



**CITY OF OURAY, COLORADO
SWITZERLAND OF AMERICA**

**PARKS, RECREATION and TRAILS
MASTER PLAN UPDATE
2009**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Ouray City Council and City staff are accordingly updating the Parks, Recreation and Trails MASTER PLAN (PLAN) which was originally completed and adopted in November of 1998. Numerous goals and priorities identified in the original plan have been accomplished or completed and are now community assets. Other successes in related areas that were not part of the plan have also been completed and are also complimentary assets, such as the Perimeter Trail. The City Council has deemed it necessary to update the plan so it reflects present and future citizen and community needs.

Several goals and priorities have been met and accomplished so they are no longer in the PLAN. Various user groups, local organizations and citizens have contributed to this PLAN update and have helped with prioritization of existing and new goals, priorities and tasks. These existing and new goals, priorities and tasks are now implemented into the updated PLAN and reflect our current and future community Park, Recreation and Trail needs.

The City Council is committed to utilizing the PLAN and will strive to complete all priorities when City and grant funding is available. The Ouray Planning Commission will also utilize the PLAN when reviewing and considering development requests and base decisions and recommendations on the context of this PLAN. The City Council is also requesting support and partners from within the community who will also embrace this PLAN and work with the City to accomplish these valuable community priorities and tasks. Together, in partnership, we will work to complete elements of the PLAN and make Ouray a great place to work, live and visit. Thanks to everyone who participated and contributed to this PLAN.

Ouray City Council

Bob Risch – Mayor
Joe Kersen – Councilman
Robert Stoufer – Councilman
Sandy Stuller – Councilman
Betty Wolfe – Councilman

ADOPTION

Adopted by the City of Ouray City Council on this day of _____, in the month of _____, 2009.

Bob Risch, Mayor

The Planning Consultant for the project was:

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1. OVERVIEW

This document is an update of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails MASTER PLAN adopted in 1998. This PLAN is still a comprehensive guide for future development of Ouray's Parks, Recreation and Trails and identifies goals, priorities and tasks for numerous amenities and facilities within Ouray. This PLAN is also a key document needed for grant funds and will illustrate the City's commitment to parks, recreation and trails improvements and ensure funders that grant funds will be spent accordingly, and together with City funds will achieve the goals and priorities of this PLAN. The City Council recognizes that quality parks, recreation and trails will instill great pride and improve the general wellness of the community.

This PLAN update is a condensed document which details the current and future goals, priorities and tasks for City parks, recreation and trails. The original plan details the numerous efforts put forth in the development, review and adoption of the original plan, credits those who participated and also provides all the relevant history. The original plan should be consulted for this information if necessary.

2. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The PLAN update involved meeting with various user groups, organizations and citizens who reviewed and commented on the original plan, improvements/changes completed to date, improvements/changes not completed and a variety of other the items or issues. These groups and organizations include:

- San Juan Snakes Hockey Club – Rotary Park/Ice Rink
- Rotary In Need of Kids (RINK)/Broomball League – Rotary Park/Ice Rink
- High Grader Club – Fellin Park/Miners' Heritage Park
- Ouray Chamber and Resort Association
- Ouray County Arts Association
- Community Development Committee
- Ouray Trails Group

The first of two (2) public meetings was held on May 18th, 2009 to present a draft of the PLAN that reflected findings and issues presented in previous meetings with the above referenced user groups and also included updated information pertaining to accomplishments and successes since adoption of the original plan. The draft also discussed site plans for Fellin and Rotary Parks with current and proposed improvements. The public in attendance provided feedback on the updated draft PLAN and site plans during the meeting and in writing following the meeting. The City Council considered all information and then directed the consultant to make changes that when incorporated would reflect a final draft PLAN. The second meeting was held on July 20th, 2009 and the final draft PLAN was reviewed once again with a limited number of comments from the public. A final schedule for review and adoption of the PLAN was established as well as work on site plans for Fellin and Rotary Parks, which when completed will be reviewed and discussed publicly with eventual incorporation into the PLAN.

3. GOALS AND TASKS

Goals and strategies were identified in the original plan and were based on ideas, issues, and concerns identified by the public and City officials during the public planning process. The goals are still relevant in this PLAN update however some of the items within certain Strategies have been completed or are no longer relevant. Also, Strategies have been changed to Tasks since there is a final product or outcome from the Task. Below are the list of Goals and Tasks:

GOAL 1:

Develop the concept of "a city within a park" by creating a unified visual theme among the parks and the trail system that is congruent with the City's architecture, history, and natural surroundings.

Tasks:

- a. Work with the Ouray Beautification Committee (OBC) to create a uniform set of design guidelines that accentuate Ouray's small town character in the design of trails and park improvements. The City Council will task the OBC to work on this strategy.
- b. Develop a system of coordinated interpretive signs and panels throughout the City that provides information on the area's history, culture, geology and environment. Interpretive signs and panels have been completed for Box Cañon Park, the NOC, and along Main Street, however more work is needed in order to complete this tasks.



GOAL 2:

Preserve and enhance the uncrowded, open, and natural character of Ouray's parks.

Tasks:

- a. Preserve existing wildlife habitat and native vegetation.
- b. Preserve the natural character of Cascade Falls Park and other minor parks.
- c. Maintain the informality of the Women's Club Mini-Park and other minor parks.
- d. Maintain the area zoned P-2 as passive open space.
- e. Utilize unobtrusive lighting consistent with Goal 2. The City is replacing street lights with LED lighting which will help reduce light pollution. Development regulations have also been amended to reduce off-sight light and glare.

GOAL 3:

Develop a trail system that links City parks with each other and provides connections to recreation opportunities surrounding the City.

Tasks:

- a. Improve pedestrian and other non-motorized circulation between the parks by connecting existing trail segments and constructing new segments. The Perimeter Trail is a new trail that circles the City and ties in numerous other trails and parks.
- b. Improve access to public lands by more clearly defining existing trailheads and creating new trailheads
- c. Consider the Uncompahgre River Corridor as the main artery of the City's trail network.
- d. Create more easy-moderate trails.

GOAL 4:

Provide parks and recreation facilities and programs that meet a variety of needs of Ouray's multi-generational residents and visitors.

Tasks:

- a. Continue the generally successful operation of all-existing recreation facilities and programs, which provide a variety of activities for the City's diverse population and visitors.
- b. Continue to encourage and solicit the participation of volunteers who are vital to the successful operation of many recreation facilities and programs.
- c. Create more recreation opportunities for youth, particularly in the summertime.
- d. Create more passive recreation opportunities, particularly for older residents.

GOAL 5:

Use the parks system as a tool for economic development so long as such development is balanced with community values and needs.

Tasks:

- a. Continue to encourage tourism during the winter months by marketing unique facilities such as the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse, the ice rink, Ouray Ice Park, cross country ski trails, and Box Cañon Park.
- b. Cooperate with the Ouray Chamber and Resort Association to develop a coordinated year-round marketing plan for the community that emphasizes the uniqueness and diversity of the parks system.
- c. Establish the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse lobby and the Box Cañon Park Visitor Center as satellite Visitor Centers that are connected to the main Visitor Center.
- d. Improve and expand parking facilities to better accommodate visitors.
- e. Continue to improve Box Cañon Park and upgrade facilities, increase safety and remain open year-round.
- f. Investigate placing interactive information kiosks at strategic locations to enhance visitor awareness of the parks system.

GOAL 6:

Improve the level of maintenance of all facilities within the parks system.

Tasks:

- a. Develop a long-range program for parks capital improvements and maintenance.
- b. Promote volunteerism through programs like "Adopt-A-Park" and utilize and coordinate the efforts of the Beautification Committee.
- c. Cooperate with the U.S. Forest Service and the Colorado State Forest Service to treat diseased trees on City property.
- d. Expand us of groups such as the Southwest Conservation Corp for assistance with park and trail maintenance.
- e. Employ a weed abatement program for all parks, trails and open space areas.

GOAL 7:

Planning for parks should be comprehensive, long range, and integrated with other plans.

Tasks:

- a. Park planning will be complimentary with the Ouray Community Plan, the capital improvement plan, and other City planning efforts.
- b. Planning for any specific park should be comprehensive and include landscaping, circulation, lighting, facilities, trail connectivity, and all other projected needs and uses.

- c. Acquire necessary easements to allow for development of proposed trail segments and trailheads.

**GOAL 8:
Implement “Green” building standards and practices when possible for City parks and recreation facilities.**

Tasks:

- a. Install Compact Fluorescent Lighting (CFL) in all park and recreation facilities.
- b. Install dark-sky lighting in all exterior lighting fixtures within park and recreation facilities.
- c. Utilize solar and geothermal resources whenever possible within park and recreation facilities.
- d. Consider LEED certification for all new facility construction.

4. PARKS

Ouray has numerous parks that offer a clean and fresh connection to a wonderful outdoor environment that is situated throughout various parts of the city. The four distinct seasons bring different adventure and demand to the City Parks. Citizens, clubs, outdoor groups and visitors utilize these venues to meet their outdoor and recreational needs. Listed below are the various City Parks and their unique attributes along with prioritized improvements and tasks:



A. Fellin Park

Fellin Park is the most visible and used park in Ouray and commands great pride and community ownership. Geothermal activity within the park allows for year-round healthy, green grass which provides a natural and inviting setting that often includes herds of deer feeding in the evening. This park encompasses several community amenities including the Fish Pond and Skate Park; a picnic area, sand volleyball court, playground equipment and gazebo; Miner's Heritage Park; field usage for soccer, football, baseball and softball, ultimate Frisbee and other sporting uses; a walking path for users and pets; and in the past supported tennis and basketball activities on surfaces that are in need of repair or no longer functional.

Fellin Park is a focal point for the community and provides access for many of the outdoor activities enjoyed by citizens and visitors alike, 365 days a year. The park's proximity to the Uncompahgre River offers excellent potential for trail linkage to other parks and other parts of town. Several improvements have been completed on the park including new toddler equipment, relocation of the Visitors Center, a fountain and rope fencing in and around the fish pond, installation of an information kiosk, and installation of wooden railing. Maintenance is an ongoing issue for the City due to the intensive use of this park.



The parking area for this park also serves parking needs and access for the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse, the Fish Pond and Skate Park, Miner's Heritage Park and the Visitor Center, and is often at full capacity. This parking lot is a gravel lot with no individual, delineated parking. The parking area is a main concern for numerous users who expect better accommodations, which include increased and designated parking for vehicles and RVs, lighting, better connection from the area to venues/facilities, and an all-weather surface. Parking, circulation and access to all these uses is critical and should be considered carefully if changes in use or modifications occur.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for the Fellin Park:

Fellin Park Priorities

- Improve landscaping in and around the parking area, bathhouse and Skate Park;
- Develop a comprehensive lighting plan for the entire area (parking area, trails, etc.);
- Completely rebuild the tennis court facilities and seek participation from the school

district;

- Completely rebuild the basketball courts;
- Install interpretive signage throughout the park;
- Create a trail hub for connection to the trail system detailed in Section 6.

B. Miner's Heritage Park

Miner's Heritage Park is situated within the parking area adjacent to the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse and includes numerous improvements and pieces of equipment associated with the mining industry. A large bronze statue of a miner marks the entrance to Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse/Fellin and Miner's Heritage Park parking area. Mining has a rich history in Ouray and several community members continue the legacy by maintaining the park and sponsor the annual Hard Rockers Holiday event. The Hard Rockers Holiday is a two-day event that brings together miners, families and friends who celebrate the history of mining in the reenactment of numerous methods and tasks commonly utilized in mining, and do so in a competitive spirit. Events such as mucking, drilling and hand steeling are completed throughout the holiday and draw competitors and viewers alike. The Club has completed improvements to the park site that are necessary for several of the events.

The City has met with members of the High Graders Club and discussed the possibility of moving the Miner's Heritage Park out of the parking area so the City can better utilize the parking area year-round. In addition, moving the Miner's Heritage Park to another location will allow for better enjoyment of Highgrader events by allowing for more space and additional competitions. The current configuration of the park and the associated trestle, equipment, past competition boulders and other items encroaches into the parking area and reduces the usage of the parking area. The Club proposed moving the Heritage Park out of the parking area and into an area near the picnic tables, gazebo and horseshoe pits.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for the Miner's Heritage Park:

Miner's Heritage Park Priorities

- Complete the re-location of the park from the parking area into an area within Fellin Park near the gazebo and horseshoe pits;
- Install interpretive signage describing mining equipment and structures;
- Assist with promotion of annual event.

C. UNCOMPAHGRE RIVER PARK

The North Ouray Uncompahgre River Reclamation Project was a project that was detailed in the original plan and had several phases, all of which have been completed. The four primary project objectives were, 1.) Flood Protection; 2.) Aquatic Habitat Enhancement; 3.) Expanded Recreational Opportunities; and 4.) Beautification of a Blighted Area. This project required cooperation and involvement from several regulatory agencies. All objectives were fulfilled however the aquatic objective is not fully attainable due to high acidic levels in the Uncompahgre River and as such will not sustain fish populations. The City is now tasked with ongoing annual maintenance and specifically the removal of sediment that collects within the river following the spring runoff.

Cities throughout the US are now better connecting with the rivers and streams flowing through their communities and have realized a multitude of benefits from tapping into this once ignored amenity. For example, hardened and channelized riverbanks are being returned to their previous, natural state

and augmented with whitewater features designed to improve kayaking, which is one of the fastest growing sports in the nation. These enthusiasts bring activity and attention back to the river and tax revenue to those communities offering whitewater access and venues. River walks offer a serene environment and therapeutic benefits to users frequenting these trails and are sought out amenities by locals and visitors alike. River walk trails and associated amenities can often become a hallmark attribute to a city.

The North Ouray Uncompahgre River Reclamation Project has been a major improvement to the city's parks and trail system. Its numerous amenities and experiences are now featured in a City Park named the Uncompahgre River Park. Listed below are additional improvements realized through the successful completion of the reclamation project:

- Dedicated river walk trail with access to the river from both sides of the river and with groomed Nordic skiing tracks along the trail in the winter;
- Interpretive signage and picnic locations along the trail and a public restroom at one location;
- Dedicated exercise stations and signage for users on both sides of the river;
- Whitewater access and rapids (at high flow rates) for river users; and
- Dedicated North/South trail access through North Ouray with access to Rotary Park to the North, and Fellin Park/Ouray Greenbelt to the South.



These improvements anchor important park and trail amenities and more improvements can still be realized. Listed below are priorities and tasks for the Uncompahgre River Park:

Uncompahgre River Park Priorities

- Completion of the trail on the South end to Fellin Park/Ouray Greenbelt;
- Signage directing users to Rotary Park on the North end of the trail;
- All weather surfacing of the trail for improved accessibility;
- River improvements with emphasis on creation of whitewater structures for river

- enthusiasts and shore side improvements such as beaches for swimmers and other river users;
- Installation of dark sky compliant lighting;
- Coordinated and maintained improvements with commercial properties along the East side of the trail; and

D. Box Cañon Park

The Box Cañon Park is a very popular Ouray tourist attraction and is second only in visitation to the world famous Ouray Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse. Box Cañon Park has hosted an average of approximately 48,500 visitors annually over the past four years. The parcel with which the Park is located was created in 1875 by mining claims known as the Trout and Fisherman Lodes. Some of the first ore shipped out of Ouray came from this site. The property was conveyed to the City in 1920 and has been maintained as a park since. The Park lies in the extreme southwest corner of Ouray and is adjacent to public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Much of the parks appeal is the spectacular setting and unique natural features which includes the Box Cañon Falls and the dramatic gorges carved by the Uncompahgre River and Cañon Creek. The new Perimeter Trail provides trail connectivity to this park.



Numerous improvements have been completed by the City and include the replacement of the suspension bridge; a new Park entry building has been constructed complete with bathrooms; new stairs have been installed and some fencing replaced. Numerous other improvements are still necessary as well as ongoing maintenance.

The Box Cañon Park is a recreational and historic resource with local, regional and statewide significance. It is critical to plan and take advantage of opportunities for expansion, better access, improved promotion and overall increased use of the park for a variety purposes including weddings, conferences and outdoor activities.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for the Box Cañon Park:

Box Cañon Park Priorities

- Improve directional signage from US Highway 550;
- Complete replacement of worn railing and fences within the park;
- Complete improvements to the entry building that would allow for year-round use;
- Develop a comprehensive plan for the park with detail on existing and planned improvements and areas for expanded promotion and utilization;
- Construct loop trail and fence along gorge on East side of the Uncompahgre River;
- Restore lights on historic sign for use during special events;
- Remove the existing brick restroom and replace it with a new picnic shelter.

E. Ouray Ice Park

During wintertime the Uncompahgre River Gorge is transformed into the Ouray Ice Park. Natural and manmade water sources flow over the steep, naturally shaded walls of the gorge and form pillars of solid ice. The Ice Park has easy access for climbers and visitors alike which is not typical for this sport and why the park has such great appeal. The combination of terrain, access and moisture results in some of the best ice climbing in the world. Presently, the City is negotiating with the Forest Service for the purchase of the Forest Service land within the Ice Park.



The annual Ouray Ice Festival draws numerous competitors and visitors who brave winter conditions and enjoy Ouray's winter wonderland. The weekend competition is a great event that brings welcomed visitors to town and is a focal point for citizens during the long winter season.

Numerous improvements have been completed within the park that improves access and safety for visitors and climbers.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for the Ouray Ice Park:

Ouray Ice Park Priorities

- Improve directional signage from US Highway 550;
- Complete the acquisition of the Forest Service property;
- Improve and maintain irrigation systems.

F. Rotary Park

Rotary Park encompasses approximately six acres and is located on the northern City limits and is accessed directly off US Highway 550. The site is relatively flat and abuts a sheer red sandstone cliff to the east and has a large number of mature cottonwood and conifer trees making this an attractive and inviting park to travelers, visitors and local users. The park is home to the ice rink and numerous other amenities including picnic tables and bathrooms and has a large parking area.

The ice rink is the main use during the winter and is host to both broomball and hockey leagues. Both leagues are managed by clubs who share management and maintenance responsibilities. A youth hockey team is also a user of the rink. There are also public skate sessions and special events for groups who reserve the rink and utilize skate rentals. The high school recently utilized the rink for their homecoming activities and the event was a big success.



The large trees and shade make the park a great place to enjoy the outdoors during the summer. Picnic tables are scattered throughout the park and support travelers looking for a place to stretch their legs and have a picnic lunch and larger events such as family reunions or large picnic gatherings.

The City has met with various user groups and discussed utilization of the park and opportunities for expanded use and improvements. This park has numerous opportunities for expanded use in both summer and winter seasons and potentially can assume some of the amenities previously located in Fellin Park.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for Rotary Park:

Rotary Park Priorities

- Complete a feasibility study for construction of a concrete slab (with refrigeration) and roof for the ice rink;
- Complete a feasibility study for a new multiuse facility that would provide area for skate rentals, concessions, a warming hut, bathrooms and storage, and for year-round use;
- Complete a comprehensive plan identifying multiple users and stakeholders for events such as art and craft fairs, flea and farmers markets, year-round rink usage and picnicking;
- Consider development of the north end of the park for small performance venue or amphitheater;
- Improve parking areas with dark sky lighting;
- Install internal walking path or trail that circles the park perimeter;
- Coordinate the installation of a crosswalk and associated signage for a pedestrian connection across US Highway 550 opposite the Chautauqua Subdivision;
- Install directional trail signage for connection to the Chautauqua Subdivision and North Ouray Riverwalk Corridor.

G. Cascade Falls

Cascade Falls is a prominent feature with high visibility from most parts of Ouray and is a favorite spot for visitors and residents. The falls are located on the eastern edge of Ouray on property owned and managed by the Forest Service. A parking lot in the Eighth Avenue right of way provides access to a trail originating from the parking lot and leads to the falls. The Perimeter Trail provides access from the Cascade Fall trail to adjacent Forest Service lands and the Amphitheater Campground and picnic area.

Cascade Falls is similar to Box Cañon in that both have a prominent waterfalls and both have relatively steep terrain, which is heavily forested. The Cascade Falls area abuts public lands and open space on three sides and a residential area borders it on the West.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for Cascade Falls:

Cascade Falls Priorities

- Coordinate trail access from the falls onto adjoining public lands with the Forest Service;
- Preserve the informality and natural character of the area;
- Delineate the parking area and improve traffic circulation;
- Delineate the existing trails to improve safety and reduce erosion;
- Revegetate and perform erosion control measures associated with trail improvements;
- Improve public safety along Cascade Flume.

H. Lee's Ski Hill

Lee's Ski Hill is a local venue situated in the southern part of Ouray and encompasses approximately two acres including an undeveloped portion of the Fifth Street right-of-way and approximately 12 lots in Block 30. The private property was conveyed to the City for the sole purpose as a ski hill and is named as such. The Hill has seen steady use and is a valuable community asset and would likely see more use if a newer lift (T-Bar) was installed.

A rope-tow surface lift provides uphill transportation to skiers and snowboarder utilizing the Hill in the winter time. The City maintains and operates the lift and offers lift services for free. Other minor amenities are also on site and the City is required to maintain licensing requirements with the Colorado Tramway Safety Board. The site serves as open space during non-winter months.



Listed below are priorities and tasks for Lee’s Ski Hill:

Lee’s Ski Hill Priorities

- Obtain funding (i.e. GOCO) for a new surface lift and associated improvements;
- Consider options for snow grooming and surface improvements;
- Construct a building with bathrooms and other ancillary needs;
- Install picnic tables and benches where possible;
- Complete a plan that would consider other uses and opportunities for the site;
- Clean, shape and re-seed the ski hill.

I. Woman’s Club Mini-Park

The Woman’s Club Mini-Park is a small park located along the south side of Portland Flume at Fourth Avenue and Fifth Street. The park is a wonderful amenity and provides a playground, benches and a picnic area, and also has established flower beds and landscaping. A Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant was utilized to install a new fence, complete extensive landscaping, and install new playground equipment. These improvements were the only priorities identified in the original parks plan and have been completed. On-going maintenance will be necessary to keep this park in prime condition.

The City should consider opportunities in other areas for mini or pocket parks and specifically at the Western terminus of 6th and 8th Avenues.



5. RECREATION

Recreation is a noun defining a pastime, sport or exercise as a means to refresh one's body or mind (*Random House Dictionary, 1999*). Recreation is vital to a community and can be easily realized by citizens walking on a city path or swimming laps in the public pool. City parks, trails and recreation facilities are commonplace in almost every town and city in America and provide much needed outlets for citizens and visitors alike. Cities take great pride in these amenities and often market these community assets to potential new arrivals (citizens, businesses and visitors). Citizens utilize these assets and often require the utmost attention to maintenance and detail, or require recreation programs in order to complete or fulfill the experience. Recreation in Ouray is no different than any other Colorado or US city. This Plan will review recreation and break it down into Recreation Facilities, and Recreation Programs and Activities.

A. Recreation Facilities

Several facilities in Ouray provide an array of venues for citizens, businesses and visitors alike. Several buildings also have capacity for multiple uses and several have the capacity to include recreation-related activities. Listed below are some of the facilities that experience intensive use:

- Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse
- Ouray Community Center
- The Box Canyon Visitor Center
- Ouray School Buildings

A multi-use facility such as a recreation center could provide many, if not all, venues for recreation and community meeting rooms and was identified in the previous plan. However, the ability for the residents of the City of Ouray alone to complete such a facility would be extremely difficult and taxing. The most likely option for success here would be for the City to work with the County and the Town of Ridgway in an effort to establish a County Recreation Board who could undertake the task and potentially realize benefits for the entire county. Without such a facility in Ouray it is critical and advantageous to continue use of the existing facilities for recreation related activities, when possible. Each facility has maintenance and operational costs that need to be considered and could be offset by

rental or use fees assessed for certain groups. Shared-Use Agreements and rental policies and fee structures should be considered and could have a variety of criteria such as scheduling priority and sliding fee scales.

I. Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse

The Ouray Hot Springs Pool is a world famous facility that has hosted an average of 136,000 visitors annually over the last four years. It is a major employer, particularly of youth, in Ouray County. This facility is the "flagship" of the Ouray park system and instills a source of community pride and revenue, and is a major attraction for the City, County, and Southwestern Colorado. The pool, adjoining bathhouse and parking lot are located North of the historic downtown and adjacent to U.S. Highway 550. The pool was built in 1926 by volunteer labor overseen by the Ouray Recreation Association Corporation. The bathhouse was constructed the following year and dedicated on July 4, 1927. In 1930 the Recreation Association turned the pool and bathhouse over to the City who has since assumed operation and maintenance of the facility. A major fire destroyed the original bathhouse in 1988 and a new bathhouse was constructed and includes locker rooms, a fitness center, and a swim shop and massage center.

The pool provides a variety of venues and has users from all age brackets. Youth learn to swim through City sponsored programs; children play in toddler areas; families relax in a variety of areas and with differing depths; adults and seniors exercise and attend water aerobics class; and, locals and visitors relax and reap the benefits of soaking in geothermal water.



The bathhouse has a second floor that hosts the fitness center which has various exercise equipment and space for aerobic activities. The total area is about 2,300 square feet and individuals and families can use the facility upon purchase of membership or pay a daily rate.

The City has completed various improvements to the facility including modification of the Pool lobby which has resulted in better direction of visitors through the entry process and improved the ability to better monitor in and out traffic. The Pool requires regular and annual maintenance which requires significant manpower and expenditures. The City is also in the process of replacing the geothermal water supply pipeline which provides the geothermal water for this facility. Parking issues and access to the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse are discussed in Section 4.A.

The facility is 20 years old and numerous other improvements have been identified. Meetings with various groups identified several issues and concerns regarding the facility, and their overall general consent was the Bathhouse is inadequate for the community and visitors alike and a new multi-use facility is their priority. This would be a major capital project for the City and require extensive planning and funding.

Listed below are priorities and tasks for the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse:

Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse Priorities

- Complete a comprehensive development plan for a new multi-use facility that would replace the existing Bathhouse and repair or replace the Pool;
- Improve landscaping around the pool area and particularly adjacent to the Southeast corner of the bathhouse;
- Study the need and feasibility of the fitness center;
- Improve lighting in the parking area;
- Improve circulation and orientation of parking within the parking area.

II. Ouray Community Center

The Ouray Community Center is situated on the second floor of the main municipal building in Ouray which also includes City Hall, the Library and Fire Department. The Center is used for a variety of purposes including cultural and recreation activities and has two large venues which are used regularly and also accessible via an elevator. The Massard Auditorium is approximately 4,000 square feet and the San Juan Room is approximately 1,750 square feet. Several accessory uses are a kitchen and coffee bar, bathrooms, and various storage spaces. The City rents these rooms at varying rates depending on residency and type of use.

Community Center Priorities

- Explore ways to have the ability to adjust the large rooms into smaller meeting facilities when needed;
- Improve the East entry way into the Community Center in order to define a main entrance;
- Update the user fee rates with a goal to maintain affordability for use of the facility but with consideration for necessary operating and maintenance costs;
- The City must continue ongoing maintenance of this facility.

III. Ouray School District Facilities

The Ouray School District contains two large areas that are frequently used for community activities.

- The multi-purpose room in the North building includes a stage and a large open space that serves as an auditorium or a dance floor and can serve in a multitude of other uses. The entire space consists of about 4,000 square feet.
- The gymnasium is located in the South building and includes basketball and volleyball courts, and bleachers.

The School District must continue ongoing maintenance of these facilities.

B. Recreation Programs and Activities

Recreation programs can be offered for a broad range of sports and activities and to all age groups, and all require a requisite facility or venue to support the program. Recreation programs can be very active and strenuous like basketball or ice climbing, or leisurely and mellow like walking or bird watching. Coordination of recreation programs is required in order to secure a facility or venue or to bring people together in a convenient meeting place. Recreation programs can be sponsored by the City or coordinated by clubs, organizations or individuals focusing on specific sports, events or activities. Recreation, in whatever form it may take, is essential to wellness and overall good mental and physical health, and generally a healthy community is a happy community.

Some recreation programs maintain steady and constant interest and participation while others wane when interest ebbs or leadership or funding ceases to continue the program. This Plan reviews the different recreation programs available in the community and their relationship to available parks, buildings and facilities within the community. Listed below is a list of sports or recreational programs that exist in Ouray:

Baseball/Softball – The baseball diamond in Fellin Park is a great facility for these uses and includes new infield improvements and lush, grassy outfields. This field is used both by the schools and clubs.

Basketball – There is an open gym program available at the school gymnasium during the winter months and the school has team sports for various age groups. Outdoor courts are needed and could be constructed at either Fellin or Rotary Park.

Broomball – There is an informal club named RINK (Rink In Need of Kids) who promotes and schedules broomball activities at the ice rink in Rotary Park. This group also works with the hockey club and completes ongoing rink maintenance. Additional improvements have been identified for the rink and Rotary Park that would facilitate this club's mission and help expand desired programs like open public skate events with concessions and skate rentals.

Climbing – Ouray supports both rock and ice climbing activities and has numerous active groups that informally partake in the easily accessible venues in and around the city. Rock climbing is available on numerous private and Forest Service locations while ice climbing is available at the Ice Park during winter months.

Community Programs – Numerous programs are available throughout the community and offered by a wide range of groups. These programs are sometimes sponsored by the City while others are club, organization or individual user based. Listed below are numerous community programs:

- Arts and Crafts
- Bird Watching
- Hiking and Geo Caching
- Hunting and Fishing
- Performing Art Groups (i.e., theatrical, music, dance and choral)

Fitness Classes – Various classes are available at the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse and also privately. A few of these classes are aerobics, water aerobics, weight training and yoga.

Gymnastics – This program presently does not exist in the community.

Ice Hockey – The San Juan Snakes is a hockey club that offers hockey to youth and adults and has hosted hockey tournaments in past years. The SJS also works with RINK on rink maintenance and would benefit from identified improvements for the rink and Rotary Park which would also help expand desired programs like in-line skating in the summer.

Nordic Skiing – The non-profit Ouray Nordic Council maintains trails throughout the County including a portion of the Riverway Trail which is located in the North Ouray Corridor

Soccer – The High School soccer team practices at Fellin Park. There are no other active soccer teams or leagues but pick-up games do assemble in Fellin Park during evenings and weekends.

Snowboarding and Skiing – The City maintains Lee’s Ski Hill for use by snowboarders and skiers and offers this service for free during the winter months and depending upon snow conditions.

Swimming – The City offers youth swim lessons during the summer and a local swim team practices and hosts an annual swim meet at the Hot Springs Pool.

Tennis – There are no current tennis facilities and new facilities can be constructed at either Fellin or Rotary Park.

Volleyball – There has been an open gym program available at the school gymnasium during the winter months but is not regularly scheduled. The school also has team sports for various age groups.

Funding for these programs and activities varies by use and facility with some subsidy from the City and School District. The key to many successful programs is support and commitment by interested individuals who volunteer numerous hours of their time and often financially contribute to the cause. This is typically the case in most, if not all, small towns. Community involvement and support is critical to these programs. The City Council is hopeful that city, county and school district cooperative efforts continue and that clubs, groups and organizations all contribute in their capacity to promote, maintain and foster recreation in our community.



6. TRAIL ACCESS IN AND AROUND THE CITY OF OURAY

Ouray's mountain setting and its proximity and access to public lands were identified as some of the City's most valuable amenities by the 1993 Ouray Community Plan. Almost half of the land in Ouray County is publicly owned and existing trails into the surrounding public lands provide a wide variety of opportunities for use and enjoyment of Ouray's unique mountain location. Fifteen trails begin inside or very close to the City limits, many of them following historic trails which access the many historic mines near Ouray. Over the past twelve years, many historic links between the town and the trails have been identified and reopened. Many of the trails cross patented mining claims or other privately owned land, especially in the immediate vicinity of the City. Colorado State Statutes guarantee such historically used access. Residents and visitors have benefited enormously by strengthening this linkage between the City and its natural surroundings. An extensive trail map and guide are available at the Ouray Visitors Center

This section has been updated extensively and contains two areas which include trails around or within the City, and trails within or close to the City and traveling onto adjoining public land. A major improvement since the original master plan is the new Perimeter Trail which is detailed first in this section. Also, the summary of suggested improvements remains the same as in the original master plan.

Summary of Suggested Improvements

- Continue to reclaim trailheads close to the City or within City limits
- Build new trail segments or delineate existing routes in order to connect existing trails with new trailheads
- Build linkages to connect mountain trails and/or trailheads with City trails and facilities
- Secure trail easements or ownership where trails cross private land
- Develop agreements with Ouray County and the Forest Service concerning public lands and trails that are proximate to Ouray

A. TRAILS AROUND AND WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS

OURAY PERIMETER TRAIL

This is a new trail that encompasses the City of Ouray and provides access to several trailheads in and around the City. The Perimeter Trail provides access to the Cascade Falls, Fifth Avenue, Baby Bathtubs, Portland, Ice Park and Box Cañon Trails. The 4.2 mile trail also utilizes portions of Lower Cascade Trail and the West side water tunnel. When complete, the Perimeter Trail will eventually encircle Ouray, with the main trailhead located at the Ouray Visitors Center. The Forest Service is planning to complete a segment of trail that crosses Forest Service property but until then users are required to use City streets to travel to and from the Visitor's Center. Currently, hikers must utilize City streets when traveling south from the Visitors Center to Cascade Falls and from the Box Cañon Park exit at South Pinecrest. Signage, though adequate, is being improved along this trail.

The Eastern and Southern portions of the trail cross Forest Service, City, County and private property and provide a very scenic section that is a 2.5 mile route from Cascade Falls Park through Box Cañon Park.



Plan

The connection South from the Ouray Visitors Center along Cascade Cliff to Cascade Falls Park is not complete. The Forest Service will supervise and contract the construction of this segment. Also, private property easements need to be obtained to complete the west side of the trail. The Perimeter Trail will be complete once these two segments are finished. Solar powered lighting is planned for the water tunnel segment. Additional signage will be needed in areas along the trail.

UNCOMPAHGRE RIVER WALK

The Uncompahgre River Walk Trail is a scenic trail located along the banks of the Uncompahgre River. Numerous places access the trail along its route, providing both public and private access. Trail access is also available from both US Highway 550 at Uncompahgre Street and from North Oak Street. This 2.0 mile loop circles the Uncompahgre River utilizing footbridges at the North and South ends. The trail has extensive interpretive signage, picnic areas and an exercise regime with supporting directional signage and apparatus. There are also public bathrooms located on Western portion of the trail along North Oak Street. This trail also provides pedestrian connection to Rotary Park via public sidewalks within the Chautauqua Subdivision.

Plan

This trail will be a major North/South route once connection is complete on the Southern end with Fellin Park and the Visitors Center and Rotary Park on the Northern end. Users are required to use an easement adjacent to the highway shoulders in the vicinity of Visitors Center and access to and from the trail to the highway is not designated or improved. Both connections are high priorities for completion.

OURAY GREENBELT

This trail is intended to provide North/South access from Fellin Park along City property currently zoned as greenbelt; however, trail or route access is incomplete. This trail is intended to follow the

Uncompahgre River North from Fellin Park to Box Cañon Park and the Ouray Ice Park utilizing city land and easements across private property. Usable segments exist from Sixth Avenue to Eighth Avenue and from Ninth Avenue to Fellin Park but are not improved or designated. There is no signage along this route.

Plan

Complete the connections from Fellin Park and the Hot Springs Pool that were in the original plan and included: North to the Uncompahgre River Walk and Rotary Park; South along the Western edge of the Hot Springs Pool parking lot; South from Cascade Catchment basin to Eighth Avenue; and South from Sixth Avenue to Box Cañon and Ice Park Trail. Private property easements need to be obtained to complete these connections and the trail. Signage will be needed for this route.

The Uncompahgre River Walk and Ouray Greenbelt trails will serve as a continuous North/South route connecting both ends of Ouray once complete. Future connections to trails North of Ouray will likely connect to the River Walk trail or potentially a new trail traveling north from Rotary Park. A trail connection with Ridgway would be a long term goal.



B. TRAILHEADS WITHIN OR CLOSE TO THE CITY TRAVELING ONTO ADJOINING PUBLIC LANDS

EAST SIDE

OLD HORSETHIEF / SKYROCKET CREEK TRAILHEAD

Currently the Horsethief Trailhead is located at the Wedge Mine in the Dexter Creek drainage Northeast of Ouray. Originally the Old Horsethief Trail began in the Skyrocket Creek drainage across US Highway 550 from the Hot Springs Pool. The original route up Skyrocket Creek is one of the oldest trails in the area and was constructed for \$1,500 in 1889 by Ouray County in order to serve the mines and miners of Gold Hill. Since 1999, the trail has been reconstructed; however, a landowner in the area has blocked access and Ouray County is currently negotiating the right-of-

way so the trail can continue along the historic route. The historic trail easement passes through privately owned property and accesses the County owned Jonathan Mine and Boardinghouse.

Plan

Complete the right-of-way negotiations for the blocked segment of the Horsethief Trail. Upon completion of the negotiations, the Horsethief Trail will once again connect to Dexter Creek, Bear Creek, American Flats and Lake City. When access is secured, it will need signage from the Hot Springs Pool to the current trailhead on the North side of Ouray Vista Subdivision.

AMPHITHEATER TRAILS

The existing network of trails in the nearby Amphitheater is one of Ouray's primary resources. The public lands of the Amphitheater area abut the City's east boundary and provide 10+ miles of hiking trails varying in degree of difficulty from easy to moderate. There are five existing trailheads:

- Cascade Falls Trail and Lower Cascade Trail trailheads are located within Cascade Falls Park;
- Fifth Avenue Trail is located at the upper end of Fifth Avenue at Sixth Street;
- Upper Cascade Falls/Chief Ouray Mine trailhead is located at the upper (East) end of the Amphitheater Campground road which is accessed from the switchbacks south of town on US Highway 550;
- Baby Bathtubs Trail is located on the Amphitheater road just East of the bridge over Portland Creek gorge, and;
- Portland Trail trailhead is located 0.25 mile up the 4WD Portland Mine (Ohio Park) road from the Amphitheater road.

All trails are easy to find and walk to with the exception of Baby Bathtubs and Portland, which are more easily accessed by car.

Plan

See below under Lower Cascade section.

CASCADE FALLS TRAILHEAD

Trail access is at the East end of Eighth Avenue on Ouray's East side at Cascade Falls Park entrance. This 0.25 mile trail ascends to the lowest of the seven Cascade Falls and offers access to the other, longer trails of the Amphitheater system detailed above. This is the most heavily used trail in the system. Parking is available at the trailhead, which is also accessible by foot along Eighth Avenue. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

The parking area is rough and requires numerous improvements. Cascade Flume needs to be more visibly defined near the entrance.

LOWER CASCADE TRAILHEAD

Trail access is near the East end of Cascade Falls Park. This 0.8 mile trail ascends 0.4 miles to the Amphitheater Road and then another 0.4 miles to a connection with the Upper Cascade Falls/Chief Ouray Mine Trail and Portland/Cascade Loop Trail, allowing access to the other trails of the Amphitheater system and the Perimeter Trail. Parking is also available at Cascade Falls Park. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

A bridge needs to be placed across Cascade Creek at the East end of the concrete flume for access to the West side of the falls and, eventually to the completed Perimeter Trail.

5TH AVENUE TRAILHEAD

Trail access is at the upper end of Fifth Avenue at Sixth Street. This 0.8 mile trail ascends 0.4 mile to the Amphitheater Road and then another 0.4 mile to a connection with the Portland / Cascade Loop, which further provides access to the other trails of the Amphitheater system. Parking is available at the trailhead, which is also accessible by foot. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.

UPPER CASCADE / CHIEF OURAY MINE TRAILHEAD

Trail access is at the upper (East) end of the Amphitheater Campground road, which is accessed from two US Highway 550 switchbacks South of town. This 4.9 mile trail (round trip) ascends to the Chief Ouray Mine. It connects to the Lower Cascade and the Portland / Cascade Loop in the Amphitheater system. Parking is available at the campground. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.

BABY BATHTUBS TRAILHEAD

Trail access is from the Amphitheater road just East of the bridge over the Portland Creek gorge. This 0.3 mile trail ascends to a connection with Portland Trail and allows access to the other trails of the Amphitheater system. Parking is available on the West side of the bridge. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.

PORTLAND / PORTLAND MINE TRAILHEAD

Trail access is 0.4 miles up the 4WD Portland Mine (Ohio Park) road from the Amphitheater road. This 1.8 mile trail ascends to the Portland Overlook where it connects to the Portland Mine and Portland / Cascade Loop in the Amphitheater system. Parking is available at the trailhead. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

The complete Amphitheater trail network can be linked directly to the City by restoring the historic trailhead at the corner of Sixth Street and Third Avenue. This was the original route to Portland Trail and would also offer non-motorized access to Baby Bathtubs Trail. The historic trail passes through privately owned property for a brief distance next to Portland gorge and an easement would need to be secured from the owner.

SOUTH SIDE

ICE PARK TRAILHEAD

Trail access is from Camp Bird road (CR361) just East of the high bridge over the Uncompahgre River gorge in the central area of the Ice Park. This 1.9 mile loop trail ascends South toward the hydroelectric dam, crosses the river on a footbridge below the dam, and returns on the West side, exiting through the Ice Park gates. Parking is available East of the bridge at the Powderhouse parking area. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

This trail could be extended 0.1 mile on each side of the river and to the suspension catwalk spanning the mouth of the dam. The City should consider acquiring easements on the property in the near future.

SUTTON TRAILHEAD

Trail access is from Camp Bird Road (CR361), 500 feet West of the high bridge over the Uncompahgre River gorge. This 2.3 mile trail ascends South to the Eastern benches of Hayden Mountain and ends at the historic Neosho Mine, boarding house and blacksmith shop. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.

WEST SIDE

OAK CREEK/TWIN PEAKS TRAILHEAD

Trail access is at the South end of Pinecrest Avenue on Ouray's West side. It follows a 4WD road for 0.4 miles as it ascends the hillside on the South side of Oak Creek. At the 1.0 mile mark, the trail divides with the South (left) trail fork continuing up along Oak Creek, and the North (right) trail fork crossing the creek and ascending Twin Peaks. The current trailhead is located at the end of the 4WD road and is also accessible by foot. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.

OLD TWIN PEAKS TRAILHEAD

Trail access is at the Western terminus of Queen Street and follows a dirt road to the right 100 feet to the current trailhead. After ascending a steep gulch for 2.0 miles, the trail connects to the Twin Peaks, Oak Creek and Silvershield trails. This is a historic route which was recently restored after an avalanche closed the trail in the 1980's. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.

SILVERSHIELD TRAILHEAD

Trail access is at North Oak and Silvershield Trail Streets on the West side of Ouray's North Corridor. It follows Silvershield Trail Street West for 300 feet to the current trailhead and then ascends the cliffs to the West. This is a historic route originally developed to serve local mines. In recent years, the trailhead has been reestablished through a permanent easement with the private owner, which restored this historic connection to both the Twin Peaks and Oak Creek trails. At the 2.0 mile mark, the trail divides with the North (right) trail fork continuing on to Oak Creek, Corbett Canyon, Corbett and Dallas trails, and the South (left) trail fork ascending the cliffs to connect with Twin Peaks and Oak Creek trails. Parking is available at the trailhead and is also accessible by foot. Existing directional signage is adequate.

Plan

Nothing is needed at this time.



7. FUNDING STRATEGIES

The primary impetus for this plan is funding! Funding is essential for all park, recreation and trail venues and programs and the City must appropriate funding annually within the budget. The City will utilize available funds and also seek grant or loan funding when possible from a variety of State and Federal grant programs. Grant funds are typically only available for specific Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and not for Operations and Maintenance (O&M). City funds are leveraged or matched with grant funds and together combine to cover CIP costs. Unfortunately construction costs have steadily increased over the last two decades and pose significant funding challenges for numerous projects.

The City budget is prepared annually with funding allocated for O&M and CIP for amenities within this Plan and detailed specifically in the General Fund and the Park Fund. The General Fund covers some miscellaneous O&M/CIP expenditures and also all Community Center expenditures. The bulk of funding is found in the Park Fund which in the 2009 budget totals approximately \$1.3 Million in expenditures and includes approximately \$100,000 in Capital Improvements. Annual O&M expenditures are made possible mostly from fees collected for use

of the Hot Springs Pool and Bathhouse and the Box Cañon Park and have remained fairly consistent and are necessary so operations and maintenance requirements don't lapse. However CIP funding is variable and typically dependent upon incoming revenue and grants. City facility and infrastructure improvements for water and wastewater, sidewalks and roads, parks, trails and recreation facilities and numerous other projects all compete for CIP dollars which are typically not sufficient enough to fund all projects, so the City must prioritize project funding based on immediate needs and adopted plans.

A number of grants are available from State and Federal sources and require matching City funds. Grant matching funds can be categorized as either a cash match which are actual dollars or as in-kind contributions which can be recognized in a variety of ways. The City may also save money for a period of time for major CIP's and then combine these savings, and possibly reserves, with grant funds in order to complete a big project. The City utilizes numerous grant programs and some of them are the Energy Impact Assistance grant; the Great Outdoors Colorado grant; the Community Development Block Grant; USDA Rural Development Grant; and the State and Tribal Assistance Grant. All grant programs should be sought and considered when possible.

Other areas of potential funding for venues and programs in this Plan are:

Impact Fees – These fees are assessed for new development and require a complete impact fee analysis and report that details the relationship between the new development and the impact it creates within the community. Recreation impact fees can be collected for new recreation facilities and should become part of the City budget with detail on revenues and expenditures. The City does currently collect payment in lieu of fees for park space on subdivision development. However, there is not significant subdivision development available within the City therefore this funding source is minimal.

Recreation District – Special districts can be established per Colorado State Statute for the operation, administration and care of recreation facilities. Districts are established by an affirmative vote by the majority of registered voters within the established boundaries of the district. The District can assess an ad valorem tax which must also be approved by an affirmative vote by the majority of registered voters within the district boundaries, and the revenues generated by this tax are managed by the District board.

Municipal Sales Tax – A municipal sales tax can be collected per State Statutes but a new sales tax requires an affirmative vote by the majority of registered voters within the city. New revenues generated by sales tax can be restricted or earmarked for specific recreation capital improvements or operations, or may be unrestricted funds dependent upon the sales tax ballot language. A sales tax can also have a sunset clause, allowing the tax to expire once the facility is constructed and paid for. Recreation centers are typically constructed and financed with bonds secured by successful municipal sales tax initiatives. The City Council is tasked with managing these tax revenues.

Direct Loans – Several of the same agencies that issue grants also issue loans at typically low interest rates. Some programs are based on income levels and Ouray may qualify for low interest rate loans. Loan debt is covered within the City budget with funds allocated by the City Council.

8. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This updated Plan has established several goals and tasks for all the City park, recreation and trail venues and programs. The goals are general with a broad scope but do detail specific tasks in certain instances. This Plan also provides detailed tasks and identifies opportunities for improvements or expansion of these City amenities. Plan implementation is the final task and will require years of commitment and fortitude.

The City Council is committed to prioritizing and securing funding for the tasks in this Plan and will consider all funding options when appropriate, but financing and maintaining projects will not guarantee Plan success. The success of this Plan will require community involvement and a commitment to partner with the City. Partnerships will be forged with citizens, the County of Ouray, the Ouray School District and other committed and organized groups. Successful Plan implementation will benefit the entire community and result in a community rich in recreation splendor. Please join the City Council and City staff and become involved and committed to the success of the City of Ouray Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

