

1. INTRODUCTION

Plan Purpose

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan (Plan) is a comprehensive guide for Longmont’s parks, recreation, and trails system, reflecting the community’s high priority for recreation, fitness, and the outdoors as a key component of a livable city.

Longmont’s parks, recreation, and trails system today is a result of over 140 years of commitment to serving the needs of the City’s residents. After two decades of keeping pace with residential growth by developing new parks, high quality recreation facilities and trails, the City recognized that it is time to clarify the long-term direction for the system. A comprehensive vision for the entire system strengthens the role of the parks, recreation, and trails system in defining and enhancing Longmont’s identity, culture and quality of life. The effort is bolstered by two parallel and integrated planning processes focusing on recreation services and accessibility. The Recreation Master Plan will provide strategic direction for recreational programming and strive to maximize Longmont’s major recreation facilities. The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Self Assessment and Transition Plan will lay out a path to meet the new ADA requirements for accessibility in the parks, recreation, and trails system.

Built on a foundation of community engagement, the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan presents a renewed commitment to care for Longmont’s well-loved parks, recreation and trails system, a strategy for preserving existing assets, and a clear direction for adding new resources.

A Community-Based Plan

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan is based on a comprehensive community involvement process that was designed and defined at the outset of the project to make sure that the participation was demographically representative of the community as a whole. The public involvement plan for the project included a variety of methods to involve the entire community, including special efforts to reach segments of the community that are often not well-represented, including those who rent their homes, the Hispanic/Latino community, and younger adults and youth.

Opportunities for input and participation were included at every step of the plan development, with frequent check-ins with the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) to make sure the outreach strategy was on track. Throughout the process, participants were asked to provide demographic information, which the planning team tracked and used to make adjustments



Kanemoto Park

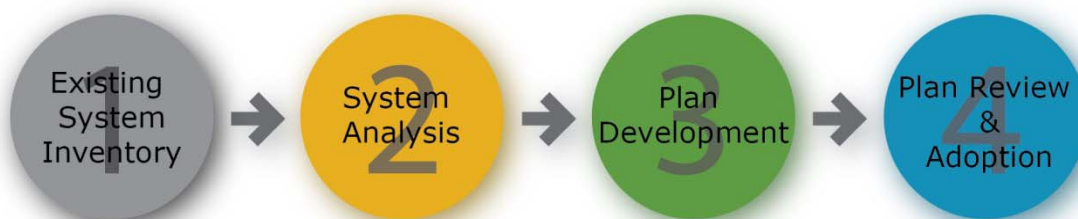
to the public involvement plan to ensure representative feedback was obtained from across the community. By the end of the process, the team made over 1,300 points of contact with community members. More detail on the process, participation, and results is provided in Appendix A: Public Involvement Summary.

Plan Process

In late 2011/early 2012, the City began an inventory and valuation data gathering exercise for asset management in parks. The collected data inventoried and quantified significant needs resulting from old and failing infrastructure. A state of the system presentation, including identified concerns, was presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board at the March 2012 Board Retreat. A similar presentation was provided to City Council and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board at the April 2012 City Council Retreat. At the retreat, City Council directed staff to develop a comprehensive master plan for the City's parks, recreation, and trails system to address several key challenges, including overall vision, trail connectivity, appropriate balance of recreation facilities, and funding strategies for new facilities, renewal, and on-going operations and maintenance.

The planning process for the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan included four phases, beginning in August 2012 and concluding with acceptance of the plan in the early part of 2014. Figure 1-1 diagrams the phases, which are described in more detail below.

Figure 1-1: Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan Process



Phase 1: Existing System Inventory - The first phase included an examination of existing parks and recreation facilities, a review of relevant plans and studies and discussions with City staff to provide a firm understanding of the planning context and to create a strong base for the plan process. During this phase, the project team inventoried, mapped and evaluated City parks and recreation facilities building from the City's work on the asset management system. Key public involvement tasks during this phase included initiation of the project web page, nine focus group meetings, several intercept events and a community visioning workshop.

Phase 2: System Analysis - The focus of the second phase was the system analysis, a needs assessment that looked critically at the parks, recreation, and trails system from a variety of perspectives. The technical analysis also drew criteria and priorities from the public involvement results, and incorporated realities including how people get around Longmont, the existing financial capacity (maintenance and capital budgets), and the actual condition of the system. The public involvement continued, utilizing paper and online questionnaires to expand on and validate earlier findings. Information about the project was updated on the website, and the project comment log continued to grow. Near the end of Phase 2, both the PRAB and City Council reviewed the results gathered from the system analysis and the public involvement efforts, and provided feedback on potential directions for the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Plan.



Community Prioritization Workshop

Phase 3: Plan Development - The third phase included the refinement of a vision for Longmont's parks, recreation, and trails system and the identification of the types of projects and funding sources needed to achieve the vision and address needs identified during Phase 2. During this phase, a community prioritization workshop was held where elements of the plan were vetted by the public and refined. Additionally, the PRAB reviewed and provided feedback on the plan direction and recommendations at their annual retreat.

Phase 4: Plan Review & Adoption - During the final phase, the full Parks, Recreation, and Trails Plan document was presented to the public and taken through the City's public review, refinement and acceptance process.

Plan Integration

Several adopted plans including the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*, the *Open Space and Trails Master Plan*, the *Wildlife Management Plan*, the *Multi-Modal Transportation Plan* and others were considered in the development of the existing system and integrated into this planning effort where appropriate. There are also a number of site-specific park master plans that provide direction for individual parks and trail systems including the *St. Vrain Greenway Master Plan* and master plans for larger park sites such as the Quail Campus, Sandstone Ranch and Dry Creek Park, as well as many newer neighborhood parks.

Early in the planning process, the planning team conducted a thorough review of documents, policies and planned projects that impact the parks, recreation, and trails system. Periodic meetings and discussions with staff

and City leaders throughout the planning process also insured that the Plan presents an accurate representation of the local context. As a result, the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan is integrated with these existing planning efforts. This integration is necessary to prevent conflicting goals, and to form a comprehensive vision that builds on existing City-wide goals.

Plan Overview

Following this introduction (Chapter 1), the Plan is organized as follows.



Clark Centennial Park

- **Chapter 2: the State of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails System** summarizes the existing park, recreation and trails system, describes how the system evolved and presents results of the system analysis.
- **Chapter 3: the Future Park, Recreation, and Trails System** presents the Plan vision and goals, and a set of recommendations for building the desired park, recreation, and trail system of the future.
- **Chapter 4: from Plan to Action** establishes an implementation strategy including a set of prioritization criteria, a capital projects list, a funding strategy, and direction for plan stewardship.
- **Chapter 5: Conclusion** provides a call to action and immediate next steps for implementing the Plan vision.

Supplemental materials accompanying this plan include the following appendices. Many of these represent snapshots of regularly changing information or tools intended for ongoing adaptation and use. See the appendices for additional information about possible updates.

- **Appendix A: Public Involvement Summary** provides an overview of the public input that informed the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan and includes a description of the public involvement plan, the process and the resulting summaries.
- **Appendix B: Park Planning and Development Guidelines** for new parks, additional recreation facilities, and park renewal to ensure that sites function in the roles defined by the Plan.
- **Appendix C: 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2018**, which identifies the current plan for capital improvements and reflects the initial steps toward implementing the Plan.
- **Appendix D: Existing Master Plans and Reports** is a reference list of site level master plans and comprehensive city-wide plans, reports and studies which are relevant to parks, recreation and trails in Longmont. The date listed refers to the most recent update.

- **Appendix E: Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan Implications** includes a preliminary evaluation of the changes to the Longmont Area Comprehensive plan prompted by this plan.
- **Appendix F: Cost Model** describes the assumptions and the spreadsheet model that formed the basis for developing project costs.
- **Appendix G: Renewal Analysis Data Analysis** provides the data and analysis of a variety of factors contributing to renewal needs identified in Chapter 2.
- **Appendix H: Park Improvement Fee Update** describes the 2013 update of the park improvement fee.
- **Appendix I: Park, Recreation and Trail Funding History** provides a timeline of funding sources for parks, recreation and trails in Longmont since 1963.

Terminology

This plan introduces a number of terms used to describe the parks, recreation and trails system and the components of that system. A few key terms are defined below with additional definitions provided in the glossary appended to this plan.

- **Parks, recreation, and trails system:** the combined total of City-owned park lands, the features and facilities that support recreation opportunities, protects natural and historic resources and beautify Longmont. Recognizing that other public and private entities provide additional land and recreation facilities in Longmont, this plan refers to the system as including the City-owned public parks, recreation facilities, and trails. Sometimes referred to as the 'system'.
- **Parks:** the land portion of the system, including all categories of park land (Community, Neighborhood and District park types as defined in the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan). Other park like lands, such as school yards and private parks will be differentiated. The term Parks will refer to public park lands owned by the City of Longmont.
- **Recreation facilities:** the built features within parks that create opportunities to engage in specific games and activities. These can range from single courts or small play areas up to the Longmont Recreation Center, which supports a wide variety of self-directed and programmed recreation.
- **Recreation programming:** the classes, activities, sports and special events that are provided by Longmont's Recreation Services and other providers within and around Longmont. There is a close connection between these services and the parks, recreation facilities, and trails in the system and detailed

in this plan. A parallel planning effort will result in a Recreation Master Plan to guide the City's role in this range of services.

- **Trails:** this system includes pathways within parks, off-street greenways, and on-street connections (parallel sidewalks along roadways, etc.) that provide both a transportation route and opportunities for walking, running, bicycling and other highly desired recreation activities.