

5. NEXT STEPS

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan provides the vision, planning foundation, and strategies necessary to make the best possible choices for the future of Longmont's parks, recreation, and trails system. There are several immediate steps that the City should follow to create the type of comprehensive support needed to fulfill the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan vision. These steps respond to the recommendations outlined in the previous chapters and developed to achieve plan goals. Together, all of these steps will be necessary to maximize the City's ability to implement the Plan. The six steps include:

1. Activate the Plan
2. Make the Plan Compatible
3. Maintain Community Passion
4. Leverage Partnerships
5. Celebrate Successes
6. Keep the Plan Relevant

1. Activate the Plan

After plan adoption, it will be up to the City staff and decision makers to implement the Plan recommendations, keeping the document and its directives at the forefront of decision making related to growth and development. Through changes in leadership, changing growth patterns, and outside economic conditions, the City needs to remain firm in its course of action. The Plan should serve as a reference when discussing new development projects and function as an inspirational resource when advocating for funding and new park, recreation, and trail projects.

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan should be leveraged immediately to open doorways for funding. Plan goals and recommendations have been designed to make the case for system investment and renewal for decision making bodies and land managers. Using the decision criteria and annual work plan process, City staff has the opportunity to pinpoint which projects are urgent and why that makes a compelling call for financial support. This Plan should also be used as a marketing tool to prove to potential sponsors, developers, philanthropists, partners, and volunteers that the City has clear direction to sustain to a high-quality parks, recreation, and trails system. Action steps for the City include:

- Distribute the link and an introduction to this plan to park, recreation, and trails allies in the community for use in advocacy and fundraising
- Use this Plan to develop an annual work plan and status report



Clark Centennial Park

- Introduce City staff in other departments to this document as a key reference when other planning efforts impact or align with parks, recreation and trail interests

2. Make the Policies and Plans Compatible

Input used to direct development of this Plan is based on a thorough understanding of existing plan documents and policies. While much of the existing policy framework functions well with direction of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, there are several topic areas that will need attention, including amendments to the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan (including the integrated Multi-Modal Transportation Plan), the Recreation Plan, ADA Transition Plan, and 5-year CIP and Budget.

Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan

The Parks, Greenways, and Open Space chapter should be amended to reflect the updated understanding of the system and direction reflected in the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan with a change from a standards based parks system. The policies related to park land level of service, site size, and other criteria are amongst the changes most relevant to the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan. The recommended approach will require an amendment to redistribute the specifics from the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan to the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan and adapting policy language in the chapter to reflect the vision of the system.

Other chapters of the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan, and related Land Development Code requirements, could be strengthened to encourage parks and recreation uses. For example, the Economic Development chapter has little discussion about the positive relationship among parks, open space, and the local economy. In particular, there is a need to clarify how parks can play a role strengthening the City's identity and related benefits to tourism and the local economy. The Human Services, Culture, and Learning Chapter also contains little mention of the role of parks in education and learning; nor is there mention of the important relationship between parks, recreation and trails with active living.

Changes to the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan should be made promptly following the adoption of this plan to support the direction set by the community and build on the momentum and understanding developed during this planning process.



Kensington Park

Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

The City has integrated the Multi-modal Transportation Plan with the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan. Policies outlined in the Multi-modal Transportation Plan identify the types of design treatments necessary to carry out development of the greenway and trail system called for in the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan. At minimum, multimodal transportation policies should make reference to recreation connection recommendations provided in the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan. The final forms of on-street recreation connections will need to be determined as well as specific corridors. Together, policies in both documents can guide a well thought-out and coordinated land development, recreation and transportation system. This coordination can foster project integration, allowing for transportation system improvements to include related park, recreation and trail improvements, and vice versa.

Park Design and Development Policies

The Park Planning and Development guidelines contained in this Plan should be used as the foundation for all future park master plans and park improvements. Currently, the City relies on the Park Design Guidelines that provide instructions on building materials and construction practices. By combining the Design Guidelines with the Planning and Development guidelines, the City will have a complete package that covers all aspects of park development. These guidelines should be updated annually to remain relevant.



Community Participation at the Festival on Main

Recreation and ADA Transition Plan

Longmont's Recreation Master Plan and ADA Transition Plan, both under development at the time of Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan adoption, are being written to maximize consistency with the vision and goals. Upon their adoption, the Recreation Master Plan and ADA Transition Plan will present recommendations that will have an impact on City funding and capital project priorities related to park and recreation facility improvements.

Park and Greenway Improvement Fee and Ordinance Update

The Plan recommends modifications to the system that will likely necessitate updates to the current Park and Greenway Improvement Fee ordinance and adjustments to the fee, which were approved for 2014. Any future changes identified from the analysis of the fee as it relates to changes in the Plan should be addressed quickly to provide clarity around this source of funding.

3. Maintain Community Passion



Community Garden at Alta Park

Throughout the planning process, the residents have voiced their support of parks, recreation, and trails. However, the realization of this vision for the system will require substantial effort and resources. The City is already exploring options to expand the funding options available for this effort and has the opportunity to harness the momentum and awareness generated by this planning process.

The City will need to build a public information and education campaign to share important information about the decisions the community faces and the vision of this Plan. Timing is of the essence, and it will be most effective to begin this effort soon after plan adoption as the Plan and its goals are still on the minds of city residents.

At minimum, key messages of the campaign should speak to:

- The role of parks, recreation and trails in the City, what they mean to individual residents, natural processes and the greater good of the community;
- The system-wide vision, what it means and where it came from;
- What's at stake for the City without adequate funding, what is needed to sustain it and how the public can help; and
- What different funding options are, what could the tradeoffs be and what is the best possible course of action.



Quail Campus

The City has extensive connections with community supporters and volunteers who help through a variety of programs. Existing networks will be important to spreading the messages across the community and are also vital to expanding collaboration among schools, youth groups, businesses, and service organizations. Above all else, it is the citizens of Longmont that can sustain the future health of the system. Thinking beyond the immediate future, the City should also continue to build involvement in and education about the parks, recreation and trails system with area youth, growing the next generation of park users and supporters.

4. Leverage Partnerships

Longmont is fortunate to have a network of City staff, non-profit organizations, and park supporters willing to help move the Plan forward. Establishing new partnerships and building stronger relationships among park supporters will help bridge the gap between need and implementation. Partnering with area schools should continue to expand recreation opportunities especially in gap areas. Continued collaboration with the St. Vrain Valley School District will be needed to improve agreements for use of school facilities.

Longmont should continue to pursue partnering with non-profit and for-profit entities as a means to off-set City costs, minimize duplications of effort and promote a sense of broad community ownership in the parks, recreation and trails system.

- Explore the development of a new inter-governmental agreement that sets the framework for a true partnership with the School District aligned with the vision
- Explore partnerships with private entities (churches, homeowners associations, private schools, etc.) in identified gap areas and test their interest in helping to provide recreational access

5. Celebrate Successes

Documenting and communicating milestones in park development will lead to increased appreciation and enthusiasm for the system, leading to further support. Publicly acknowledging successes should also extend to thanking project supporters, while seeking continued commitment towards the next park project. Celebrating successes should be integrated within part of the larger public information campaign and used, in part, to foster new and growing partnerships and funding opportunities.

- Build a contact list, beginning with the list generated from the public input process for this plan, to share successes related directly to plan implementation.
- Utilize on-line tools and social media to celebrate implementation of this plan and future milestones

6. Keep the Plan Relevant

Longmont has a long history of being a parks community. The City has done a commendable job providing a well-planned and maintained parks, recreation, and trails system over the long-term, especially in light recent growth and economic challenges.

At the center of this effort, it will be critical for staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and elected officials to become the Plan stewards and champions, keeping a close eye on the Plan's progress and outside opportunities as they become available. The PRAB members serve as a key connection between the broader community and the City Council.

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan should stay relevant to the times and changing needs of the community. Keeping the plan in front of the public and decision makers and soliciting for new ideas can keep the Plan relevant. It is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board convene on a yearly basis with the sole purpose of discussing the status and progress of the Plan and providing recommendations.



Collyer Park Train-Themed Playground

PRAB can also champion in other ways:

- Engage with the community regularly at events and celebrations
- Evaluate ideas for new projects
- Assist in developing an annual work plan and project report

With the ongoing support of the community, the diligent advocacy of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the technical knowledge of City staff and the leadership of the City Council, the ambitious vision for Longmont's future parks, recreation, and trails system can be realized. The ongoing efforts will maintain the role of this system as one of the defining characteristics of the community and continue a tradition of park excellence that goes back to the founding of Longmont.