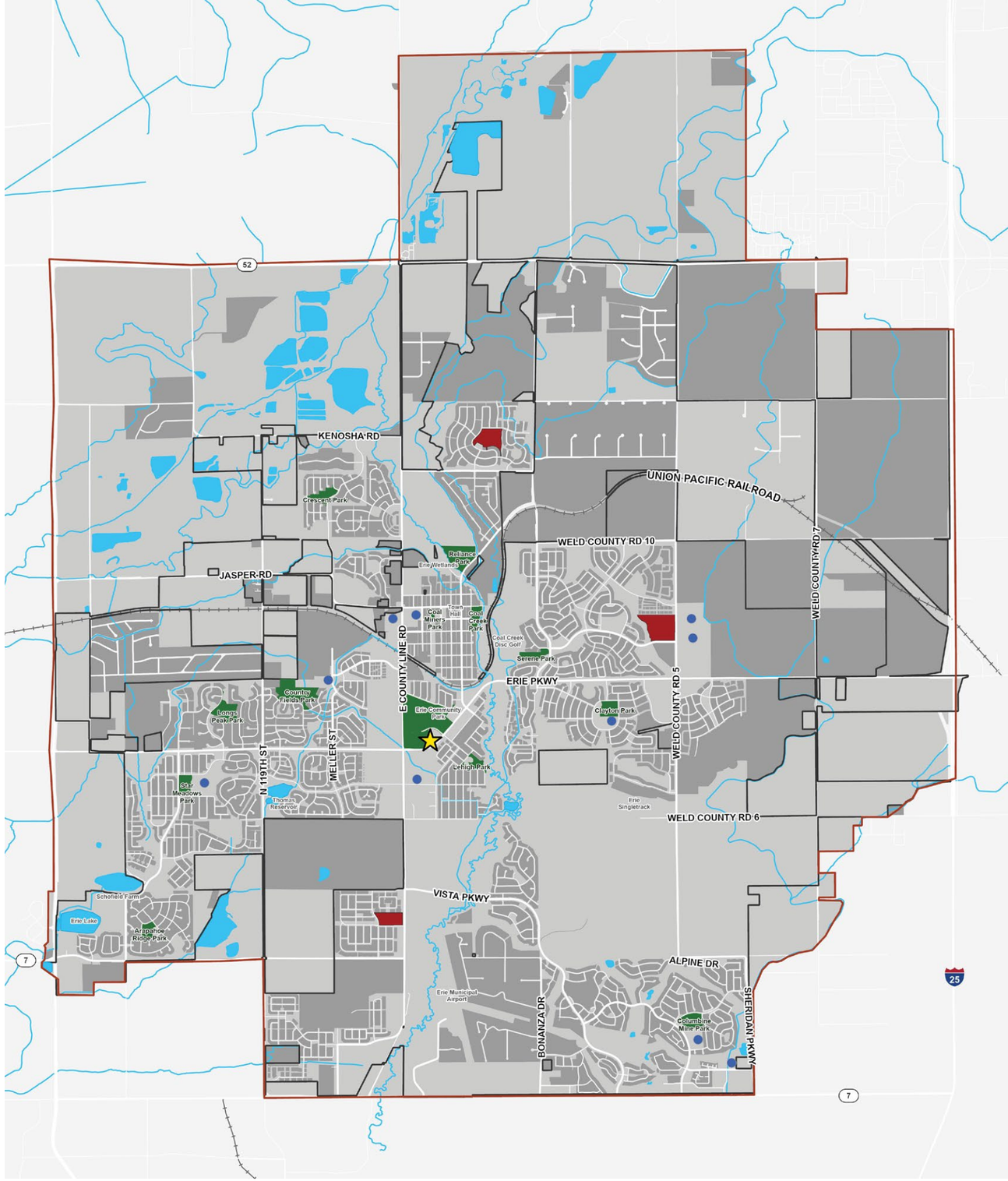
The Town of Erie also has a Joint Use Agreement with the St. Vrain Valley School District and access to seven school sites.

The current provided Parks LOS based on 40,000 residents is 4.1 acres per 1,000 residents. With the additional future planned parks acreage, the future Parks LOS based on 64,000 residents would be 3.3 acres per 1,000 residents. This is a slightly low LOS, as it is below the lower quartile of 4.7 acres per 1,000 residents per the 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review, and when compared to other agencies in Colorado.

It is important to note that there are also **257.7 acres** of privately owned parks and green spaces. While the Playbook acknowledges these parks and green spaces as adding value to the communities in which they serve, their acreage is excluded from the LOS analysis of the Playbook.

Figure 3 shows the current park locations for the Town of Erie.

More detailed information can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.



Legend

Existing Waterways & Railroads
- Streams & Ditches
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Boundaries
- Town Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Land Use
- Residential Land Uses
- Non-Residential Land Uses

- Erie Community Center
- School Sites

Green Space
- Town Owned Parks
- Town Owned Undeveloped Park Sites

Figure 3. Existing Parks Map

Scale: 1" = 4,500'
0' 4,500' 9,000'

3.2.4. Open Space and Levels of Service (LOS)

Erie owns a total of **1,365 acres** of open space. This equates to a LOS of 34 acres per 1,000 residents. While there is not an NRPA Agency Performance review to compare to, this LOS is relatively similar or high when compared to other nearby agencies in Colorado.

The main open space system is located primarily along the Coal Creek corridor. Additional large open space tracts are located on the west side of Erie, adjacent to open spaces owned or maintained by other agencies, including Boulder County, the Town of Frederick, and others.

Figure 4 shows the current open space locations for the Town of Erie.

More detailed information can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

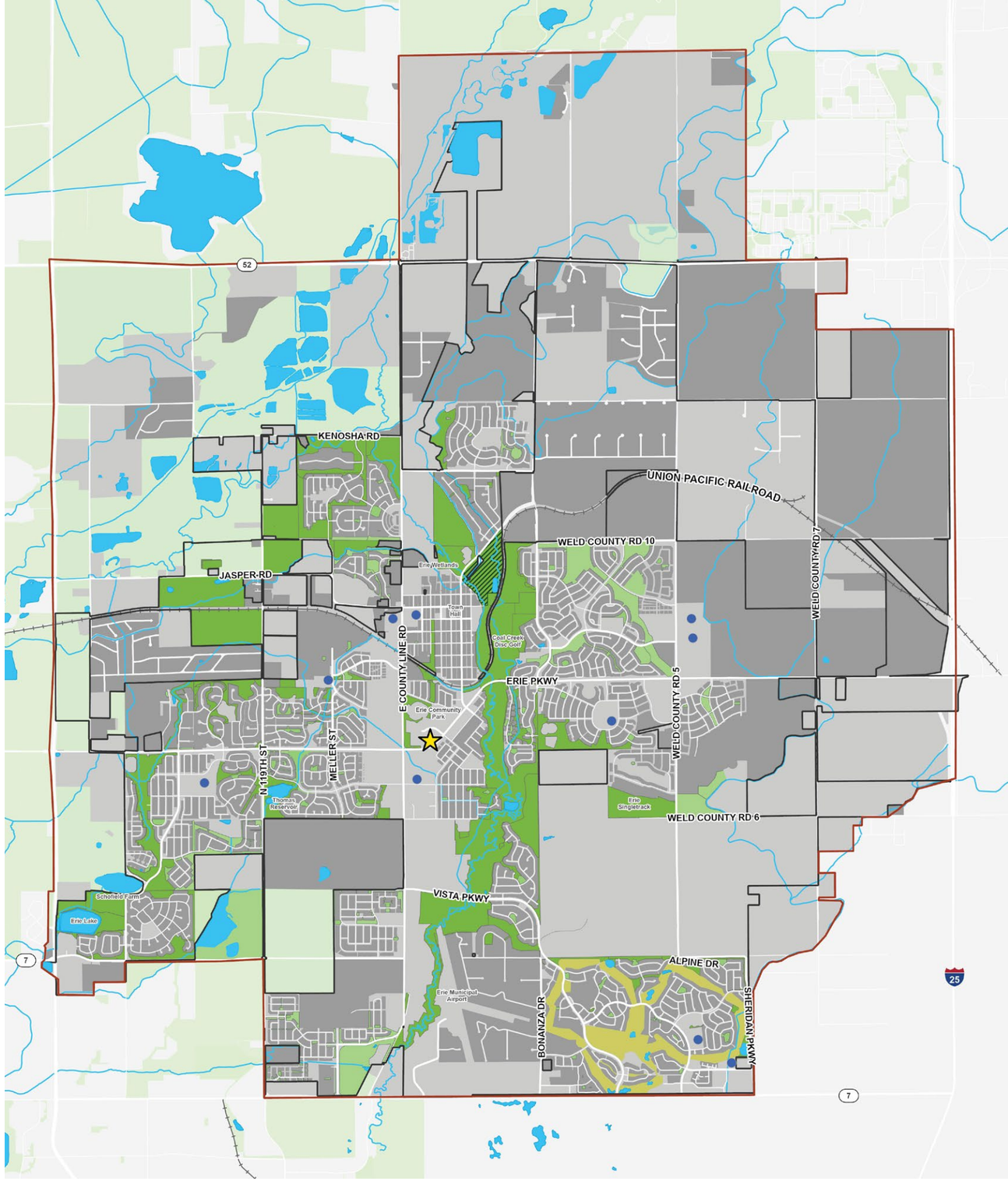


Figure 4. Existing Open Space Map

3.2.5. Trails

Erie currently has 82.2 miles of trails. 48.8 miles of these trails are maintained by the Town. There are also numerous future planned trails within Erie, all of which will provide excellent connectivity for current and future populations. There are however, some missing gaps in the trail system that need to be addressed.

Figure 5 shows the existing and future planned trails of Erie. Several gaps and barriers exist, including the following:

- Weld County Road 10
- Gaps located near School Sites
- Future trails located on lands that are not owned by the Town of Erie

More detailed information can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

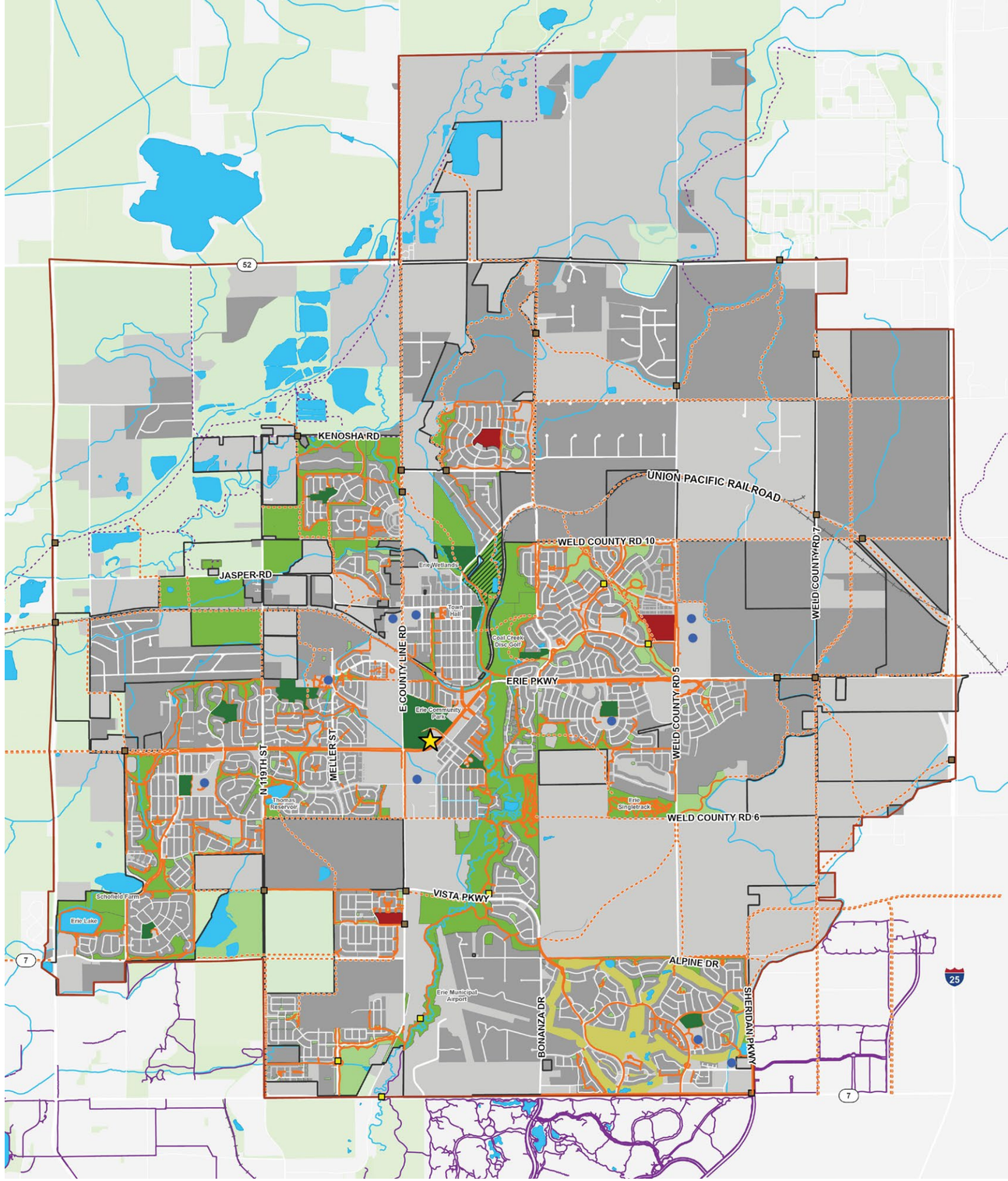


Figure 5. Existing and Future Trails Map

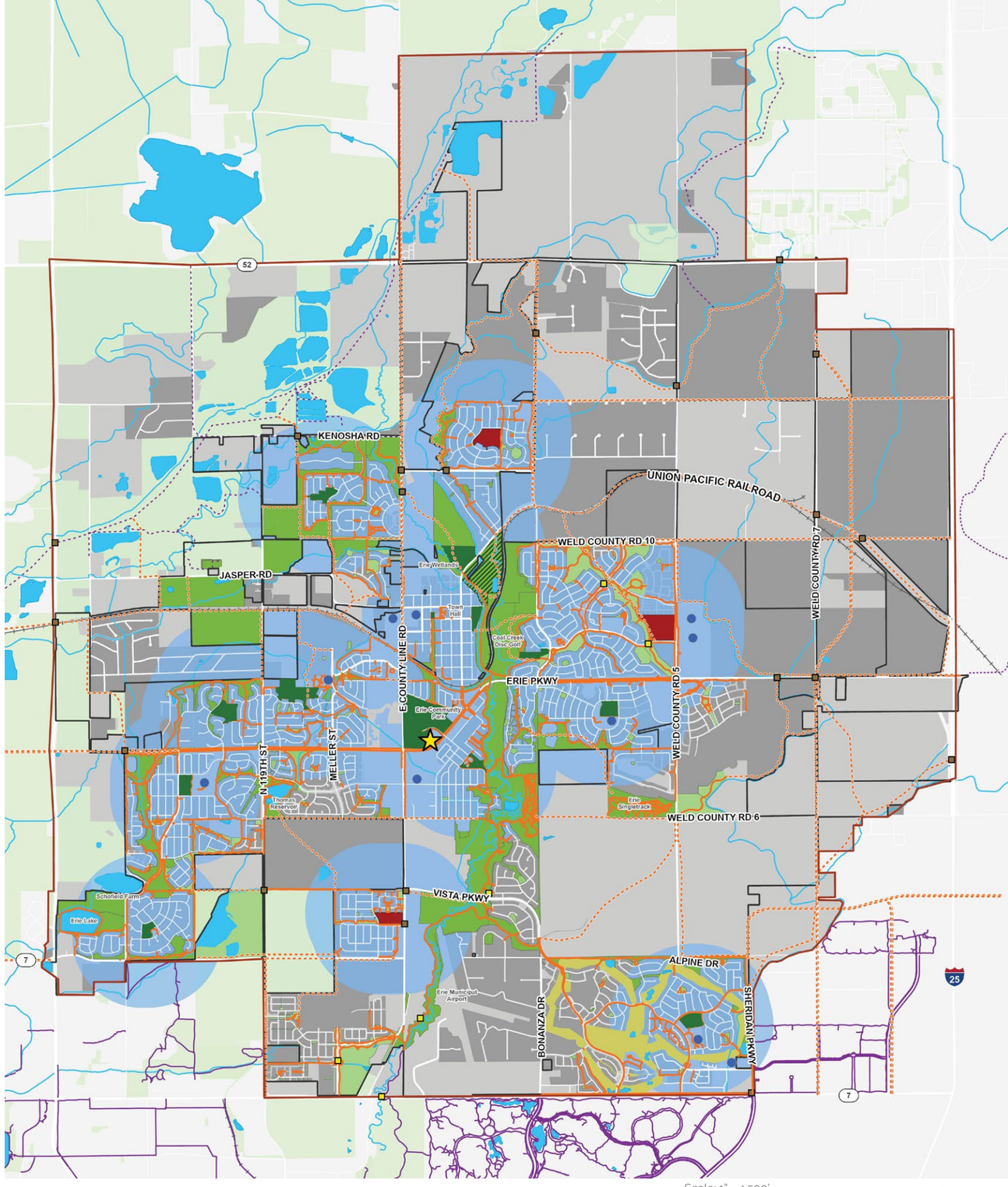
3.2.6. Future Land Use

A significant amount of Erie's population growth will occur in the eastern portions of Town, along the I-25 corridor. In addition, infill development will likely occur within the Town limits over the next 10 years. It will be important to strategically plan for future parks and recreation needs in these general locations to meet the needs of current and future residents of Erie.

3.2.7. Walkability

A goal of the Playbook is to ensure that every Erie resident may experience barrier free access to an Erie-owned park, amenitized open space, or recreational facility within a 1/2 mile or a 10-minute walk of their home. Based on the 1/2 mile walkability analysis, future parks and recreation resources may be needed on the east side of Erie, along the I-25 corridor north and south of the intersection of Weld County Road 10, as well as in northern Erie, near State Highway 52 and Weld County Road 5. They may also be needed near various residential areas within the Planning Boundary.

Figure 6 shows a 1/2 mile radius from the existing Erie-owned parks.



Legend

Existing Waterways & Railroads
- Streams & Ditches
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Boundaries
- Town Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Land Use
- Residential Land Uses
- Non-Residential Land Uses

- Erie Community Center
- School Sites

Green Space
- Town Owned Parks
- Town Owned Open Space
- Private Green Space
- Other Open Space
- Golf Course
- Town Owned Undeveloped Park Sites
- Housing + Preserved Open Space

- Existing Trails
- Future Trails
- Other Existing Trails
- Other Planned Future Trails
- Underpass
- Proposed Underpass

- 1/2 mile distance to an Erie Owned Park

Scale: 1" - 4,500'
0' 4,500' 9,000'

Figure 6. Walkability Map

3.2.8. Trail Access

Figure 7 shows a 1/2 mile radius from the existing trails of Erie. Most residents of Erie live within a walkable distance to an existing trail, but some current and future residents in the north eastern area of the Planning Boundary do not meet this requirement. The future planned trails of Erie may help to alleviate this need.

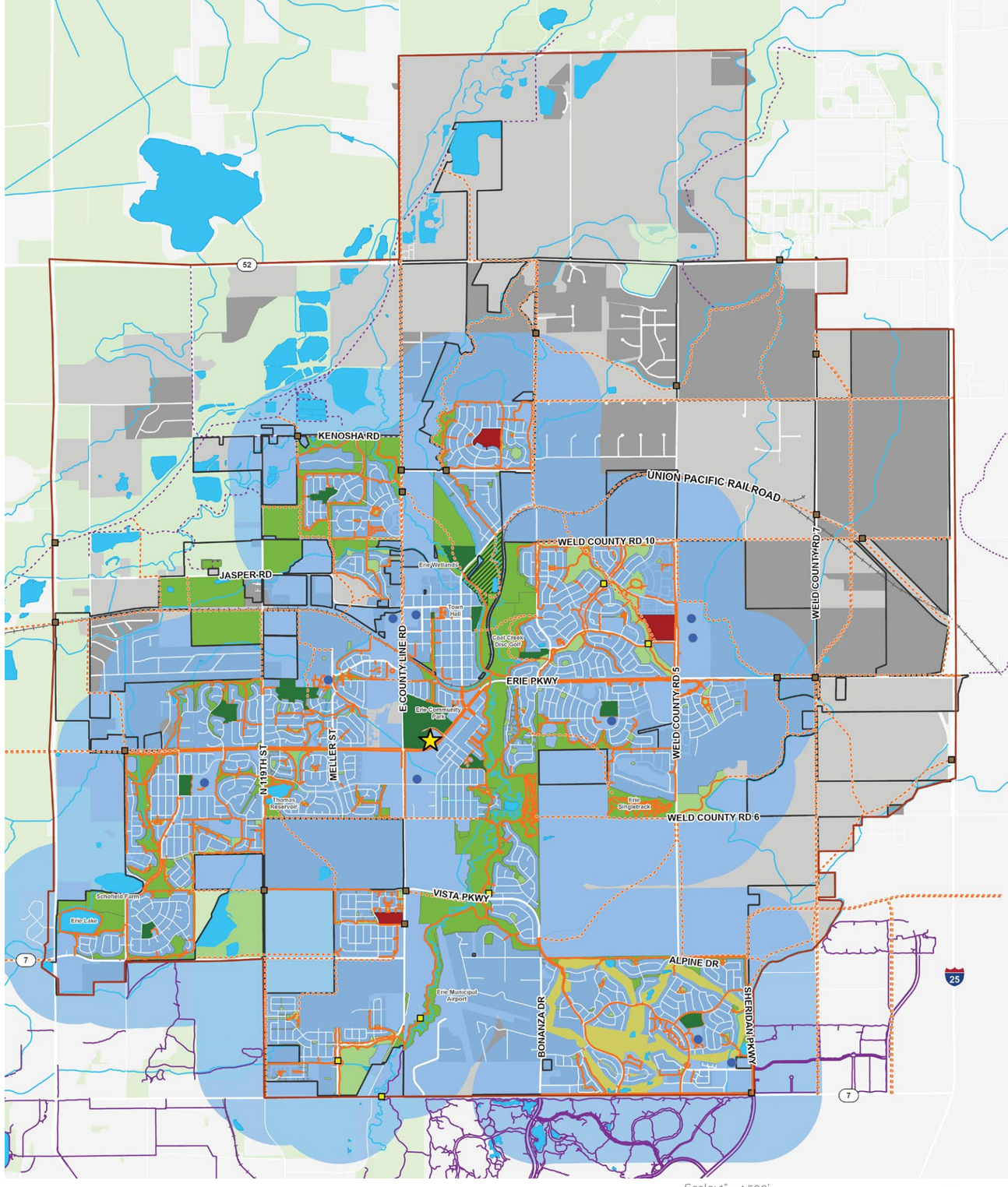


Figure 7. Trail Access Map

Scale: 1" - 4,500'

0' 4,500' 9,000'

north

Legend

Existing Waterways & Railroads

- Streams & Ditches
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Boundaries

- Town Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Land Use

- Residential Land Uses
- Non-Residential Land Uses

- Erie Community Center
- School Sites

Green Space

- Town Owned Parks
- Town Owned Open Space
- Private Green Space
- Other Open Space
- Golf Course
- Town Owned Undeveloped Park Sites
- Housing + Preserved Open Space

- Existing Trails
- Future Trails
- Other Existing Trails
- Other Planned Future Trails
- Underpass
- Proposed Underpass

- 1/2 mile distance from Existing Erie Trails

3.2.9. Potential Gap Areas

Based on the locations of the existing PROST areas, future planned parks, future planned trails, future land use, walkability, and trail access, several potential gap areas have been identified where future parks or recreation facilities may be located.

These areas include:

- **Eastern Erie along I-25**
- **Northern Erie near Highway 52 and Weld County Road 5**
- **Western Erie near Wise Homestead Open Space**
- **Other strategic residential areas within the Planning Boundary**

Western Erie remains more rural and less densely populated, with much of its landscape permanently protected as Boulder County Open Space. These conditions present challenges for large park development due to limited available land and conservation restrictions. In contrast, as we move east into more urbanized areas of Erie, residential density increases, creating a greater demand for additional parks and open space to meet the needs of a growing population. While the eastern part of Town will continue to be a focus for new development, it is equally important to ensure western Erie remains well-served. Opportunities like Schofield Farm (currently under construction), the Wise Homestead property, and the Parkdale Wetland Experience offer meaningful ways to enhance access to recreation and open space in the west without compromising the integrity of protected lands.

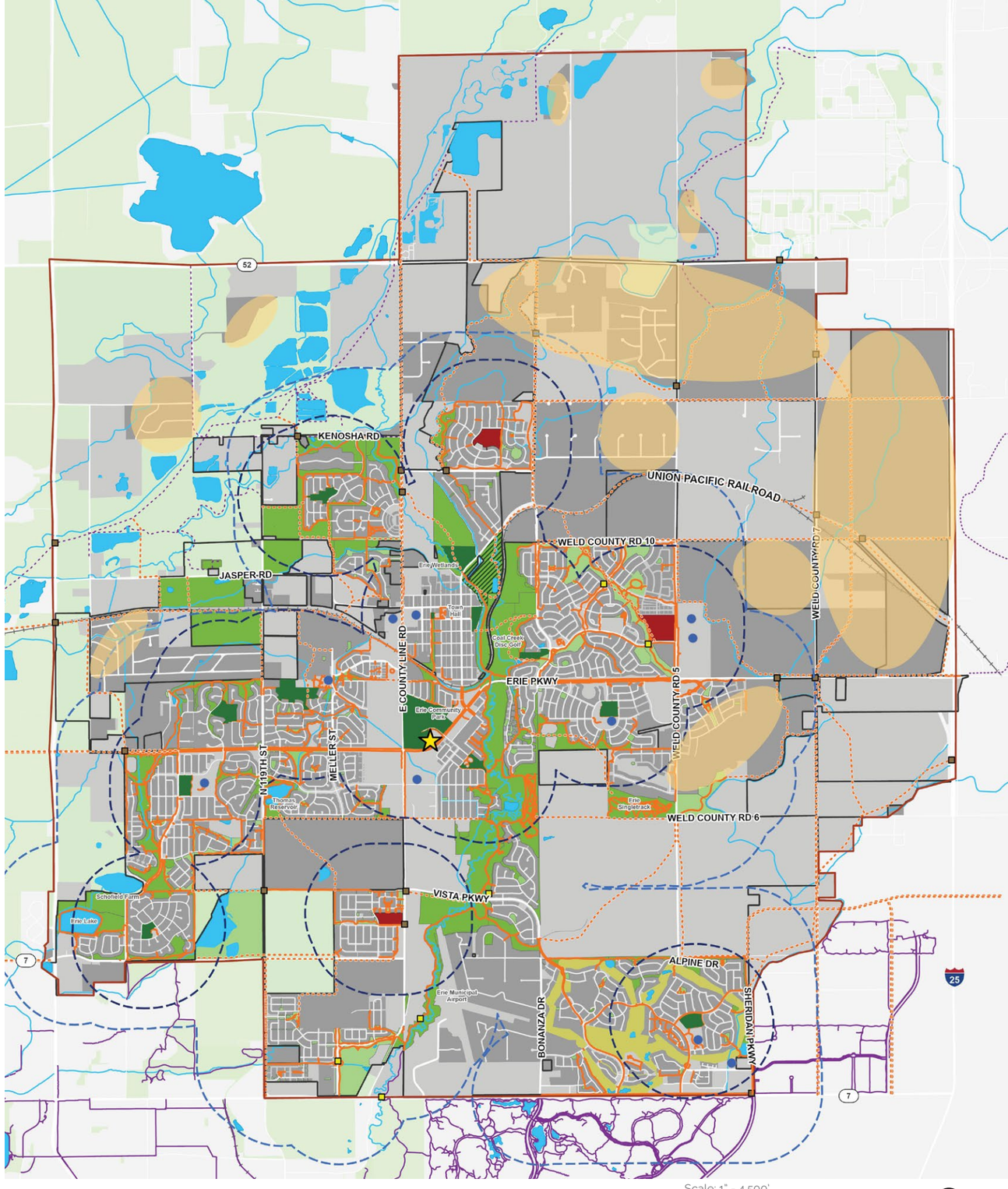


Figure 8. Potential Gap Areas Map

Legend

Existing Waterways & Railroads
- Streams & Ditches
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Boundaries
- Town Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Land Use
- Residential Land Uses
- Non-Residential Land Uses

- Erie Community Center
- School Sites

Green Space
- Town Owned Parks
- Town Owned Open Space
- Private Green Space
- Other Open Space
- Golf Course
- Town Owned Undeveloped Parks
- Housing + Preserved Open Space

- Existing Trails
- Future Trails
- Other Existing Trails
- Other Planned Future Trails
- Underpass
- Proposed Underpass
- Access Gaps

- 1/2 mile radius to an Erie Owned Park
- 1/2 mile radius to Existing Trails

Scale: 1" - 4,500'
0' 4,500' 9,000'
north

3.2.10. Recreation Facilities & Level of Service

Erie will provide a high LOS for the 2035 population for most facility types when compared to the benchmark comparisons of the 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review. More detailed information about these metrics can be found in 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review.

2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review

For a future population of 64,000, the following facilities may be considered as additions to meet the benchmarks set forth in the NRPA Agency Performance Review. Other factors such as population demographics, future trends, and information gathered during the community engagement process should also be taken into consideration.

Potential Future Facilities to be Considered* based on NRPA benchmarks:

- Recreation Center
- Diamond fields
- Rectangular fields
- Basketball and volleyball courts, standalone
- Community gardens
- Indoor multi-use courts (basketball, volleyball, tennis, pickleball, etc.)
- Outdoor multi-use courts (basketball, volleyball, tennis, pickleball, etc.)
- Indoor walking loops/running tracks
- Indoor competitive swimming pools
- Outdoor swimming pools
- Outdoor fitness zones/exercise stations

*Please note that these considerations are for general reference and information only. It is not expected that Erie would institute all of these or limit future facility expansion to these only, but rather keep these in mind when considering NRPA benchmarks.

More detailed information can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

Clayton Park
Credit: Town of Erie

3.3. Existing Recreation Facilities and Programs

3.3.1. Key Takeaways

Erie's Parks & Recreation Department offers a range of programs and services that currently serve all age groups and interests in the community. The Town is recognized for high-quality programs in aquatics, fitness, youth and adult sports, camps, and special events. Participation has grown significantly since 2021, demonstrating a strong and increasing demand for recreational services and facilities.

Most Popular Program Areas

- Aquatics, Fitness, Camp Erie, Youth Sports, and Adult Trips consistently experience extensive waitlists, signaling strong community interest and the need for expansion.
- Teen Programs, Therapeutic Recreation, and Cultural Arts are growing in popularity and have been prioritized for future development.
- Special Events remain a signature offering, with 18 annual events and expanded permitting of private/community-led events.

Areas for Facility Expansion

- The Erie Community Center (ECC) is the primary indoor recreation hub but operates near capacity. Lack of indoor and outdoor aquatic space, gyms, fitness areas, and multipurpose program rooms is a key constraint limiting program growth.
- Planning for a second community center, outdoor aquatic center, additional athletic fields, and a performing arts facility is a key future need.
- There is a strong need for additional indoor space, including group fitness areas, drop-in fitness areas, gyms, aquatic spaces, cultural arts facilities, and administrative spaces.
- Athletic field demand exceeds current supply, particularly during peak seasons.
- There is no performing arts center, outdoor aquatic center, or indoor ice rink, which limits offerings in cultural arts and other recreation activities.
- Limited school district facility access due to shared use restricts scheduling flexibility. Additional facility partnerships should be explored.
- Lack of available time at existing Town recreation facilities to support drop-in (self-directed) use or rentals.
- There is an opportunity to establish more formal partnerships with nonprofits, private providers, and neighboring municipalities.
- There is a need for more office space and storage for the Department.

Program Planning for Future Growth

To meet future recreational needs tied to population increase, the following considerations are essential:

- The Recreation Programming Plan (2021-2023) is in place and regularly guides program design and evaluation. This Plan should be updated as needed to meet future demands and needs.
- Expand indoor recreation facilities, potentially through a second community center, to accommodate growing interest in aquatics, fitness, youth programs, therapeutic, and cultural programs.
- Provide increased opportunities for rentals of recreation spaces.
- Continue to offer programs that are delivered by Town staff and supported by contracted providers under structured rental or revenue-sharing agreements.
- Boost program staffing levels as programs and facilities grow.
- Enhance partnerships with schools, private providers, and non-profits to expand capacity and avoid duplication of services.
- Sustain and increase operations budgets to match the expected breadth and volume of programming.

Priorities for programming based on community input include:

- Youth and Adult Sports
- Special events
- Camps
- Fitness/Wellness
- Cultural Arts
- Aquatics
- Teens
- Older Adults
- Therapeutic

Erie Lake Open Space
Credit: Town of Erie

3.4. Operations & Funding

3.4.1. Key Takeaways

Currently, the Erie Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) organizational structure for operations and maintenance is well suited for future growth and development. For instance, budgets and success metrics accurately reflect the performance of the department, allowing the department to consistently deliver a high level of service.

As Erie continues to grow, the PRD should evolve to meet increasing community demands while maintaining high levels of service, fiscal responsibility, and operational efficiency. The following summary highlights the current status and future considerations related to operations, funding, staffing, and service delivery.

Organizational Strength and Growth Readiness

- Erie PRD is structured across four core divisions: Business Services, Development & Neighborhood Services, Parks and Open Space, and Recreation.
- The PRD's organizational structure and performance tracking systems are well-positioned for future growth, supported by accurate budgeting and clear operational responsibilities.
- Staff growth is needed to meet rising service demands in planning, project administration, recreation programming, parks and facilities maintenance, facility operations, and volunteer coordination.
- Succession planning and continuity strategies for major disruptions (e.g., natural disasters or pandemics) are future needs.

Operations and Maintenance

- Erie's parks, trails, and open spaces are well managed by knowledgeable staff using a detailed Maintenance Management Plan with tiered service levels.
- Staff also maintain other Town assets such as medians, public lands, and vacant properties. These maintenance items often overlap with Public Works responsibilities, which indicates a need for more role clarity.
- The Parks and Open Space Division currently shares a maintenance facility with Public Works, which has outgrown its capacity. Plans may require a standalone Parks and Open Space Division facility.
- Continued investment in equipment, tracking systems, lifecycle cost analysis, and deferred maintenance planning is critical.

Current Funding Sources and Financial Planning

- The primary source of operational funding is the Town's General Fund (46%), supplemented by the Parks Improvement Impact Fund which is reserved for capital projects that enhance the system, and the Trails & Natural Areas Fund which can be used for capital, operations, or land acquisition.
- Other sources include user fees, sponsorships, grants, and the Conservation Trust Fund, and the Tree Impact Fund.
- The 2022 cost recovery rate was 28.57%, with higher-than-average operational expenditures and revenue per capita.
- The department has a cost recovery philosophy with a tiered fee and a scholarship program to ensure access and affordability.
- Budget growth across capital, personnel, and operations categories reflects Erie's investment in expanding services—but identifying new funding sources for capital replacement and operational expansion will be vital.

Future Considerations

- **Facility Expansion:** Meeting the community's growing indoor recreation needs will require significant capital investment and potentially new public-private partnerships.
- **Staffing and Planning**: Continued staff growth, long-term planning capacity, and interdepartmental coordination will help sustain high service levels.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Long-term cost recovery strategies, updated funding policies, and diversified revenue streams will be critical to sustain operations.
- **Operational Excellence:** Clearer delineation of responsibilities, robust data tracking, updated policies, and enhanced volunteer management will support efficient operations.
- **Recreation Programming Growth:** Rising demand for recreational programming will necessitate additional facilities and staff.

Erie Community Park
Credit: Town of Erie

4: **Future Needs**

Understanding the evolving socioeconomics and diverse demographics of Erie helps pinpoint current and future demand for recreational facilities, parks, and programs.

4.1. Population Growth & Demographic Trends

This analysis draws on socioeconomic and demographic information provided by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), who utilizes 2020 Census data and demographers for 2024-2029 projections. ESRI also provides data on housing, recreation, entertainment spending, and participation in activities.

For the 2029 and 2035 population estimates and characteristics, demographic information obtained from the Town of Erie was utilized to model off ESRI's data to develop the final figures.

The analysis of population growth and demographics reveals critical trends that will signify demand for Erie's parks, recreation, open space, and trails through 2035. Understanding these trends is essential to ensuring the Town's parks, recreational facilities, and programs remain responsive, equitable, and forward-thinking.

4.1.1. Population Growth

- Erie is expected to experience substantial population growth, increasing from approximately 40,000 residents in 2024 to around 64,000 by 2035—a 60% increase. This increase will put pressure on existing facilities and will require strategic expansion to meet growing demand.

4.1.2. Age Distribution

- Adults aged 25–44 represent the largest age cohort in Erie, followed by youth aged 5–17. There will be strong growth in the 55+ age groups in the coming years.
- The median age is projected to increase slightly from 38.8 in 2024 to 39.5 in 2029, suggesting a sustained presence of young families, working professionals, and school-age children.
- The youthful demographic of Erie will drive demand for family-oriented programs, teen-focused spaces, and flexible facilities that cater to both children and older adults.

4.1.3. Household Growth

- Nearly 45% of households have children, significantly higher than state and national averages, underscoring the importance of youth programming, inclusive family amenities, and safe, accessible outdoor spaces.

4.1.4. Household Income & Expenditures

- Median household income will increase from $163,377 in 2024 to a projected $184,911 by 2029—indicating that most of the community has financial means to support and engage with recreational services.
- 91.6% of Erie households earn over $50,000 annually, a strong predictor of participation in recreation programs and willingness to invest in leisure and fitness activities.
- Erie residents allocate approximately 4% of their household income—or around $7,168 annually—toward entertainment and recreation, reinforcing the opportunity for expanded offerings that align with their interests and expectations.

4.1.5. Implications for Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

Capacity Planning

Capacity planning helps communities allocate available and future resources to satisfy the needs of residents over time. Rapid population growth in Erie will necessitate the expansion of existing facilities and the development of new recreation facilities, parks, and trail systems to maintain quality of life and access.

Age-Specific Services

The prevalence of youth and middle-aged adults indicates a need for programming that serves children, teens, and adults, including multi-purpose recreation centers, sports facilities, and family-friendly open space. Older adults will also require additional programming and services.

Affluence-Driven Demand

Higher income levels and above-average recreation spending suggest residents will expect high-quality, diverse, and innovative recreation options.

Equity Considerations

While most residents are financially well-off, continued attention should be given to promoting inclusive access and affordability to ensure equity across all socioeconomic groups, including underserved and under-represented populations.

Sustainable Investment

The growing and demographically youthful population provides a strong foundation for long-term investments in trails, parks, and recreation that foster health, community connection, and environmental stewardship.

Resiliency

Incorporating resiliency and long-term flexibility into parks and recreation development is essential for creating spaces that can continue to be financially attainable and adapt to changing community needs.

More detailed information can be found in Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report.

4.2. Future Budget and Funding Source Implications

This section outlines the future budget considerations and funding implications associated with these needs. By understanding these future costs, the Town can align its finance methods and funding mechanisms to support a balanced and sustainable parks, recreation, open space, and trails (PROST) system.

4.2.1. Park and Recreation Facilities Costs

The development of new recreation facilities and the expansion of existing amenities will require major capital investments.

Key Cost Drivers

- Planning, design, and construction of a second community recreation center.
- Development of athletic field complexes and neighborhood parks in growth areas.
- Development of future community park sites
- Renovation and enhancement of existing parks to add restrooms, lighting, seating, and inclusive play areas.
- Development of cultural facilities such as amphitheaters or performing arts spaces will require a combination of public and private funding.
- Planning, design, and construction of an outdoor aquatics center.

Implications for Funding

- Large-scale facilities will likely require a mix of funding sources, including general obligation bonds, grants, impact fees, dedicated sales tax revenues, and partnerships with other organizations.

4.2.2. Park and Open Space Land Acquisition Costs

Securing land for future parks and open spaces is critical as developable land becomes scarcer and more expensive.

Key Cost Drivers

- Land and construction costs are increasing regionally, making it critical for Erie to act quickly on priority acquisitions and projects.
- Acquisition of 30+ acre parcels for future community parks.
- Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and riparian corridors through land purchase or conservation easements.
- Purchase of smaller parcels in underserved areas for neighborhood parks.

Implications for Funding

- Current Public Land Dedication (PLD) and Open Space Dedication (OSD) fees may not fully cover rising land costs.
- Partnerships with land trusts and conservation organizations may provide additional leverage.

Colliers Hill Trails
Credit: Colliers Hill

4.2.3. Trail Development Costs

Expanding Erie's trail system and improving connectivity will enhance access to parks, schools, and regional trail networks. Most new trails in Erie are built in private developments.

Key Cost Drivers

- Construction of new multi-use trail segments to close network gaps.
- Upgrades to existing trails wayfinding and ADA improvements, and lighting for specific trail segments, primarily those that are commuter routes.
- Land acquisition or easements for trail corridors.

Implications for Funding

- The Town may utilize state and federal transportation grants (e.g., TAP) for trail projects.
- Impact fees along with revenues from the Conservation Trust Fund and the Trails and Natural Areas Fund can help fund local trail development.
- Coordination with regional partners can provide additional resources for cross-jurisdictional connections.

4.2.4. Maintenance and Operations Needs

As Erie's park, recreation, and open space system expands, so will the need for additional maintenance capacity and staffing.

Key Cost Drivers

- Increased acreage of parks and open space requiring care and maintenance.
- Additional facilities, playgrounds, athletic fields, and trails needing regular upkeep.
- Expanded recreation programming requiring more staff and operational resources.

Implications for Funding

- The Town will need to plan for long-term operational funding to avoid deferred maintenance.
- Diversifying revenue streams (e.g., program fees, partnerships, dedicated taxes) can help sustain service levels.
- Consideration of operational cost recovery policies for recreation programs and facilities to balance affordability and sustainability.

Erie Singletrack Trails
Credit: Girls, Gears and Beers LLC

Erie Community Park Aerial
Credit: Bergreen Photography

5: Recommendations

This chapter presents the overarching recommendations of the Playbook, organized into five plan categories. Each category has been defined through the plan process to set the vision and focus areas for the future. The plan categories listed below are of equal weight and do not represent an order of prioritization. The recommendations provide a high-level roadmap that guides the plan's implementation strategies are informed through a combination of a detailed technical plan assessment, current trends, and community preferences and desires.

5.1. Parks & Recreation Facilities

A well-planned system of parks and recreation facilities is essential for supporting active, healthy lifestyles and fostering a sense of community in Erie. Strategic investments in both new facilities and existing infrastructure will ensure residents continue to enjoy access to high-quality recreation opportunities.

As part of the planning efforts for new recreational facilities, a comprehensive feasibility study should be completed for each initiative to determine the specific programmatic needs and amenities to be included, site location, capital funding requirements, and operational requirements and priorities for development.

5.1.1. Recommendations

A. Plan for future community recreation spaces

- A second new community recreation center in Erie is envisioned to meet indoor recreation needs such as fitness, aquatics, cultural arts, sports, and flexible program spaces.
- A potential outdoor aquatics center will respond to demand and provide seasonal amenities and complement existing indoor facilities.
- Advance plans for a performing arts center as a unique cultural destination based on the performing art center feasibility study.
- Increase capacity for athletic fields, indoor pickleball courts, and outdoor pickleball courts to accommodate growing youth and adult sports participation.

Erie Community Center Indoor Pool
Credit: Town of Erie

B. Revitalize and expand the existing Erie Community Center

- Utilize the spaces and resources available in the existing Erie Community Center to help meet the future demand of Erie. This should be based on updates to the Recreation Program Plan.
- Expand the center where possible to add space for program areas that are in high demand.

C. Focus on maintaining existing facilities

- Develop a capital lifecycle replacement plan (this is often referred to as an asset management plan for sustainable facility management).
- Replace or repair parks and recreation facilities and amenities as needed.
- Continue improvements to existing facilities, including restrooms, lighting, and accessibility upgrades.
- Ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Universal Access compliance.
- Update existing operations and maintenance plans for each facility.

D. Plan for additional future parks

- Establish a prioritization program to confirm high, medium, and low-priority future park investments in Erie.
- Develop new neighborhood-scale parks equitably in Erie, including in underserved areas per the Overall PROST Map.

E. Strengthen asset management, safety, and accessibility

- Maintain updated Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for all facilities to ensure safety and preparedness.
- Increase opportunities for more equitable and inclusive recreational opportunities.

As part of the planning efforts for these facilities, comprehensive feasibility studies for each should be completed that determines the specific amenities to be included, the site, capital funding requirements, operational requirements and priorities for development.

5.2. Open Space & Trails

Erie's open spaces and trails are among its most treasured assets, providing opportunities for recreation, conservation, and community connection. Protecting these resources while improving access and the user experience will require deliberate planning and stewardship.

5.2.1. Recommendations

A. Restore habitat and ecologically sensitive areas

- Identify and map high-value open spaces and conservation areas and update data bases as required to ensure the high priority areas continue to meet standards as defined.
- Support environmental stewardship and restoration efforts to protect Erie's unique character and wildlife habitats.

B. Enhance trail connectivity and accessibility

- Close gaps in the existing trail network to create a fully connected system, such as exploring opportunities to expand trails using underutilized rights-of-ways or conservation easements.
- Improve signage and wayfinding to support safe, user-friendly trails.
- Integrate ADA-compliant and universally accessible features throughout the trail system.

Coal Creek Open Space
Credit: Town of Erie

5.3. Recreation Programs and Resources

Recreation programming fosters community engagement and supports physical, social, and emotional well-being. Erie's growing and diversifying population requires expanded and inclusive offerings designed to meet a wide range of needs.

5.3.1. Recommendations

A. Expand and diversify recreation programs

- Update the existing Recreation Programming Plan to reflect the direction of Recreation Division for the next 3-5 years. The plan should recognize that the Town does not need to be the primary provider of all recreation programs and services in the community.
- Maintain a focus on providing recreation programs for special demographic groups including:
  - Youth – Programs that serve a variety of interest areas beyond just sports including after-school and summer camps.
  - Teens – Activities designed specifically for teens that are both organized and drop-in in nature.
  - Older Adults – Programs and services that serve a wide range of the senior age category, including an appeal to the younger more active based senior.
  - Intergenerational/Multi-generational – Offering programs and services that have an appeal to multiple generations or across generations. This includes family based activities.
  - Ethnic/Culturally Based – There should be an effort to offer programs and services that are appropriate for the cultural orientation of the area.
- Continue to focus on basic performance measures to track recreation programming effectiveness on a summary basis.
- Maintaining strong programming emphasis requires an annual comprehensive marketing plan. This includes the following for both Town programs as well as those that are contracted:
  - Rates of fill for programs and activities (capacity vs. actual numbers)
  - Resident and non-resident participation rates
  - Participation numbers and comparisons to past years/seasons
  - Rate of program cancellations (should be between 15% and 20%)
  - Financial performance including cost per participant
  - Evaluations from participants

B. Strengthen partnerships and collaboration

- Build on partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and private providers to expand capacity and coordinate services. The expected role of other providers in delivering programs include:
    - Youth Sports – Most team sports on the competitive and travel level will be offered by community-based organizations. Parks and Recreation will focus on recreational focused youth sports programs.
    - Adult Sports – Parks and Recreation will continue to provide a base level of adult sports programs and will also partner with other providers for a full compliment of programming.
    - Fitness/Wellness – This will remain a major area of program focus for Parks and Recreation in the future with a limited role for other providers in offering specialized services.
    - Aquatics – Aquatic programming will continue to be an important program area for Parks and Recreation that will be augmented by other providers.
    - Older Adults - Parks and Recreation will continue to be a primary provider of activities for this age group, while specialized services and programs will likely be provided by other organizations on a contract basis.
    - Cultural Arts – Parks and Recreation will continue to increase its role in providing cultural arts programming along with contract providers. This will grow substantially with the development of a performing arts center.
    - Special Events – This will remain a primary program area for the Town but there should be a maximum level of community wide special events that will be offered per year with any additional events and activities being offered by other providers on a permit basis.
    - Youth – Recreation programming for youth will continue to depend on a baseline of Parks and Recreation activities (including camps) augmented by contract providers.
    - Therapeutic – This will be a growth area for Parks and Recreation programming that can be enhanced through partnerships with other agencies and providers.
    - Teens – Parks and Recreation will focus on expanding program opportunities for this age group. Utilizing other providers will be important to providing a broad spectrum of opportunities.
- Formalize agreements with external providers to clarify roles, responsibilities, and facility use. Partnerships could include:
    - Other public sector organizations
    - Non-profits such as a YMCA
    - School districts
    - Private providers

Erie youth soccer program
Credit: Town of Erie

- Clearly identify specific roles and expectations with other contract providers that also limits to facility scheduling, fees, and operations. Any financial agreements with other contract providers should require that at least 30% of gross revenues be kept by the Town and an effort should be made to move the percentage to 40%. For those program areas where there are no contracts, utilize other providers on a referral and clearinghouse basis. This should involve promotion of their activities, coordinating of some programs, and permitting of facilities. If there are not contract providers present, then referring the community to other possible service providers should be considered. This could be neighboring park and recreation agencies that provide the service or non-profit's that have the service. However, this process needs to be closely managed to be successful. Other contract requirements should include:
    - Program plan
    - Safety and security plans
    - Participant code of conduct
    - Annual background checks for all staff and volunteers
    - Quarterly and annual reports on program numbers and participants
    - Coaches training program and concussion protocol for youth sports

C. Monitor and improve program effectiveness

- Gather community input at least every two years to ensure programs reflect evolving needs.
- Consider updating the athletic field use requirements to include the following from the user groups:
    - Town Parks and Recreation programs
    - Town sponsored organizations
    - Other organizations
- Consider establishing clear priorities for user groups that contain the following:
    - Organization is a recognized 501(c)3.
    - There is an established board of directors, and the organization is managed by a set of bylaws.
    - The organization has adequate liability insurance.
    - Program participation by sport and season for the past 3 years.
    - A minimum of 80% of program participants should be from the Town of Erie.
    - Annual background checks for all coaches, staff, and volunteers
    - Coaches' training/certification program
    - Concussion/injury protocols
    - Participant/coaches/spectator code of conduct
    - There is an emergency action plan

5.4. Operations and Funding

To deliver high-quality services during rapid growth, Erie should strengthen its operational foundation and diversify its funding strategies. Proactive planning for staffing, maintenance, and financial sustainability is essential to meet the challenges ahead.

5.4.1. Recommendations

A. Consider establishing a Land Acquisition process and evaluation criteria

Goals of the Land Acquisition Process for Parks, Open Space, and Trails

- Align with the overarching goals and objectives of the adopted PROST Playbook.
- Identify and prioritize high-quality sites for future acquisition.
- Create a measurable, transparent, and consistent process to support decision-making.
- Provide regular reporting to track progress on open space objectives.
- Engage the appropriate advisory bodies and staff in evaluating potential acquisitions.

Land Acquisition Team

The Land Acquisition Team should consist of the following representatives:

- Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB)
- Planning Department Staff
- Parks and Recreation Department Staff
- Town Attorney

This team should be responsible for conducting evaluations, coordinating due diligence, and supporting negotiations related to potential acquisitions.

Land Acquisition Criteria

The Town should adhere to a set of land acquisition criteria to evaluate potential sites for acquisition. These criteria will:

- Help rank and prioritize parcels based on alignment with Parks and Recreation objectives.
- Provide a foundation for staff recommendations to the Town Council and OSTAB.

Note: These criteria are not intended to address feasibility considerations such as seller willingness, property price, or financial strategy. Those elements will be addressed during the due diligence phase. Community outreach may be integrated into the evaluation process as determined appropriate by the Acquisition Team.

Process Overview

1. Annual Review and Identification
   - Town staff should conduct an annual assessment of areas, regions, or specific parcels that may serve as beneficial parkland or open space.
   - A report should be prepared and presented to Town Council identifying top-priority areas.
2. Priority Setting
   - The Acquisition Team should use the adopted criteria to rank potential parcels and make recommendations.
   - Staff should seek direction from Town Council regarding specific parcels of interest.
3. Due Diligence and Negotiation
   - Staff should lead negotiations and perform due diligence on Town Council-directed parcels.
   - Feasibility, funding strategy, and acquisition options should be evaluated in consultation with the Town Attorney and relevant departments.
4. Reporting and Approval
   - Staff should report the outcome of due diligence and negotiation back to Town Council.
   - Final acquisition decisions will require formal approval from Town Council.

Ongoing Evaluation and Updates

- OSTAB should conduct periodic reviews of the acquisition plan and process to ensure alignment with community needs and evolving PROST Plan goals.
- Town staff may re-evaluate and adjust the priority sites as necessary.

Reporting and Accountability

An annual reporting system should be developed to track and measure progress. This report should include:

- Status of ongoing acquisitions
- Assessment of open space targets and needs
- Summary of decisions made and parcels acquired

Conclusion

This land acquisition method and process provides a consistent and goal-aligned pathway for expanding the Town's parks and open space system. With collaboration across Town departments, advisory boards, and Town Council, the Town will ensure the preservation and enhancement of valuable land for the benefit of current and future generations.

Land Acquisition Criteria					
No.	**Criteria**	**Purpose**	**Potential Points (1 Point for Each Item)**	**Multiplier**	**Maximum Potential No. of Points**
1	**Overall PROST Map**	To achieve the need for the future parks and open spaces that are identified on the Overall PROST Map.	* Land is located in the general vicinity of a future park or open space area per the Overall PROST Map.	5	5
2	**Adjacency & Contiguity**	To create a connected system of parks, recreation, open space, and trails throughout Erie.	* Land is adjacent to an existing or future planned park or open space area per the Overall PROST Map.	4	4
3	**Trail System Connectivity**	To create and enhance a connected trail system throughout Erie.	* Land is located in the general vicinity of a future planned trail per the Overall PROST Map. * Land could accommodate a trail facility and contribute to the overall future planned trail system of Erie per the Overall PROST Map.	3	6
4	**Accessibility & Equity**	To ensure that every Erie resident has access to an open space, park, or trail within a ½ mile or a 10-minute walk from their home.	* Land is located in an area that meets the ½ mile or 10-minute walk objective.	3	3
5	**Community Identity**	To preserve and celebrate Erie's rich history and sense of place by integrating historical resources, public art, and cultural landmarks into facilities.	* Land contains historical resources or cultural landmarks. * Land contains public art or other facilities or resources that can support local artists and community identity. * Land is suitable for potential future activities and programming for a variety of demographic groups.	2	6
6	**Recreational Opportunity**	To provide access to active or passive recreational or educational activities.	* Land is suitable for potential future development of sports/multi-use fields or other active recreational areas. * Land contains unique passive recreational or educational opportunities.	2	4
7	**Natural Areas Inventory**	To preserve and protect natural habitats, wetlands, wildlife corridors, and other significant biodiversity per the Natural Areas Inventory.	* Land contains valuable biodiversity elements such as natural habitats, wetlands, or wildlife corridors as per the Natural Areas Inventory. * Land provides opportunities to restore or create valuable biodiversity elements such as natural habitats, wetlands, or wildlife corridors as per per the Natural Areas Inventory.	2	4
8	**Unique Environmental Features**	To preserve iconic land features that represent local and regional value	* Land has distinctive land features that could be valuable to the community for a variety of purposes, including viewsheds, water frontage, landforms, etc. * Land contains high quality soils usable for agricultural purposes and/or is irrigated land.	1	2
9	**Developability**	To expedite park land development and open space conservation, lower development costs, and implement easier construction and entitlement processes.	* Land is already zoned or entitled for park land development or open space conservation, or would qualify for an expdited entitlement process. * Land is suitable for construction with appropriate terrain for a park and would not require extensive earthwork. * Land has easy or direct access to existing utilities such as water, sewer, and electricity.	1	3
10	**Park Suitability**	To acquire parcels of land that meet the minimum size requirements of neighborhood or community parks, or are sizable areas.	* Land meets the minimum park size for the desired future park type per the Overall PROST Map. * Land is suitable for the desired future program and facilities as determined by the Parks and Recreation Department. * Land is 30 acres in size or more.	1	3
TOTAL AVAILABLE POINTS					**40**
HIGH PRIORITY ACQUISITION					26 - 40
MEDIUM PRIORITY ACQUISITION					14 - 26
LOW PRIORITY ACQUISITION					0 - 13

Table 1. Recommended Land Acquisition Criteria

B. Plan for financial sustainability

- Forecast five-year operational and capital budget needs.
- Explore additional funding sources, including grants, partnerships, and sponsorship programs.
- Review and update the cost recovery policy and scholarship program every five years.

C. Commit to national best practices

- Maintain CAPRA accreditation through NRPA as a benchmark for excellence.
- Continue using tools like Placer.ai and Amilia analytics to guide operational decisions.

D. Strengthen organizational capacity

- Develop and regularly update a staffing plan, onboarding process, and certification training programs.
- Complete a cost of service analysis every five years.
- Evaluate compensation rates for part-time staff to meet the state's minimum wage mandates and attract and retain staff.
- Determine what operational functions could be contracted in the Department and the budget implications of implementing the plan.
- Consider establishing volunteer and park ambassador programs to enhance capacity.
- In the next 3-5 years plan for an increase in staffing in the following areas:
  - **Business Services**
    - Review and modify the existing organizational structure of the Department.
    - Possible new positions: Volunteer Coordinator
  - **Development and Neighborhood Services**
    - Determine the role of the Division in areas that are not directly related to parks and recreation.
    - Possible new positions: New Project Manager and Neighborhood Services Coordinator
  - **Parks and Open Space**
    - Determine the role of the Division in areas that are not directly related to the maintenance of parks and recreation.
    - Possible new positions: Park ambassador/park rangers, Additional Park maintenance staff, and Additional Open space/trails maintenance staff
  - **Recreation Facilities and Programs**
    - New positions associated with new facilities including an outdoor aquatic center, second community center, and Schofield event space.
    - New positions associated with a possible Performing Arts Center
    - Possible new positions: Therapeutic Coordinator, Teen Coordinator, and Cultural Arts Coordinator

Erie PRD Staff
Credit: Town of Erie

E. Improve maintenance and management systems

- Conduct athletic field capacity analysis to manage demand and preserve field quality. Establish an annual hourly level of use ceiling for fields to minimize turf damage and keep fields usable. Usage recommendations and preserving field quality methods, such as rotating field usage, will be determined by Staff.
- Update to a comprehensive Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) to improve efficiency.
- Continue an emphasis on capital replacement requirements for all parks, facilities and open space/trails.
- Update the existing Maintenance and Operations Plan and Open Space Management Plan every 2-3 years. This should include consideration for any new parks, trails, open space and facilities. This update should also have a specific focus on preventative maintenance. Ideally each major park, open space, trail, or recreation facility should have its own maintenance plan that is specific to that location.
- Define the Parks & Open Space Division's long-term role for maintenance responsibilities for medians, streetscapes and right of ways in conjunction with other Town departments' responsibilities.
- Clarify the maintenance responsibilities between the Town and HOAs for any shared park or open space areas.
- Develop a formal standard of maintenance staff ratio per developed park acres (one staff for each 10 acres is a common standard) and a staff ratio per square footage of indoor facilities (one staff for 40,000 square feet is a basic standard).
- Establish different maintenance tiers for all parks, trails, open space and facilities. This process should sort amenities based on level of use, prominence in the community, and the type of use. From this a level of service is determined for each tier.
- Continue to utilize the extensive maintenance performance measures that are in place and increase the use of technology (handheld devises for field input of information, etc.) to support these efforts.
- The Department should continue the focus on tracking actual time and resource requirements for individual larger parks, open space areas and key facilities to determine actual maintenance costs.
- Continue to have comprehensive contracts in place for all contract maintenance functions. Explore the viability of contracting for additional maintenance functions that reduce the reliance on Department staffing levels and provide an acceptable level of service in a cost-effective manner.
- Grow and improve the Agricultural Lease program to ensure that it serves the needs of the Town.
- Expand the lifecycle cost analysis for parks and recreation amenities and equipment.
- Continue to transition to all electric equipment and vehicles as the technology becomes available to support the needs of the Department. This should include the purchase of new electric equipment and the establishment of charging stations in the Parks and Open Space maintenance facility and in key parks and facilities throughout the community.
- Complete a feasibility study for the development of a Parks and Open Space maintenance facility that is independent from the Public Works facility.
- Establish an annual athletic field capacity schedule for natural turf fields that ensures there is adequate time allocated for turf rejuvenation.
- Develop a policy on the utilization of artificial turf for athletic fields that includes a determination of when and where this is appropriate, establishes an implementation plan, and a capital replacement program.
- Continue to determine ways to reduce water usage as well as fertilization levels in developed park areas.
- Upgrade irrigation systems to improve efficiency and lower water usage.
- Continue to promote and manage the existing agricultural lease programs for open space properties.

Camp Erie
Credit: Town of Erie

F. Evaluate New Local Government Funding Sources and Finance Methods

To support the acquisition, development, and long-term maintenance of Erie's parks, open spaces, and trails, the Town should pursue a diverse and sustainable mix of funding sources. This section outlines key finance options that combine local revenues, external grants, partnerships, and creative funding mechanisms. Together, these tools will help Erie meet its park and open space goals as the community grows.

- Public Land Dedication requirements
    - Review the park typology requirements to allocate more acreage to neighborhood parks and less to pocket parks.
    - Review and update PLD and OSD fee schedules to ensure they reflect current land values and park development costs.
- Development and Neighborhood Services
    - Prioritize acquisition of land to protect and preserve open space areas or develop future parks per the Overall PROST Map. Strategic land acquisition and habitat restoration efforts will balance growth pressures with conservation goals.
    - Evaluate Parks and Recreation Impact Fees to reflect current costs.

Potential Funding Sources

- **Public Land Dedication (PLD) and Open Space Dedication (OSD) Fees**

  These include the fees collected from developers in lieu of land dedication for parks and open space. The Town collects these fees from developers during development approvals and places them in separate funds for future acquisition or improvements.

- **Sales and Use Tax Revenues**

  This includes a portion of the local sales tax allocated to parks and open space. It is a voter-approved dedicated sales taxes to provide a reliable revenue stream for acquisition, operations, maintenance, and improvements.

- **Local, State, and Federal Grants**

  Pursue available state, regional and federal funding sources to leverage local resources to address high priority project initiatives. Reference the table to the right for a list of available grants in 2025.

- **Conservation Trust Fund**
- **Bond Funding**
- **Partnerships and Donations**

  Conservation Easements and Land Trusts
    - Utilize legal agreements as a tool to preserve private land as dedicated open space and conservation areas without Town ownership. The Town may partner with land trusts to secure conservation easements at lower cost, where private land owners and conservation organizations provide funds.
    - Establish formal partnerships with land trusts and conservation organizations to pursue joint preservation projects.

  Philanthropy and Community Foundations
    - This includes donations or grants from individuals, foundations, or nonprofits. Funds may support targeted acquisitions, cultural amenities, or community-driven projects. Philanthropic organizations and private donors provide funds.
    - Engage local foundations and major donors to explore philanthropic partnerships for signature projects.

Available Grants (2025)*

Parks & Recreation
Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Outdoor Equity Grant Program
Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative and Grant Program
Great Outdoors Colorado: Community Impact, Land Acquisition, or Pathways Grants
Economic & Community Development
Boulder County: Community Partnership Grant
Boulder County: Economic Vitality Program
Sustainable Infrastructure & Resiliency
US Department of Transportation: Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment: Environmental Justice Grant Program
US Department of Transportation: Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program
Arts & Culture
National Endowment for the Arts: Our Town Creative Placemaking Grants Program
Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade: Colorado Creates Grant
Arts in Society: Colorado Art Grant
Scientific and Cultural Facilities District Grants

Table 2. Available Grants (2025)

** Note: This list is not exhaustive. PRD Staff should coordinate with the Town's grants team on additional opportunities.*

5.5. Cultural Elements

Cultural resources strengthen Erie's identity, celebrate its heritage, and create opportunities for community connection through arts and history. Integrating cultural elements into parks and public spaces enriches the community's sense of place.

5.5.1. Recommendations

A. Support outdoor cultural venues and events

- Develop amphitheaters and flexible event spaces to host festivals, performances, and community gatherings.

B. Preserve and celebrate historic resources

- Advocate for the protection and enhancement of historically and culturally significant sites, such as Schofield Farm Open Space, by working with the Historic Preservation Advisory Board, property owners, and other partners.

C. Expand cultural arts programming

- Increase public art installations, history-focused events, and partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations.

D. Foster collaboration

- Build strong relationships with historical societies, artists, and nonprofits to enhance cultural offerings.

Erie annual hot air balloon festival
Credit: Uncover Colorado

5.5.2. Overall PROST Map

This map shows the existing and future parks, recreation, open space, and trails for Erie. It serves as a roadmap to guide the locations and development of future facilities and maintain existing facilities and lands.

Legend

Existing Waterways & Railroads

- Streams & Ditches
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Boundaries

- Town Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Land Use

- Residential Land Uses
- Non-Residential Land Uses

- Erie Community Center
- School Sites

Green Space

- Town Owned Parks
- Town Owned Open Space
- Private Green Space
- Other Open Space
- Golf Course
- Town Owned Undeveloped Park Sites
- Housing + Preserved Open Space

- Existing Trails
- Future Trails
- Other Existing Trails
- Other Planned Future Trails
- Underpass
- Proposed Underpass
- Future Town Owned Community Park/Recreational Facility Opportunity
- Future Town Owned Neighborhood Park Opportunity
- Future Town Open Space Opportunity
- Potential Urban Recreation Facility

Note that the location and development of all future planned facilities, including parks, recreation, open spaces, and trails should be coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions. Future parks will be considered if new residential areas are annexed into Town and redeveloped.

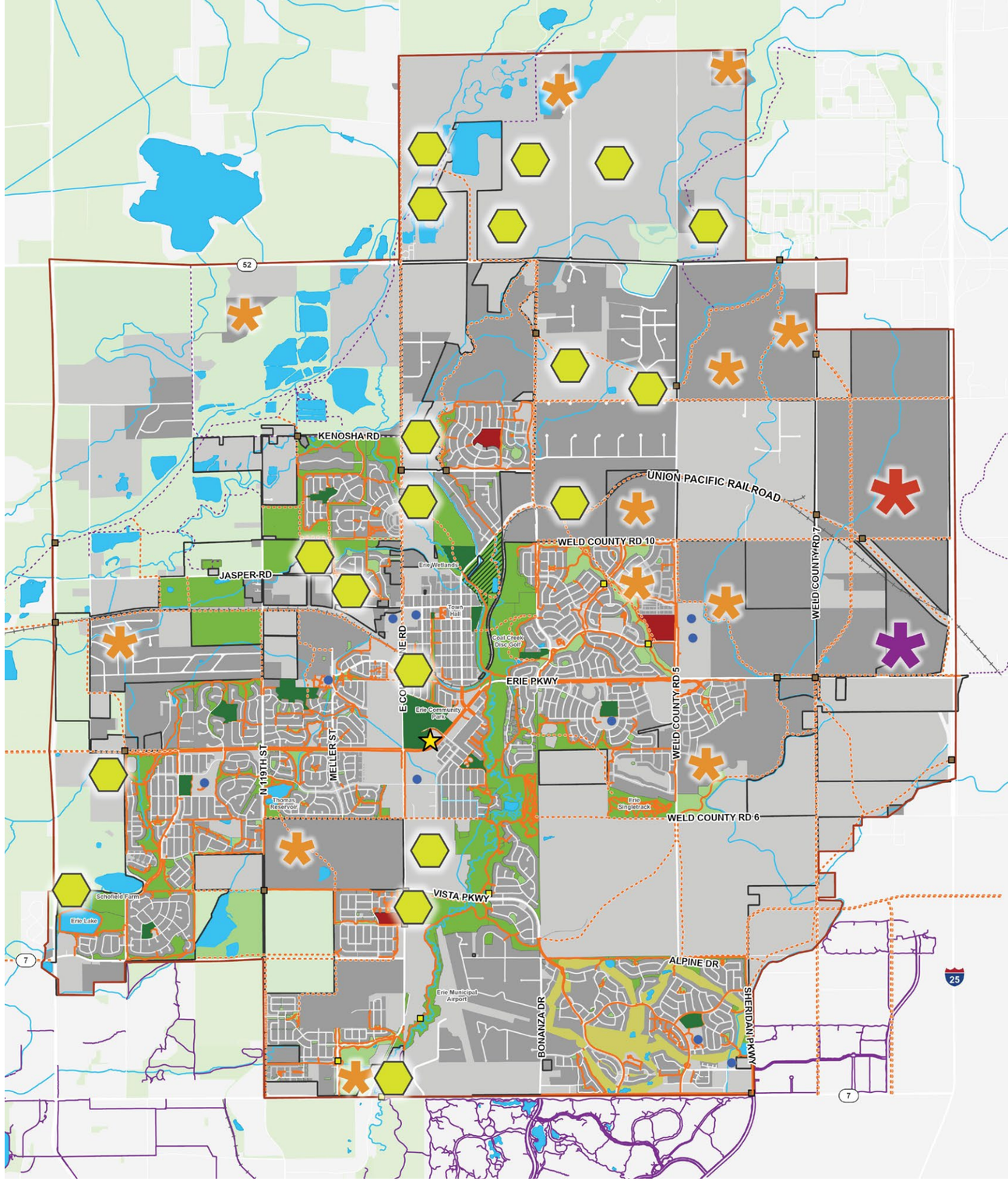


Figure 9. Overall PROST Map

Scale: 1" - 4,500'
0' 4,500' 9,000'
north

Camp Erie
Credit: Town of Erie

6: Implementation Plan

This chapter provides a strategic framework for advancing the plan elements outlined in Chapter 5: Recommendations and identifies high-level implementation methods for each of the five categories. The implementation plan guides decision-making, resource allocation, and required partnerships to achieve Erie's vision for parks, recreation, open space, trails, and cultural resources.

The Action Plan provides a detailed roadmap for implementing the Plan recommendations and establishes priorities for each element. It translates high-level strategies into specific, actionable steps with clear responsibilities and timelines. This Action Plan serves as a practical management tool to track progress, assign responsibilities, and ensure accountability throughout the Plan's lifecycle.

6.1. Parks & Recreation Facilities

Methods

Feasibility Studies for Major Facilities

- Conduct studies for the second community recreation center, outdoor aquatics center, and continue efforts of the Erie Community Center expansion to identify locations, design options, capital costs, and operational models.
- Establish partnerships with other organizations to expand parks and facilities opportunities.

Capital Lifecycle Replacement Planning

- Develop and maintain a plan for asset management and reinvestment across all recreation facilities.

Maintenance Tiers and Efficiencies

- Establish levels of service for facility maintenance based on use intensity and community prominence.

Park Development and Renewal

- Plan and develop for future parks per the Overall PROST Map and other Department planning efforts underway.

Future Partnership Development

- Establish partnerships with other organizations to expand parks and facilities opportunities.

6.2. Open Space & Trails

Methods

Strategic Land Acquisition

- Use Park Land Dedication (PLD) and Open Space Dedication (OSD) tools, along with fee-in-lieu options, to prioritize acquisitions that support ecological value, scenic quality, and public access.

Habitat Restoration and Stewardship

- Expand programs to restore riparian areas, native plant communities, and wildlife corridors in collaboration with conservation organizations.

Trail Connectivity and ADA Access

- Close network gaps by leveraging underutilized rights-of-way and easements. Integrate ADA-compliant features and universal design principles throughout the trail system.

Wayfinding and Safety Enhancements

- Implement Erie's Trails and Open Space Wayfinding Master Plan and add signage, lighting, and safety features to enhance user experience.

Partnerships with Regional Agencies

- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to expand regional trail connections and open space systems.

6.3. Recreation Programs & Resources

Methods

Program Planning and Evaluation

- Regularly update the Recreation Programming Plan to reflect community needs and trends, including targeted services for youth, teens, older adults, and culturally diverse populations.

Performance Metrics and Feedback Loops

- Track participation rates, financial performance, and community feedback to guide programming decisions.

Partnership Development

- Build formal agreements with schools, nonprofits, and private providers to share programming responsibilities and facilities.

Equity and Inclusion

- Expand outreach and adapt programming to meet the needs of different demographic groups, underserved communities, and diverse populations.

6.4. Operations & Funding

Methods

Park Land Dedication (PLD) Requirements

Review and Adjust Park Typologies

- Evaluate the existing park typology standards within the PLD framework to better align with Erie's evolving development patterns and community preferences. Consider allocating a higher percentage of acreage to neighborhood parks, which provide equitable access within walking distance, while adjusting the emphasis on community parks and pocket parks to balance operational demands and long-term maintenance costs.

Update PLD and OSD Fee Schedules

- Conduct a comprehensive financial analysis to ensure PLD and Open Space Dedication (OSD) fee schedules reflect current and projected land values, construction costs, and infrastructure needs. This will position the Town to effectively acquire and develop new parkland without falling behind as land costs escalate.

Strengthen Policy Consistency

- Align PLD and OSD requirements with the Overall PROST Map to ensure future dedications support system-wide connectivity, ecological preservation, and equitable distribution of parks and open space.

Lifeguard staff training at the Erie Community Center
Credit: Town of Erie

Future Land Acquisition Process and Criteria

Establish Clear Acquisition Criteria

- Develop and adopt criteria for evaluating potential acquisitions based on ecological value, recreational potential, proximity to underserved areas, and alignment with trail connectivity goals. Prioritize parcels that support contiguous open space systems and avoid fragmented "leftover" lands that provide limited value.

Create a Strategic Acquisition Plan

- Prepare a long-range acquisition strategy that identifies priority parcels and anticipated phasing needs based on projected population growth, development pressure, and funding availability.

Balance Conservation and Recreation Goals

- Emphasize acquisitions that serve dual purposes of habitat preservation and recreational use, supporting the Town's conservation objectives while meeting resident demand for accessible open space.

Future Operations and Funding Efforts

Staffing Plans and Organizational Development

- Create and update staffing plans tied to service levels for parks, facilities, and programs. Develop onboarding, training, and succession planning systems

Volunteer and Ambassador Programs

- Establish a volunteer program and park ambassador initiative to support programming and community engagement.

Financial Sustainability

- Diversify revenue streams with grants, partnerships, sponsorships, and potential voter-approved dedicated taxes.

Dedicated Acquisition and Maintenance Fund

- Establish restricted funds to enable opportunistic land purchases and to support ongoing operations.

Data-Driven Decision Making

- Use tools like Placer.ai and Amilia analytics to inform staffing, programming, and facility operations.

National Accreditation

- Maintain CAPRA accreditation through regular self-assessments and continuous improvement.

Partnership Development

- Explore joint ventures with private providers and nonprofits for shared development and operational responsibilities.

6.5. Cultural Elements

Methods

Cultural Facility Development

- Advance plans for amphitheaters, performing arts spaces, and other cultural venues as unique community destinations.

Historic Preservation Strategies

- Advocate for the protection and enhancement of historically and culturally significant sites, such as Schofield Farm Open Space, by working with the Historic Preservation Advisory Board, property owners, and other partners.

Cultural Partnerships

- Develop collaborative agreements with local artists, cultural organizations, and historical societies to expand programming and preserve heritage.

Public Art and Programming

- Increase public art installations and history-focused events to foster community identity and engagement.

Funding and Philanthropy

- Pursue grants and philanthropic support for cultural initiatives, leveraging partnerships for shared investment.

6.6. Action Plan

The Action Plan illustrated on the following pages translates the high-level priorities and implementation methods into specific, actionable and measurable steps. This Action Plan is designed as a practical management tool to support accountability, track progress, and guide annual work planning. It ensures that Erie's parks, recreation, open space, and cultural initiatives are advanced systematically and aligned with community needs.

Each action item is organized by the five thematic categories established in the plan: Parks and Recreation Facilities, Open Space and Trails, Recreation Programs and Resources, Operations and Funding, and Cultural Elements.

Coal Creek Splashpad
Credit: DTJ Design

Parks and Recreation Facilities						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**Priority**	**Timeline**
PRF-1	**Second Community Recreation Center Feasibility Study**	Establish priorities for the development of a new major recreation facility with identified capital funding sources.	Specific indoor recreation spaces desired include fitness space for drop-in use, group exercise rooms, gymnasium for multi-use courts, an aquatics area, flexible indoor program spaces for diverse programs such as teen, youth, or older adult programs and services, cultural arts areas for performance or classes, and storage, administrative and other support spaces.	Parks & Recreation, Finance	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
PRF-2	**Outdoor Aquatics Center Feasibility Study**	Establish priorities for the development of a new Outdoor Aquatics Center with identified capital funding sources.	Evaluate the potential for a seasonal outdoor aquatic facility to complement existing amenities. Specific aquatic programming desired includes competitive swimming, recreational pools, and various aquatic program offerings.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
PRF-3	**Performing Arts Center**	Expand and act on the current feasibility study.	Build upon the existing feasibility study to explore opportunities for development as a cultural hub.	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
PRF-4	**Existing Community Center Expansion Feasibility Study**	Explore options to expand the facilities and programming of the existing Erie Community Center.	Assess the Erie Community Center's ability to meet future demand and potential options for expansion.	Parks & Recreation, Facilities	Medium	Short Term (1-2 Years)
PRF-5	**Additional Athletic Fields and Courts**	Assess opportunities to provide additional rectangular fields, diamond fields, and dedicated pickleball courts in Erie.	Opportunities may include constructing additional fields and courts, partnering with other agencies with existing facilities, or a combination of both.	Parks & Recreation	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
PRF-6	**Plan for New Parks**	Plan and develop additional parks in locations identified on the Overall PROST Map.	Prioritize the development of parks in underserved neighborhoods to promote equitable access and meet the future needs of the growing population of Erie. Seek park land in areas of growth per the Overall PROST Map.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	Medium	Ongoing
PRF-7	**Plumbed Restrooms Demand Analysis**	Explore the demands for plumbed restroom facilities in existing parks based on park use and community interest.	Opportunities may include the installation of permanent restroom facilities and in neighborhood parks based on need generated from future park use. Restroom facilities should also be considered when planning and designing new additional parks.	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
PRF-8	**Capital Lifecycle Planning**	Maintain and improve existing parks and facilities per a Capital Lifecycle Plan.	Establish a comprehensive asset management and replacement planning for all facilities.	Parks & Recreation, Finance	High	Annual
PRF-9	**Emergency Action Plans (EAP)**	Prepare a comprehensive EAP for each facility.	Continue to have a strong emphasis on safety and security and review the plan on an annual basis.	Parks & Recreation, Public Safety	Medium	Annual
PRF-10	**ADA-compliance and Universally Accessibility**	Integrate ADA-compliant and universally accessible facilities and features where feasible.	Asses areas in need for access and prioritize facility upgrades to be ADA-compliant and universally accessible.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	Medium	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
PRF-11	**Adaptive and Inclusive Recreational Program Study**	Conduct a comprehensive audit and study of recreation facilities for inclusivity.	Explore options to expand ADA accessibility, multilingual outreach, and inclusion in parks and recreation facilities.	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)

Table 3. Action Plan: Parks and Recreation Facilities

Open Space						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**Priority**	**Timeline**
OST-1	**Habitat Restoration**	Protect, restore, and buffer ecologically sensitive areas and wildlife corridors.	Support environmental stewardship and restoration efforts to protect Erie's unique character and wildlife habitats.	Parks & Recreation	Medium	Ongoing
OST-2	**Plan for New Open Space Areas**	Plan to acquire open space areas in locations identified on the Overall PROST Map.	Prioritize the acquisition and preservation of open lands to meet the future needs of the growing population of Erie. Seek open land areas per the Overall PROST Map.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	Medium	Ongoing
Trails						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**High**	**Timeline**
TRL-1	**Trail Network Gaps**	Identify and prioritize missing gaps in the existing trail network to create a fully connected system between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and regional trails.	Prepare a list of trail gaps and conduct a prioritization analysis to determine which gaps to fill at what point in time, Work with new developments to ensure that the trail network is complete and provide trails that tie into existing or future panned trails.	Parks & Recreation, Engineering	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
TRL-2	**Signage, Wayfinding and Safety**	Continue to implement the 2019 Erie Trails and Open Space Wayfinding Master Plan.	Continue to provide trailheads, maps, signage, digital wayfinding tools, and other techniques to enhance the user experience of the Erie trail system. Supporting safety related infrastructure may include safe crossings along major roads, expanding access to natural surface trails, enhancing ADA accessibility, benches, shade areas, water stations and restrooms. Include additional supporting signage and educational information for the use of e-bikes, scooters, and other micro-mobility devices.	Parks & Recreation, Public Safety	Medium	Ongoing
TRL-3	**ADA-compliance and Universally Accessibility**	Integrate ADA-compliant and universally accessible trail features throughout the system where feasible.	Asses areas in need for access and prioritize trail feature upgrades to be ADA-compliant and universally accessible.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	Medium	Short Term (1-2 Years)
TRL-4	**Trail Expansion**	Explore use of underutilized rights-of-ways, conservation easements, or other spaces for trail expansion and connectivity.	Coordinate planning efforts with future roadway expansions and planning.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	Medium	Ongoing

Table 4. Action Plan: Open Space and Trails

Recreation Programs and Resources						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**Priority**	**Timeline**
RPR-1	**Existing Recreation Programming Plan Update**	Update the existing Recreation Programming Plan to reflect the direction of Parks and Recreation for the next 3 to 5 years.	Recognize that the Town will not have to be the primary provider of all recreation programs and services that are needed in the community but will coordinate with other providers to ensure that adequate levels of recreation services are obtainable.	Parks & Recreation	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
RPR-2	**Existing Program Expansion Evaluation**	Continue to evaluate program offerings and participation on an annual basis to determine potential recreational offering additions or adjustments in the future.	Priorities for general programming expansion should include Youth and Adult Sports, Special Events, Camps, Fitness/Wellness, Cultural Arts, Aquatics, Teens and Youth, Older Adut, and Therapeutic. Continue to collaborate with alternative providers to address those interests that the Recreation Division is not prepared to or able to host.	Parks & Recreation	Medium	Annual
RPR-3	**Provide for Specific Demographic Groups**	Analyze how recreation programs are available for specific demographic groups.	Specific groups include youth, teens, older adults, multigenerational, and ethnic or culturally based communities.	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts, Human Resources	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
RPR-4	**Competitive Youth Sports Needs**	Determine how Erie can best accommodate competitive youth sports/travel teams.	Develop a policy that addresses how facility needs of Erie based competitive youth sports/travel teams will be met and the specific requirements for eligibility.	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
RPR-5	**Joint Use Agreement (JUA) Opportunities**	Increase utilization of school facilities and programs per the St. Vrain Valley School District.	The school district has a significant inventory of indoor and outdoor amenities that can be utilized for public recreation. It is currently difficult for Erie Parks and Recreation to access many of these facilities due to school use demands and safety concerns, but a concerted effort is needed to try and increase utilization of school amenities for recreation programs in the community in the future.	Parks & Recreation	Medium	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
RPR-6	**Expand Partnership Programs Contracts with other Providers**	Determine the role of other providers in delivering both existing and new recreation programs.	Work to establish additional partnerships with other public agencies, non-profits, and private sector providers to expand the recreation programming options that are available to the Erie community.	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
RPR-7	**Expand Partnership Facilities Contracts with other Providers**	Explore new partnerships for additional facilities and agreements.	Partnerships will require formal written agreements that outline the roles and responsibilities for the Town and the other provider. These agreements could include capital funding requirements, operational obligations as well as determination of recreation program development. Contracts with other contract providers should clearly identify specific roles and expectations as well as limits to facility scheduling, fees, and operations	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
RPR-8	**Community Outreach and Feedback**	Gather input from the community on recreation programming needs and expectations.	Methods can include surveys, focus groups, open houses, community forums, and other methods of public input.	Parks & Recreation	High	Ongoing, every 2 years
RPR-9	**Adaptive and Inclusive Recreational Program Study**	Conduct a comprehensive audit and study of recreation programs for inclusivity.	Explore options to expand ADA accessibility, multilingual outreach, and inclusion in programs.	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)

Table 5. Action Plan: Recreation Programs and Resources

Operations and Funding						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**Priority**	**Timeline**
OF-1	**Park and Open Space Land Dedication Requirement Adjustments**	Explore the feasibility of the additional park land and open space that is currently anticipated for the future population growth of Erie, and adjust the dedication requirements accordingly.	The current park land and open space requirements should be analyzed to better suit the needs for the future population growth of Erie. Requirements should be adjusted for park type allocation, fee-in-lieu rates and policies, and overall land dedication patterns per the Overall PROST Map.	Parks & Recreation, Planning, Finance	Medium	Short Term (1-2 Years)
OF-2	**Land Acquisition Procedures and Criteria Analysis**	Conduct an open space land acquisition analysis per the land acquisition criteria and procedures outlined in the PROST Playbook.	This land acquisition method and process provides a consistent and goal-aligned pathway for expanding the Town's parks and open space system.	Parks & Recreation, Planning	Medium	Annual
OF-3	**Future Staffing Plan**	Continue to update the overall staffing philosophy for all divisions in the Department at least every two years.	The Plan should be tied to levels of service for parks, facilities as well as for recreation programs. It should also specify the role of part-time staff. All job descriptions for full-time and part-time staff should be updated or developed to adequately reflect the actual duties of each position.	Parks & Recreation, Human Resources	Medium	Ongoing, every 2 years
OF-4	**Onboarding, Training, and Certification Program**	Develop and maintain a formal policy and program that is committed to staff onboarding, training and certification.	Include a comprehensive full-time staff manual for each division.	Parks & Recreation, Human Resources	Medium	Ongoing, every 2 years
OF-5	**Organizational Structure Review**	Review and modify the existing organizational structure as needed to ensure effective and efficient Department operation.	Plan for an increase in staffing over the next 3-5 years.	Parks & Recreation, Human Resources	High	Ongoing, every 2 years
OF-6	**Existing Facilities Operations and Maintenance Plan**	Update the existing facilities operations and maintenance plan and provide specific plans for each major facility.	Refer to additional details in the PROST Playbook.	Parks & Recreation, Facilities	Low	Short Term (1-2 Years)
OF-7	**Existing Plans Updates**	Continue to update safety and security plans on an annual basis and update and add cameras and other equipment where appropriate. Update the 2021 Marketing and Community Relations Plan.	Establish annual marketing priorities and a formal sponsorship program for recreation programs, special events and facilities with different tiers of involvement.	Parks & Recreation, Public Safety	Low	Annual
OF-8	**Maintain CAPRA Accreditation**	Ensure Erie Parks & Recreation maintains national standards of excellence.	Conduct periodic self-assessments, update policies and procedures, and prepare documentation for reaccreditation through NRPA every five years. Engage staff in continuous improvement efforts aligned with CAPRA standards.	Parks & Recreation, Administration	High	Ongoing, every 5 years

Table 6. Action Plan: Operations and Funding 1

Operations and Funding (continued)						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**Priority**	**Timeline**
OF-9	**Technological Tools**	Continue using data and tools like demographic analysis, Placer.ai and Amilia analytics to inform decisions.	Continue to utilize Placer.ai. to understand the demographic characteristics of park, facility and program users. Continue to expand the use of Amilia analytics information to guide programming, operations and management decisions. Complete a demographic analysis of the Town and greater market area every three years to determine the impact on parks and recreation needs.	Parks & Recreation, Facilities	Medium	Ongoing
OF-10	**Future Financial Planning**	Plan for operational and capital requirements and create a detailed 5-year forecasts for all divisions. This includes capital replacement requirements, cost of service analysis cost recovery policy, and facilities and program areas.	Forecast operational and budget needs for the next five years to meet the requirements of the master plan's implementation/action plan. Continue with cost center accounting practices to identify operating cost and revenues for key parks, facilities and program areas in the Department. This likely means the establishment of sub budgets beyond the general accounts that are in place to include more specific budget accounts for individual facilities, recreation program areas and parks. Establish clear staffing and operational budget requirements for Parks & Recreation to support the program plan.	Parks & Recreation, Finance	High	Short Term (1-2 Years)
OF-11	**Funding Source Expansion**	Identify possible additional funding sources for operations and maintenance that are outside of the Town's general fund.	Explore various funding source options outlined in the PROST Playbook. Commit to maximizing the current funding mechanisms for capital and operations. Explore other possible funding sources for operations and maintenance including grants and non-tax options. Promote equity partnerships to assist with the development and operation of needed new facilities and amenities.	Parks & Recreation, Finance	High	Ongoing
OF-12	**Policies and Procedures Update**	Update standard operating procedures and policies.	Develop a continuity of service plan for the Department. Update the naming rights policy to include trails and open space.	Parks & Recreation	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
OF-13	**Parks, Open Space, and Trails Maintenance**	Update exiting Plans as outlined in PROST Playbook.	Plans and policies include the Maintenance and Operations Plan, Open Space Management Plan, divisions long-term role definitions, HOA responsibilities, maintenance tiers, performance measures, a CMMS, contracts, Agricultural Lease Program, lifecycle cost analysis, equipment and vehicles, artificial turf options, water usage, and irrigation controls.	Parks & Recreation, Facilities	Low	Short Term (1-2 Years)
OF-14	**Additional Volunteer Programs and Opportunities**	Explore additional volunteer programs and opportunities for residents and users to participate in Parks and Recreation efforts.	Develop a volunteer program to support small park project development, light parks and open space maintenance, and support for recreation programming.	Parks & Recreation, Public Safety	Low	0
OF-15	**Park Ambassador or Ranger Program**	Strongly consider the establishment of a park ambassador or park ranger program.	Develop a program to support park operations, engage with visitors, and promote park stewardship in order to connect people with parks, and enhance the overall visitor experience.	Parks & Recreation, Public Safety	Low	Medium Term (3-6 Years)

Table 7. Action Plan: Operations and Funding 2

Cultural Elements						
No.	**Action Item**	**Intent**	**Details**	**Responsible Departments**	**Priority**	**Timeline**
CE-1	**Support Outdoor Event Space**	Plan for amphitheaters and event spaces in key locations.	Support the creation of outdoor amphitheaters and flexible cultural event spaces.	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts	High	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
CE-2	**Enhance Historic Preservation**	Prioritize the preservation, restoration, enhancement, and maintenance of the historic structures and resources of Erie.	Preserve and enhance historic sites, such as Schofield Farm and Wise Homestead, with interpretive signage, educational programming, and other methods.	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts, Historical Societies	Medium	Medium Term (3-6 Years)
CE-3	**Expand Cultural Arts Programing**	Increase cultural and arts programming, including festivals, public art installations, and history-focused events.	Integrate cultural features into parks and public spaces to celebrate Erie's heritage and engage the community.	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts	Medium	Short Term (1-2 Years)
CE-4	**Public Art Incorporation and Inclusion**	Follow the policies and procedures as outlined in the Erie Public Art and Placemaking Plan	Public Art & Placemaking strategies will capitalize on the beautiful parks and scenic surroundings of the city, which	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts	Medium	Ongoing
CE-5	**Develop Cultural Arts Partnerships**	Formalize partnerships with artists and organizations.	are cherished by community members.	Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts	Low	Ongoing

Table 8. Action Plan: Cultural Elements

6.7. Conclusion

The Erie PROST Playbook charts an inspiring path toward a connected, vibrant, and resilient parks,

recreation, open space, and trails system. By embracing the priorities and strategies outlined in this plan, Erie will continue to strengthen its identity as a community that values health, nature, and shared experiences.

Grounded in the six guiding goals of Equitable Access, Stewardship of Open Lands, Connected System, Community Identity, Fiscal Sustainability, and Future Growth Resiliency, this Playbook provides a clear framework for both immediate action and long-term success. Each action will bring the vision closer to reality, ensuring that future generations inherit a landscape rich in opportunity, beauty, and belonging.

The work ahead is both an investment in place and in people, and together, Erie can make it happen.

Bike Ride at Sunset
Credit: Town of Erie

7: **Appendices**

Appendix A: Needs Assessment Report

Appendix B: Full Size PROST Maps

Erie Community Park
Credit: Design Concepts

Connecting YOU to FUN Playbook

2025 Erie Parks & Recreation PROST Strategic Plan