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OPEN SPACE, PARKS, RECREATION & TRAILS

A. OPEN SPACE, PARKS, RECREATION & TRAILS VISION

BROOMFIELD PRESERVES AND ENHANCES THOSE NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL PLACES THAT REFLECT THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE COMMUNITY.

B. CURRENT SITUATION & FUTURE TRENDS

Recreational opportunities and contact with nature not only improve a community’s quality of life, but they can also help counter the obesity epidemic, offset rising health care costs, and provide an important benefit to the local economy. As such, they have become an increasingly important factor in determining where to live or locate a business. Prospective residents and employers are attracted to locations that offer proximity and access to parks and open space. Cities are responding by looking at land use choices that support healthy lifestyles—including open space, parks, recreation and trails. Local policy makers are increasingly paying attention to the connection between health and the way communities are designed and branded.

Broomfield’s commitment to preserving open space and to providing park, trail and recreation opportunities is clear to the Broomfield community. In the [Broomfield 2015 Citizen Survey](#), over 90 percent of the respondents rated the quality of parks, open space and trails as excellent or good. The importance of open space to residents has also increased since the 2012 and 2007 surveys.

The 2005 City and County of Broomfield’s [Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Trails \(OSPRT\) Master Plan](#) articulates a vision based on residents’ expressed values about the natural and recreational qualities that make Broomfield a special community.

The Comprehensive Plan [Land Use Map](#) includes the overall vision illustrating the current open lands network throughout Broomfield. Specifically, the [OSPRT Master Plan](#) has been the primary tool providing guidance for Broomfield’s actions related to open lands acquisition and preservation, parks development and trail construction.

As stated in the Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan, these values define the community’s heart and soul:

...the heart represented by parks and other civic spaces that bring Broomfield together as a community, &

...the soul represented by those open spaces that provide contemplation and appreciation, whether viewed from afar, experienced close at hand or near to home.

This plan established a comprehensive inventory of existing and needed resources and amenities and identified core goals and associated measures, principles and implementation strategies. Background, guidance and analytical justifications that support these overall goals and policies are included in that plan.

PROVIDING OPEN LANDS

Broomfield has worked actively to acquire, to preserve and, where suitable, develop open lands for public use. The term “open lands” is an umbrella concept that encompasses three subsidiary designations: park/recreational areas, open space and other open lands. The following definitions describe the unique attributes and purposes of Broomfield’s three types of open lands designations.

- **Parks and Recreational Areas:** These areas are the most intensively developed and used types of open lands. They may contain open irrigated turf areas for passive recreation, playing fields, hard courts, picnic areas, restroom facilities and other improvements.
- **Open Space Areas:** These areas are parcels intentionally protected from development and set aside for unstructured passive recreation and the appreciation of natural surroundings. They may contain trailheads and trails, fishing facilities, wildlife viewing areas and other facilities that support uses compatible with a site’s natural resources and conditions.
- **Other Open Lands:** These areas include golf courses, drainage/detention areas and other facility uses.

[Map 23](#), the Open Space, Recreation and Trails Map shows the current and proposed paths and trails connecting Broomfield’s conservation easements, open space and open lands, and city parks with regional trails and open space.

Table 1. Existing Open Lands by Type and Acreage

Open Lands (Acres)	Open Space	Parks	Other Open Land	Total Open Lands	% of Total
Public Open Space	2,614			2,614	32%
Conservation Easement	370			370	5%
Intergovernmental Agreement Broomfield/Boulder Counties	2,422			2,422	30%
Public Parks and Recreational Facilities		743		743	9%
Golf Courses			665	665	8%
Joint School Parks		177		177	2%
Private Park and Recreational Facilities		257		257	3%
Other Public Open Lands			821	821	10%
Private Open Lands			127	127	1%
Private Open Space	12			12	<1%
Subtotal:	5,418	1,177	1,613	8,208	100%
Broomfield County Planning Area (includes Broomfield/Boulder County Intergovernmental Agreement)				24,043	
Open lands as a percentage of total planning area average:	22%	5%	7%	34%	

Source: City and County of Broomfield, October 2016

Efforts have focused on connecting these public areas of the community by preserving an interconnected greenway system composed of open lands not only along the edges of Broomfield that provide a buffer to adjacent communities (the “Green Edge”) but also significant parcels of land within the community. From a quantitative standpoint, the [OSPRT Master Plan](#) calls for the preservation of approximately 40 percent (estimated as 9,617 acres) of Broomfield’s planning area as open lands. Currently, approximately 34 percent, or just under 8,119 acres, of the planning area consists of open lands. Projects under way include improvements to open lands at McKay Lake and Lambertson Farms with the addition of regional trail connections, environmental education facilities, habitat enhancements and public recreational opportunities.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

The Level of Service maps ([Maps 24](#), [25](#), and [26](#)) provide a helpful analysis of the location of open lands throughout the community. The Level of Service concept is based on the goal to ensure that residents in all areas of the City have comparable access to open space, parks and recreation facilities and programs, and trails. A half mile distance is typically used to identify public access to parks, opens space, recreation, and trails.

Examples of other factors to consider in determining if a parcel should become part of the open lands system include:

- Open Space considerations may include the parcel’s scenic quality, connectivity to other open lands, trail corridor potential, environmental quality and wildlife value, historic relevance, and ability to create community buffers.
- Park Land considerations may include the size of the parcel for a needed facility or recreational use, suitability of the terrain for recreation, connectivity to existing facilities, accessible to a variety of transportation options (trails, transit, bike lanes, cars), significant views and natural features.



CONNECTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A second priority strongly and consistently voiced by the Broomfield community is the need to develop a well-connected trails network to create a “walkable” community. Older developed areas are the biggest challenge to completing this network, because missing links are difficult to build in locations occupied by existing homes and other improvements. Until the mid-1980s, new developments often were not required to provide trails. The majority of the existing trail network has been built since the mid-1980s. See [Map 18, Existing and Proposed Trail Network](#).

Addressing this need presents an opportunity to provide for biking and walking as alternate modes of transportation that link key public areas together. Trail connectivity provides an opportunity for citizens to walk and ride to many destinations instead of relying solely on the automobile to meet transportation needs. Currently, there are 88 miles of multiuse concrete trails, approximately 26 miles of soft surface trails, 95 miles of detached sidewalks and 72 miles of on-street bike lanes, as shown on [Map 18, Existing and Proposed Trail Network](#). The [OSPRT Master Plan](#) fully analyzed the “missing links” needed to complete a comprehensive trail network through Broomfield, and many of them have been completed since 2005.

Connecting Broomfield

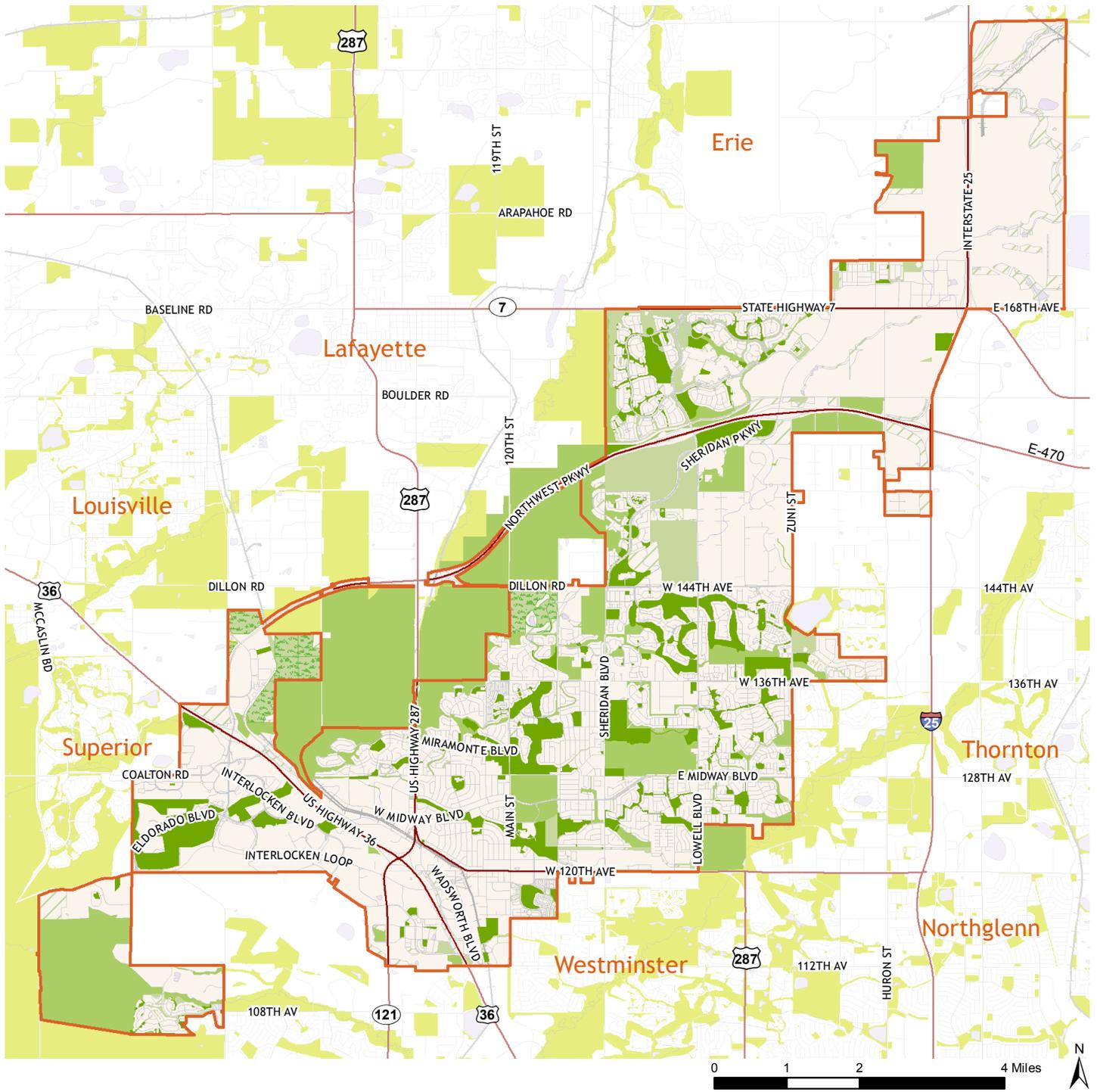
88 miles of multiuse trails

26 miles of soft surface trails

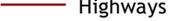
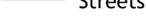
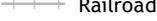
95 miles of detached sidewalks

72 miles of on-street bike lanes

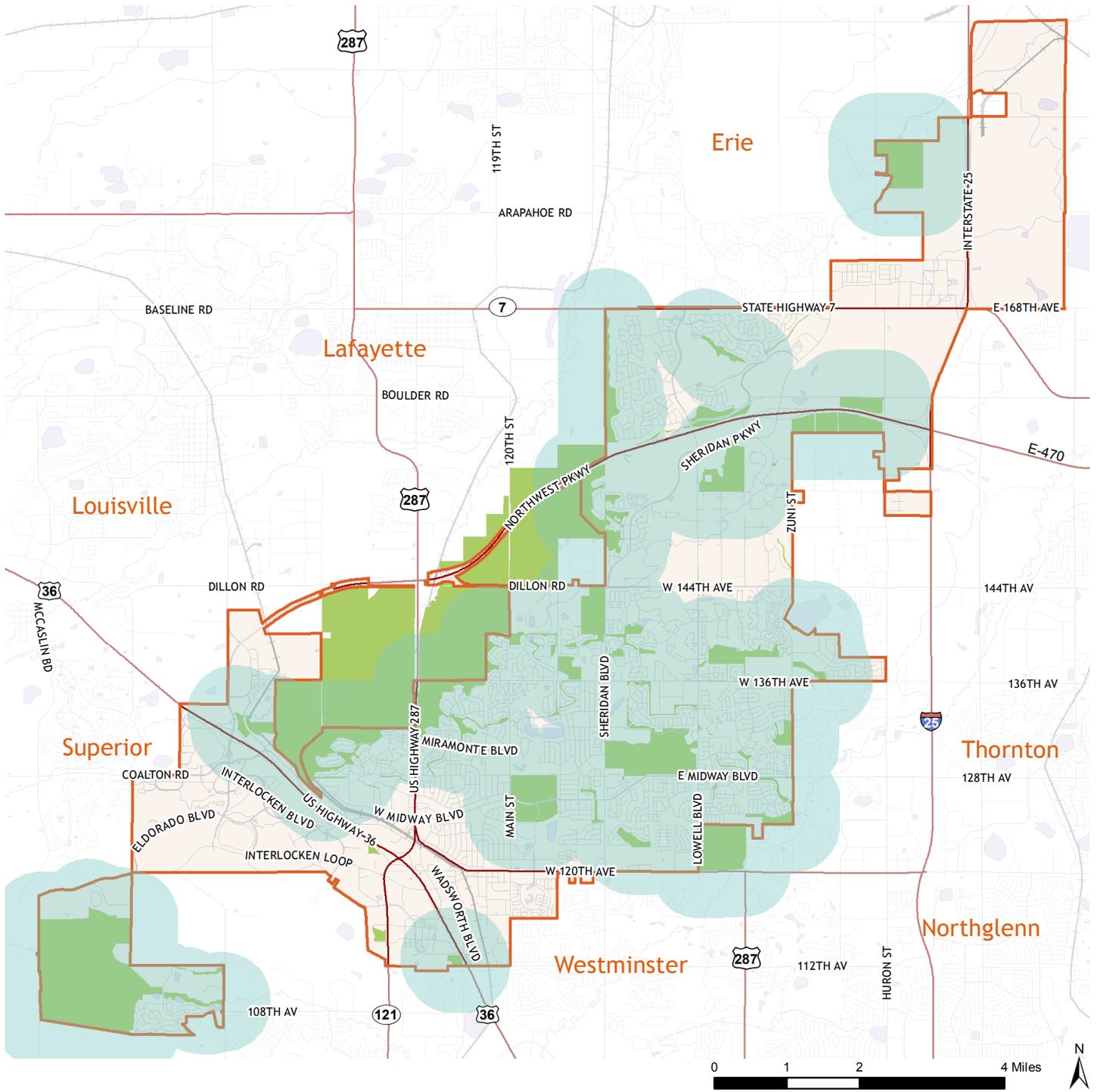
Map 23. Open Lands



LEGEND

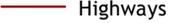
-  City and County of Broomfield
 -  Interstate
 -  Highways
 -  Streets
 -  Railroad
 -  Creeks, Ditches and Canals
 -  Waterbody
 -  Open Lands Outside Broomfield, Owned by Others
 -  Additional Open Lands Identified on Land Use Map
 -  Conservation Easement
 -  Open Space
 -  Other Public/Private Open Lands
 -  City Parks/School Parks
- Note: This designation is not inclusive of all future open lands.

Map 24. Open Space Level of Service

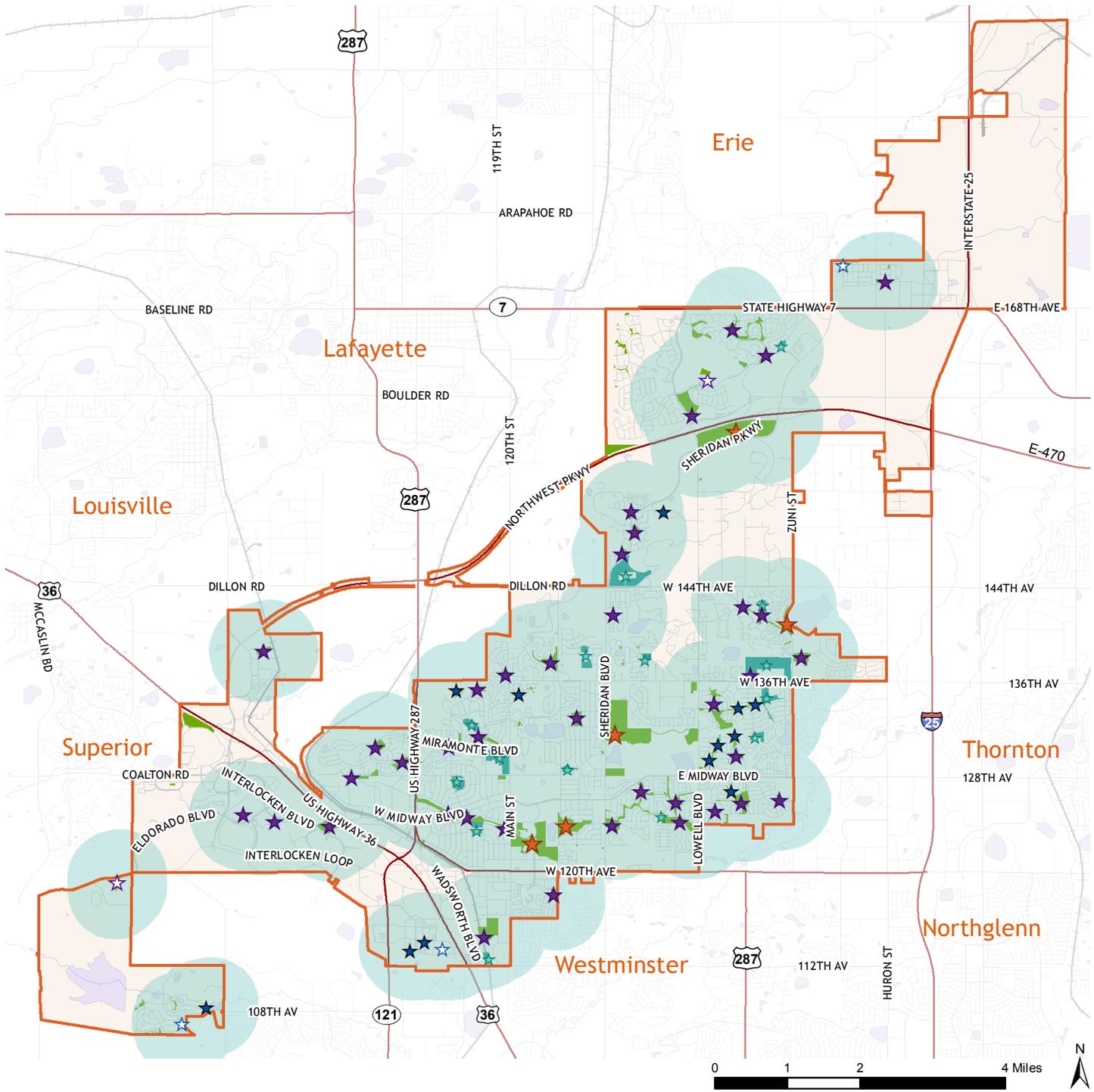


Source: Broomfield GIS Department; CDOT

LEGEND

-  City and County of Broomfield
-  Interstate
-  Highways
-  Streets
-  Railroad
-  Creeks, Ditches and Canals
-  Waterbody
-  Open Space
-  Open Space Half-Mile Buffer

Map 25. Parks Level of Service

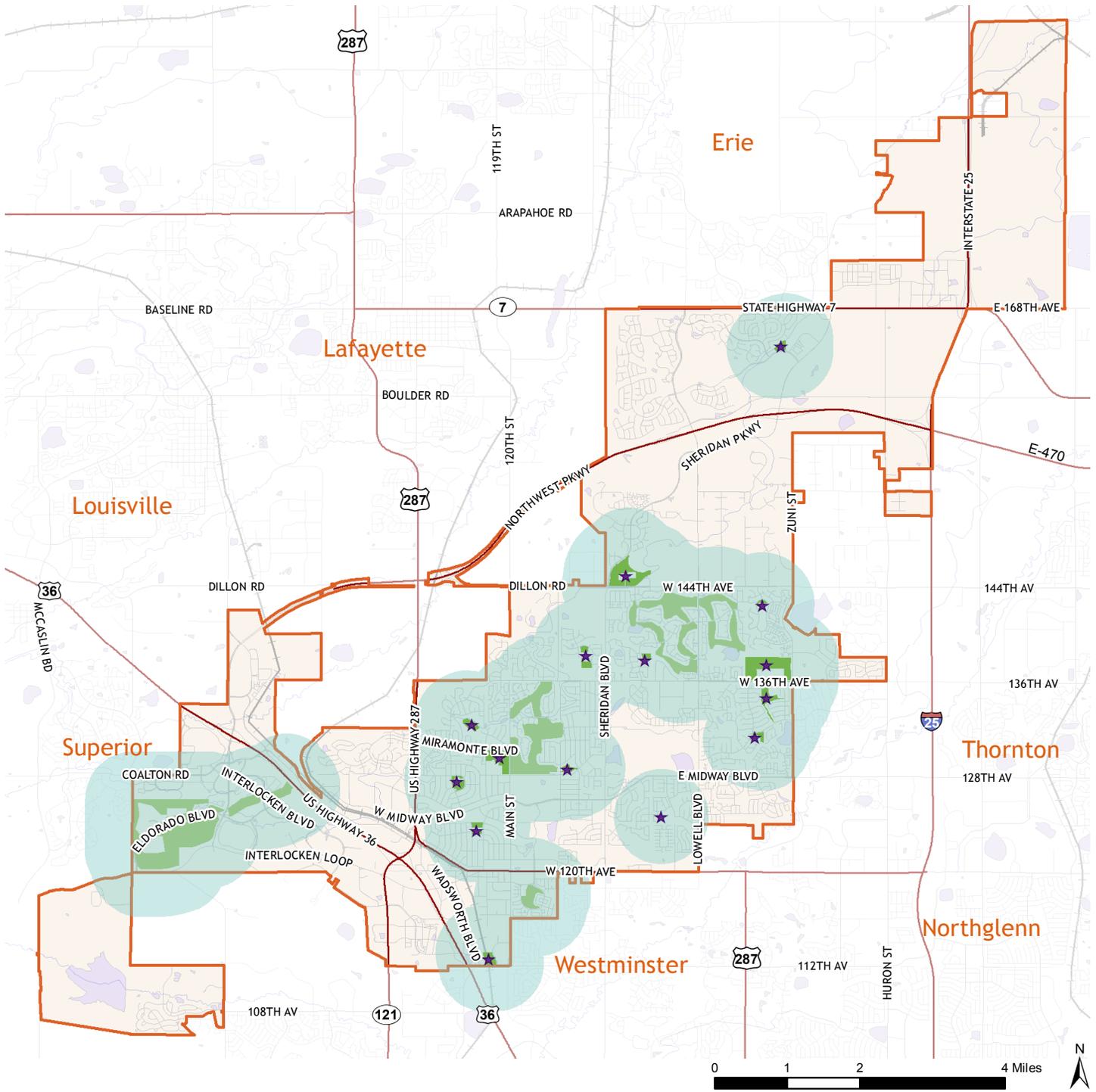


Source: Broomfield GIS Department; CDOT

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| City and County of Broomfield | Creeks, Ditches and Canals | Community Park | Pocket - not built |
| Interstate | Waterbody | Neighborhood | School |
| Highways | Public Park and Recreation | Neighborhood - not built | School - not built |
| Streets | School Park | Pocket Park | |
| Railroad | Parks Half-Mile Buffer | | |

Map 26. Schools and Golf Courses Level of Service



Source: Broomfield GIS Department; CDOT

LEGEND

-  City and County of Broomfield
-  Interstate
-  Highways
-  Streets
-  Railroad
-  Creeks, Ditches and Canals
-  Waterbody
-  Golf Course
-  School Park
-  Schools and Golf Course Half-Mile Buffer
-  Schools

C. GOALS & POLICIES

Goal OP-A: Forty Percent Open Lands

Provide approximately 40 percent of Broomfield's planning area as open lands.

Policy OP-A.1: Develop and maintain an integrated and comprehensive system based on level of service to inventory, and evaluate and prioritize potential open lands for purchase and/or preservation. The appropriate level of service to residents should closely resemble Broomfield's existing commitment to open lands.

Action Step OP-A.1.1: Maintain and update the [OSPRT Master Plan's](#) inventory of prioritized potential open space and park lands.

Action Step OP-A.1.2: Prepare an annual implementation progress report to inform the community regarding future open lands funding and acquisition strategies by summarizing progress toward open land goals. The report would also detail the acres of open lands obtained from dedications, existing sales tax acquisitions and other sources and means.

Policy OP-A.2: Pursue the preservation or acquisition of high-valued open space, parks properties and trail easements, while achieving the overall open lands goal by strategically applying a full range of acquisition, preservation and financing options.

Action Step OP-A.2.1: Identify an alternative financing strategy for investment in the acquisition of open lands. These strategies could include bonding, certificates of participation or other debt mechanisms.

Action Step OP-A.2.2: Consider and prepare revisions to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to facilitate the acquisition and/or preservation of desirable open lands in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan [Land Use Map](#) and the [OSPRT Master Plan](#). The [OSPRT Master Plan](#) identifies such potential revisions as establishing criteria for clustered development and a transferable development rights (TDR) program.

Action Step OP-A.2.3: Acquire or otherwise conserve high-priority open lands using a variety of dedicated local funding sources. A compilation of potential dedicated funding sources is identified within the [OSPRT Master Plan](#).

Action Step OP-A.2.4: Establish a foundation or partner with an existing foundation to help with purchasing and conserving open lands.

Action Step OP-A.2.5: Expand partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions to include intergovernmental agreements (IGAs), and project-specific affiliations for joint acquisition and management. Also, expand partnerships with other organizations within the community to leverage Broomfield resources to acquire and/or preserve desired open lands.

Action Step OP-A.2.6: Actively solicit property donations of priority open lands in exchange for tax benefits for the property donor.

Action Step OP-A.2.7: Analyze the viability of using a TDR program to conserve open land in Broomfield as an alternative to acquiring open land properties.

Action Step OP-A.2.8: Consider and prepare revisions to expand the criteria in the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) by which to evaluate the appropriateness of accepting cash-in-lieu of land dedication. The [OSPRT Master Plan](#) identifies potential conditions for when this mechanism may be appropriate.

Action Step OP-A.2.9: Analyze the viability of using cluster zoning to acquire open lands.



Goal OP-B: Interconnected Public Open Lands System

Connect public spaces with paths and greenways within and between existing and new areas of the community in order to provide continuous green space throughout the community benefiting wildlife, enhancing recreational experiences, and increasing Broomfield’s walkability.

Policy OP-B.1: Design trail connections to link open space, parks, recreational facilities and other public places (e.g., schools, libraries, employment areas) into an integrated system. The trail system should connect recreational opportunities, support a variety of uses, enhance community image, overcome such community barriers as regional roadways and rail lines and offer alternatives to motor vehicle travel and commuting.

Action Step OP-B.1.1: Prioritize and develop the key missing links and needed facilities to overcome community barriers in Broomfield’s trail system.

Action Step OP-B.1.2: Extend the Broomfield Trail through the length of the planning area generally following the Community Ditch corridor.

Policy OP-B.2: Use existing natural or human-made corridors (e.g., drainageways, ditch corridors, utility corridors) to support connections where feasible.

Policy OP-B.3: Where off-street trail connections are not feasible, provide safe, user-friendly, and well-marked on-street connections that maximize separation

between pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles, and that make arterial street crossings safe and that provide a pleasant experience.

Policy OP-B.4: Acquire land for parks and open space that provide physical connections to adjacent open lands and that complete missing components of the overall system, including the need for larger community parks, regional parks and a large athletic complex.

Policy OP-B.5: Partner and coordinate with municipal, county, state and local neighbors to complete intercommunity and regional connections.

Policy OP-B.6: Face greenways that extend through residential neighborhoods with active uses, front doors, open fences or local streets to maintain safety within these areas. Avoid lining greenway systems that extend through residential neighborhoods with solid fences.

Action Step OP-B.6.1: Update residential greenway and open space standards to promote visibility and safety.



Goal OP-C: Community Image and Identity

Use open space, parks, trails, and recreational facilities to reinforce a strong community image and identity and to improve quality of life.

Policy OP-C.1: Develop and implement evaluation criteria for assessing potential land acquisitions that capture important community values (e.g., views, ability to experience and connect with natural areas, and wildlife “close to home”) and that support rather than conflict with proposed development types.

Policy OP-C.2: Acquire or develop “signature” facilities or properties that become important landmarks for the community. These may include premium open space properties, developed parkland, or a well-connected trails system distributed throughout the community. Examples include The Field, Broomfield County Commons and the proposed reservoir along Lowell Boulevard.

Action Step OP-C.2.1: Develop off-leash dog parks and alternative approaches to their management.

Policy OP-C.3: Acquire or develop properties that are physically contiguous and form a connected system. A well-connected green-space system will help establish a strong community identity, as well as strengthen the Green Edge buffer between Broomfield and adjacent communities.

Action Step OP-C.3.1: Consider and prepare amendments to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) regarding parks and open space to encourage the dedication of compact and usable open space or parkland parcels.

Action Step OP-C.3.2: Aggressively pursue IGAs with Weld County, Adams County and Westminster to designate border land for mutually beneficial open space.

Action Step OP-C.3.3: Continue to cooperate with other communities to increase, preserve, and maintain

the Green Edge and to take full advantage of open space, parks, recreational areas, and trails in the region.

Policy OP-C.4: Establish design standards for parks, trails, and facilities that encourage durability, that are responsive to unique site conditions, and that generally promote sound stewardship of Broomfield’s natural resource areas.

Action Step OP-C.4.1: Consider and prepare design standards for park construction that address size, location, typical facilities, parking and amenities.

Action Step OP-C.4.2: Consider and prepare design standard modifications to Broomfield’s Standards and Specifications for trails, bike lanes and walkways.

Action Step OP-C.4.3: Update maintenance practices to incorporate new technology in design standards (e.g., WiFi, QR codes [smartphone-readable barcodes]).

Policy OP-C.5: Employ a consistent identity and signage program that allows residents and visitors to easily recognize Broomfield properties and facilities and that provides effective wayfinding.

Action Step OP-C.5.1: Consider and prepare an educational program regarding trail and recreational facility use etiquette.

Action Step OP-C.5.2: Update signage program to incorporate new technology in design standards (e.g., WiFi, QR codes).

Policy OP-C.6: Incorporate distinctive public art into parks and trail corridors, within a public art program.



Goal OP-D: Stewardship

Careful and responsible management of open space and stewardship of natural resources.

Policy OP-D.1: Develop and implement a variety of tools and strategies to creatively protect and preserve significant open lands and wildlife habitat.

Action Step OP-D.1.1: Consider and prepare revisions to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to encourage the use of naturally sloped and vegetated swales for stormwater conveyance in lieu of storm sewers.

Action Step OP-D.1.2: Consider and prepare revisions to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to promote the protection of ridgelines, high points within the community, and scenic views.

Action Step OP-D.1.3: Continue to adopt guidelines for open space management that minimize the use of toxic chemicals in controlling pests and weeds.

Policy OP-D.2: Establish clear guidelines for public use of open space areas that are grounded in their inherent natural resource values and that provide for public enjoyment without compromising these inherent qualities.

Action Step OP-D.2.1: Consider and prepare amendments to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to update the Open Space Zone District provisions in order to be consistent with the intent and recommendations provided by the [OSPRT Master Plan](#), and update the Zoning Map to ensure that all city-owned and dedicated properties are zoned as open space.

Action Step OP-D.2.2: Review Broomfield's [Guidelines for Management and Maintenance of Open Spaces](#).

Policy OP-D.3: Develop area management plans for open space areas of a significant size that define appropriate and allowable uses, management strategies and restoration, or remediation activities needed to enhance the health and the functioning of the resource, and that maximize public enjoyment and uses.

Policy OP-D.4: Encourage environmentally sustainable site and building design.

Action Step OP-D.4.1: Strive to incorporate Green Building Council guidelines when developing or renovating park, recreational or trail facilities.

Action Step OP-D.4.2: Create metrics for evaluating and negotiating development with sustainable design.

Policy OP-D.5: Develop environmental quality protection standards that can be implemented in conjunction with Broomfield's development review process to provide additional protections for valued open space, parks, and recreational and trail resources.

Action Step OP-D.5.1: Consider and prepare amendments to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to identify the types of natural areas and features that should be conserved through the open space public land dedication requirements for new residential development.

Action Step OP-D.5.2: Consider and prepare amendments to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to stipulate that parkland should meet the specific program and environmental criteria defined in the [OSPRT Master Plan](#).

Action Step OP-D.5.3: Consider and prepare amendments to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) to better ensure that stormwater detention areas provide truly usable parkland or open space exhibiting a natural character before they may be credited toward a project's public land dedication requirements.

Action Step OP-D.5.4: Consider and prepare developing management and maintenance guidelines to promote better stewardship of community open lands.

Action Step OP-D.5.5: Incorporate environmental standards in [Broomfield Municipal Code](#).

Policy OP-D.6: Address the process and transparency for any proposed change of use, trade or lease of any open land property that is owned as fee simple by the City and County of Broomfield.

Action Step OP-D.6.1: Consider and prepare options to establish criteria and procedures for evaluating and approving the possible future disposal, change in use, trade or lease of designated open lands. Any such devised process should provide substantial opportunities for public input.

Policy OP-D.7: Expand partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, nonprofits entities, and other organizations within the community to promote stewardship programs and volunteer initiatives and to implement the [OSPRT Master Plan's](#) goals and objectives.

Action Step OP-D.7.1: Work with existing environmental education programs, such as the volunteer-based Broomfield Nature Program, to develop brochures, programs and educational programs (classes, tours) to promote stewardship of open space lands and compliance with established rules and conservation design guidelines.

Action Step OP-D.7.2: Adopt a leadership role in promoting volunteer activities that benefit open space, trails and parks.

Policy OP-D.8: Establish and use standards, policies, and practices that encourage and support the protection of wildlife and wildlife and plant habitats.

Action Step OP-D.8.1: When developing undeveloped property, relocate displaced wildlife. When relocation is not a viable option, euthanasia should be done as humanely as possible.

Action Step OP-D.8.2: Consider revision of the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#) regarding requirements for a wildlife/environmental analysis regarding proposed greenfield development and methods to mitigate adverse impacts of proposed development projects.

Action Step OP-D.8.3: Implement the [OSPRT Master Plan's](#) baseline management plan for each open space property to assess quality of vegetation, wetlands, wildlife habitat and waterways for potential enhancement and restoration. Identify critical habitat areas and take steps to protect those areas.

Action Step OP-D.8.4: Continue to define and implement open space maintenance requirements.

Action Step OP-D.8.5: Use permaculture principles to maintain and enhance natural areas and trails and to promote and protect native species of plants and animals when possible.

Goal OP-E: Future Needs

Develop a proactive approach to meeting future open space, parks, and recreation needs.

Policy OP-E.1: Regularly analyze service capabilities in terms of access and acreage of Broomfield's recreational facilities and programs against generally recognized established measures to identify areas for improvement. Regularly update buildout projections and locations for residential growth to update projected needs for facilities.

Action Step OP-E.1.1: Consider and prepare a facility program for a new recreation center, and evaluate the suitability of alternative potential locations for the center within the community.

Action Step OP-E.1.2: Periodically analyze resident participation in organized athletic leagues and the leagues' use of Broomfield facilities to ensure that an appropriate level of facilities and programs is provided.

Action Step OP-E.1.3: Periodically analyze other communities' participation in Broomfield-sponsored leagues and out-of-community use of Broomfield facilities to develop reimbursement policies that ensure that out-of-community use of Broomfield facilities is accompanied by appropriate compensation.

Action Step OP-E.1.4: Update and evaluate existing teen programs and facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Action Step OP-E.1.5: Review current build-out projections for residential areas, commercial areas, and open lands.

Policy OP-E.2: Establish strategic partnerships with surrounding communities and nonprofit entities and schools to provide for shared facilities and specialized-use facilities and parks that serve existing neighborhoods..

Policy OP-E.3: Incorporate established service standards for parks and open space as public land dedication requirements that are part of the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#). The [OSPRT Master Plan](#) identifies potential service standards for open space, parks and public land dedications.

Action Step OP-E.3.1: Consider and prepare modifications to Broomfield's service standards for each type of park facility to ensure that the mix of park types reflects the community's needs and expressed values.

Action Step OP-E.3.2: Include [OSPRT Master Plan](#) dedication requirements as an amendment to the [Broomfield Municipal Code](#).

Action Step OP-E.3.3: Revise the public land dedication formula to reflect increased open space and park needs for multifamily development.

Policy OP-E.4: Establish guidelines for accommodating emerging recreational needs and preferences into existing community lands and on lands that may be provided by private partners.

Action Step OP-E.4.1: Consider and prepare revisions to the Broomfield [Municipal Code](#) to establish design standards for such items as amenities and furniture for parks, open space and trails provided by developers. The [OSPRT Master Plan](#) identifies potential quality and quantity standards.

Policy OP-E.5: Reflect the variation of recreational needs for young adults and aging seniors in park design, access to open space, and connectivity of the trail system.

Goal OP-F: Distribution of Facilities

Promote the equitable distribution of open space, parks, recreational, and trail facilities.

Policy OP-F.1: Promote access for populations with special needs to appropriate recreational, open space, and trail facilities in compliance with applicable federal accessibility requirements.

Action Step OP-F.1.1: Consider and prepare accessibility standards and guidelines for appropriate recreational and trail facilities.

Policy OP-F.2: Regularly analyze the service capabilities in terms of access and acreage to Broomfield's recreational facilities and programs against established measures for major geographic areas of the City. Those areas falling below 50 percent of the established service standard should be targeted for improvements.

Action Step OP-F.2.1: Prepare and consider amending the [Municipal Code](#) regarding parks to encourage that parks are accessible, secure and visible to the residents they are intended to serve.

Action Step OP-F.2.2: Provide a park within one-fourth mile of every home where feasible.

Action Step OP-F.2.3: Study to identify economically challenged areas of the community, and create additional policies/ actions to create relative equity in access to open lands.

Action Step OP-F.2.4: Incorporate the recommendations from the [Athletic Field Use and Demand Analysis Study](#).

Policy OP-F.3: Promote accessibility to facilities and programs for residents regardless of income level.

Action Step OP-F.3.1: Evaluate and adjust, as necessary, Broomfield's existing recreation program participation and its facility admittance fee assistance programs.

Action Step OP-F.3.2: Promote a scholarship program for the underserved to fulfill the need for affordable recreational programs.

