

## CHAPTER ONE STAKEHOLDER AND FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

### 1.1 OVERVIEW

As part of the process for the Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan, PROS Consulting conducted a combination of 3 focus groups, which included approximately 25 participants, 15 stakeholder interviews, and 1 community forum.

This process of community involvement helps establish priorities for the future improvement and direction of management and planning for Durango. The focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and community forum enable the Department to learn what users of the system value, are concerned about, and feel are unmet needs that the department could be providing.

Three primary questions were asked to spark conversations and gather information.

1. What are the strengths of Durango Parks and Recreation System?
2. What are the opportunities for improvement?
3. What is the top priority that should be addressed through this master planning process?



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### 1.1.1 STRENGTHS

Locals express that the variety and excellent quality of the parks, facilities, and recreation programming encourage active lifestyles, provide opportunity to recreate, and foster a sense of community. Respondents generally equated good parks to healthier families and healthier community.

Participants expressed high regard for current trails including the continuation of extending the Animas River Trail. The City trails collectively represent potential for great connectivity between neighborhoods and people and the opportunity for both recreational and economic development.

Participants agree that Parks and Recreation Department employees are courteous, helpful, and continues to value community input through different committees for residents to serve on. Residents also see great existing partnerships with the City such as Trails 2000.

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### 1.1.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Residents would like to see the continuation of connecting the trail system throughout the City by connecting the trails to Three Springs and completing Animas River Trail. Dedicated mountain bike and dedicated hiking trails was also important to residents when developing additional trails throughout the City. Some residents showed concern over safety when on the trail system. The community perceives an opportunity to improve lighting throughout the park and trail system and develop a communication method for users to be able to contact for help, share emergency information or share concerns while on trails and in parks.

Park development is important to residents at Durango Mesa Park and the 75 acres at Three Springs. Residents see these two sites as a solution to help accommodate community needs for a potential BMX park, additional tennis/pickle ball courts, community events space, and as a location for a new recreation center.

Respondents see a need for additional indoor recreation space, by either expanding the existing recreation center or build an additional facility to help with the needs of the community. Residents also suggested partnering with the school system to help provide additional indoor recreation space.

Although park development and additional new amenities and facilities are important; the community also wants the parks and recreation system to be able to maintain what they already own. The Department needs to find a balance between maintain existing infrastructure and adding new amenities and facilities. Funding will be important when developing these parks. The City should investigate different funding sources such as public/private partnerships. Many residents were wary of a sales tax increase.

Community members would like to see Lake Nighthorse open and accessible to the community. The Department needs to follow the existing master plan for the development of recreation features that the community wants.

Residents want the City to have a clear roadmap in place for the future needs of parks and recreation in the City of Durango. Have a sense of balance what is affordable, realistic and visionary.

### 1.1.3 TOP PRIORITY

The following items are recurring themes from stakeholders and focus group attendees as their top priority for this master plan:

- Expanding trail connectivity/trail network throughout the city
- New funding and revenue sources
  - Leveraging partnerships to help with new developments
  - Public and private funding
  - Public/private partnerships
- Safety and security in parks and on trails
- Development of the Community Park in Three Springs and Durango Mesa Park
- Additional indoor recreation space
  - Build new or expand existing
- Lake Nighthorse open and accessible to the community

