

# Durango Parks & Recreation Department

# Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024



Adopted  
September 2020

## Overview

The Durango Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan emanates from the adopted 2020 City of Durango Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan, which was envisioned as a ten-year plan. This 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan builds upon the previous strategic plan and is intended to serve as a five-year plan that is reviewed and updated annually.

The implementation of the 2020 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan is envisioned to be primarily accomplished with the financial support of two voter approved dedicated funding sources: (1) 2005 Quarter Cent Sales and Use Tax (Open Space, Parks and Trails Fund) for the preservation, acquisition, and maintenance of natural lands including, but not limited to, land to preserve water quality in rivers and streams, wildlife habitat, land for hiking and biking, and the creation and maintenance of parks and trails. This tax sunsets in 2026; and (2) 2015 Half Cent Sales and Use Tax (2015 Half Cent Tax Fund) for construction, operations or maintenance of recreation facilities, parks, trails, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, maintenance facilities used by the Parks and Recreation Department, and the urban forest. This tax sunsets in 2039.

The 2020 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan identified Big Moves that are overarching and visionary in nature:

- Connect trails (SMART 160 Trail East and West, Animas River Trail)
- Sustained dedicated funding
- Implement Durango Mesa Park Plan
- Enhance branding, marketing, and telling the Parks and Recreation Department story to the community
- Address aging facilities and infrastructure
- New parks and recreation facilities
- Existing Recreation Center expansion or build a new multi-use recreation facility
- Continue to seek alternative funding for new development, operational funds, capital projects
- Maintain and upgrade existing facilities
- Continue to develop and enhance Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area

## VISION

The following vision presents how Durango Parks and Recreation Department desires to be viewed in the future:

**To be the reason why people want to be in Durango**

## MISSION

The following is the mission for how Durango Parks and Recreation Department will implement the vision:

**Enrich lives every day**

## CORE VALUES

- Service Excellence
- High Quality Offerings
- Innovation (+Fun)
- Health and Wellness
- Sustainability (Environmental + Fiscal)

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### ONE: Improve Fiscal and Environmental Sustainability

#### 2019/2020 Progress

- Achieved 89% cost recovery for all recreation services including the operation of the Durango Community Recreation Center, Durango Gymnastics, Chapman Hill as well as youth and adult programs in 2019
- Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area cost recovery improved from 74% in 2018 to 85.5% in 2019 due in part to an increase in programs and activities offered by local businesses as contracted services
- Completed Year 6 of the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) study at Oxbow Park and Preserve in 2019
- Transferred actual costs to maintain new Parks and Open Space acquired since 2005 from the dedicated sales tax (Open Space, Parks and Trails Fund) to ensure there is no increased burden due to these community assets to the City of Durango General Fund for operations
- Transferred operational subsidy costs for the Durango Community Recreation Center and Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area from the dedicated sales tax (2015 Half Cent Tax Fund) to ensure there is no increased burden to the General Fund for operations
- The Parks and Recreation Department has worked collaboratively with the Fire Adapted Durango Partnership involving the City of Durango, Durango Fire Protection District, Wildfire Adapted Partnership, Colorado State Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State of Colorado Department of Fire Prevention and Control, La Plata Electric Association, San Juan National Forest, La Plata County, and neighborhood

residents. Fire mitigation in the Wildland Urban Interface of SkyRidge Open Space and Overend Mountain Park was initiated in 2020.

- Implemented adaptive management in response to the Coronavirus pandemic resulting in decreased revenues for operations and capital projects in 2020
- Actively pursued available state and federal grants for future projects. Implemented previously awarded grants for: (1) the development of the Animas River Trail north from Animas City Park to Oxbow Park and Preserve; and (2) Lake Nighthorse operations and the construction of the ADA fishing pier and picnic area, and the swim beach.

### 2021 & Beyond

- Strive to increase cost recovery of General Fund subsidized recreation services to 100%, including the operations of Durango Gymnastics, Chapman Hill as well as youth and adult programs
- Continue to transfer actual costs to maintain new Parks and Open Space acquired since 2005 from the dedicated sales tax (Open Space, Parks and Trails Fund) to ensure there is no increased burden due to these community assets to the General Fund for operations
- Continue to transfer operational subsidy costs for the Durango Community Recreation Center and Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area from the dedicated sales tax (2015 Half Cent Tax Fund) to ensure there is no increased burden to the General Fund for operations
- Continue the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) study at Oxbow Park and Preserve in partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Continue the collaborative Fire Adapted Durango Partnership to mitigate the risk of wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
- Target the implementation of projects to promote economic vitality
- Natural lands preservation and stewardship in accordance with the Master Plan
- Community Forest Plan tree planting and stewardship
- Maintain dedicated funding for existing facility improvements
- Continue to actively pursue available state and federal grants for future projects.

## **TWO: Develop and Maintain an Exceptional Built Environment**

### 2019/2020 Progress

- Construction of the following capital improvement projects:
  - One-mile extension of the Animas River Trail north from Animas City Park to Oxbow Park and Preserve
  - Oxbow Park River Access
  - Redevelopment of the Animas River Trail section in Iris Park and Riverfront Park to meet current trail standards
  - Moore Parks Shop

- Cundiff Park bike skills course
- Schneider Park Skatepark shade structure and seating area
- Rotary Park restrooms and parking lot renovation
- Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area ADA fishing pier, picnic area, and swim beach
- Renovation of the Recreation Center boiler system, upgrade of facility lighting to LED fixtures, and replacement of carpeting
- Mason Center asbestos abatement
- Chapman Hill flooring replacement
- Educational and wayfinding signage on City trails
- Management and stewardship of 5,299.97 acres of land in the City
- Management and operation of 142,450 sq. ft. of indoor Parks and Recreation facilities:
  - 71,557 sq. ft. Durango Community Recreation Center
  - 33,600 sq. ft. Chapman Hill rink and pavilion
  - 17,886 sq. ft. Mason Center
  - 11,710 sq. ft. Durango Gymnastics
  - 7,697 sq. ft. Moore Parks Shop

### 2021 & Beyond

- Construction of the following capital improvement projects:
  - Durango Mesa Park Phase I including infrastructure improvements, bike park, BMX track, directional trails, dog park and frisbee golf course
  - Grade-separated crossing of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street for the Animas River Trail linking Memorial Park to Animas City Park
  - Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area entrance station, roadway improvements, and picnic facilities
  - Mason Center building removal and park improvements
  - Improved access from downtown across Camino del Rio to Animas River Trail
  - Upgrade asphalt sections of the Animas River Trail to current standards
  - Redevelopment of Santa Rita Park
  - SMART 160 Trail East final design and construction
  - Three Springs Community Park Pickleball Courts and Dog Park final design and construction
  - Chapman Hill Ski Area grading, replace rope tows and lighting final design and construction
  - Twin Buttes Trailhead design and construction
  - Park system upgrades
- Continued management and stewardship of City parks and open space lands
- Continued management and operation of indoor Parks and Recreation facilities
- Be innovative, sustainable, and forward thinking in design
- Natural surface trail system implementation and stewardship

- Implement best practices in resource efficiency of recreational buildings
- Refine standard design and specifications for park amenities
- Evaluate parks for inclusivity including development of new ADA accessible natural surface trails or Other Power Driven Mobility Device (OPDMD) accessible amenities
- Develop a long-term capital maintenance schedule for ongoing replacement items in parks and recreational facilities

### **THREE: Promote Service Excellence through Innovation and High Quality Offerings**

#### 2019/2020 Progress

- Complete national re-accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
- Provision of a wide array of diverse recreation programs to the community
- Enhancement of adventure sports at Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area
- Expanded childcare programs to provide more diverse program offerings
- Enhanced current marketing opportunities and established a more comprehensive sponsorship and marketing plan
- Completed recreation program lifecycle and age segment review

#### 2021 & Beyond

- Maintain national accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
- Enhance part-time and seasonal employee on-boarding process
- Increase recreation programming including outdoor recreation, fitness, and life skills
- Incorporate adaptive management and be flexible with existing facilities use
- Continue to expand Chapman Hill programming
- Adjust fitness programming to stay current with changing trends
- Analyze Core Program areas and make necessary adjustments
- Establish a comprehensive customer appreciation program

### **FOUR: Enhance Community Connections and Meeting Diverse Needs**

#### 2019/2020 Progress

- Adoption of the 2020 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan
- Effective partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies including Durango Trails, La Plata County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and others
- Telling the Story with the implementation of the Economic Impact Study of the Parks and Recreation Department

- Development and promotion of the Friends of Durango Parks and Recreation volunteer program
- Continue to enhance effective branding and marketing of Durango Parks and Recreation

### 2021 & Beyond

- Phased implementation of the 2020 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan
- Continue partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies
- Complete the economic impact study to determine the financial impact of the department on the local economy
- Secure partnership opportunities to leverage dollars, capacities, and efficiencies
- Strengthen community partnerships/independent contractors in the provision of recreation programs
- Continue to enhance the provision of services to meet community diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Develop and implement an organizational performance measurement system
- Revise public amenity (parks, trails, open space) dedication and impact fee requirements for new development

## **SUMMARY**

The goals and priorities of the 2020 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan have been taken into consideration in the development of this Strategic Plan and the annual Parks and Recreation Department operating and capital improvement plan budget. The annual budget includes proposed expenditures and anticipated revenues for the upcoming fiscal year for operations of the Parks and Recreation Department as well as the projected five-year capital improvement plan. The capital projects are reviewed annually and adjusted according to available funds, community priorities and opportunities. The Parks and Recreation Department budget is prepared by Department staff and reviewed and approved by the City Manager and City Council. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board, and Multimodal Advisory Board review and recommend to the Durango City Council capital improvement project expenditures associated with the dedicated sales tax.

The Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan is reviewed and approved annually by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board.