

PLANNING MATTERS



American Planning Association
Colorado Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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2023 APA Colorado Chapter Awards

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INTEGRATED LAND AND WATER USE PLANNING FOR THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

HONOR Award: Growing Water Smart

By Morgan Hester, Julia Gallucci, Daniel Gould

Our adventure began when the City of Colorado Springs and Colorado Springs Utilities attended the WaterSmart Land and Water Use Planning Workshop in Fall 2019. During this workshop, we began to collaborate on how best to connect land and water planning and identified future planning efforts where water and land use planning could start. Our first opportunity for collaboration were the City of Colorado Springs' RetoolCOS project to amend the zoning code, and Colorado Springs Utilities' update to the Water Efficiency Plan.

RetoolCOS revised the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 7 of City Code, which had not been comprehensively updated since the late 1990s. The primary goal of the project was to establish a new, modern, and more user-friendly Unified Development Code (UDC) as directed by PlanCOS, the 2019 Council-adopted comprehensive plan.

The RetoolCOS project gave the City of Colorado Springs and Colorado Springs Utilities an opportunity



to update the Commercial Landscape Code which became part of City Code in 2001. Through this effort, we established regulatory language for a 25% high water use turf limit on all new development, including both commercial and residential projects, and the individual yards within those developments. Through the accompanying Landscape Policy Manual, we were able to improve irrigation efficiency equipment requirements, water-wise plant and tree requirements, and soil amendments.

Winning approval for these changes proved very challenging, especially the 25% high water use turf limit. A long series of collaborative presentations and virtual community tours demonstrated the need, and the issues around current landscape installs, and helped our team gain final approval from

City Council in 2023. Combined, these Code changes will allow Colorado Springs Utilities to gain over 400 AF of annual savings by 2030.

Acknowledging the critical influence of land use patterns and density on water demands, Colorado Springs Utilities developed a Land Use-based Water Demand Model for its 2022 Water Efficiency Plan. A land use-based model consists of modeling future changes in water demands based on recent or emerging development patterns. This method is most useful where large areas of undeveloped land exist within a utility's water service boundary and where urban planning documents are available and regularly updated.

These models and plans will allow the City of Colorado Springs and Colorado Springs Utilities to better manage outdoor water use in new developments and predict how demands will change as land-use changes. As a next step, we hope to demonstrate the value of these changes through landscape design competitions and public landscape installs that show how such changes reflect the economic vitality and community values of our City.



Growing Water Smart Workshop 2019.

COLORADO SPRINGS RETOOLCOS PROJECT

HONOR Award: General Planning Project

In January 2019, City Council adopted PlanCOS, Colorado Springs' Comprehensive Plan. This 2019 APA Colorado Honor award-winning Plan was successful thanks to the 5,000+ participants who established the vision and goals for the future of Colorado Springs. To further PlanCOS, six directives were established, one being the complete revision of the existing Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance, known as the RetoolCOS project, to provide the technical backing to further PlanCOS. As a result of the project, a Unified Development Code (UDC) was adopted by the City Council in early 2023.

The Colorado Springs Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance had not been comprehensively reworked in several decades. Unfortunately, the Euclidean-type zoning and suburban dimensional standards that had been carried forward over the decades created separations of uses throughout the City and in some cases, limitations to development. New concepts were proposed through the RetoolCOS project that were not only reflective of the need for regulatory language to support what was established in PlanCOS but flexibility for more creative development and housing opportunities.

While Staff recognized the opportunity for change to residential zoning, several housing proponents further expressed the dire need, focused on revising standards to address inequities with residential zoning as it impacted housing affordability and attainability. Early in the



RetoolCOS project, project staff drafted language that would permit varied housing types in existing residential zone districts for purposes of flexibility, including duplexes, expansion of ADU allowances, and the reduction of minimum setbacks and lot sizes. Concepts were presented in a City Council update and due to counter opposition expressed at public hearings, project staff was directed to scrap the ideas.

Acknowledging a need for change was too important to ignore, the project timeline was paused to brainstorm solutions, resulting in the creation of the Residential Flex Districts, or R-Flex Districts, allowing for varied housing types within the same development as long as defined densities are met. While no properties prior to the adoption of the UDC would have an R-Flex designation applied, applicants and property owners now have the option to request the rezoning for both new developments and converting existing PUDs for better predictability of permitted uses and dimensional standards as it would not have to be recreated, project-by-project. Densities and dimensional standards were inspired by existing developments, ensuring compatibility with future R-Flex zoning requests. The three new Districts include –

- R-Flex Low – Up to 6 dwelling units (DUs) per acre, reflective of a typical “single-family” zone district.
- R-Flex Medium – Between 5 DUs/acre and 16 DUs/acre, similar to most of the PUD (now PDZ) developments in the past several years.
- R-Flex High – Between 15 DUs/acre and 30 DUs/acre.

Beyond the above-mentioned goals, the R-Flex Zone Districts intend to limit the need for requesting future PDZ as the need for an established “hard zoned” residential district that are reflective of current development trends now exist for applicants to request. More importantly, being able to provide a mix of housing types developments by right aims at more options, thus better housing affordability and attainability.



EAST BOULDER

SUBCOMMUNITY PLAN

 City of Boulder
Planning & Development Services

THE EAST BOULDER SUBCOMMUNITY PLAN

HONOR Award: General Planning Project

What is the future of Boulder's industrial neighborhoods and office parks? This question was at the heart of the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan, a three-year effort adopted by Planning Board and City Council in 2022. Today, the 1600 acre area supports about 17,000 jobs but includes no residential areas and has very little retail or service. The Plan guides the evolution of East Boulder, one of the city's 10 subcommunities, over the next two decades into a local business hub, with a variety of housing options and an artful community that is well connected to the surrounding city and the region.

One of the plan's long-term outcomes is new, mixed-use neighborhoods in key locations. Housing will be integrated into these areas, as well as mobility improvements to support biking, walking and transit throughout the subcommunity. The goal of these "15-minute neighborhoods" is to decrease car dependence and make walking and biking safe and convenient, ultimately helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions, one of the City of Boulder's climate goals.

The project launched in 2019 and after three years, 24 engagement opportunities, 72 meetings with boards, advocacy groups, a community working group and City Council, and one international pandemic that slashed the project budget and caused a loss in city planning staff, the plan was unanimously adopted by both Planning Board and City Council.

The planning process led to a lot of firsts for the city. This was the first project that employed "Community Connectors," members of under-represented communities who partnered with the project team to co-design and co-facilitate engagement for equitable opportunities in decision-making. This was the first time our staff built a digital twin of the city and employed 3D modeling software to test impacts of different scenarios, providing the community with a data-based understanding for land use choices.

This was also the first time we shifted a major planning project from an in-person engagement strategy to a completely virtual space, integrating video, online meetings and interactive mapping to help the community understand the issues, participate in the process and ultimately create the vision for an important place in the city.

The city is currently engaged with the implementation of the plan, working toward a rezoning strategy based on the adopted plan and updates to the city's Form-Based Code, which may be applied to neighborhoods identified in the plan. Stay up to date on the exciting things coming to East Boulder at bldr.fyi/EastBoulder.

DENVER PARK AND RECREATION'S OUTDOOR ADVENTURE AND ALTERNATIVE SPORTS STRATEGIC PLAN

HONOR Award: General Planning Project



ANIMAS CITY PARK OVERLOOK TOWNHOMES, CITY OF DURANGO

HONOR Award: Innovative Partnership and Collaboration

Durango, CO: City of Durango has been recognized by the American Planning Association Colorado Chapter to receive a 2023 APA Colorado Honor Award in the category of Innovative Partnership & Collaboration for the Animas City Park Overlook Townhomes development.

This is a pioneering, innovative housing development and the first of its kind for the Durango Renewal Partnership, and Urban Renewal Authority (URA), in Durango, Colorado. The housing project is in the North Main Gateway URA and is Durango's second Urban Renewal Area. The Animas City Park Overlook Townhomes development is located on 6 parcels that would have allowed the applicant / developer to build 4 duplexes and 2 single-family homes. Agave Group, the developer, the URA, and the City of Durango collaborated to innovatively design and maximize the sites into a 22-townhome community with a focus on workforce housing.



There are 4 income qualified deed restrictions and the 6 workforce unit deed restrictions templates that are being utilized by other municipalities in La Plata County for new developments that contain deed restrictions units for alignment and ease of administration.

This housing development creatively utilized new strategies that many Colorado planning departments have adopted into Land Use Development (LUDC), are seeking to adopt, or hope to adopt in the future and can use the Animas City Park Overlook Townhomes as an innovative project that advanced public-private partnerships, URA, through collaboration and commitment, to achieve tangible results that can be replicated not only in Durango, but by many other Colorado communities. Durango City Council leadership, steward by public policy, and public funds, impacted this project and led the path forward to implementing this housing development into reality.

The Awards Ceremony took place on Thursday, September 28th at 8:30am in-person during the Colorado Planning Conference in Colorado Springs. Thanks to the openness of the developers and the hard work of everyone involved in this innovative partnership as it would not have been possible without North Main Gateway URA, Agave Group, La Plata County, Durango 9-R School District, Durango Business Improvement District, HomesFund, Animas Mosquito Control District, Mountain Civil Consulting, SEH Inc., and Reynolds, Ash and Associates.



SUSTAINABLE BRECK PLAN

September 2022

Sustaining What We Love



TOWN OF
BRECKENRIDGE



SUSTAINABLEBRECK PLAN

HONOR Award: Sustainability and Environmental Planning

By **Jessie Burley (Town of Breckenridge)**, **Meital Hoffman (AECOM)**, and **Jerry Tinianow (Western Urban Sustainability Advisors)**

Forging an innovative alliance with a team of sustainability experts to revitalize their outdated 2011 SustainableBreck Plan, the Town of Breckenridge will usher in a new era of environmental leadership. The SustainableBreck Plan Update, completed in six months, has new goals, targets, and strategies to address how our world has changed and continue our sustainability efforts for the next decade and beyond. There are now five main topic areas — Energy, Water, Material Management, Climate Action, and Mobility.



The scope of the project went beyond the typical sustainable planning process and included:

- Extensive, bi-lingual community outreach and Breckenridge Town Council engagement;
- Data collection, analysis, and modeling to understand the current and future conditions relating to the five main topic areas;
- Review and synthesis of pertinent peer sustainability and climate action plans;
- Development of sustainability, decarbonization, and resiliency strategies tailored to Breckenridge, but that also align with regional goals;
- Integration with existing Breckenridge efforts related to community livability, specifically on the topics of housing, childcare, land use, and food systems;
- Cost-benefit analysis of key strategies to inform implementation;
- Creation of an actionable, implementation plan identifying the lead agency, time horizon, and rough cost to implement each strategy;
- Compelling and approachable visual documentation; and
- Development of a public-facing online dashboard for Breckenridge to transparently report sustainability metrics.

The plan was guided by extensive, thoughtful community outreach. In recognition of the housing affordability challenges that often prevent workers from living in the communities they serve, all members of the local workforce were treated as equal participants in the planning process. Community engagement efforts were conducted in Spanish and English, and open house events provided food and childcare to allow for diverse participation. Additionally, our planning team conducted numerous one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders around Breckenridge, including the local tourism board, the local electric utility company, and the manager of the local supermarket. As a town with a tourism-based economy, it was critical to obtain buy-in from key organizations in the tourism industry. Our team reached out to national and regional stakeholders, including Vail Resorts and Airbnb.

The result of the planning process was a robust and actionable sustainability and climate plan with an online reporting dashboard. The plan identifies co-benefits for every strategy to ensure widespread support for implementation. The plan also challenges Breckenridge to increase its ambitions by outlining stretch targets in each topic area. The online reporting dashboard was designed to be easy for Breckenridge staff to update as new data becomes available. It provides a robust reporting and accountability system in addition to a “one-stop-shop” for sustainability information and resources.

Since the passage of SustainableBreck, Breckenridge has effectively implemented strategies from the plan including boldly banning single-use plastics, expanding shared electric car and eBike programs, and working with staff to eliminate diesel-powered equipment for landscaping. By addressing the unique sustainability and climate challenges facing a historic, tourism-based, mountain town, SustainableBreck and the online dashboard have become a blueprint for mountain communities across Colorado and the country.



MT. CRESTED BUTTE TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

HONOR Award: Small Budget

I live in Mt. CB

Familiarity with the mobility network



Typical modes(s) of transportation



Seasonality

All

Transportation Information

Word of mouth, social media, periodicals, community groups, mobile apps (ex: Google Maps), bus stops and schedules

I work in Mt. CB

Familiarity with the mobility network



Typical modes(s) of transportation



Seasonality

All or Seasonal

Transportation Information

Co-workers, employers, mobile apps (ex: Google Maps), bus stop stops and schedules

I often travel to Mt. CB

Familiarity with the mobility network



Typical modes(s) of transportation



Seasonality

All or Seasonal

Transportation Information

Social media, word of mouth, mobile apps (ex: Google Maps), bus stops and schedules

I visit Mt. CB

Familiarity with the mobility network



Typical modes(s) of transportation



Seasonality

Seasonal - Likely Summer/Winter

Transportation Information

Social media, bus drivers, tourism resources and venues, mobile apps (ex: Google Maps), bus stops and schedules

TOWN OF SILVERTON

COMPASS MASTER PLAN 2022

Merit Award: Community Engagement



The Challenge

Silverton, Colorado is a town with approximately 700 residents nestled in the heart of Colorado's San Juan Mountains. Like many small mountain towns, the community has struggled to sustain its character and natural environment, while shaping a more resilient economy. It is a rugged, remote, and picturesque community. The town has experienced an increase in tourism and popularity in recent years, particularly during the Covid-19 summers, due to its mountain town character and access to outdoor recreation.

Silverton is home to the Gold King Mine which has a history of driving the town's local economy. But in 2015, an accident occurred causing the release of toxic waste water into the Animas River. The community was able to utilize the Superfund program to

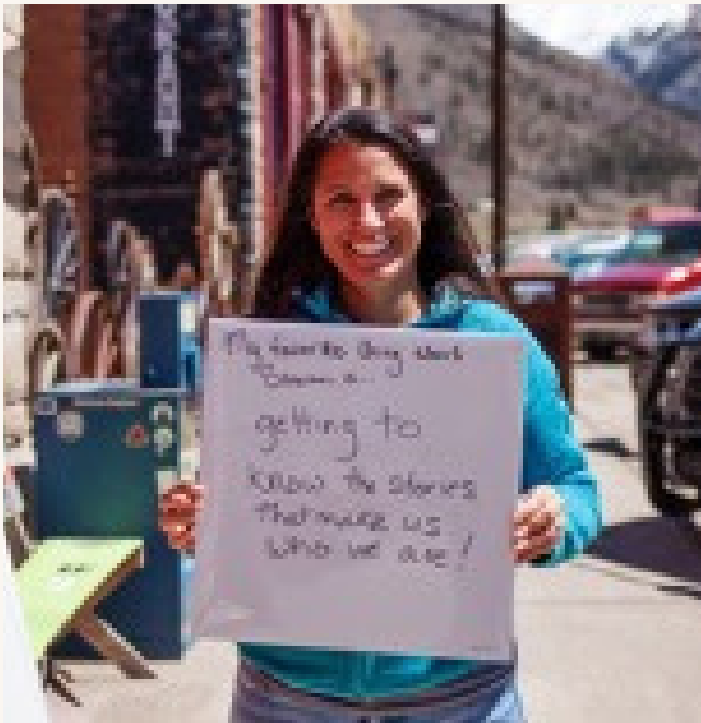
clean-up the mess, but the effects of the disaster still have a hold on the community on their economy.

The Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) had an interest in helping Silverton overcome the effects of the environmental disaster, while also helping the community deal with recent growth pressures. Enlisting the assistance of the Colorado Brownfields Partnership and Community Builders, this project sought to create a unified community vision for Silverton by tackling tough issues like growth, affordable housing, economic diversification, and connecting to natural resources. After beginning the visioning process, the Town of Silverton and Community Builders partnered to conduct a town master plan.

Process

As part of the Silverton Compass Master Planning process, Community Builders and the Town of Silverton undertook a significant community engagement effort in 2021-2022 which directly influenced the development of the Plan. During this time period there were over 75 opportunities for the community to engage and over 350 community members (50%) participated in the process.

Throughout the process, the team conducted in depth outreach to engage hard to reach populations to obtain a wide range of voices to incorporate their input in shaping the master plan. This included meeting with the Latinx population at their places of employment, students at the K-12 school, senior center meetings, firefighters at the fire station, and conducting several open houses at popular coffee shops and restaurants during peak periods.



Another key component of the outreach process included a five part series of topic based webinars conducted over a 2 month period to teach community members the importance of the economy, responsible growth, housing, natural assets, and building civic health and capacity. Each webinar included expert guest speakers from other communities to discuss their successes and challenges on the topic. These webinars also resulted in a pool of community volunteers to assist with topic based task forces.

In addition to the above, Community Builders also conducted numerous Task Force Meetings, Walking Meetings, Targeted Focus Groups and traditional Open Houses/Workshops.

Key Outcomes and Deliverables

The unanimously adopted Master Plan includes recommendations, strategies, and funding opportunities to achieve the community’s goals by strengthening the local economy, providing housing types and prices for everyone, creating family-friendly spaces, enhancing natural assets, and building civic health and capacity.

Community Builder and the Town of Silverton received a merit award for Community Engagement for this process during the 2023 State APA Conference. To learn more about the Silverton Compass Project, [check out this short film.](#)



LIGHTING CODE UPDATE AND ADOPTION, CITY OF FT. COLLINS

Merit Award: Community Engagement

NIGHT SKY INITIATIVE

THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS is committed to protecting and preserving our night sky through best practices in outdoor lighting that will maintain safety and security while also reducing light pollution and supporting a healthy ecosystem.

VERY BAD BAD BETTER BEST

LIGHT TRESPASS vs. LIGHT WHERE NEEDED

LIGHTING BEST PRACTICES

- All light should have a clear purpose.
- Light should be directed only to where it is needed.
- Light should be no brighter than necessary.
- Light should be used only when it is useful.
- Use warmer color lights where possible.

Project Overview

In 2016, Fort Collins’s City Council adopted a resolution expressing support for incorporating dark sky policies and standards into Building Codes, Land Use Codes and Streetscape Standards. In support of Council’s stated objectives, City staff evaluated codes for development projects and proposed updates to better align with Council’s intent.

The Land Use Code changes align with Council’s stated objectives as requirements address all aspects of light pollution by limiting light trespass, intensity and glare, and provide increased protections for sensitive areas, such as Natural Areas and residential neighborhoods, while allowing greater lighting levels in commercial areas. In essence, the code will no longer uniformly apply standards across the city and instead promote more thoughtful and tailored lighting plans that respond to the context and land use of development sites.

The goals of the proposed code updates include:

- Promote nighttime safety, security, productivity, enjoyment and commerce on new development sites;
- Create a “lighting budget” approach to site lighting that responds to the specific context of the site and needs of the development;
- Minimize glare, obtrusive light, artificial sky glow, excessive energy use, and impacts to adjacent properties and neighborhoods;

- Protect Natural Areas and the local natural ecosystem from the damaging effects of electric night lighting; and
- Address recent technological advances in outdoor lighting, particularly the advent of energy efficient LED lighting.

Community Engagement

Engagement was an opportunity to ground community members in understanding the implications of proposed code changes. The lighting engineering firm, Clanton & Associates, prepared a Case Studies and Cost Comparison Analysis of existing and proposed lighting requirements on five recently completed development projects. In general, the report concluded existing requirements fall short in controlling over-lighting and glare, and that new requirements would not result in more expensive lighting installations.

NIGHT SKY INITIATIVE

* Artificial light at night can have negative and deadly effects on many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants.

BACKLIGHT Spill Light

UPLIGHT Sky Glow (Light Pollution)

GLARE Front-Side Light

Don't **BUG** your neighbors!

COLOR TEMPERATURE

2700K Extra Warm White	3000K Warm White	3500K White	4000K Cool White	6000K Daylight

GOOD FOR NIGHTTIME USAGE | GOOD FOR DAYTIME USAGE

City of Fort Collins

fcgov.com/nightsky

Bringing this analysis to life, staff facilitated four separate evening tours of the development projects to help communicate the technical implications of the code. Attendees were asked to fill out on-site questionnaires that evaluated the qualitative aspects of existing lighting installations. Staff used the Case Studies Report and input received during tours to further advance the code.

Following the tours, staff engaged the broader community through a variety of virtual activities that include public open houses, presentations to a variety of groups (Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, Police Services, Boards, Building Services Team, Light and Power Team, Capital Projects Team, Engineering), and facilitated two Technical Advisory Committee workshops. Staff also facilitated a virtual training session for City Planners responsible for reviewing new lighting plans and applying standards.

Key considerations brought up during engagement influenced the code, such as how to address built-to lot line development, the 20-hour commercial activity unique to downtown, including specific provisions for athletic fields, circumstances that would trigger compliance for existing development, and clearer intent statements for specific lighting installations such as stringed-lighting.

TELLURIDE COMMUNITY VISION PLAN: A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PLAN HELPING TO CHANGE TELLURIDE'S FUTURE

Merit Award: Community Engagement

1.05%

annual growth rate (2010-2021)



\$68,878

median household income

2

water treatment plants



2022
year of Climate Action Plan (CAP) adoption

2,059

population of Telluride



ESTES FORWARD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Merit Award: Innovative Partnership and Collaboration



RECREATE: PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN, CITY OF FT. COLLINS

Merit Award: Sustainability and Environmental Planning



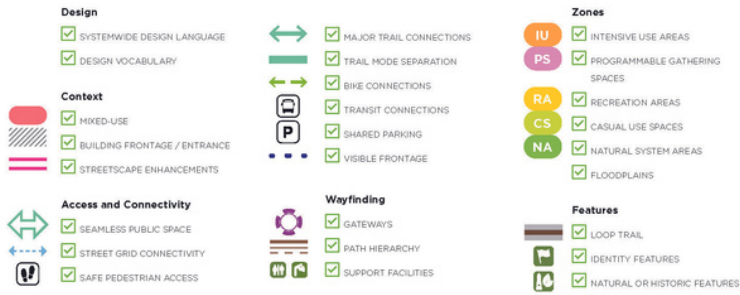
Fort Collins is known for its natural beauty, robust bicycle network, and outdoor recreation. Biking along the Poudre River Trail for fresh air or to commute. Walking into the foothills to decompress or to learn. Playing ball for the championship or between neighbors. Taking a dip to cool off or to maintain agility. Sliding through a grain silo or a sugar beet. Tree-lined streets becoming festival grounds. Public spaces are part of what makes Fort Collins Fort Collins. They attract residents and entice them to stay.

With exceptional natural resources, charm, and high quality of life, Fort Collins is expected to continue growing by nearly 40% between 2020 and 2040. In order to sustain Fort Collins's environmental assets, commitment to health and wellness, and overall quality of life, parks and recreation must keep up.

ReCreate: Parks and Recreation Master Plan is helping city parks and recreation become more sustainable through its holistic view, realistic accounting of benefits and costs, and commitment to equity.

APPLYING THE GUIDELINES

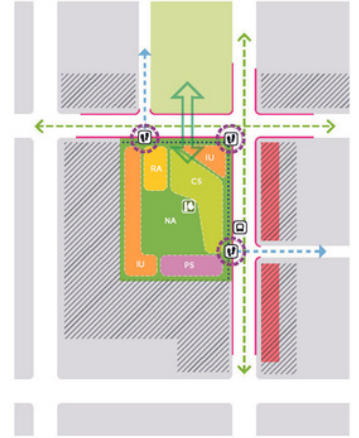
The following diagrams illustrate how the various design guidelines apply to different park classifications. Enlargements of each diagram can be found in the following section on park and facility classifications.



Neighborhood Park



Urban Park



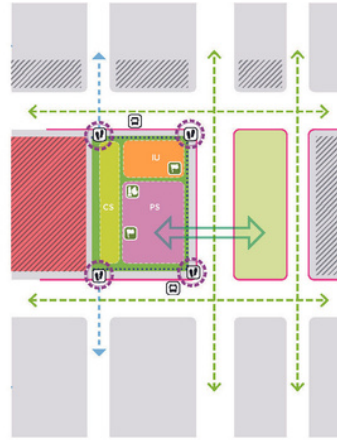
Community Park



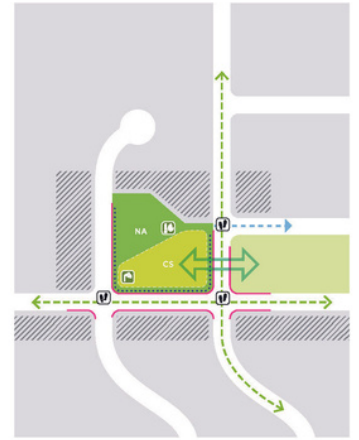
Schoolside Park



Plaza



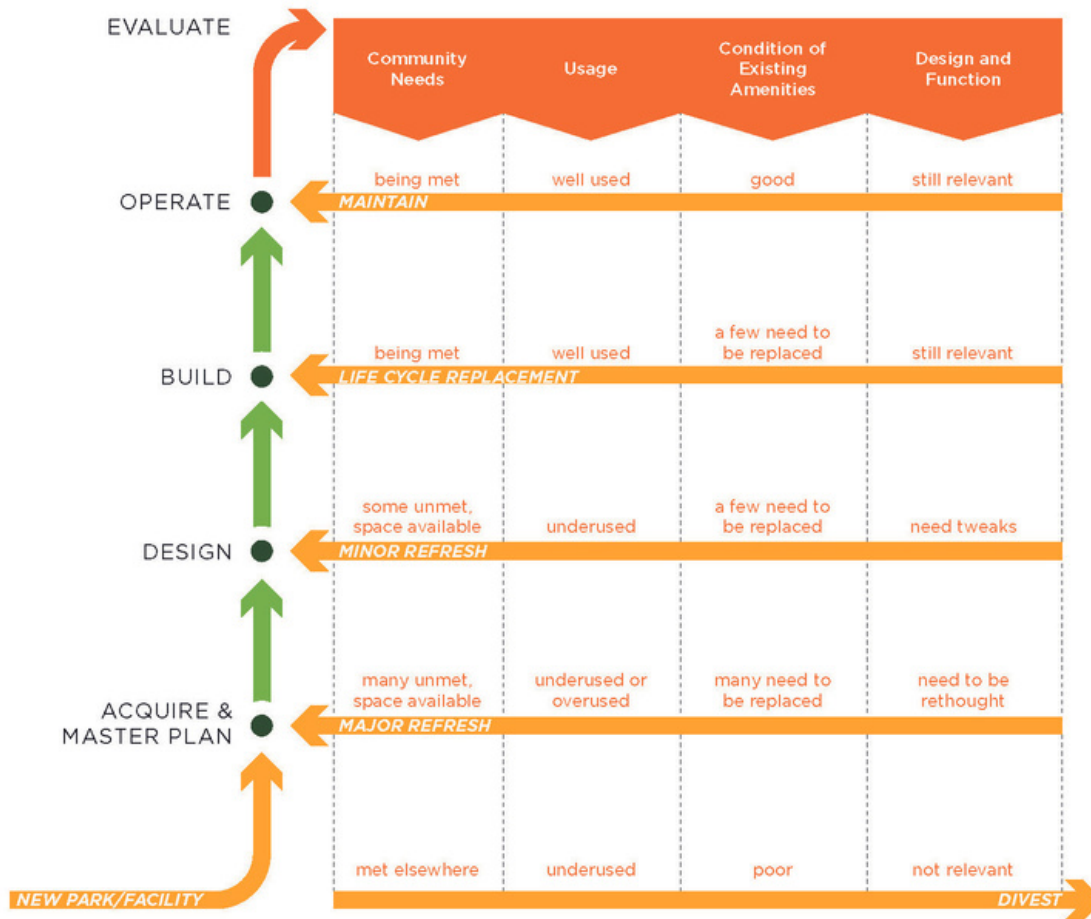
Mini Park



A Holistic View

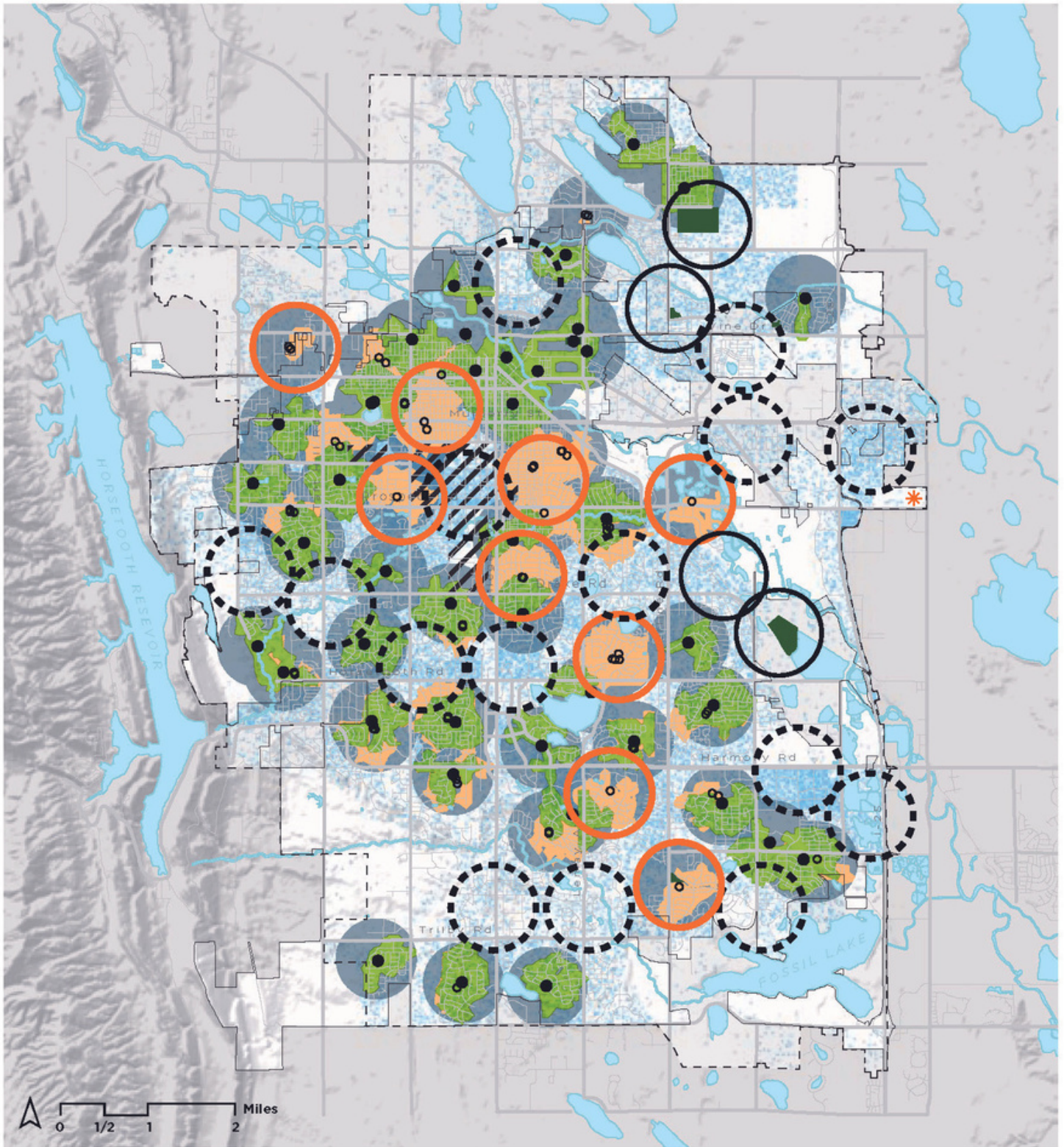
Looking out 10 to 20 years, RēCreate sets a vision for how the City can help residents sustain and build wellness, curiosity, innovation, and community. It aligns the efforts of the various departments that manage parks, trails, and recreation facilities—as well as those that manage community gardens, natural areas, and stormwater utilities that contribute to the city’s iconic, interconnected public space system. It acknowledges that parks and recreation are part of this holistic system that spans the natural and the designed, the big and the small, the urban and the suburban, but together brings beauty and a sense of place to Fort Collins.

While each part of the system has a different purpose, vision, and management structure, nature does not respect administrative boundaries, and residents’ experiences should be seamless.

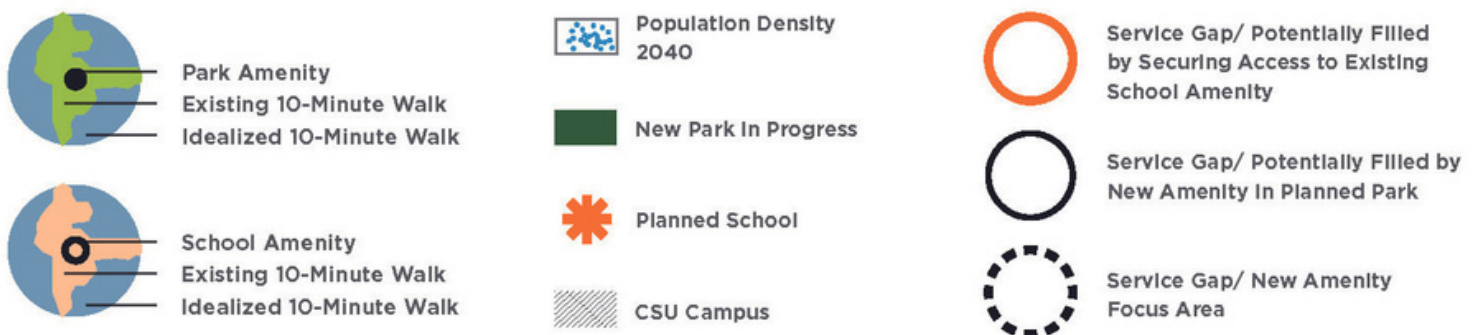


What emerging trends or innovative ideas in parks and recreation would you like to see in Fort Collins?

¿Qué nuevas tendencias o ideas innovadoras sobre parques y recreación le gustaría ver en Fort Collins?



Playgrounds — Access Standard — 10-Minute Walk



A Realistic Accounting of Benefits and Costs

ReCreate provides a road map to making the best use of City resources. It acknowledges that parks and recreation provide immense value and offer benefits that touch each of the outcome areas used by City administrators for budgeting and tracking progress. An investment in parks and recreation is an investment in all of the city's priorities.

The plan outlines facility and program life cycles so that there is a transparent process for evaluating performance to inform realistic budgeting. All capital facilities and programs were evaluated to create an accurate snapshot of capital needs and opportunities for filling gaps.

A Commitment to Equity

As ReCreate rethinks, renews, and reimagines parks and recreation in Fort Collins, the City remains committed to equity. The planning process engaged a representative cross-section of residents, and equity is interwoven throughout the plan to ensure all community members benefit. It is evident in the plan's level of service metrics ensuring access to recreational amenities across the city. It is evident in recommendations to expand equitable program pricing strategies. It is evident in proposing that the City proactively and consistently engage with neighbors on future projects so that public space reflects their needs and values.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The path forward for parks and recreation in Fort Collins is captured within the following goals, actions, and methods.

PARKS

Provide equitable access to parks.



RECREATION

Provide equitable access to recreational experiences.



TRAILS

Expand the active transportation network to support access.



RESOURCES

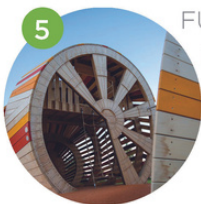
Protect and enhance natural and historic resources in parks.



5

FUNDING

Ensure the financial sustainability of parks and recreation.



6

PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen partnerships to leverage resources for mutual benefit.



7

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Ensure parks, paved trails, and recreation facilities are operated and maintained efficiently and to defined standards.



Each goal describes an ideal future for the parks and recreation system. Each goal is supported by a set of actions that the City can take to move towards that ideal future.

ECONOMIC HEALTH

Promote the synergy between parks, recreation, and economic health.



COMMUNICATION

Improve marketing and communication to enhance operations and user satisfaction.



DESIGN

Elevate the design of and connection to nature in parks and recreation facilities.



SAFETY

Continue to enhance safety and security in all parks and facilities.



2022 ADVANCING ADAMS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Merit Award: General Planning Project



Advancing Adams – the suite of Comprehensive, Transportation, and Parks, Open Space & Trails master plans that will guide growth and development in the Colorado county for the next 20 years – was ratified a year ago by the Adams County Board of Commissioners (BoCC). Advancing Adams also seeks to advance the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and property owners of Adams County.

Adams County is set to become the third most populous county in Colorado by 2040 – and because the economy has significantly shifted since 2012, housing affordability has moved to the forefront of this plan. Advancing Adams updates the county’s current land use plan and development policies while incorporating other planning efforts such as open space, greenways, affordable housing, and transit/transportation.

“With Advancing Adams, we can better integrate our future planning efforts and use infrastructure investments to connect and re-connect diverse communities across the county in historic ways,” said Director of Community & Economic Development Jenni Hall. “There is also an overarching theme of partnership with other organizations and local jurisdictions to leverage these investments wisely.”

The Advancing Adams plans identify areas for infill opportunities, including the development of parks, open space properties, and trails, in areas that will transition between industrial and residential land uses in the future and in areas where higher density residential uses will be supported.

The 20-Minute community model addressed in this plan also seeks to cluster services and residential and employment opportunities within a 20-minute walk, bike, or drive. 288 miles of bicycle lanes are planned to be invested in Adams County. Additionally, 6,500 acres of collective publicly accessible open spaces, parks, and greenways plan to be added to maintain current levels of provisions per person.

Adams County has the second highest growth rate in the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) region, making community amenities a primary focus of Advancing Adams. As of 2021, Adams County now owns and manages 2,166 acres of parks and open space, a 39% increase since 1998, and 40.75 miles of trails, a 60% increase since 1998.

Through a robust engagement process, Advancing Adams included an unprecedented level of community participation with thousands of completed surveys and responses. The process was also informed by many stakeholder meetings and focus groups, centered around a diverse 50-person community advisory committee. 85% of community survey respondents feel the loss of agricultural land is a significant issue and 93% believe housing affordability is a significant issue.

“Adams County is growing, and it’s growing fast,” said Hall. “It’s critical we have policies in place to make sure we are addressing and accommodating that growth responsibly. Advancing Adams embraces the many different community efforts and visions that will help guide our growth and development over the next 20 years.”



WESTMINSTER 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Merit Award: General Planning Project

The City of Westminster adopted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan on March 27, 2023 that emphasizes economic development, homeownership, and protection of lands for open space and parks. The Plan goes beyond land use with strategies for water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, transportation, parks and recreation, libraries, health and human services, housing programs, economic development strategy, historic preservation, and arts and culture. Importantly, the Plan requires mandatory compliance with any development applications, thus elevating the Plan from advisory to regulatory.

The bulk of community engagement occurred in 2019, reaching an estimated 77,000 people including targeted outreach to Latino and Asian communities as well as area youth. The Plan was on its way to adoption in early 2020 when the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, slowing work on the Plan to allow prioritization of other immediate needs. This pause provided time to reconsider assumptions for housing, employment, and the need for green spaces for all neighborhoods. This reconsideration included making contact with every business within the City, over 2800 in all, to determine both their immediate and long-term needs. A meeting-in-a-box was also developed to allow residents to host small household gatherings to provide input on the Plan while complying with COVID-19 protocols.

City Council elections in 2021 also brought in a new majority, with a high concern for water supply and thus a challenge to bring the newly elected leadership up to speed on the Plan. An interactive web-based model was developed to allow staff and City Council to run scenarios for buildout of the City with different land uses, densities, differing assumptions for conservation activities, weather, and economic activity. This transparent process resulted in thousands of



model runs, demonstrating the resiliency of the system through multiple possible futures. Through this iterative process the Plan results in a projected annual reduction in water demand of 613 acre-feet or 199,838,000 gallons as compared to the City's prior Plan.

In support of homeownership, the Plan establishes greater opportunities for housing diversity to better balance the conventional single-family development and recent higher density multi-family that predominates. The Plan provides new opportunities for townhomes and smaller-format homes to address a range of ages and lifestyles across the City.

Employment development will be supported by protecting key sites for office, incubator spaces, and research and development labs with a focus on sites with proximity to other employment land uses and supporting transportation infrastructure. The Plan also proposes supporting the revitalization of aging commercial centers to fit the changing needs of the community.

Open space, parks, golf courses, and creek corridors, which constitute over 40% of Westminster's land, are identified for protection. This thoughtful development pattern will ensure Westminster balances more intense activity centers, that can support future transit and access to jobs with lands for recreation and preservation of views and natural features.

The Westminster 2040 Plan overall will preserve and perpetuate the City's legacy of protecting resources, while providing needed opportunities for housing diversification and business development.



COLORADO COLLEGE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES SOUTHEAST COLORADO SPRINGS UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND REPORTS

Merit Award: Student Project



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