



To prepare the master plan, the department evaluated gaps in the parks and recreation system, park and facilities needs, and priorities for development of new parks and facilities, which are presented in this chapter.

### Park Development and Service Area Guidelines

**Gaps in Boulder's park system:** The system's current park acreage (developed and undeveloped) exceeds the department's guidelines established for park acreage per 1,000 residents, as well as meets the guidelines for Boulder's projected population at build-out (approximately 124,400) The geographic distribution of park land, however, will need adjustment to meet future community needs. Park needs in new and redeveloping neighborhoods will continue to be addressed through the city's area planning and subcommunity planning processes.

Gaps where neighborhoods are under-served by park lands are located primarily in the northernmost part of the city. Completion of Boulder's undeveloped parks will meet the department's service guidelines in most of these under-served areas, and will provide additional parks in well-served areas. Exceptions include the Gunbarrel area, where a future park need has been identified, and areas near New Vista High School, where land is scarce and a joint-use agreements with BVSD mitigates needs. The department will continue to look for park opportunities in these areas.

**Park needs in developing areas.** As Boulder matures, connections to nature and recreation become even more important as a respite from the urban environment. Some growth will take place in infill sites that are not currently zoned for housing, including commercial and industrial areas. Areas of significant anticipated change include the Gunbarrel area and the Transit Village.

Rezoning and redevelopment of infill sites may require the city to acquire and develop new park lands. Infill developments may have an even greater need than other neighborhoods for parks and urban green space because of higher density (more people per square mile) with more multi-story housing, and housing in mixed-use development over offices or commercial space. These sites may not be large enough to provide a neighborhood park of five or more acres, so smaller neighborhood parks, pocket parks, or urban plazas will be likely. The department will explore creative ways to acquire, develop, and maintain these park sites.

**Park development guidelines.** The Park Service Area Guidelines, approved by PRAB after public hearings and discussions with the Planning Board and City Council, describe the desired standards for urban parks. The new emphasis on smaller parks and urban plazas reflects the reality of development trends in Boulder, including the scarcity of large parcels of land for park development (see Appendix I, Park Service Area Guidelines).

### 2002 Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment

The 2002 Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment gathered information from focus groups, community leaders, a public open house, and a survey mailed to 3,000 Boulder residents. It reported the following trends would impact Boulder's parks and recreation system by 2020:

- o enrollment increases in city-sponsored recreation programs and sports activities
- o a high number of Boulder residents (90 percent) participating in recreational activities
- o an aging but active population
- o vacant land in the city service area becoming more scarce and expensive
- o increased use and user fees for public school fields
- o growing local and regional populations increasing the demand for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities
- o nonresidents seeking to use parks and recreation facilities  
(In 2002, 13 percent of all Boulder recreation center patrons were nonresidents.)

### Potential New Facilities List

The department has identified numerous facilities desired by the community through needs assessments and surveys, discussions with city officials, and public open houses.

The vision plan includes \$26 million in funding for potential new facilities. The total estimated cost to construct the facilities listed below is \$85 million, not including land. However, it is unlikely that all of these facilities would be funded and built, especially without partnerships.

The current list includes the following:

- o bike path around the Boulder Reservoir
- o cyclocross course
- o 50-meter indoor pool
- o additional 18-hole and par-3 golf course
- o 18-hole disc golf course
- o ice arena
- o indoor tennis
- o indoor-outdoor water park
- o indoor turf facility (seasonal bubble dome)
- o indoor events center and multi-use gymnasium
- o Little League ballfield complex
- o storage facilities for recreation groups
- o visual and performing arts center
- o velodrome

The department will conduct discussions with the community, boards, and City Council to determine the priorities for facility construction.

**Priorities for park development.** This master plan includes a process and criteria, endorsed by PRAB, for analyzing the relative need, opportunities, and constraints for developing undeveloped parkland (see Appendix J, Prioritizing Park Development). The process is flexible to respond to changing conditions and new opportunities, and will be reviewed at least annually as part of the budgeting and capital improvement program (CIP) process. Parks are divided into five priority groups, which are linked to the department's three funding plans. The department used the priority list for the 2007 CIP. It anticipates that some parks in Priority Groups II and III will be developed under the fiscally constrained plan, provided that sales and property-tax revenue projections are accurate and maintenance funding is identified.

In determining priorities for park development projects, the department considers the following criteria:

- Does it fill a gap in an under-served area?
- Does it fill a priority need identified in the 2005 Parks and Recreation Survey or in other sources?
- Is the site ready for design and development with no significant physical or legal constraints?
- Does it meet an unmet ballot measure commitment?
- Is there a high potential for partnership or other collaboration?
- Have maintenance dollars been identified and earmarked for this project?
- Does the area have a high percentage of low-income residents and/or children, youth, and seniors? Is it high density?
- Will the development have revenue potential (such as rental of fields)? Will it contribute to the economic vitality of the city by bringing in 'outside' money?
- Will development be more efficient or cost-effective if timed with other public projects?
- Are there environmental constraints on the property that need to be mitigated?
- Is the project partially built?

### Recreation Facility Needs

The department has analyzed recreation facility needs to prepare recommendations for this master plan through a needs assessment in 2002 (see sidebar, page 23), and more recently through discussions with facility managers. Many of the system's needs, such as new multi-purpose fields and improvements to the Boulder Reservoir and Flatirons Golf Course, are reflected in the recommendations (see pages 40-45).

Part of the vision for this master plan is to provide new recreation facilities desired by the community. A recommendation in the vision plan funding category calls for completing Valmont City Park, a potential site for new recreation facilities. This can be accomplished if the department receives significant new funds.

Some facilities and programs desired by the community are used extensively by BVSD and youth sports organizations that may not have the resources to build or manage their own facilities or programs. The department currently extends this form of subsidy for some agencies and organizations because it is committed to offering services that benefit the community. In the future, support for such facilities, particularly new ones, could depend on their ranking in a prioritization process, similar to the process for park development, that is being developed by the department.

Criteria that could be used include:

- Has a community need been identified?
- Does it respond to changing demographics?
- What segment of the city's population is served?
- Will it be a subsidized facility or an enterprise-like operation? Where does it fit within the Core Services Business Model?
- Is land available?
- Are there any development constraints?
- Is infrastructure available and in place?
- Are there any development efficiencies?
- Will it be a duplicative service or facility? Is it already available or provided in the region?

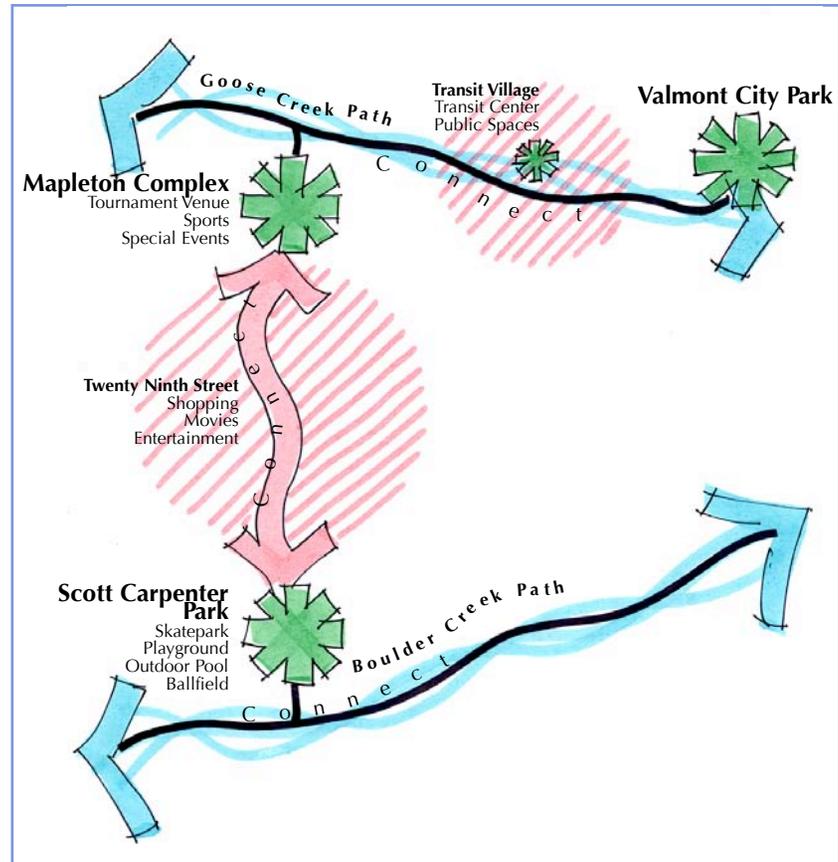
- Does it promote economic vitality?
- Are there any potential partnerships or other leveraging opportunities?
- Is there demonstrated community benefit versus individual benefit?
- Has funding been secured?

During the master plan process, community members have expressed the need or desire for potential new facilities (see sidebar, page 24). Construction of all the potential new facilities included on this current list would cost the department approximately \$85 million (2006 dollars), not including the costs for purchasing additional land.

Demands for services and facilities continue to grow regardless of the department's financial resources. To afford building some of these potential new facilities, even with vision plan funding, the department will have to change its role in constructing and managing them. While the department's vision plan includes \$26 million for future recreation facilities, these funds must be leveraged through partnerships.

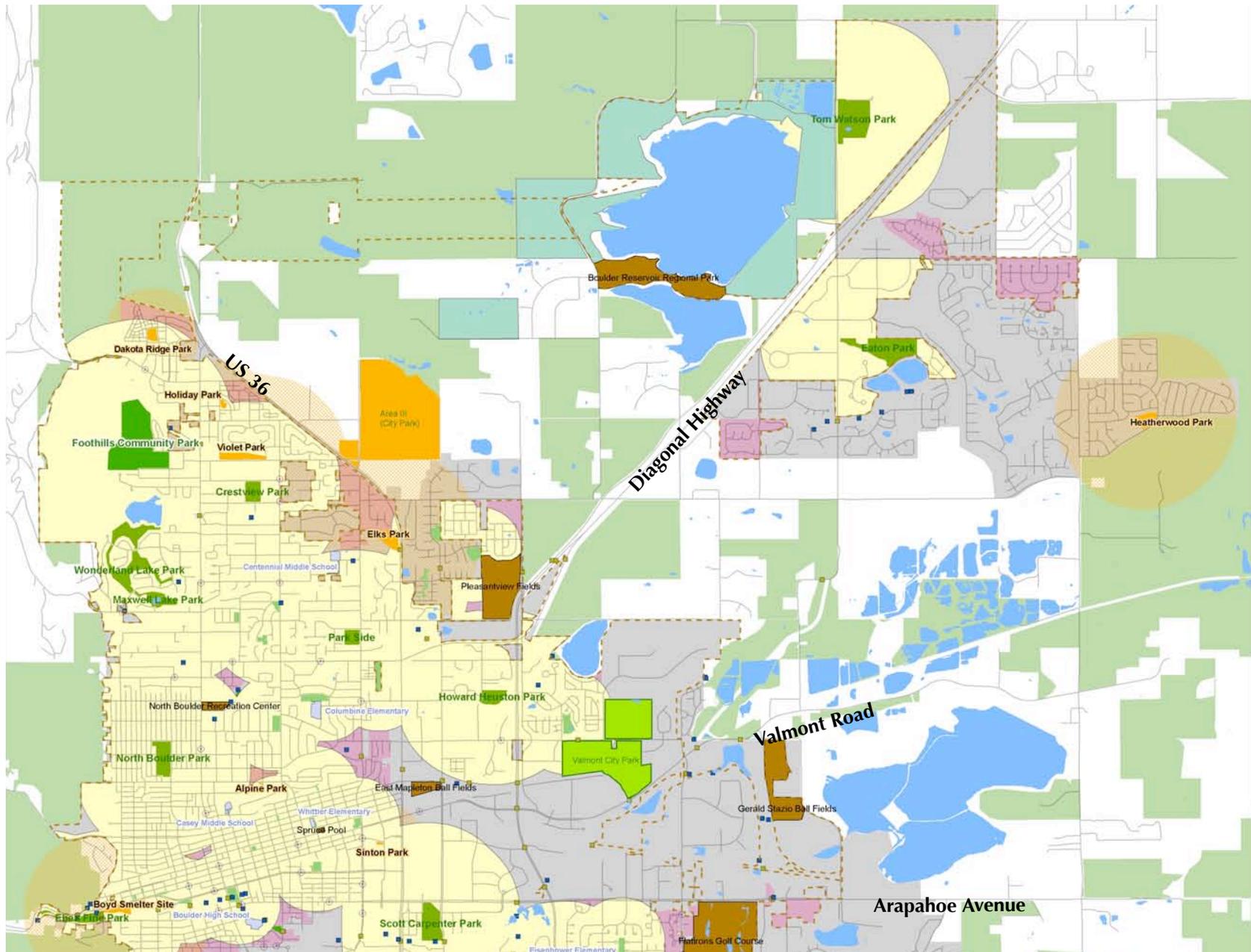
The department is conducting forums with the community and potential partners to discuss opportunities and challenges in meeting requests for services and facilities. The department will use these discussions to develop a process for setting recreation facility priorities, for evaluating requests, and for making decisions. The department will begin using the evaluation process in 2007.

## The Parks and Recreation Retail Connection

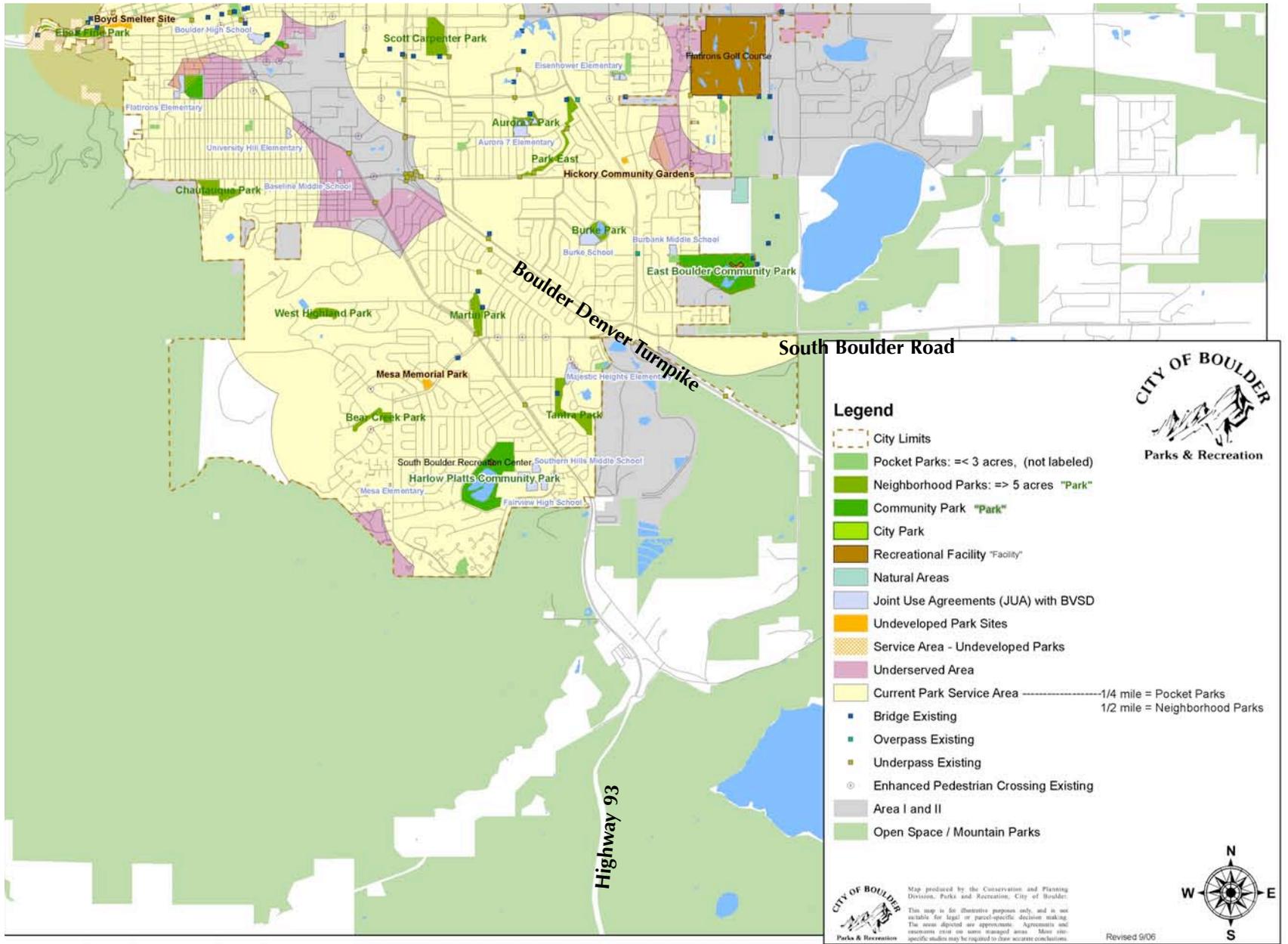


*Imagine a Saturday in the future: attending a sports tournament at Mapleton Complex, heading over to Twenty Ninth Street to have lunch at a café and do some shopping, and then continuing on to Scott Carpenter Park and pool for the afternoon. Or starting at Valmont City Park, meeting friends arriving via train at the Transit Village, and walking down to Twenty Ninth Street, with your kids riding up from the Boulder Creek path and the skatepark to meet you for pizza and a movie.*

*The parks and recreation retail connection is part of the department's vision for the future, in which enhanced parks and recreation facilities connect the community to key destinations that contribute to Boulder's economic vitality.*



Park Service Area Map - NORTH half of city



Park Service Area Map - SOUTH half of city

## CORE SERVICES BUSINESS MODEL

### BOULDER'S PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

