

CHAPTER ONE - BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

METHODOLOGY

PROS Consulting, INC. and Durango Parks and Recreation Department identified operating metrics to benchmark against comparable park and recreation systems. These benchmark agencies were identified by the department to include comparable high quality, nationally accredited and / or Gold Medal agencies in Colorado and a comparable one in Arizona. The goal of the analysis is to evaluate how Durango is positioned among peer agencies as it applies to efficiency and effectiveness practices.

The benchmark assessment is organized into specific categories based on peer agency responses to targeted questions that lend an encompassing view of each system's operating metrics in comparison to Durango. In addition, the benchmark comparison is also compared to national data from the National Parks and Recreation Association's (NRPA) Park Metrics database and/or recommended best practice standards.

Information used in this analysis was obtained directly from each participating agency. Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains, and reports data, variances may exist. These variations can impact the per capita and percentage allocations, and the overall comparison must be viewed with this in mind. The benchmark data collection for all systems was complete as of January 2018, and it is possible that information may have changed since the original collection date. The information sought was a combination of operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, and inventories. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available.

The table below lists each benchmark agency in the study, arranged by population size served, and reveals key characteristics of each jurisdiction. The overview also indicates which agencies that have achieved CAPRA accreditation or are a Gold Medal agency along with the year won. The majority of benchmark agencies are local peers from the state of Colorado, along with Flagstaff, Arizona. Durango represents the third highest population (18,909) and jurisdiction size (13.93 sq. mi.), while it ranks third from the bottom in population density (1,357 residents per sq. mi.).

Agency	Population	Jurisdiction Size (Sq. Mi.)	Population per Sq. Mi.	NRPA Gold Medal (Year)	CAPRA Accredited
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	66.00	1,101	No	No
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	34.22	1,655	Winner (2012)	Yes
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	13.93	1,357	Winner (2012)	Yes
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	9.70	1,945	Winner (2010)	Yes
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	10.10	1,256	No	No
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	5.69	1,792	No	No
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	6.38	1,412	No	No

BENCHMARK COMPARISON

1.1.1 PARK ACREAGE

The following table provides a general overview of each system's park acreage. Durango has the highest total acres owned or managed (5,300). Assessing level of service for park acres, Durango ranks first with 280.3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which is exceptional and is above NRPA's upper quartile for all agencies with 16.6 acres per 1,000 residents. This exceptionally high level of service is largely driven by the high amount of non-maintained acres (natural areas) within Durango e.g. Horse Gulch and Lake Nighthorse.

Agency	Population	Total Acres Owned or Managed	Total Developed Acres	Percentage of Developed Acres	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	5,300	345	7%	280.3
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	1,845	65	4%	180.9
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	3,462	585	17%	61.1
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	408	166	41%	45.3
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	655	253	39%	34.7
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	410	220	54%	32.3
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	843	277	33%	11.6

NRPA Median 9.6 Acres per 1,000 Residents
NRPA Lower Quartile 4.6 Acres per 1,000 Residents
NRPA Upper Quartile 16.6 Acres per 1,000

1.1.2 TRAIL MILEAGE

By comparing total trail mileage to the population of the service area, the level of service provided to the community can be determined, which is expressed as trail miles for every 1,000 residents. As seen below, Durango has the highest total trail mileage per capita (5.90 miles per 1,000) among benchmark agencies. Benchmark agencies, as a whole, are providing high levels of service for trail mileage, as all benchmark agencies is above the national best practice of 0.25-0.5 miles of trail per 1,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Soft Trail Miles	Paved Trail Miles	Total Trail Miles	Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	96.0	15.5	111.5	5.90
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	58.0	7.0	65.0	5.12
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	8.8	13.3	22.1	2.17
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	12.0	4.0	16.0	1.78
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	37.0	32.0	69.0	1.22
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	28.0	28.0	56.0	0.77
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	-	24.0	24.0	1.27

Best Practice Agencies 0.25-0.5 Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents

1.1.3 FTE'S PER 10,000 RESIDENTS

This section compares levels of staffing for each system by comparing full-time equivalents (FTEs) to total population. In order to provide a level comparison of staffing among benchmark agencies, total FTEs are calculated by summing all the hours worked by departmental staff and dividing the total by 2,080, which is traditionally accepted as equivalent to the total annual hours worked by one full-time employee.

Total FTEs per 10,000 residents is a key performance metric that assesses how well each agency is equipped, in terms of human resources, to serve its jurisdiction. Among peer agencies, Durango is slightly lower than other benchmark agencies, while still exceeding the national high quartile for staffing levels, with 20.1 FTEs per 10,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Total FTEs*	FTEs per 10,000 Residents
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	40	44.0
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	52	40.6
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	47	24.9
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	21	20.6
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	38	20.1
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	86	11.8
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	44	7.8

NRPA Median 7.3 FTEs per 10,000 Residents

NRPA Lower Quartile 3.7 FTEs per 10,000 Residents

NRPA Higher Quartile 14.9 FTEs per 10,000 Residents

1.1.4 OPERATING BUDGET

Benchmark agencies reported a wide range of annual operating expenditures, from \$10.2 million (Golden) to \$2.7 million (Cortez). Durango’s total operating expenditures is higher than NRPA’s median but lower than the higher quartile.

Dividing the annual operational budget to the service area’s population allows for a comparison of how much each agency is spending per resident. Durango is just slightly higher than the benchmark median and higher than the national median, for spending per resident. While a lower expense per resident can suggest efficiencies in operation, it can also signal limited program offerings, lower maintenance standards, or lighter marketing efforts, so the evaluation of optimal per capita spending must take into consideration the unique situation and intent of the agency.

Agency	Population	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Resident
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	\$ 10,226,930	\$ 542.05
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	\$ 5,057,603	\$ 398.55
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	\$ 6,531,733	\$ 345.43
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	\$ 3,453,700	\$ 338.70
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	\$ 2,762,030	\$ 306.65
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	\$ 14,714,374	\$ 259.76
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	\$ 6,233,655	\$ 85.80

Total Annual Operating Expenditures
NRPA Median \$3,501,000
NRPA Lower Quartile \$1,202,000
NRPA Higher Quartile \$9,446,000

Operating Expense per Resident
NRPA Median \$77.32 per Resident
NRPA Lower Quartile \$39.84 per Resident
NRPA Higher Quartile \$141.89 per Residents

1.1.5 NON-TAX REVENUES

By comparing each agency’s annual non-tax revenue to the population, the annual revenue generated on a per resident basis can be determined. As seen below, there is a large discrepancy in revenue-generating capabilities among benchmark agencies. Durango falls into the middle of the benchmark agencies for earned income generated per resident (\$220.13); however, the City earns exceptionally more per resident than NRPA’s higher quartile (\$51.51).

Agency	Population	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Revenue per Resident
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	\$ 6,990,690	\$ 370.52
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	\$ 17,082,380	\$ 301.57
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	\$ 2,808,084	\$ 221.28
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	\$ 4,162,503	\$ 220.13
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	\$ 1,352,400	\$ 132.63
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	\$ 602,404	\$ 66.88
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	\$ 1,762,230	\$ 24.25

NRPA Median \$19.04 per Resident
NRPA Lower Quartile \$6.73 per Resident
NRPA Higher Quartile \$51.51 per Residents

1.1.6 OPERATIONAL COST RECOVERY

Operational cost recovery is arrived at by dividing total non-tax revenue by total operating expense, and measures how well each department’s revenue generation covers the total cost of operations. Durango has the third highest cost recovery rate with 64% behind only Golden (68%) and Castle Rock (116%). NRPA reports the upper quartile for agencies at 50%.

Agency	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Total Operating Expense	Operational Cost Recovery
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	\$ 17,082,380	\$ 14,714,374	116%
Golden Parks and Recreation	\$ 6,990,690	\$ 10,226,930	68%
Durango Parks and Recreation	\$ 4,162,503	\$ 6,531,733	64%
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	\$ 2,808,084	\$ 5,057,603	56%
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,352,400	\$ 3,453,700	39%
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,762,230	\$ 6,233,655	28%
Cortez Parks and Recreation	\$ 602,404	\$ 2,762,030	22%

NRPA Median 29% Cost Recovery
NRPA Lower Quartile 14% Cost
NRPA Higher Quartile 50% Cost

1.1.7 FUNDING SOURCES

The following table is a breakdown of each peer agency’s funding sources along with NRPA’s average distribution of percentages. As seen, Durango has the highest percentage of earned / generated revenue of any agency (53%) and is twice the NRPA average (26%) which speaks very highly to the agency’s focus on financial sustainability and operating in a business mindset.

Agency	General Fund Tax Support	Dedicated Levies	Earned / Generated Revenue	Other Dedicated Taxes	Sponsorships	Grants	Other
Durango Parks and Recreation	47%	0%	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Cortez Parks and Recreation	30%	0%	20%	46%	0%	0%	4%
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	33%	28%	39%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	44%	0%	29%	0%	0%	0%	25%
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	30%	0%	48%	0%	0%	0%	22%
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Golden Parks and Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NRPA Average Distribution	59%	8%	26%	2%	1%	2%	3%

1.1.8 REVENUE SOURCES

The following table demonstrates a breakdown by percentages for different sources of revenue. Castle Rock and Glenwood Springs did not provide information for revenue sources. Durango performs exceptionally well in generating revenue from Program Fees and Charges while there are opportunities for improvement on the Facility Entry Fees / Memberships and Facility Rentals too. These are limited, in part, due to the current facility limitations experienced by the department and one which the Master Plan’s Facility Feasibility study will aim to address.

Agency	Facility Entry Fees / Memberships	Program Fees and Charges	Facility Rentals	Facility, Property, or ROW Leases	Concessions / Resale Items	Sale of Real Property	Other
Durango Parks and Recreation	53%	37%	8%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Cortez Parks and Recreation	65%	13%	3%	0%	2%	0%	17%
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	0%	29%	0%	5%	2%	3%	0%
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	54%	16%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Golden Parks and Recreation	60%	20%	5%	0%	5%	2%	5%

1.1.9 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET

The following table shows the capital budget for years 2014, 2015, and 2016. Durango Parks and Recreation continues to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and upgrading its high quality system with the highest average annual CIP budget of \$3,194,333.

Agency	CIP Budget 2014	CIP Budget 2015	CIP Budget 2016	Avg Annual CIP Budget 2014-2016
Durango Parks and Recreation	\$ 2,787,500	\$ 2,982,500	\$ 3,813,000	\$ 3,194,333
Golden Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,407,530	\$ 3,948,830	\$ 2,444,030	\$ 2,600,130
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	\$ -	\$ 2,345,705	\$ 3,672,198	\$ 2,005,968
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	\$ 350,946	\$ 2,009,192	\$ 472,000	\$ 944,046
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,133,000	\$ 1,040,000	\$ 841,000
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 462,500	\$ 154,167
Cortez Parks and Recreation	\$ 71,000	\$ 73,867	\$ 225,183	\$ 123,350

1.1.10 PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

This section assesses program participation for each agency by comparing total program participations to the population of each service area to determine the average participation rate per resident. Program activity is measured in *participations* (versus *participants*), which accounts for each time a resident participates in a program and allows for multiple participations per resident. Durango generates the second most participations per resident with 22.57 behind Glenwood Springs with 245.17 participations per resident.

Agency	Population	Total Program Participations	Participations per Resident
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	2,500,000	245.17
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	426,823	22.57
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	127,000	1.75
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	18,967	1.49
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	30,000	0.53
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	-	-
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	-	-

1.1.11 INDOOR RECREATION SPACE

Assessing the available indoor community / recreation center space among benchmark agencies, all of the peer agencies are providing an exceptional level of service. By dividing the existing square footage by the total population, the amount of indoor space available per resident can be determined. Durango’s 6.79 square feet per resident is highest among the peer agencies as well as the accepted national best practice of 1.5-2.0 sq. ft. of indoor space per resident. A good portion of this square footage (33,600 sf.) serves a special use at the Ice Rink and Pavilion at Chapman Hill.

Agency	Population	Sq. Ft. of Indoor Recreation Facilities	Sq. Ft. per Resident
Durango Parks and Recreation	18,909	128,384	6.79
Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation	10,197	64,000	6.28
Cortez Parks and Recreation	9,007	46,000	5.11
Golden Parks and Recreation	18,867	71,483	3.79
Flagstaff Parks and Recreation	72,656	194,100	2.67
Castle Rock Parks and Recreation	56,645	144,000	2.54
Steamboat Springs Parks and Community Services	12,690	-	-

Best Practice Agencies 1.5-2.0 Sq. Ft. per Resident

1.1.12 CONCLUSION

The following summarizes the key findings for Durango that were highlighted in the benchmark analysis:

- In terms of park acreage, Durango is well ahead of the curve, as the City reports total acreage and acres per resident that far exceed its benchmark peers and the NRPA median.
- The City offers ample miles of trails for users, and it is exceeding the recommended best practice level for trails per population.
- Durango is slightly lower than peer agencies for Full-time Equivalent (FTE) per resident; however, exceeds the national median by NRPA.
- The City’s per capita non-tax revenue generation and operational expenditures are well above the national median, Durango is achieving a strong cost recovery at 64%.
- The City’s commitment to capital investment is evident, in that it is spending on improvements at the highest level among the benchmark agencies.
- Program participation levels are very high, with 23 participations per Durango resident. A large number of their participants are not residents of Durango but of La Plata County, which drives higher numbers. Durango has a large number of tourists/visitors as well.
- Durango is the leader in offering square feet per resident for indoor recreation facilities at 6.79 sq. ft. per resident. It’s important to note that a portion of this square footage (33,600 sq. ft.) serves as a special use at the Ice Rink and Pavilion at Chapman Hill. It’s also important to remember that Durango serves a much larger population outside the City limits indicating that the 6.79 sq. ft. per resident would go down if we included population outside the City limits.