

PROST SWOT Analysis Overview



Parks SWOT Analysis



Strengths



- **High parkland per capita in town:** 14.68 acres of parkland/1,000 residents exceeds national benchmarks.
- **High quality athletic fields:** As compared to peer communities that are serving soccer, lacrosse, softball, baseball and more.
- **Walkability:** 100% of Town residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.
- **Diverse amenities:** Ice arena, skate park, bike park, playgrounds, and athletic fields that serve the region.
- **Well-loved spaces:** Town Park, Rainbow Park, and Big Mine Park are particularly heavily used and appreciated. Parks serve as venues for performances, sports, gatherings, and informal play.
- **Community gardens:** The Red Lady Garden and other garden spaces are greatly appreciated by users, despite informal management structures and minimal infrastructure.
- **Artistic and funky features are a community asset:** Pocket parks and public art installations are popular and align with CB's creative identity as a Colorado Creative District and National Historic District.



Weaknesses



- **Aging infrastructure:** The playgrounds at Rainbow Park and Three Ladies Park, Town Ranch, and some pocket parks are deteriorating and not meeting current industry standards or the creative designs desired by the Crested Butte community.
- **Lack of formal standards:** No established level of service standards for prioritizing tiers of maintenance.
- **Limited town involvement in gardens:** Red Lady Community Garden needs infrastructure and water-savings improvements, no formal support from Town departments, private fees being collected on public property, word-of-mouth marketing of community gardens leading to inequitable access.
- **Limited ADA and non-vehicular access in key locations:** Some parks and picnic spots lack wheelchair access.
- **Overlapping and uncoordinated oversight:** Public Works, PROST, and community groups each play roles in park spaces such as Red Lady Garden and Big Mine Park, resulting in an inefficient use of space (i.e., snow storage limiting winter parking and unformalized garden spaces).



Opportunities



- **Renovate key sites:** Prioritize park renovations and equipment replacement in the 5-year capital plan (e.g., Rainbow Park, Three Ladies Park).
- **Regional partnerships:** Leverage regional interest to seek shared funding or development of new parks and recreation amenities.
- **Establish maintenance Levels of Service:** Categorize parks to guide capital investment and staffing.
- **Plan active uses for undeveloped parkland:** The 8th St. Greenway is sizeable in acreage and would improve community LOS if improved for warm-month public use.
- **Big Mine Park:** Additional programming and year-round use of Ice Arena if enclosed (e.g., caged courts desired by WESA). Develop open space per the Big Mine Park Master Plan.
- **8th Street potential:** Use snow storage areas as flexible space for seasonal uses—disc golf, pocket parks, or bike/pedestrian trails.
- **Enhance access to Coal Creek:** Develop public areas such as the west end of Sopris Ave.
- **More winter use:** Expand non-skiing activities like skating and winter play; enclosing the Ice Arena would extend the season and improve programming.
- **Formalize and improve gardens:** Secure a permanent site for Red Lady Garden, add new garden sites, and link to education and other programs. Expand botanic garden spaces at the Depot and other underused areas.
- **Dedicated pickleball courts:** Play in town occurs on shared courts leading to user conflicts and limited play time.



Threats



- **Growing regional population:** Future population of around 7,500 would drop the parkland ratio to 2.35 acres/1,000 people— well below national benchmarks.
- **Regional service burden:** The town shoulders a disproportionate share of park users due to limited regional amenities outside of the Town of Crested Butte.
- **Lack of leveraging development:** New residential developments outside of Town limits may not be required by local government to build or fund new parkland, amenities and trail access.
- **High maintenance costs:** Current resources are stretched; risk of declining quality and safety.
- **Loss of creative identity:** How to maintain a mountain "rough edges" identity without becoming "poor quality" or compromising safety as public expectations rise.
- **Lack of flexibility on programming snow storage areas:** Areas such as 8th St. and Big Mine have missed opportunities for additional programming due to inflexibility around using snow storage areas.

Recreation SWOT Analysis



Strengths



- **Extensive programming:** 60+ youth programs and 45+ adult programs, covering 16+ sports; above average compared to peer mountain towns. Nonprofit club sport teams supplement recreation that PROST does not offer.
- **Staffing costs:** Low for the volume of recreation programming offered by the Town.
- **Strong community support:** 2015 voter-approved .05% Sales Tax funds 78% of PROST operations. Strong support for mill levy increase. Partner programs sell out quickly, events are culturally vital, and local newspaper regularly covers youth and adult sports.
- **High participation despite limitations:** Programs like adult softball, dance, hockey, and youth sports remain oversubscribed and popular.
- **Dedicated partners:** Groups like CB School of Dance, WEHA, WESA, CB Nordic and local coaches help deliver strong programs with limited space.
- **Diverse offerings:** Over 100 recreation programs spanning from Tumble Bugs for toddlers to adult Thai Chi.



Weaknesses



- **Limited indoor space:** Indoor facilities are undersized and below peer standards; some are inaccessible or reserved for specific groups.
- **High waitlists:** 50% of programs, especially youth indoor programs, regularly exceed capacity and available instructors.
- **Heavy reliance on volunteers:** Programming limited by availability of coaches and parent volunteers.
- **Winter challenges:** Options for indoor recreation are extremely limited for all user groups and indoor space at CBCS is prioritized for school use.
- **Inadequate facilities:** Jerry's Gym, Pump Room, and activity rooms are outdated, undersized, and lack ADA access or proper flooring.
- **Limited field space:** Field space is at capacity in the fall and spring seasons and accommodating new programs such as lacrosse further crunches capacity.
- **Ice rink limitations:** Big Mine offers only 10 weeks of ice, lacks refrigeration and drainage, and reaches -20F.
- **Underserved age groups:** Few programs for tweens, teens, and seniors despite demand.
- **Volunteer burnout:** Heavy reliance on volunteer coaches and instructors, who are aging out or declining involvement.



Opportunities



- **Redevelop existing public spaces for indoor rec:** Alleviate program pressure, reduce waitlists, meet winter needs, and improve equity and regional access (e.g., Jerry's Gym renovation and expansion).
- **Develop new spaces with partners:** Collaborate with partners like the Center for the Arts, MetRec, Mt. CB, and CBS to develop new indoor shared-use facilities, including sites outside Crested Butte town limits.
- **Introduce cost recovery model:** Establish a sustainable fee structure with consideration for resident vs. visitor rates.
- **Expand staff capacity:** Hire more full-time or seasonal staff to support year-round programs and reduce reliance on volunteers.
- **Repurposing and partnerships:** Broad support exists for a flexible, year-round indoor facility. Opportunities include repurposing Fire Station #1 and partnering with the Center for the Arts on a shared multi-use indoor space.
- **Regional facilities collaboration:** Share infrastructure across CB South, Mt. CB, and Met Rec.
- **Program partnerships:** Work with Center for the Arts, School of Dance, and nonprofit groups to expand indoor rec capacity.
- **Coaching pipeline:** Increase stipends, formalize training, and improve onboarding to retain and recruit coaches. Find opportunities for coaches to coach more than one sport.



Threats



- **Unmet indoor demand:** The number of indoor facilities is less than peer communities and severely limits winter and year-round programming.
- **Increased regional use without support:** Demand rising from regional residents without proportional funding or staffing.
- **Facility constraints blocking growth:** Limited gym space and court sizes restrict class sizes and future expansion.
- **Loss of critical spaces:** Uncertainty around facilities like the Pump Room puts programs like dance and community events at risk. With no regional public indoor fitness space, residents rely on private options like the Elevation Hotel gym—which will be unavailable in 2026 and beyond due to redevelopment, leaving few alternatives.
- **Indoor space bottleneck:** High waitlists for programs like basketball and soccer will grow worse without new or renovated facilities.
- **Cost barriers:** Rising rents, insurance, and staffing costs are putting pressure on nonprofit partners and program affordability. Private gyms expensive for most.
- **GOCO grant limits:** Enclosing the ice arena could trigger \$700K repayment to GOCO.

Open Space SWOT Analysis



Strengths



- **Natural resource protection:** Open space lands are managed for conservation and recreation. The amount and quality of open spaces purchased with local public funds is well above average for peer communities
- **Park integration:** In parks like Big Mine and Rainbow, there is a unique adjacency to open spaces with ice rink, trails, view corridors, and recreation facilities.



- **Strong public support for conservation:** Open space, natural character, and environmental protection are top priorities in survey and focus groups.
- **Funding base exists:** The Town's RETT is 3% of the sales price of real property with 15% of that dedicated to Open Space. The community has long been willing to invest in conservation. 2025 RETT Fund balance of \$2M for OS.
- **Partnership potential:** Local organizations (HCCA, % for Open Space, CBLT, CBMBA, etc.) are engaged and offer stewardship capacity.

Weaknesses



- **Below industry standard for staffing:** Only one (1) full-time employee and one (1) seasonal employee are tasked with managing open space, alongside other PROST department duties.
- **Unclear Definition of Open Space:** The Town lacks a clear and consistent definition of "open space," which limits its ability to strategically guide conservation, prioritize investments, and communicate the value and intent of protected lands.



- **No guiding strategy or values:** The town lacks an open space acquisition framework, conservation goals, or consistent decision-making process for PROST staff and Town Council to work with.
- **Competing priorities:** Conserved lands often serve multiple purposes, such as habitat protection and recreational access, which can sometimes be in conflict.
- **RETT funding ambiguity:** Lack of clarity around acceptable uses of RETT funding per the ballot language.

Opportunities



- **Conservation partnerships:** Tap into local, regional, state, and national funding and partnerships for land acquisition and stewardship.
- **Regional collaboration:** Gunnison County's upcoming corridor plan presents an opportunity to collaborate regionally on land use. The plan will help identify where development should be focused and avoided, providing a strong foundation for coordinated open space conservation along the Highway 135 corridor.
- **Multi-benefit approach:** Future acquisitions and preservation could be aligned with broader community needs such as recreation, affordable housing buffers, and ecosystem protection. This can help ensure that open space contributes meaningfully to multiple goals, particularly in areas adjacent to development.



- **Create an open space vision:** Establish community-approved values, acquisition priorities, and allowable uses.
- **Expand conservation categories:** Incorporate recreation, watershed protection, climate resilience, and natural resource protection into acquisition decisions.
- **Expand opportunities for passive recreation and enhanced stewardship:** Expand opportunities for passive recreation by adding trails, signs, benches, and interpretive content to make spaces more inviting and inclusive.

Threats



- **Limited stewardship capacity:** Lack of staff time focused on protected lands could lead to degradation or missed opportunities.
- **Reactive and Fragmented Growth:** Without a clear land use vision and regulatory framework, the region remains vulnerable to incremental and scattered development. This pattern threatens to consume valuable open spaces and working lands, especially in areas that lack infrastructure and essential services.



- **Loss of open lands:** Historically, agricultural land near town is being developed for affordable housing and vacation homes, growing the regional service population of PROST and leading to competing priorities for unprotected lands.
- **High Acquisition Costs:** Limited funding (\$2M currently in RETT) may only cover one major acquisition without partnerships or matching grants and competing on the open market is often not feasible.

Trails SWOT Analysis



Strengths



- **World-class trail network:** Includes regional and in-town trails, sledding access, boardwalks, and access to regional trails.
- **Regional spine connections:** Rec Path to Mt. CB and Deli Trail allow some non-vehicular access to Crested Butte and good non-car access to key trails.
- **High use and visibility:** Popular among both locals and visitors, helping justify improvements.
- **Passionate trail community:** CB is the birthplace of mountain biking and CBMBA is the world's oldest mountain bike association. CB Nordic, Adaptive Sports, and many locals actively use, maintain, and advocate for trails.
- **Commitment to connectivity:** Enthusiasm for a "Town as Trailhead" model and strong public support for CB-CB South trail, and in-town connections.
- **Diverse year-round trail use:** Summer and winter trail systems are well-loved and integral to community life.

Weaknesses



- **Inadequate accessibility:** Many trails lack ADA compliance, and some in-town pedestrian routes are difficult or inaccessible. Limited sidewalks/trails, particularly between CBCS and youth activity centers like Big Mine Park, the Cemetery, and Baxter Gulch. Pedestrian access in winter is hindered by inconsistent private snow removal.
- **Trail conditions vary widely:** Some key routes (Woodswalk, Deli, Kapushion) are narrow, difficult to navigate for some users, or eroding. Private trashcans, vehicles and snow storage limit use of key trails in town.
- **Insufficient maintenance on in-town trails:** To be accessible and safe, several trails need improved surfacing, handrails, grading, and drainage solutions.
- **Gaps in beginner and accessible trails:** Not enough beginner loops or adaptive-accessible routes close to town.
- **Tricky links:** Areas like Bellevue Ave, Lower Loop, and Moonridge Ln. are uncomfortable for pedestrians, particularly for youth and seniors.
- **Wayfinding is lacking:** Trail signage and maps are inconsistent, especially for Perimeter Trail and in-town routes.

Opportunities



- **Trail enhancements:** Improve access for residents with disabilities, young families, and seniors for more equitable access and shore gaps in accessing trails from town.
- **Secure easements:** Converting annual trail easements to perpetual ones can solidify long-term access.
- **Policy creation:** Develop clear policies for commercial and E-bike use and E-bike charging stations on town trails/ easements held by Town.
Regional connections: The CB to CB South Trail and ADA/multi-modal access on the Woodswalk/Lower Loop from Town to OBJ campground are opportunities for regional collaboration and leadership.
- **Create a primary Trailhead at the 4-Way:** Install wayfinding signage, maps, and a bike fix-it station to support biking from town to reduce vehicular traffic to trailheads.
- **Support the CB-CB South Trail:** Most popular proposed project based on community engagement which has the potential to dramatically expand access and reduce car use in town.
- **Expand adaptive and beginner trails:** Redesign Ditch Trail, Woods Walk and Baxter Gulch for wider ADA and multi-use.
- **Finish Perimeter Trail with signage:** Create a complete, well-marked loop for residents and visitors.

Threats



- **Deferred maintenance risk:** Delays could reduce safety and usability, especially in winter.
- **Loss of easements:** Some trails are on annual agreements that could be revoked.
- **Rapid growth:** Higher use without upgrades may degrade trail conditions.
- **Policy gaps:** Unclear policies on commercial and E-bike use could threaten access.
- **Capacity & overuse:** Popular trailheads (e.g., Peanut Lake) are overcrowded; town growth will only increase strain.
- **Conflict among users:** Lower Loop and similar multi-use trails are seeing tensions between bikers, hikers, and adaptive users.
- **Funding constraints:** Infrastructure and easement needs require coordination across agencies and landowners—complex and time-consuming.