

## 10.1 Executive Summary\*

\*This Chapter is excerpted from a comprehensive narrative attached as **Appendix F**.

Parks, pathways, and other open spaces provide aesthetic appeal and livability to our community, which are important to residents and their quality of life. They add beauty and value to developers and companies that may be interested in investing in the community. The Parks and Recreation chapter discusses recreational opportunities, future demands, and strategies on how to meet the needs of our growing community.

The Comprehensive Plan of 2008 discussed recreational standards for the City's green space areas. These standards continue to play an important role in providing ample recreational opportunities for our community by implementing best practices regarding the supply of recreational resources.

The public survey conducted in the preliminary stages of the comprehensive planning update included many survey questions on the community's needs and desires for additional passive and active recreation opportunities. The survey data was a successful tool in updating the 2019 Comprehensive Plan as it provided insights of current expectations of the residents of our community.

The overall goals, objectives, and strategies, implementations and recommendations are described throughout this chapter.



### Department Mission

To provide facilities and programming for meaningful leisure opportunities that will enhance the quality of life by benefiting the health and wellbeing of our citizens, our community and our environment.

## 10.2 THE PARKS & REC DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department has developed numerous outdoor recreation programs offering a wide variety of team sports activities for youth and adults, as well as seasonal outdoor recreation programs and events. The Department operates the Recreation Activity Center and the Community Outdoor Pool. The Community Outdoor Pool is in Richard Aguirre Park and is heavily utilized by youth swim teams, and provides open swimming opportunities for the public at large.

### Cemetery

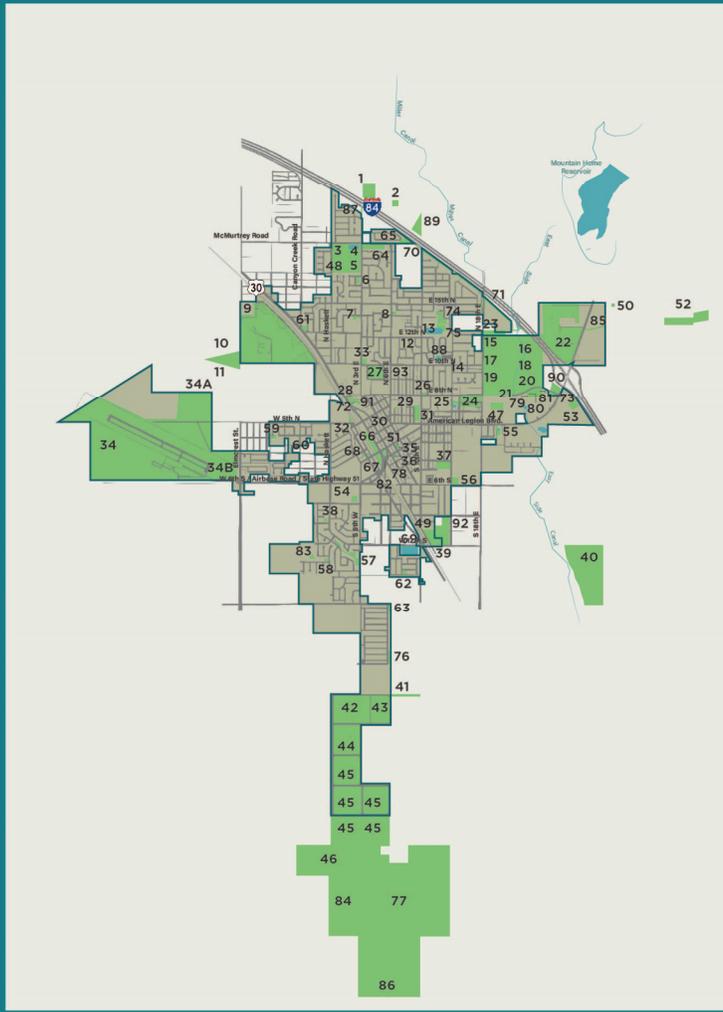
In addition to providing recreational facilities, the Parks & Recreation Department's Cemetery Division is responsible for landscaping, general maintenance and burial arrangements at the municipal cemetery. The Mountain View Cemetery has belonged to the City of Mountain Home since 1928 and contains over 13 acres of land, and provides standard lots, crematory lots, and niche wall resting places.





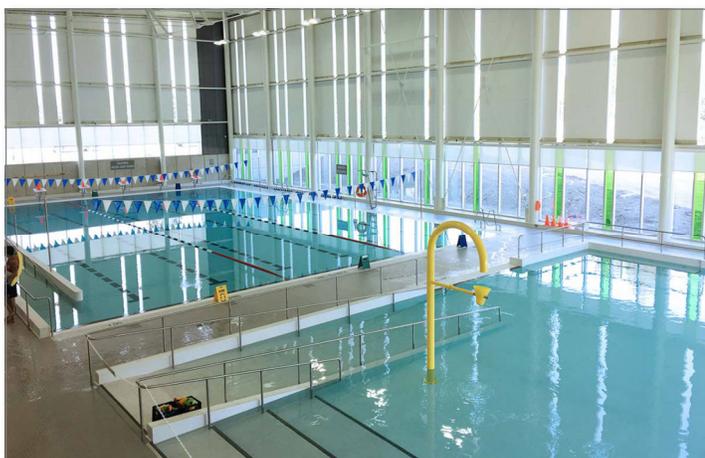
## CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES AND PUBLIC SPACES

Map 10.1



1. Water Tank 1, 1B, Well 16
2. Aguirre Well #12
3. Gravel-Storm Drainage Pit (Legacy Park)
4. Gravel Pit (Legacy Park)
5. Gravel Pit (Legacy Park)
6. Stonetree Park
7. Well Site (North Elementary)
8. Fire Station #2
9. Dump (Sawmill)
10. Sawmill
11. S. 20' of Lot 7, Block 4, Abbott Sub.
12. Baker Pit
13. Sewer Manhole (30' x 30')
14. Golf Course - U.S. Lot 4
15. Golf Course
16. Golf Course
17. Golf Course
18. Golf Course
19. Golf Course
20. Golf Course
21. Golf Course (Well Property)
22. Pilot, Con Chemco & Industrial Park Prop.
23. Golf Course
24. Mountain View Cemetery
25. E. 14th N. Storm Drainage Pit
26. Library
27. Richard Aguirre Park
28. City Shops (Old)
29. Small Wedge (Richard Bennett Add.)
30. Memorial Park (Triangle Park)
31. Carl Miller Park
32. Well Site #6
33. Senior Citizen Center Property
34. Airport Property
- 34A. Optimist Park
- 34B. Animal Shelter (location-part of #34)
35. City Hall and Museum Property
36. Main Fire Station
37. Ball Park (High School)
38. Well Site #10
39. Animal Shelter (Old Location) (Portion now used as Dog Park)
40. Old City Dump
41. Roadway to Lagoons\* (use easement)
42. Lagoons
43. Lagoons
44. Lagoons
45. Lagoons (five sections)
46. Farm Ground
47. Cemetery Annex (behind Rost Funeral Home)
48. Legacy Park
49. City Shops/Public Works Yard
50. Well #14
51. Economic Development Building
52. Water Tank #3 (Replaced old #52 Youth Center which was sold by the City)
53. Visitor Center
54. Parks & Recreation Building
55. American Legions Retention Pond
56. Retention Pond (M.I.I. Jr. High)
57. Ridgercrest/Sunsire Park
58. Rolling Hills Park
59. Don Etter Park
60. R. Claire Wetherell Park
61. Rosewood Park
62. Colonial Park
63. Silverstone #1 Park
64. Community Garden (at beginning of Walking Path)
65. Greystone Park
66. R.R. Park
67. Underpass Park\* (maintained by city)
68. Basque Park\* (maintained by city)
69. Sediment Ponds\* (maintained by city)
70. Walking/Bike Path (Phase #1 from Legacy Park to N. 18 E.)
71. Walking/Bike Path (Phase #2 from N. 18 E. to Golf Course)
72. Island Park
73. Property at E. 8th N. & American Legion Blvd.
74. Drycreek #2 Park & Drainage Parcel
75. Drycreek #2 Access Road
76. Silverstone #2 Park
77. Farm Property
78. Piece of Property next to Fire Station #1
79. Drainage Pond on SW side of Police Dept.
80. Police Dept.
81. Empty Lot on NE side of Police Dept.
82. El Rancho Park
83. Rolling Hills Park #5
84. Farm Property
85. Hot Creek Road
86. Farm Property
87. Water Culvert
88. Brenda Pit
89. New Well Site (Aguirre Ground)
90. Park & Ride Lot/D.C.T. Trail Head
91. City Shop Addition
92. City Property behind Public Works
93. Discovery Center/Fiber Optic Hub

\*property not owned by city



Not photo of actual pool—photo is only a representation of a similar type of facility.

## 10.5 WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

### Western Elmore County Recreation District (WECRD)

Formed in 2001, WECRD was created to facilitate recreation facilities in Mountain Home. Since its inception taxpayers have been contributing toward the financial needs of a new community recreation facility. In 2018 the Board of Directors decided to build an Indoor Pool Facility. This facility will encompass a six-lane competitive lap pool as well as a family/leisure style pool. There will be multi-purpose rooms available for various events and trainings.

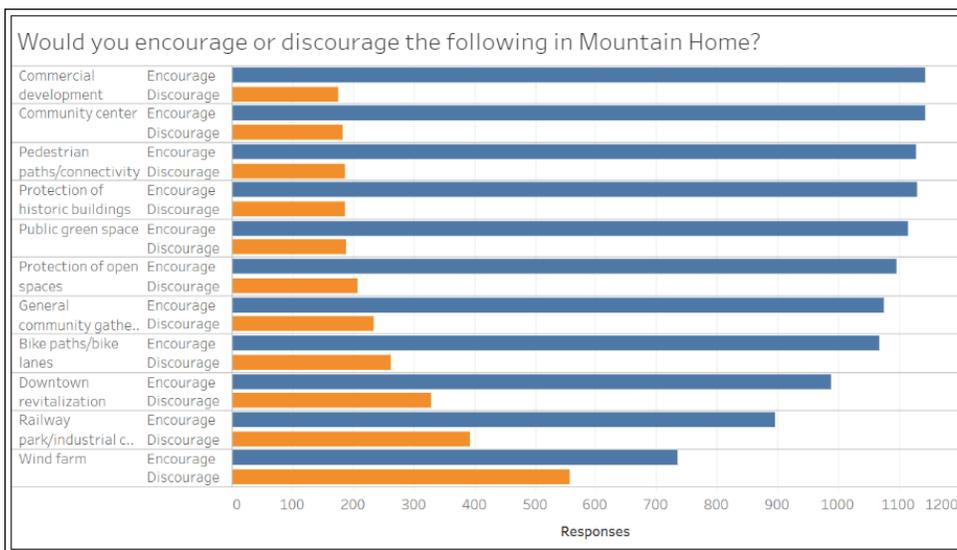


## 10.6 VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY



When looking at the Word Clouds in the Introduction/Chapter 1 it was apparent that outdoor recreation, community gathering spaces and green areas are a large part of the residents' lifestyle. All forms of feedback garnered from the community that were geared toward this topic soundly favored adding more activities and areas to recreate.

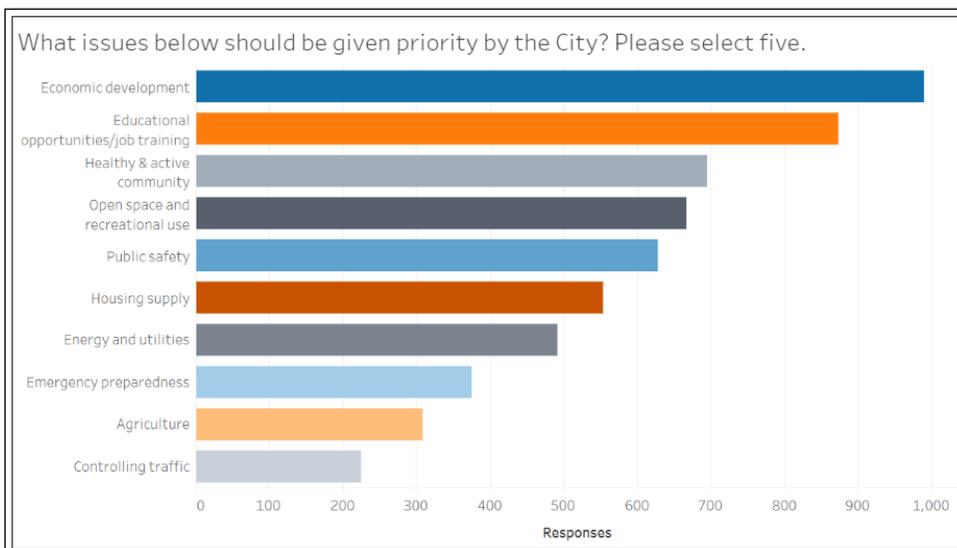
The anticipation of a new indoor pool facility was widely favored by the community, as was shown by the results of the public survey conducted in the initial planning stages of this updated Comprehensive Plan. Below are additional results of citizen comments relative to Parks and Recreation, and recreational facilities and land use.



In response to the first question posed—in the top graph—an extremely high percentage of residents want more recreation options:

- Community Center.....86%**
- Pedestrian Pathways.....86%**
- Public Green Space.....86%**
- Bicycle Pathways.....80%**
- Downtown Revitalization...75%**

The results for the question asked in the bottom graph show:



**70% of those citizens that responded to this question want the City to prioritize elements of a “Healthy & Active Community”**

**67% of those responding desire for the City to make “Open Space and Recreational Use” priorities**



## 10.7 WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?

“Open space” is not vacant land per se, but includes recreational sites, outdoor gathering places, parks, greenways, active agricultural lands, cemeteries, wetlands, and pathway networks—areas designed and designated with a purpose. With a complete inventory of open space, and a plan for prioritizing and protecting key lands, a community can work towards designing and building interconnected open spaces, as well as work towards obtaining the financial means to achieve its open space goals.

Part of Mountain Home’s Downtown Revitalization is the inclusion of a number of open space areas to enhance the walkability and pedestrian experience in the downtown core, which studies have shown will positively impact the economic development of the historic downtown. The Downtown Plan also includes the integration of components of the City’s Bike & Pedestrian Path Master Plan, which is shown on **Map 10.2**.



## 10.8 BENEFITS OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The benefits of parks and open space to the public cannot be understated. Data and statistics prove that local parks and recreation facilities provide health and wellness opportunities, as well as environmental benefits, for all populations, demographics and regions. A few of the many benefits include:

- **Attract Investment** – Parks and open space create a high quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents to communities.
- **Revitalize Cities** – urban parks, gardens and recreational open space stimulates commercial growth and promote inner-city revitalization.
- **Boost Tourism** – Open space boosts local economies by attracting tourists and supporting outdoor recreation.
- **Prevent Flood Damages** – Floodplain protection offers a cost –effective alternative to expensive flood-control measures.
- **Safeguard Environment** – Open space conservation may be an inexpensive way to safeguard drinking water, clean air and achieve other environmental goals.
- **Older adults** engage in over 3.5 times more physical activity in parks with walking loops<sup>6</sup>.

**PARKS HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL POWER**

**1 ACRE OF TREES**  
absorbs the carbon dioxide produced by  
**DRIVING A CAR 11,000 MILES.**

**PARKS HAVE HEALTH POWER**

Increased access to places for physical activity leads to a  
**25% increase**  
in people exercising  
*3 or more days a week.*

**PARKS HAVE SAFETY POWER**

In Macon, GA, a revitalized park that included new programming and beautification efforts  
**reduced incidents of crime and violence by**  
**50%.**

Sources:  
Centers for Disease Control, Environmental Protection Agency,  
American Planning Association

**PARKS HAVE COMMUNITY POWER**

Parks strengthen community ties and  
**bring diverse populations together.**

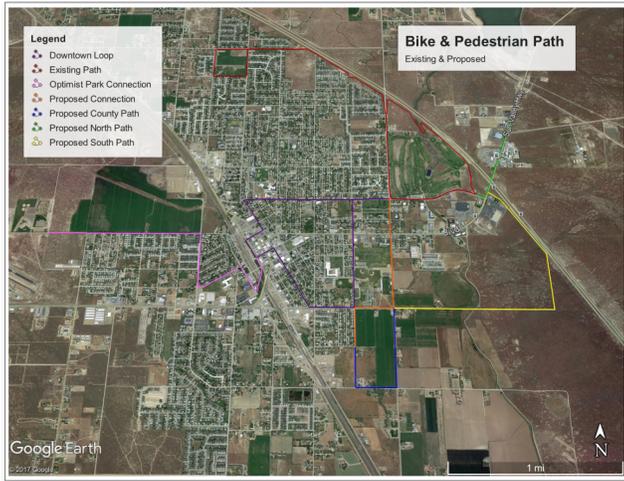
Parks have the power to strengthen communities, transform lives, and protect the future.

**Parks are the most powerful aspect of every community.**

\*Graphic Source: National Recreation and Parks Association.



Map 10.2



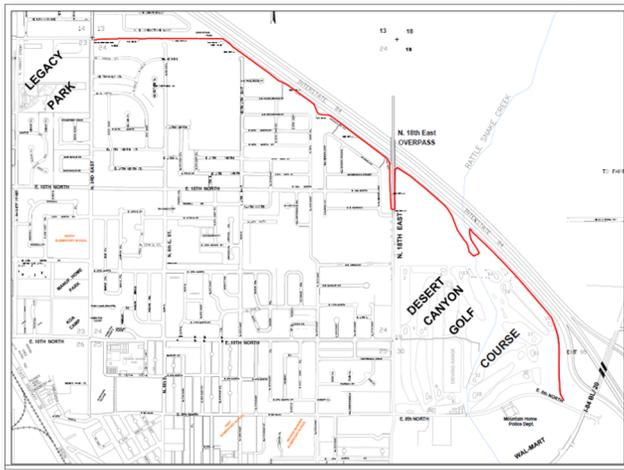
## 10.9 BIKE ROUTES & PATHWAYS PLANS

Bicycle routes/paths and multi-use pathways provide residents, property owners, and visitors with safely designed opportunities to experience the natural, cultural and scenic amenities of the area.

### Pathways & Bike Routes Provide:

- Safety – safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Accessibility – alternate modes of transportation around town.
- Recreational – Compliments the park system and encourages activity.
- Air Quality – No vehicle emissions.
- Aesthetics – Visually appealing.
- Value - Enhances property values.

Map 10.3



Mountain Home has already developed a preliminary Bike & Pedestrian Pathway Plan (**Map 10.2**) to improve connectivity throughout the community, as well as to encourage active lifestyles among residents. The first leg of the path (**Map 10.3**) has been completed and is widely used and enjoyed by both residents and visitors. Larger maps are shown in **Appendix M**.

## 10.10 FUTURE

As population increases, the demand for parks, recreation opportunities, facilities and cemetery plots also increases. The challenge for the City will be to promote and support public and private opportunities to meet these demands.

A study is currently underway comparing data from the **2009 NRPA Operating Ratio Report** with existing park and recreation facilities in Mountain Home. The study will reflect whether Mountain Home meets standard operating ratios (amount of open space versus population and area). To date it appears that the City has a shortfall of at least those types of facilities shown at **Table 10.2**.

And while the City has not historically purchased land for parks, as population increases the City will need to take steps to meet future park and recreation facility needs. One solution that the City of Mountain Home is exploring it to adopt new code and ordinances that would require parks and/or other open space to be integrated into new developments, with dedication of such land for public enjoyment.

Table 10.2

| CURRENT CITY FACILITIES NEEDS |                                                                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sports Complexes              | For youth and adult activities such as soccer, baseball, soft-ball, etc |
| Park Amenities                | Such as covered group picnic shelters with water and power              |
| Pathway System                | That links parks and other destinations points (i.e. downtown)          |
| Park(s)                       | Regional parks, or nature parks; parks within City limits               |

## 10.11 GOAL 1

**To provide excellent park and recreation facilities to meet current needs and future growth through careful planning and community involvement.**

- A. Develop and implement a master plan which would identify future locations of a much-needed multi-purpose community Recreation Facility.
- B. Continue to work with the WECRD and community members to implement the construction, maintenance, and overall operation of a community swimming pool.
- C. Implement a schedule of maintenance and updates to existing parks and open spaces, such as lighting and public bathrooms.
- D. Develop and/or upgrade recreation and park facilities to meet local needs.
- E. Support and promote other community programs, activities and events sponsored by other public and private entities.

## 10.12 GOAL 2

**Seek innovative funding sources for acquisition, planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.**

- A. Continue to use resources in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- B. Encourage non-profit groups, local companies and other organizations to take ownership and become involved in the care and maintenance of the City's neighborhood parks and facilities.
- C. Consider joint public-private partnerships, endowments and user fees for acquisition and maintenance of parks, facilities and programs whose costs are high or limited usage and make public support not feasible.

## 10.13 GOAL 3

**Encourage high quality social, recreational and community events that build a strong sense of community.**

- A. Enhance focus on sports programs that are specific to age appropriate activities.
- B. Educate volunteers, coaches and parents by involving and providing educational opportunities to increase their value as members of our community.
- C. Work with the School District #193 and adjacent communities to provide joint school-park sites and programs wherever possible.
- D. Cooperate with and encourage private sports associations and non-profit entities to build and maintain recreation facilities including ball fields, soccer fields and playgrounds.

