

May 2019

Game Plan for a Healthy City



Denveright.

Parks & Recreation Game Plan



DENVER
PARKS & RECREATION





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Executive Summary

Game Plan Overview

About Denverright

Denverright is a set of community-driven plans that shape Denver's future land use, mobility, parks, recreational resources, and more.



Citywide strategies from Comprehensive Plan 2000, the 2002 Blueprint Denver land use and transportation plan and the 2003 Game Plan for parks and recreation have served Denver well for the last decade and a half. They have guided our transportation choices; promoted new mixed-use development; created and enhanced parks, trails and recreation centers; and catalyzed areas of change while preserving the character of stable neighborhoods.

But a lot has changed since those plans were adopted.

RTD's FasTracks system has added significant new transit options to the region. Our population has experienced rapid growth. We've learned smarter and more modern ways to plan for the future of our city with inclusivity and climate change in mind.

Denverright.

Blueprint Denver

Denverright.

Denver Moves: Transit

Denverright.

Parks & Recreation Game Plan

Denverright.

Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails

Your Vision for Denver

You helped planners create six "vision elements" that serve as the basis for Comprehensive Plan 2040 and drive each plan's goals.

Equitable,
Affordable and
Inclusive



Economically
Diverse and
Vibrant



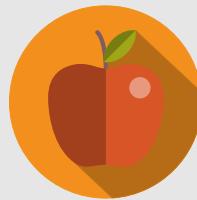
Environmentally
Resilient



Connected,
Safe and
Accessible Places



Healthy and
Active



Strong and
Authentic
Neighborhoods



Your Voice

Thousands of Denverites shared their unique perspectives on what makes Denver great and how it can evolve to be even better. You shared your voice in many ways – by attending meetings and workshops; taking online map-based surveys; talking with the Denveright street team at festivals, community events and transit stations; joining a Community Think Tank; and more. Through coordinated Denveright outreach and the individual plans' efforts, there were limitless opportunities to help shape our city's future.



Denveright.

Your Voice. Our Future.

Denveright represents an unprecedented opportunity to align citywide plans to guide future investments so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Denveright strategies come straight from the community, and are designed to help the city prepare for and deliver a future that is responsive to their goals, visions and priorities. Denveright includes 5 coordinated planning efforts, including the *Game Plan*:

**Blueprint
Denver**

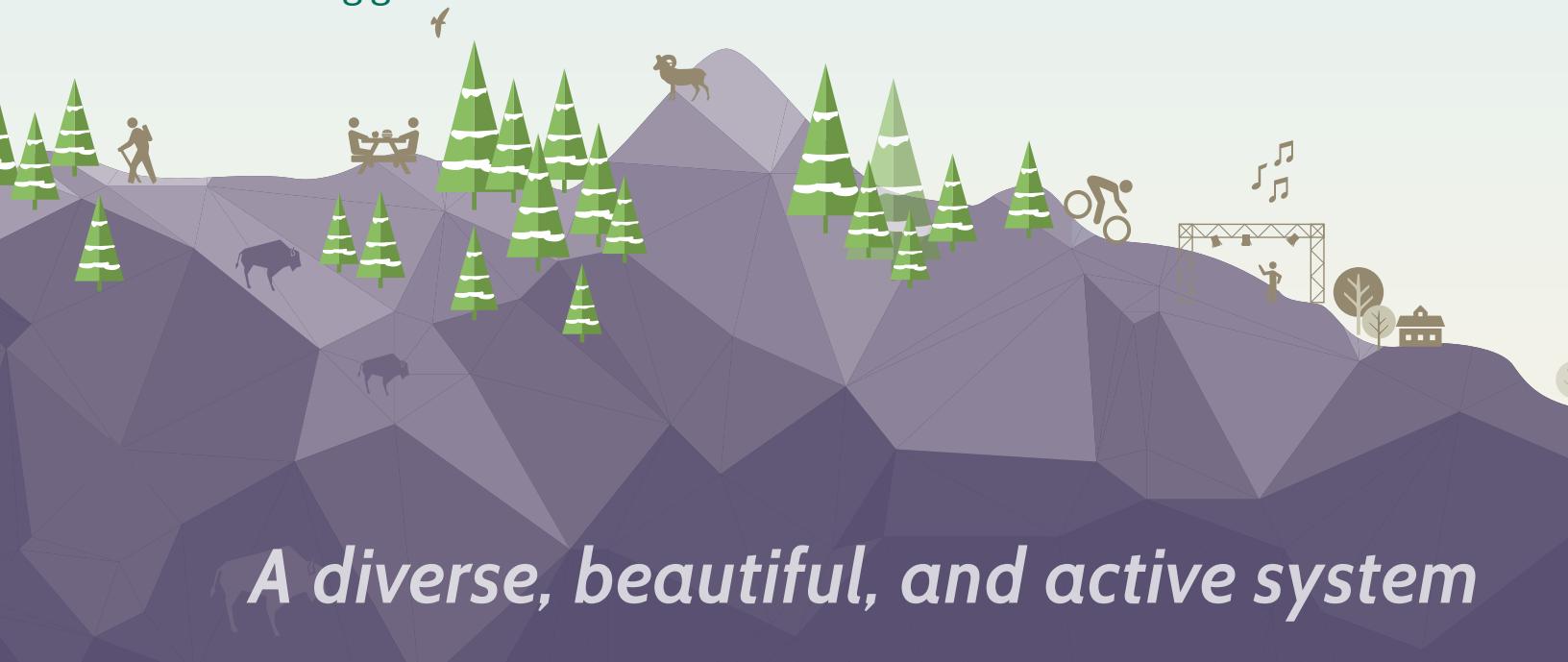
**Game Plan
for a
Healthy City**

**Denver Moves:
Transit**

**Denver Moves:
Pedestrians
and Trails**

**Comprehensive
Plan 2040**

The science is clear, our planet is facing a global crisis attributed largely to human behavior that is changing climate patterns around the world. This environmental emergency threatens to alter our normal landscape, limiting where we can live, where we can grow our food and how we are able to access natural resources. As we look to our future we recognize that reversing our contribution to climate change is critical. How we plan our city can help us reduce our drain on resources and reduce Denver's carbon footprint to eliminate our collective contribution to the climate change crisis. That commitment must be our over-arching guide.



Game Plan for a Healthy City is a park and recreation plan for Denver's urban and mountain park systems that proclaims safe and easy access to parks and open space, a healthy lifestyle, and a healthy environment are all basic rights for every resident. Built from input from more than 6,000 residents, stakeholders, and staff members, the Game Plan provides both a vision and a strategic roadmap for the future of our parks, hundreds of facilities, and recreation programs, and 20,000 acres of park landscapes.

Over the next 20 years this strategic master plan will guide and inform the development of specific park improvement plans, new policies and regulations to protect and expand parks, and annual management actions and capital investments to make these goals a reality.



spanning from the mountains to the plains

A Healthy City

Parks, recreation, and the urban forest are vital infrastructure to our city's health.

Trees and vegetation in our parks as well as along our parkways and streets help clean the air we breathe and provide shade that decreases the cooling load on our energy infrastructure during our hot months. Our parks and urban forests hold, clean, and infiltrate stormwater, decreasing the load on our storm sewer system. Bikeways create important mobility conduits that promote fitness and relieve commuter traffic on congested streets. Investment in parks and recreation infrastructure has a positive ripple effect of benefits throughout our city. Collaboration—both internally with the City and externally with other organizations, volunteers, and the private sector—is a key ingredient; let's work together to grow a Healthy City!



Every Drop

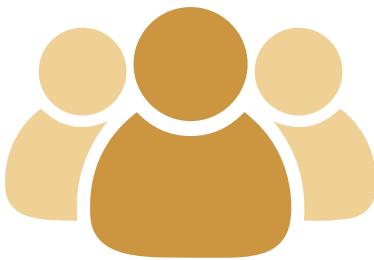
Make the parks system more resilient and environmentally sustainable.

To do this, we must adapt to the changing climate and limited resources.

Implementation strategies for Every Drop focus on:

- Expanding resilient and low-water landscapes
- Protecting and expanding our urban forest
- Conserving energy and resources use
- Fire management in the mountain forests
- Improving health of our waterways

THE VISION IS SUPPORTED THROUGH FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:



Every Person

Ensure equity in the distribution of parks and park resources and programming so that all residents have the opportunity to improve their personal health and well-being.

To do this, we must diversify and grow parks and recreation opportunities and access.

Implementation strategies for Every Person focus on:

- Growing parks and improving access so all neighborhoods have a park within a 10 minute walk
- Diversifying recreation offerings
- Promoting equity within the system, especially by investing in neighborhoods with highest unmet needs



Every Dollar

Manage resources to ensure long term economic and operational health of the parks system.

To do this, we reinvest in Denver's parks and recreation resources and people.

Implementation strategies for Every Dollar focus on:

- Growing collaborations internally and with neighborhoods, nonprofits, private sector, and sponsors
- Identifying ways for new development to contribute to meeting the park and recreation needs of new residents
- Supporting staff development and professional growth
- Improving technology and upgrading facilities



Uniquely Denver

Provide parks and programming that reflect Denver's community and cultural identity.

To do this, we must increase opportunities to connect to Denver's nature and culture.

Implementation strategies for Uniquely Denver focus on:

- Protecting and expanding our parkway system
- Planning for historic and cultural resources
- Expanding access to the mountain parks and increasing places to experience nature in our city
- Collaborating with agencies and organizations to activate parks

Why Plan Now?

We have a system that is incredibly diverse and works well in many ways. However, it is facing unprecedented challenges environmentally and economically, and it is not fully meeting the needs of all of our neighborhoods. Action today is critical to growing a Healthy City with park and recreation access for all.

Here is a snapshot of the challenges we are facing:



DROUGHT & FLOODING

11% (\$2.7M) of park's annual operating budget goes towards irrigation. Droughts and flooding are both projected to increase in the future.



PARKS NOT KEEPING UP WITH GROWTH

From 2010-2016 the city experienced an 11% growth while park space didn't keep pace. Denver's park access of 9 acres per thousand residents is well below the national average of 13.



GROWING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Deferred maintenance totals \$119 million and nearly 1 in 6 park assets is in poor condition. Expenses are significantly outpacing funding growth.



THREATENED URBAN FOREST

Denver's urban tree canopy is one of the lowest in ranked cities and every 1 in 6 trees are threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer.

OBESITY IS RISING

Nearly 1 in 6 children is obese, and 52% of Denver's residential parcels are not within a 10 minute walk of a playground.

LIMITED ACCESS TO NATURE

Many neighborhoods do not have walking access to places to experience nature, and the mountain parks are difficult to access for families without a car.

Game Plan at a Glance

Connecting principles to implementation strategies

Guiding Principles

Aspirations describing how we desire the system to be



Every Drop

Goals

The desired result in support of the principles

1. Protect water quality and manage water use.
2. Protect and expand the urban forest.
3. Protect and restore healthy wildlife habitats and functional ecosystems.
4. Employ best sustainable practices for operational resilience.
5. Increase opportunities for people to experience and connect to nature.



Every Person



Every Dollar

6. Ensure that parks, facilities, programs, and staff contribute to a high-quality, safe, and meaningful experience for park users and program participants.
7. Achieve equitable access for underserved communities to parks and recreation amenities for all members of the community.
8. Make decisions informed by an understanding of community perspectives.
9. Provide quality programs and places that respond to Denver's evolving needs.
10. Foster a work culture that embraces teamwork, increases job satisfaction, and creates successful ambassadors to the community.

11. Explore alternative and additional funding options for park, trail, and recreation needs.
12. Broaden system investments and services with allied individuals, agencies, and organizations.
13. Increase the supply of parks, facilities, and resources relative to Denver's population growth.
14. Deliver high-quality service efficiently and effectively to all sectors of the city.
15. Recognize parks and public spaces as vital elements of urban infrastructure for the city.

16. Protect and enhance Denver's legacy pathways: its parkways, greenways, and trails.
17. Highlight and protect the system's unique historic, social, and cultural resources.
18. Celebrate the breadth of Denver's diverse ecological system, spanning from the prairie to the tundra.
19. Design parks, facilities, and programs that reflect Denver's distinct places and neighborhood identities.
20. Provide opportunities to expand Denver's healthy, outdoor lifestyle to all.



Uniquely Denver

Vision: A HEALTHY CITY

The overall aspiration for the future of our parks and recreation system; what we are working towards

Strategies

The approach to accomplish the goals

ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE AND LIMITED RESOURCES.

Strategies address:

- Water Use
- Stormwater and Waterway Health
- Urban Trees and Mountain Forests
- Energy and Resource Use

DIVERSIFY PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.

Strategies address:

- Parks and Recreation Programming
- Engagement, Outreach, and Communications

GROW THE PARK SYSTEM AND RECREATION ACCESS.

Strategies address:

- Park, Facility, and Program Expansion
- Mobility and Access

REINVEST IN DENVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES AND PEOPLE.

Strategies address:

- Equity
- Funding, Operations, and Staff
- Partnerships
- Collaboration With the Private Sector

CONNECT TO DENVER'S NATURE AND CULTURE.

Strategies address:

- Parkways, Tree-Lined Streets, and Trails
- Arts, Culture, and History
- Innovative Parks and Recreation
- Nature and Outdoor Recreation

Implementation

Recommendations

Provide implementation guidance and directions for the Action Plan.

Action Plan

The priority action steps, summarized in the 3 Year Action Plan.

- Action 1
- Action 2
- Action 3
- Action 4
- Action 5
- Action 6

Each action identifies:

- Lead Department
- Supporting Department
- External Partners
- 3 Year Milestone

Metrics

Measurements that are monitored over time to track improvements in the health of our parks, recreation, and urban forest.

-  Metric 1
-  Metric 2
-  Metric 3
-  Metric 4
-  Metric 5
-  Metric 6

The Foundation for a Healthy City

The strategies in the Game Plan ensure our parks, recreation, open space, and urban forests will create a system focused on Every Drop, Every Person, and Every Dollar that is Uniquely Denver. The following ideas underlay the strategies.



ADAPT to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

Denver's climate and environment will be challenged in the coming years. The community and the DPR must remain committed to conservation and sustainable practices to support the environmental health of the city. To meet this challenge, the Game Plan offers strategies for water use; stormwater and waterway health; urban trees and mountain forests; and energy and resource use to **adapt to the changing climate and limited resources**.



DIVERSIFY Parks and Recreation Services

Caring for and supporting the health of every person in Denver today is fundamental. To achieve this, the Game Plan recommends strategies for parks and recreation programming and for enhancing engagement, outreach, and communications in order to **diversify parks and recreation services**.



GROW

the Park System and Recreation Access

Amid estimates that population growth will continue in the Denver region, DPR must continue to provide excellent service and enhanced access to more people. Strategies for park, facility, and program expansion, as well as improved mobility and access, will provide the ability to **grow the park system and recreation access**.



RE-INVEST

\$ in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

The Game Plan will only be successful if there are adequate resources to support operations and staff. To **reinvest in Denver's parks and recreation resources and people**, the Game Plan includes strategies in the areas of equity; funding, operations, and staff; partnerships; and collaboration with the private sector.



CONNECT

to Denver's Nature and Culture

Ultimately, the Game Plan is a way to protect what is special about Denver, linking residents to the incredible natural setting. Strategies for Denver's parkways, tree-lined streets, and trails; arts, culture, and history; innovative parks and recreation; and nature and outdoor recreation will work together to continue to **connect to Denver's nature and culture**.

25 Priority Strategies

These strategies were prioritized based on existing needs analysis, community and staff input, and Departmental priorities. They have the greatest ability to respond to the system's pressing needs over the next three years.



ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE & LIMITED RESOURCES



DIVERSIFY PARKS & RECREATION SERVICES



GROW THE PARK SYSTEM & RECREATION ACCESS



REINVEST IN DENVER'S PARKS & RECREATION RESOURCES & PEOPLE



CONNECT TO DENVER'S NATURE & CULTURE

1.2 RESILIENT LANDSCAPES Create select park areas to incorporate climate resilient landscape and drought tolerance.	1.5 ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lakes.
1.13 ENERGY EFFICIENT FACILITIES Make facilities more energy-saving and efficient, reducing energy use in park and recreation operations by 25 percent in 10 years.	1.15 WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING Address waste more efficiently, increase user responsibilities, and expand recycling in parks and recreation facilities.
3.1 GROW PARKS Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals.	3.2 EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion.
4.3 ALTERNATIVE FUNDING Explore alternative funding strategies to address unmet standards and expand and enhance Department services.	4.7 STAFF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT Support and invest in staff development and professional growth to support engagement and retention.
5.3 TREE-LINED STREETS Expand a system of tree-lined streets to improve mobility, tree canopy, and water quality.	5.8 PARKS ACTIVATION Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events.

<p>1.6 URBAN FOREST EXPANSION Protect and expand tree cover in areas of high urban heat.</p>	<p>1.8 RIGHT-OF-WAY TREES Redefine municipal roles and responsibilities for the establishment, care and replacement of trees in the ROW.</p>	<p>1.12 MOUNTAIN PARK FIRE MANAGEMENT Work with regional partners to research and develop best practices for Mountain Park forest management and fire mitigation.</p>
<p>2.2 RECREATION PROGRAMMING Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.</p>	<p>2.3 EMERGING TRENDS Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.</p>	<p>2.7 ENGAGEMENT Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives and needs.</p>
<p>3.5 10 MIN WALK ACCESS Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood.</p>	<p>3.6 MULTI-MODAL ACCESS With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.</p>	<p>4.1 EQUITABLE ACCESS Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity.</p>
<p>4.9 UPGRADE FACILITIES Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.</p>	<p>4.12 PARTNERSHIP WITH DPS Develop a citywide mutually beneficial relationship with DPS to share resources.</p>	<p>4.16 DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT Work with other City agencies to seek increased participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.</p>
<p>5.9: INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SPACES Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health.</p>	<p>5.12 NATURE IN THE CITY Create nature experiences and access to natural areas in every community.</p>	<p>5.13 MOUNTAIN PARK ACCESS Expand access, amenities, programs, and ease of use to improve the experience of the mountain parks to encourage more use by Denver residents.</p>

Implementing the Game Plan has Already Begun!

Thanks to the citizens of Denver, voters in November 2018 approved Measure 2A, a .25% sales tax dedicated to the improvement and expansion of Denver Parks.

The additional tax funds, combined with existing city general funding, will create new opportunities to realize Game Plan goals in the following areas:

- Acquiring Additional Land for Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- Improving and Maintaining Existing Parks, Trails, and Open Space, including in Denver's Mountain Parks
- Building and Maintaining New Parks and Trails
- Restoring and Protecting Natural Features like Waterways, Rivers, Canals, and Streams
- Expanding the Urban Tree Cover in Parks, Parkways, and Public Right-Of-Ways.

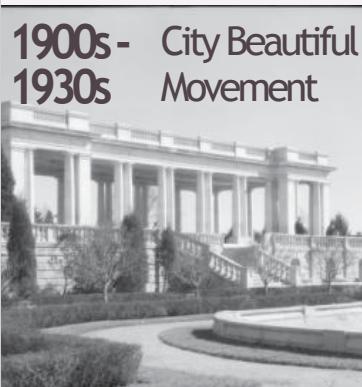
2A FUNDING VISION: HEALTHY CITY / HEALTHY PEOPLE



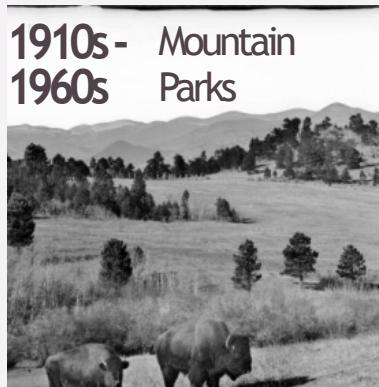
2A: Our Opportunity to Extend a Legacy

Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) has inherited an extraordinary legacy of green space, including many of the city's historic parks, civic spaces, parkway system, trails and mountain parks. For more than 100 years, Denver's parks and recreation system has been built through stewardship and multiple eras of innovative and intentional planning, design and policy.

TIMELINE: DENVER'S PARK AND RECREATION LEGACY



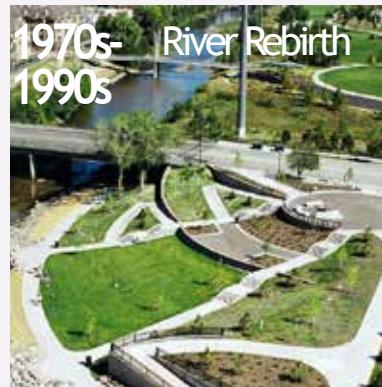
1900s - 1930s City Beautiful Movement



1910s - 1960s Mountain Parks



1950s-1970s Social Welfare



1970s-1990s River Rebirth

In the early 1900s, Mayor Speer enacted a vision to bring the City Beautiful movement to Denver, which has resulted in the grand parks, parkways and mature landscapes that Denverites enjoy today, more than 100 years later.

Constructed between 1912 and 1941, Denver's mountain park system sets the stage for regional open space planning in Colorado.

Investment and expansion of Denver's recreation center system was central to providing reinvestment in the urban core and neighborhoods to promote social welfare.

Reinvestment and reclamation of urban waterways was a strong focus of this era. The goal was to revitalize post-industrial river corridors and improve environmental health and riparian habitat.

Building on the *Game Plan for a Healthy City*, Denver Parks and Recreation's vision for 2A funding is: *Healthy City, Healthy People*. As the Department plans to use 2A funding, equity is our driving principle, along with partnership, sustainability, accountability, and transparency. Building a healthy city includes adapting to climate change, enhancing biodiversity, and improving stewardship of our resources. Ensuring the health of Denver residents means increasing parks and open space access for all and improving and enhancing our parks and outdoor recreation opportunities. This is the legacy we can extend to current and future generations of Denver residents.

Outcomes: A Healthier City

By implementing these strategies, we will be supporting a greener, healthier city, with more opportunities for residents to get out and play, socialize, experience nature, and exercise. By improving our city's open spaces, parks, urban forest, and recreation centers, we are creating a healthy city—for residents, local wildlife, and our natural environment. A Healthy City is more economically sound, environmentally thriving, and socially just.

OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES



Mountain Parks

- Expanded Amenities and Events
- Greater Access and Awareness
- Strengthened Funding and Operations
- Preserved Historic Resources
- Healthier Mountain Ecosystems
- More Diverse Activities and Programming

Neighborhood Parks and Tree-lined Streets

- Greener Streets
- More Accessible Parks
- Resilient Landscapes
- Increased Access to Natural Experiences
- Activated Parks and Inclusive Programming
- Neighborhood Oriented Design



Recreation Centers

- Expanded Sustainable Practices
- Greater Indoor / Outdoor Connectivity
- Neighborhood-specific Programming
- Improved Experience

Greenways & Linear Parks

- Healthier Waterways
- Better Neighborhood Connections
- Improved Trail Experience
- More Diverse Programming

Downtown Parks & Urban Forest

- Reduced Heat Island and Cooler City
- More Active Recreation
- More Access to Nature
- Diversity of Programming
- Enhanced Multiuse Public Realm

Chapter 1

Introduction

Parks have often been seen as one of the ‘nice-to-haves’ ... [but parks] are important pieces of city infrastructure, just like having streets to get places. What we do has to be an integral part of the health and social well-being of our community.

-Allegra “Happy” Haynes,
Denver Parks and Recreation Executive Director

A System at a Turning Point

The 2019 Game Plan addresses many changing issues and dynamics within the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), in the City and County of Denver, and in the broader environmental context. Across Denver, the country, and the world, the role of parks and recreation services is expanding as issues of public health, environmental change, economic development, and equity become paramount.

Cities can no longer plan for or describe parks, open spaces, urban forests, and recreation centers, as singular amenities—the “nice-to-haves” as Director Happy Haynes described it. Rather, they are essential factors of community-building that have demonstrated their transformative value on the health and vitality of communities across America.



A Beloved, Diverse System

Denver's treasured mountain parks, neighborhood parks, trails, parkways, historic sites, urban forest, and recreation centers are vital ingredients in Denver's bright future. As the city continues to grow and change in the coming years, DPR will evolve its own offerings to stay ahead of trends, meet the needs of a diverse community, and set a high standard for quality of life in Denver. This requires a concerted effort to invest in Denver's legacy open space systems and facilities, many of which need replacement and critical updates. At the same time, Denver needs a roadmap to protect what makes the city special and unique.

Denverites love their parks. The city boasts one of the most diverse, expansive, and historic park and recreation systems in the West. Within the city limits, the system encompasses over 260 urban parks totaling over 6,000 acres, from urban plazas to natural areas. Highlights include 24 lakes, 80,000 trees, more than 80 miles of trails, 34 designated parkways, 10 off-leash dog parks, 29 pools, 28 recreation centers, 150 playgrounds, 300 athletic fields, and 8 public golf courses. Beyond the city and county limits of Denver, residents also have access to an extensive system of 22 accessible or inaccessible conservation areas, these lands total more than 14,000 acres in Clear Creek, Douglas, Grand, and Jefferson Counties.





TOWARDS A HEALTHY PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

The 2019 Game Plan for a Healthy City lays out a plan for the long-term health and growth of these immense resources. Beyond that, it asks the question:

How can we further weave health, equity, connectivity, and well-being into all aspects of our city—including our parks, neighborhoods, city systems, regional ecosystem, and beyond?

A CHANGE IN MINDSET: PARKS AS VITAL URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

No ordinary plan can achieve this bold vision and revitalize parks and facilities as thriving social hubs for youth, families, adults, and older adults across the city.

This plan positions DPR to rise to the urgent challenges around it by establishing a shift in mindset toward parks, the urban forest, and recreation centers as essential facets of a healthy city.

To do this, the 2003 Game Plan is updated as the

2019 Game Plan for a Healthy City

It centers its recommendations and strategies on four key ideas around environmental health, community well-being, economic sustainability, and cultural vitality.



A Changing Environment

The world around us is changing.

The 2019 Game Plan enables DPR to provide leadership to be a more resilient and environmentally sustainable city in the context of these changes. As it pertains to the environment, it challenges the department and the city to reach new targets and serve as leaders for sustainability—to strive to capture and reuse every drop of water, to plant shade trees in every neighborhood, and to lower dependence on irrigation.

Environmental issues of climate change in Denver are complex and multifaceted, from too much heat to too little water in some areas, and too much water in others. Today, the Denver region is experiencing an increase in temperatures, more storms with flooding, and longer periods of drought. Future summers are predicted to be hotter, with an average high of 96 degrees—more like summers in far south Texas today.

As the city grows and increases in density, urban heat island will continue to pose an issue. Denver is currently one of the lowest-ranked cities in terms of downtown urban tree canopy. Compounding this, one out of every six trees is threatened by the emerald ash borer.

Drought and drought tolerance is a critical issue for Denver in the coming years. Denver's parkland is currently not ready for droughts, with over 55 percent of urban parkland needing irrigation. With a future that forecasts longer summertime periods of drought and 10 to 20 percent less precipitation overall, simply irrigating Denver's parks will quickly cost even more than the current 11 percent of DPR's annual operating budget. As droughts intensify, the system must also prepare for increased potential of higher intensity flooding. Denver has 85 parks that today lie within a floodplain and will face frequent inundation in the future.



OUR PARKS AND URBAN FORESTS FACE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



Frequent Flooding

18% of urban parkland is within a floodplain and could face more frequent inundation with projected intensities in rainfall in severe storms.



Drought and Water Usage

11% of the park's annual operating budget goes towards irrigation, and this cost could increase as droughts lengthen and summer precipitation decreases by 10-20%.



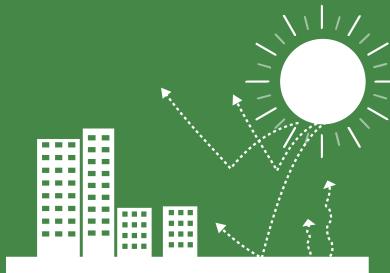
Threats to our Urban and Mountain Forests

Denver's urban tree canopy is one of the lowest in ranked cities and every 1 and 6 trees are threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer. Mountain forests face increasing fire risks.



Increasing Temperatures

Future summers are projected to be hotter with an average high of 96. This is an increase of 10 degrees compared to the average summer temperatures 25 years ago.



Urban Heat Island

When it's hot, many parts of our city feel even hotter because of the "urban heat island" effect, caused where parking lots and buildings absorb heat and increase surrounding temperatures. Trees and parks can help cool the urban environment.

Equity Out of Reach

Denver is changing.

Anyone who has lived in, worked in, or visited Denver recently is aware that the city is growing at an unprecedented rate. The city's sustained growth has brought over 100,000 new people to the city since 2010. Yet, at the same time, park acquisition is struggling to keep pace with the city's growth and densification. The *Game Plan* sets up DPR to meet the needs of every person—to ensure equity in the distribution of resources, and access to current and future services. DPR's goal is to provide programs, places, and facilities that promote healthy lifestyle options for all residents, and to do so, it will need current data, creative partnerships, an engaged community, and innovative solutions.

Even today, Denver does not currently have enough parks to meet the needs of the community. With less than nine acres of parks per 1,000 residents, Denver is below the national average of thirteen acres per 1,000 residents (see the *Game Plan Update Existing Conditions* report in the Appendix for more detail on the needs assessment and other metrics).

Meanwhile, Denver is growing quickly. Since the creation of the 2003 *Game Plan*, the city has grown by nearly 121,000 residents. From 2010 to 2016, the city grew by 11 percent, while overall park space only increased by 1 percent. Population growth is projected to continue, with an additional 175,000 residents anticipated by 2040. This growth will bring many benefits to the city, but it will also add pressure on the already constrained parks and recreation system.

Denver is a young city. Of all Denverites, 18 percent are under the age of 18 years old, making youth programs and basic playground amenities essential for the city. The Trust for Public Land's ParkScore measures city park systems by a number of factors, and playgrounds are an important provision by their standards. In late 2017 the Trust for Public Land, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and Urban Land Institute (ULI) joined with over 130 mayors nationwide to launch a 10-minute walk to a park campaign. Denver is one of the inaugural cities

endorsing this significant initiative. In Denver today, 85% of residents can walk to at least one park within 10 minutes, but access to recreation amenities is more limited. For example, 52 percent of residential parcels are not within a 10-minute walk of a playground. The existing conditions analysis for this plan revealed that Denver's high-need neighborhoods are centered in the northern and western parts of the city. Many of these areas are separated from the city's larger parks and recreation resources by the river, major interstate highways, and railroad tracks.

Recreation programming and facilities are central to a healthy city, with amenities for all generations, cultures, and family structures. Denver is currently predominantly white (78 percent); 9 percent of residents are African American, 4 percent are Asian, and 1 percent are American Indian. Residents of Hispanic or Latino origin make up 34 percent, and this population is expected to continue growing. The city's population overall is well educated, with 44 percent of residents having a bachelor's degree or higher. The city's economy and character are strong attractions for the millennial generation. At the same time, more families are choosing to remain in the city rather than moving to suburbs, and more older adults are choosing to age in place.

DPR's recreation centers are presently underutilized. Based on a statistically valid survey across the city completed by ETC Institute, 43 percent of respondents claimed they do not use DPR's recreation centers and only 30 percent have participated in recreation programs in the past year. Of those, 80 percent of respondents indicated the recreation programs they participated in were "fair" or "poor." These findings call for more investment in programs that address community needs and align with local trends.

The 2019 *Game Plan for a Healthy City* positions Denver to close these existing gaps, diversify services and programs, and grow future access and walkability to parks and playgrounds, all while balancing conservation, development, and recreation needs.

OUR PARKS AND RECREATION ARE NOT FULLY MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS



Balancing Use and Overuse

Parks are intended to be used and loved by residents, but there can be too much of a good thing. Overuse can strain turf and limit long-term sustainability and access.



Underutilized Recreation Centers & Programs

43% of residents claim they do not use recreation centers and only 30% of survey respondents participated in recreation programs in the past year.



Lack of Playgrounds

18% of Denverites are under the age of 18, yet 52% of Denver's residential parcels are not within a 10 minute walk of a playground.



Existing Shortage of Parks

With less than 9 acres of parks per 1,000 residents Denver is well below the national average of 13 acres per 1,000 residents.



Keeping up with Growth

From 2010-2016 the city experienced an 11% growth while park space only grew by 1%. Expected growth of an additional 175,000 residents by 2040 will add more pressure on the already limited parks without a growth in park space.

The True Value of Parks and Recreation

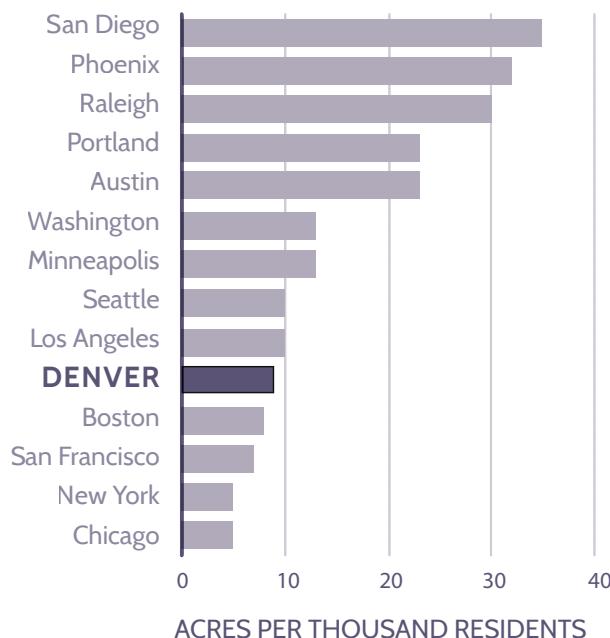
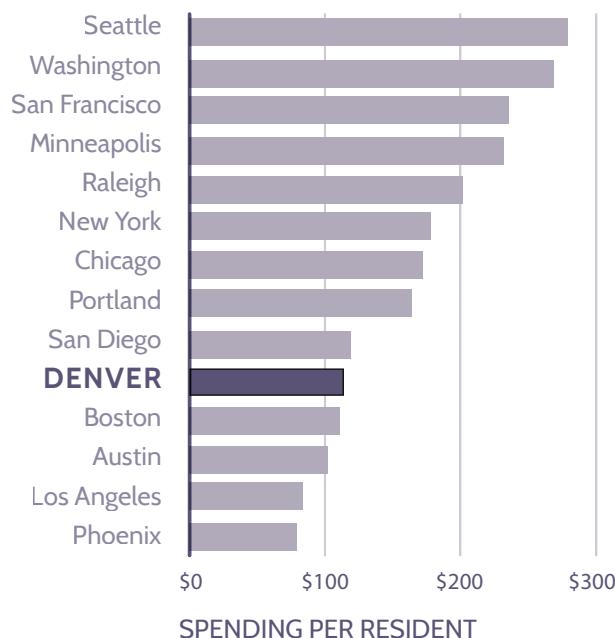
Denver's economic context is changing.

Across the country, public agencies increasingly need to do with more with less, and Denver is no exception. Yet, parks are significant economic generators, particularly for growing cities like Denver. A recent study by the NRPA estimates in 2015 America's local park and recreation agencies created \$154 billion in economic activity and \$81 billion in added value, and accounted for 1.1 million jobs. Amid the paradox of rising expenses and tremendous demonstrated value, DPR remains without a dedicated funding source. Moving forward, the 2019 *Game Plan* sets up DPR to model best practices in fiscal and resource management to ensure the long-term economic and operational health of the system.

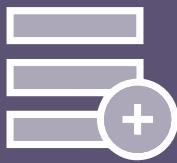
While parks are often perceived of as free amenities, the reality is that parks are expensive to maintain and expand. It is increasingly difficult to operate and enlarge parks and recreation amenities with existing funding resources. Currently, funding sources lack adequacy with the majority of funding coming from the City's General Fund, the tax-based fund that covers most city agencies and obligations.

In addition to financial support, Denver's parks and recreation services require dedicated human capital. Balancing staffing levels, program needs, employee growth, and business management is challenging for such a wide-ranging and diverse system of more than 6,000 acres of urban parkland including 260 parks and 28 recreation centers—along with a 14,000 acre mountain park system that includes 22 accessible parks and 24 conservation areas. DPR's lack of staff is a challenge to meet the growing demand for more services, engagement, and access. Within the organization exists a lack of cohesion among individual divisions or facilities—formed, in part, by the large size and physical separation—preventing some systematization of procedures and shared knowledge. Good data can be a powerful tool for operational decision-making, but today there are insufficient ways to gather and share data.

Denver is lagging behind peer cities in parks and spending per capita



OUR SYSTEM FACES GROWING NEEDS AND LIMITED ECONOMIC RESOURCES



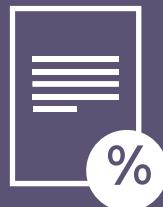
Insufficient Data for Decision-making

The Department is in the early stages of using data for decision making, but older technology and limited time limit the ability of DPR to collect and analyze data.



Organizational Health & Siloed Departments

Maintaining and managing a large diverse system is complex and requires coordination with and across city departments. Communication and collaboration could be strengthened.



Need for Additional Funding

The department needs additional funding to maintain existing parks and facilities, while also growing the system.



Funding Capacity Constrains Growth

Current funding capacity constrains the growth of city services including Parks and Recreation. To add additional services and fully meet the growth potential of DPR services, alternative funding would be needed.



Limited Resources to Maintain & Staff a Large Dynamic System

Nearly 1 in 6 park assets are in poor condition and deferred maintenance totals \$119 million. The recently-passed GO Bond will address some of this backlog, but the remaining deficiencies will remain a concern without significant additional funding resources.

Stand Up for What We Love

Why people move to and love Denver remains the same as ever.

Denver is a city that is steeped in nature, with a diverse, multicultural community. Amidst changing local and global dynamics, it is important to continue to protect, enhance, and nurture the best parts of Denver's open space system—from its unique mountain park resources, to new urban plazas, to historic parkways, to hard-working city staff. A vibrant cultural scene rounds out the city's enthusiasm for health and fitness, with everything from spectacular restaurants and museums to special events in the city's diverse neighborhoods. The 2019 *Game Plan* provides strategies to support, honor, and build on Denver's high-quality parks, facilities, urban trees, parkways, and programs, and to make sure they continue to reflect the city's culture, identity, and strongest assets. Ensuring Denver's parks feel safe and welcome to users is a priority.

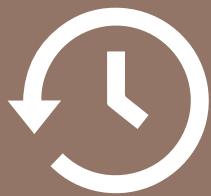
Concurrent with the 2019 *Game Plan*, the city is also updating *Blueprint Denver*, its land use and transportation plan. (Read more about the *Game Plan*'s coordination with *Blueprint Denver* in Chapter 1.) *Blueprint Denver* lays out projections and a roadmap for growth and development throughout Denver in the years to come, highlighting areas that are expected to transform in density and use, and those that may be enhanced. The *Game Plan* has collaborated with *Blueprint Denver* toward

ensuring these changing neighborhoods have open space and wellness amenities that make them healthy places to live for all. Likewise, the *Game Plan* recommendations respond to *Blueprint Denver*'s direction by focusing attention to parks, recreation facilities, and the urban forest that reflect Denver's culture in these changing neighborhoods. With a long history of landscape planning and visioning, DPR stewards and interprets many historic resources and champions public art. In these ways, DPR can play an important role in celebrating and honoring local culture and heritage.

There is no question that Denver is a great place to live, work, and play. With close proximity to the mountains and a reported 300 days of sunshine per year, the city has become well-known for supporting an active, outdoor lifestyle. The urban and regional greenways and trails support that active, healthy lifestyle that many people seek in Denver. Beloved by many and unique to Denver, the mountain parks remain a well-kept secret to many in the community. DPR has been making a concerted effort to bring nature to everyone in the city, with new nature play areas in many neighborhood parks. The *Game Plan* seeks to create innovation in facilities, improved access to mountain parks, and environmental programming that promotes Denver's outdoor lifestyle throughout all neighborhoods of the city.



OUR SYSTEM COULD BETTER REFLECT OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITY CHARACTER



Threatened Historic, Social & Cultural Resources

Population growth and other factors have added pressure to many of the historic parkways, trails and boulevards, and other resources, and many have lost their original character over time. Balancing use and preservation is a need.



Streets and Parkways Do Not Meet Contemporary Needs

Parkways add character to many parts of our community, but there is a need to update their function to reflect today's needs: a greater variety of mobility options, green stormwater infrastructure, and social space.



Urban Parkland Landscape not Typical of Denver

58% of Denver's urban parkland consists of irrigated landscapes. The City and County of Denver encompasses a land area that was predominantly prairie prior to development.



Limited Access to Denver's Outdoor Lifestyle

Many neighborhoods do not have walking access to places to experience nature, and the mountain parks are difficult to access for families without a car.



Lack of Neighborhood Identity within the Parks

Denver's 78 neighborhoods all have a unique context and identity but their parks, facilities, and programs do not reflect these distinct places. There is a need to balance equity to amenities with responding to different neighborhood contexts.

Background of the Game Plan for a Healthy City

Over the past fifteen years, Denver has grown and changed. The parks and recreation system today faces new challenges, prompting the need for the Game Plan for a Healthy City.

City Council adopted the original *Game Plan* in 2003, as an official amendment to *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000*. The mandate for the citywide parks and recreation plan was seeded in the comprehensive plan. Over the past 15 years, the 2003 *Game Plan* has served as a strategic framework of principles that guide recommendations on policy, management, resource allocation, partnerships, financing, and sustainability as it relates to the larger park and recreation system.

While the 2003 *Game Plan* is considered a successful plan, much has changed since its adoption. DPR has made significant strides by implementing and putting into use many of the recommended policies and goals. At the same time, the city has experienced unprecedented growth and redevelopment—the impacts of a changing climate and a need to be efficient with resources. Each of these factors have exerted new pressures and challenges on the system. In 2016, DPR began the process of updating the plan to provide sound guidance for the next decades.

The intent of the 2019 *Game Plan for a Healthy City* is as follows:

- Comprehensively evaluate the current state of Denver's parks and recreation system
- Reconfirm, refresh, and rearticulate the mission, vision, core values, and guiding principles of the *Game Plan*
- Provide updated quantitative and qualitative goals related to the different aspects of the DPR system
- Provide recommendations for delivering equitable access to parks, recreation, and facilities for the DPR system
- Provide an assessment of current funding and recommend strategies for the increase of future funding resources for the operations of DPR
- Assess the community's needs and identify opportunities and respond to evolving recreational trends



The Denveright Process

Denveright is a coordinated, comprehensive citywide planning initiative, focusing on land use, mobility, and parks and recreation.

Game Plan for a Healthy City is an important component of Denveright, a comprehensive, citywide planning effort. In 2016, Denver undertook a coordinated effort that built on its successes and traditions to shape the future of Denver. Encompassing five distinct citywide plans and guided by input from the community, Denveright shapes Denver's future in the areas of land use, mobility, parks, and recreational resources by coordinating the planning processes for the following:

- The update of the *Denver Comprehensive Plan*, the 2000 plan for the city that established a vision for Denver as a livable city
- The update of *Blueprint Denver*, the 2002 integrated land use and transportation plan
- The update of the *Game Plan*, the 2003 citywide parks and recreation master plan
- The development of *Denver Moves: Transit*, a new mobility plan for transit in Denver
- The development of *Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails*, a new mobility plan for sidewalks, crossings, and trails

Completing five major citywide plans concurrently has presented incredible opportunities for collaboration and amplification of ideas across multiple plans. The planning teams for *Game Plan* and *Blueprint Denver* worked closely together to identify issues that cross between plans and ensure that each plan includes language that supports the goals of the others. See Chapter 3 for more detail on crossover issues and strategies among these plans.

Comprehensive Plan 2040 provides a guiding vision that informed *Game Plan*'s guiding principles and goals.

DENVERIGHT VISION ELEMENTS



Equitable, Affordable, and Inclusive



Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods



Connected, Safe, and Accessible Places



Economically Diverse and Vibrant



Environmentally Resilient



Healthy and Active

Denver Parks and Recreation Today

A Diverse System, Spanning from the Mountains to the Plains

The depth and breadth of Denver's park and recreation system is truly remarkable. With a total acreage of more than 20,000 acres, more than 260 parks and 28 recreation centers, the system is one of the largest in the country. At the same time, few park systems could boast spanning landscapes so diverse—from the snowy mountain peaks of Colorado's Front Range down through Sandhills Prairie and highly developed urban parkland. (See the Existing Conditions Report to learn more about the system today.)

At more than 14,000 acres, the mountain parks system is a unique resource for Denverites, offering

22 accessible parks and 24 conservation areas that protect wildlife habitat and viewsheds. Here, Denver residents have access to 47 miles of trails, forested hiking, mountain biking and fishing, picnic sites with stunning views of both downtown and the Rocky Mountains, and extensive wildlife viewing, including birds, bison, elk, and mountain goats. Two unique sites within the mountain parks are cultural as well as recreational destinations: the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, which offers visitors a view into the history of the region, and the Red Rocks Amphitheatre, a premier outdoor concert venue nestled into a stunning 300 million-year-old geologic formation. While these are incredible resources,



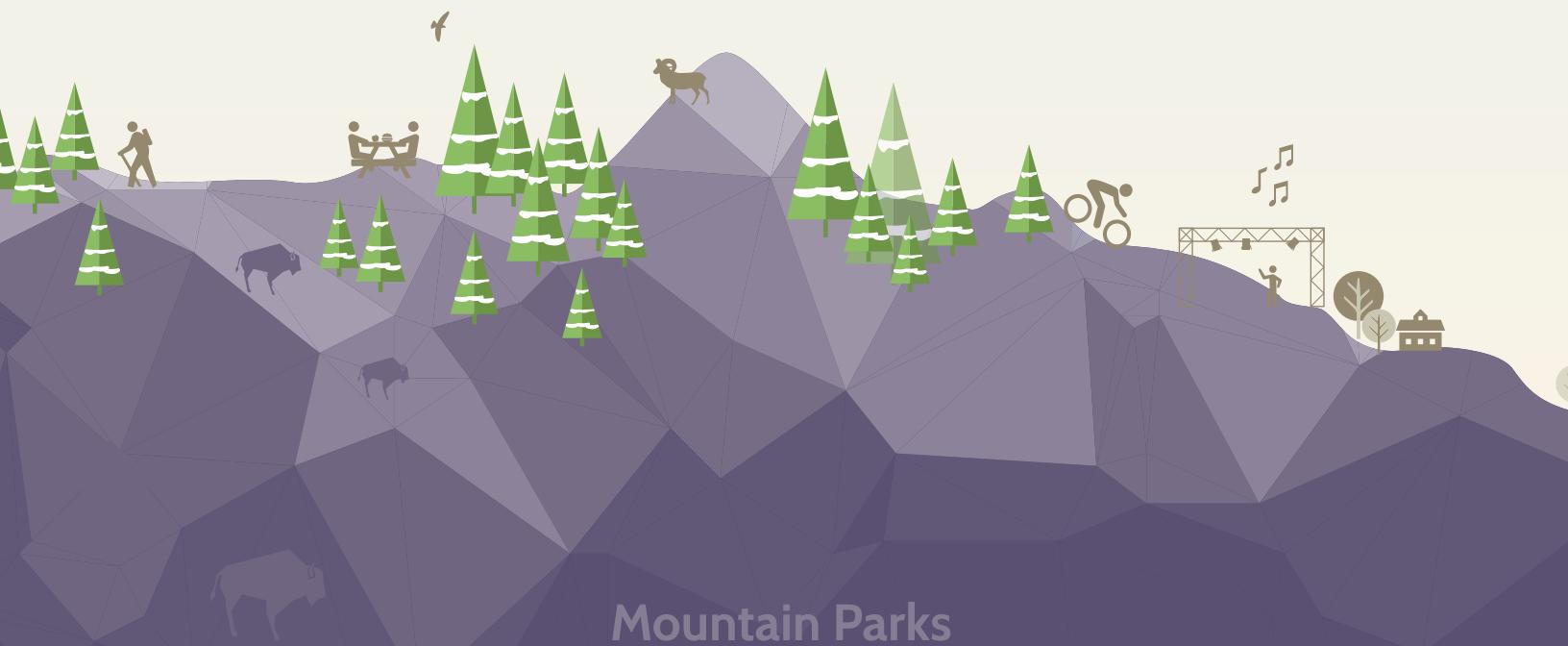
72%

of Denver park land
is in the mountains,
more than 14,000
acres

22 + 24

Accessible
parks

Conservation
tracts



Mountain Parks

many opportunities exist to make the mountain parks better connected and accessible from Denver's population centers.

Denver's urban system includes 260 parks totaling more than 6,000 acres, as well as 28 recreation centers and a robust urban forest. In 2018, 84% of urban parks and 100% of mountain parks were formally designated park lands, a status that helps protect them in perpetuity. Urban parkland ranges in size from large regional parks, like the iconic City Park at 300 acres, to much smaller neighborhood and pocket parks, which can be less than a quarter of an acre. The system includes linear parks and trails along the city's urban waterways, like the South

Platte River, Cherry Creek, and the High Line Canal. Park character varies tremendously, from historic landscapes like City Park to more modern and specialized landscapes like Babi Yar Park.

Urban parks and recreation centers provide a vast array of amenities and things to do—everything from passive walking and relaxing in a park setting, to skateparks, dog parks, bike BMX courses, community gardens, swimming pools, playgrounds, music venues, water recreation, and more is available to residents. Programming in recreation centers reaches all demographics, from fitness classes to arts and culture programming to active older adult activities.

>6,000

acres of urban parkland

260

Urban Parks & Open Spaces



CITY PARK



SANDERSON GULCH



BABI-YAR PARK
Community + Special Use Parks



MESTIZO-CURTIS PARK
Neighborhood Parks + Pocket Parks



CARLA MADISON
Recreation Centers



LOWRY SPORTS COMPLEX
Athletic Complexes



PARKFIELD NATURAL AREA
Urban Open Spaces

10

Regional Parks

43

Linear Parks

45

Community + Special Use Parks

137

Neighborhood Parks + Pocket Parks

28

Recreation Centers

10

Athletic Complexes

17

Urban Open Spaces

>80

Miles of trails and greenways

7

Urban Golf Courses

Urban Parks and Recreation

Recent Planning Context

Denver's planning legacy sets the stage for the current *Denveright* and *Game Plan for a Healthy City* planning efforts. The *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000*, *2002 Blueprint Denver*, and the original *2003 Game Plan*, as well as more recent implementation-level plans by DPR, all demonstrate Denver's commitment to planning for its future.

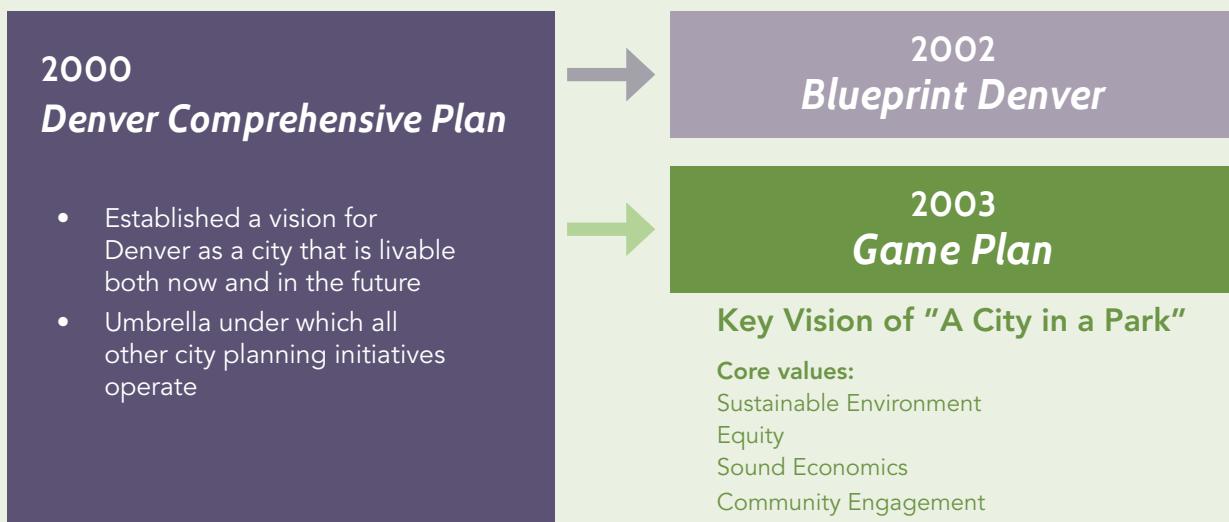
Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000

Created in 2000, *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000* focused broadly on all aspects of Denver's future and still serves as the city's highest-level policy document. The plan established four guiding principles—economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, equity, and engagement—under an overall vision for a livable city.

This comprehensive plan set the stage for the *Game Plan* by calling for an update to the 1986 park, recreation, and open space master plan, and specifically recommending this new master plan be adopted as an amendment to the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000*. It also addressed improvements to the mountain parks system, strengthening connections between parks and neighborhoods, diversifying recreational resources, and promoting environmental stewardship throughout the city. The update to the comprehensive plan, *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, is part of the *Denveright* planning process.

Our Planning Context

The 2019 *Game Plan* is an update to the 2003 *Game Plan*. It is part of a citywide planning initiative called *Denveright* which also includes land use and transportation planning.



Blueprint Denver 2002

In 2002, Denver City Council adopted *Blueprint Denver* an amendment to the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000*. *Blueprint* is a land use and transportation plan that identifies future land uses, transportation improvements, and an overarching growth strategy. It also called for an update to Denver's 1950s-era zoning code. *Blueprint Denver* identified several important principles, including directing growth to areas of change while preserving the character of areas of stability, and emphasizing multi-modal streets and mixed-use development. The accompanying *Blueprint Denver* map created a depiction of what Denver should look like in 2020 and became the basis for updating Denver's zoning to a context- and form-based code.

Game Plan 2003

Adopted as a supplement to the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000*, the 2003 *Game Plan* is a strategic, policy-level plan to guide the DPR budget, capital development, and policy decisions, as well as provide a framework for collaboration with other city agencies, organizations, and businesses. The plan established a key vision for Denver as "a city in a park" with streets, buildings, parks, and people as integral elements of a rich and varied landscape extending from our front doors to the mountains.

Using an extensive public process, the 2003 *Game Plan* clarified four core values that the people of Denver expressed as important for their parks and recreation system: a sustainable environment, equity, sound economics, and community engagement.

Denveright.

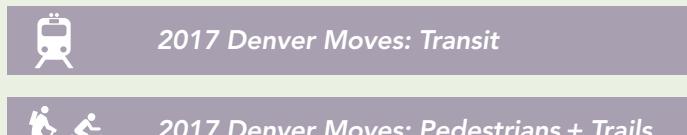
Your Voice. Our Future.

Comprehensive Plan 2040

Denveright Policy Plans



Denveright Implementation Plans



Implementation Plans*

Play Area Master Plan (2008)

Mountain Parks Master Plan (2008)

Dog Park Master Plan (2010)

Resources, Allocations and Priorities Plan (RAPP) (2013)

Restroom Master Plan (2005)

Rec Assessment Study (2006)

Golf Strategic Plan (2011)

Individual Park Master Plans (Ongoing)

*Summarized in the Game Plan Existing Conditions Report

Planning Process

A Comprehensive Process focused on understanding and analyzing needs, visioning and goal setting, and identifying strategies and implementation steps.

Planning for the future of Denver's parks and recreation system took place over three phases of work, beginning in the summer of 2016. The first phase assembled a comprehensive understanding of the current state of Denver's park and recreation system. Methods included synthesizing past reports and plans; analyzing data related to demographics, economics, and environmental resources; and soliciting stakeholder and community feedback. Phase one culminated in an existing conditions report, which documented the current state of the system and posed significant questions for the future. See *Game Plan Update Existing Conditions* report in the Appendix for more detail on the needs assessment and other metrics.

During phase two, which began in the spring of 2017, a collective vision for the future of Denver's park and recreation system formed. With the existing conditions report as a springboard, leadership, *Game Plan* Task Force, community members, and other stakeholders helped develop guiding principles and goals that referred to different elements of the system. Significant in-person and online engagement, including department employees and the public, informed several iterative rounds of revision and refinement that resulted in a clear vision for the future of parks and recreation in Denver. Additionally, the process developed comprehensive goals in close consultation with DPR leadership and staff.

During the final phase, the process developed detailed recommendations and implementation steps. Strategies, action steps, and metrics for monitoring success were developed in partnership with staff and stakeholders in order to create a clear roadmap for achieving the vision and goals of the plan.



2018

2019

Spring Summer Fall Winter Spring Summer Fall Winter Spring

PHASE 2: ENVISION AND GOALS

Build a collective vision for the future of Denver's park system, exploring principles, goals and different scenarios.

PHASE 3: DRAFT AND ADOPT

Review draft recommendations and build the steps for achieving the plan.



Draft Plan



Final Plan



Public Forum 2

Community Events



Public Forum 3



Healthy City Roundtable

Engagement

The Game Plan's broad outreach process gathered input from staff, stakeholders, and thousands of community members.

Game Plan for a Healthy City was created with the help and input of thousands of community members and staff. The ideas, goals, and actions documented here grew from a robust engagement process including dedicated outreach to DPR staff and specific community stakeholders as well as numerous touchpoints with the broader community. The result is a plan that is truly championed by the department and supported by the public.



3

Public Forum Series, held in 11 separate locations throughout the city



27

Staff Focus Groups, Workshops, & All-staff Meetings



9

Outreach Tents at Existing Events & Community Focus Groups





2,900

Responses to
Online Surveys

5,900+

Denverites weighed in throughout
the *Game Plan* process.

817

Responses to
Statistically-valid
Survey

1

Healthy City
Roundtable

7

Community Task
Force Meetings

30

Game Plan
Ambassadors

Stakeholder and Staff Input

Game Plan Task Force

A group of 38 diverse stakeholders from all parts of the city convened for the duration of the plan as *Game Plan Task Force*. The group included community members from different neighborhoods throughout the city, as well as representatives from the Denver Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (DPRAB), Denver Public Schools, and many branches of city and county government including the Mayor's Office, Denver City Council, and the Office of Sustainability, the Office on Aging, the Department of Public Health and Environment, and Department of Finance. It also included local non-profit organizations affiliated with DPR, such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Mountain Parks Foundation, the Park People, and the Trust for Public Land.

Game Plan Task Force met quarterly throughout the planning process and served as the main public steering committee for the plan. Meetings focused on two main goals: (1) providing information regarding the plan for members to disseminate to the community and (2) engaging members in meaningful activities and dialogue to shape plan direction. Members interacted with the plan between meetings via email and were frequently assigned homework tasks to share more about the plan with their communities and gather more feedback from their networks.

Game Plan Ambassador Group

Game Plan Ambassador Group was composed of 20 staff representatives from all divisions and levels of DPR. The group gathered quarterly to hear updates on the planning process from the internal planning team and to provide input to the process. Ambassadors then reported back to their colleagues and disseminated information about the plan amongst their work networks. They served as an important conduit for questions and comments from all staff to reach the planning team.

Game Plan Project Management Team (PMT)

Game Plan Project Management Team consisted of employees from DPR Marketing, Planning, Recreation, Forestry, Trails, and Natural Areas, and a representative from Denver Community Planning and Development. This group met quarterly to discuss the plan updates, including community outreach efforts such as open houses, public surveys, and the Task Force.



DPR All-staff Meetings

The entire DPR staff meets together biannually. During the planning process, the internal planning team used these meetings to provide an update on *Game Plan* progress. Updates varied from simple presentations to interactive polling activities where each staff member used their cell phones to text responses to on-screen questions. A live poll conducted in the fall of 2016 resulted in more than 350 staff responses to questions regarding challenges facing the department as well as the department's future goals.

Staff Focus and Working Groups

The planning team convened staff focus groups at several critical junctures throughout the process. First, as part of the *Game Plan*'s organizational and recreational assessments in the fall of 2016, 11 separate focus groups met to discuss challenges and opportunities within the department. These focus groups gathered input from employees on all levels and in all divisions regarding what operational and support processes are needed to successfully deploy a plan. Focus groups were each composed of 10 to 15 people and included groups from Planning, Operations, Finance, Administration, Permitting, Forestry, Parks, Mountain Parks, and Recreation. Additional focus groups convened with division directors and department leadership. Approximately 80 employees participated overall and provided input related to organizational strengths, challenges, staffing and structure, internal support processes, resources, and technology.

Two additional rounds of focus groups convened to help develop specific goals, strategies, and actions over phases two and three. During the summer of 2017, five staff focus groups worked to further define issues that *Game Plan* must address, as well as aspirational goals for the department moving forward. A total of 82 employees participated in this process, representing all divisions and levels of the department. During the winter of 2018, additional working groups concentrated on reviewing and expanding strategies and actions that could help the department meet their new goals. Again, participants represented all divisions and levels of the department, and ideas were vetted in conversations with leadership.

Healthy City Round Table

In the fall of 2017, DPR and the planning team convened a roundtable discussion aimed at creating a citywide conversation on how the plan could help create a healthier city for residents, city systems, and the broader environment. A group of 20 invited guests from diverse city departments and associated government and non-profit organizations brainstormed ideas on the concept of a healthy Denver, and offered specific guidance on how to integrate the ideas into the ongoing parks and recreation planning process.



Public Engagement

Public Forums

Over the course of *Game Plan* planning process, the team hosted four broad public forums: the first during phase one in collaboration with other Denveright teams, another during phase two, and two additional meetings during phase three. Each public forum was held in multiple locations throughout the city over the course of two to three days to ensure that a wide spectrum of Denverites were afforded the opportunity to participate.

The public forums used an open-house format with interactive stations to engage participants in content and idea generation. Boards, presentations, and short videos displayed and shared ideas. The team collected feedback in multiple ways, including comment cards, map and graphic activities, and conversations. Overall, nearly 700 people attended the four public forums and provided feedback on several thousand comment cards.

Existing Events

During phase one, in the summer and fall of 2016, *Game Plan* had a presence at six different existing events throughout the city. With outreach tents, fun facts about the plan, engaging activities, and plenty of free popsicles, we spoke to more than 240 people. The team chose events to represent a diversity of voices throughout the city, especially those who are

typically underrepresented in the planning process. Events included Feria del Verano—a block party at the intersection of Globeville and Elyria-Swansea, the West Colfax Neighborhood Festival, the Montbello 50th anniversary celebration, the Seniors in September fair at the Denver Art Museum, the Run the Rocks event at Red Rocks, and a meeting with the Mayor's Youth Commission.

On-the-ground Meetings

During phase two, in the spring of 2017, *Game Plan* reached out to three specific communities to gain additional diverse perspective on the emerging plan ideas. The team selected target communities based on a demographic analysis of previous responses to public meeting and survey material, which identified gaps in participation by certain demographic groups. These meetings included low-income refugee residents of the Sun Valley neighborhood in West Denver, Asian-American youth through the Asian Pacific Development Center, and a Latino/Spanish-speaking group from the Westwood area of southwest Denver. Each meeting introduced participants to the draft plan concepts and engaged the group in discussion about their use of and vision for DPR facilities and programs. The meetings included translation services as needed to ensure equal participation.



Statistically Valid Survey

In the fall of 2016 (during phase one), the ETC Institute administered a statistically valid community survey for Denver. The survey focused on the city's efforts to plan for the future of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services. ETC mailed the survey to a random sample of households in Denver in order to represent all demographics. Each survey contained a cover letter, copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope.

ETC obtained responses from 817 residents who completed the survey. This rate met and exceeded the number required to be statistically valid. Respondents were proportionate to the broader Denver population in relation to age and gender. Of respondents, three out of four identified as Caucasian and over a quarter identified as Hispanic or Latino. Demographics of respondents are comparable to overall demographics for the City and County of Denver. See results of the survey in the Appendix.

Online and Analogue Surveys

For Denverites who were unable to attend the public forums or other events, online and paper surveys offered a flexible way to share feedback and input with the planning process. During phase one, the Denveright website hosted both map-based and question-based surveys specific to the *Game Plan*, garnering more than 540 responses. During phase two, both an online survey and a paper survey were available at all recreation centers, using the same questions and content provided during the phase two public forums. In phase 3, an online survey gathered feedback about the plan strategies from over 500 people. These follow-up surveys gathered input from an additional 2,900 voices. The phase three survey comments demonstrated the community's two most important priorities are to grow parks and recreation access and to reinvest in Denver's resources and people. Together, these two ideas received 64 percent of the respondents' support.



Coordination with Denveright

Throughout the *Game Plan* process, ongoing coordination with the other Denveright plans has produced plans that integrate ideas around citywide growth, infrastructure, and quality of life. In particular, *Game Plan* worked in close partnership with the *Blueprint Denver* team, whose policy-level recommendations on land use and built form, design quality, mobility and access, and quality of life infrastructure directly overlap with *Game Plan* ideas. *Blueprint Denver*'s focus is on growth, the ingredients for creating great places, and guidance of Denver's change and evolution—all elements that parks and recreation are both impacted by and will help to shape. The first public meeting, in fall of 2016, was held as an official Denveright kickoff to demonstrate the crossover areas among all plans and allow citizens to engage with each topic. Ongoing coordination among teams and staff supported continued integration of ideas.

Planning for Growth

The *Blueprint Denver* plan acknowledges Denver's many diverse neighborhoods and places are constantly evolving and recommends strategies that will support a healthy, citywide evolution toward more complete places. This means not just guiding development, but also ensuring that important quality-of-life infrastructure, like parks and open space, safe sidewalks, housing options, and transit access, are provided equitably. As Denver continues to grow and change, the collaboration of *Blueprint Denver*, *Game Plan*, and Denver Moves supports efforts to ensure that future changes benefit everyone.

Blueprint Denver envisions four types of evolution across the city, ranging from areas that are expected to transform in land use and scale over the coming years, to those where change will be more incremental and enrich neighborhoods.

1. Transform: areas expected to experience significant character change
2. Connect: areas with a need to improve access to opportunity
3. Integrate: areas where people may be vulnerable to displacement
4. Enrich: areas that can be strengthened and more inclusive

Blueprint Denver establishes place types across the city and projects the expected level and type of change citywide. When comparing areas that *Blueprint Denver* described as expected to transform the most, these areas also often overlap closely with the neighborhoods that *Game Plan* identified as most in need of more parks and recreation access today. For example,

regional centers and corridors across the city are expected to take on the most significant growth, while the remainder of Denver's places would evolve in smaller ways. These areas are often underserved for parks and open space today due to their current or historic land uses and density of development. As they transform, more residential uses are often expected to be introduced.

Understanding growth pressures helps *Game Plan*'s recommendations align with land use policies to ensure the right strategies are in place for parks and recreation services to match growth needs. As *Blueprint Denver* notes, ensuring the proper scale and intensity for all places—and appropriate transitions between residential areas and other places—is key to livability; parks, open spaces, and access to recreation are critical elements to balancing development and density.

Protecting and Enhancing Quality of Life

The vision for the 2019 *Game Plan for a Healthy City* emphasizes the essential roles and responsibilities that parks and recreation services contribute to creating equitable, livable cities. *Blueprint Denver* helps to reinforce this idea, pointing to parks, open spaces, community centers, and streets as quality-of-life infrastructure. The main aspirations of the quality-of-life infrastructure elements in *Blueprint Denver* are to produce outcomes that measurably improve the daily lives of Denver residents. Together, *Game Plan* and *Blueprint Denver* are working to help accomplish the following:

- Ensure that active recreation is available to all areas of Denver
- Protect and increase access to Denver's natural features
- Define appropriate types and uses of green infrastructure
- Create social spaces for residents throughout Denver's neighborhoods, centers, and corridors

Game Plan and *Blueprint Denver* have collaborated on cross-plan development of policies and strategies that position parks, open spaces, and recreation amenities as central to a complete city in the future. These strategies range from consideration of tree canopy to seeking public-private partnerships for provision of open space as part of new developments. *Game Plan* strategies with cross-over coordination with *Blueprint Denver* are tagged in Chapter 3.

Planning for Park Access in a Growing City

Overlay of areas lacking walkable park access (>10 min walk) overlaid on Blueprint Growth Strategy



PARK ACCESS GAPS



Area lacking walkable park access (>10 min walk)

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS



Regional centers:
50% of new jobs and 30% of new households



Community centers and corridors:
20% of new jobs and 25% of new households



High and medium-high intensity residential areas in downtown and urban center contexts:
5% of new jobs and 15% of new households



Greenfield residential areas:
5% of new households



Districts:
15% of new jobs (Value Manufacturing, Innovation Flex, Campus, Airport) and 5% of new households (Innovation Flex)



All other areas of the city:
10% of new jobs and 20% of new households spread across all Denver neighborhoods

The future growth area percentages indicate the projected amount of new jobs or new housing across all areas in the city with that place designation. Each place may have a unique ratio of new jobs and housing different than what the place designation captures across the entire city. For example, some centers or corridors may only have new jobs—and no new housing units—due to market conditions or existing land use regulations, such as the airport influence overlay zone near DEN. For more details on the future places that make up the growth strategy map, see descriptions starting on page 144 and by context in Chapter 5. New or amended neighborhood or small area plans adopted by City Council may update the map.

Chapter 2

Vision, Principles, and Goals

Vision: A Healthy City

Parks, recreation, and the urban forest are vital urban infrastructure in creating a healthy city

Healthy cities are composed of integrated, connected systems that support one another and provide multiple benefits to the community. Trails provide for both recreation and transportation. Urban plazas support outdoor lunches and transform to host large events on the weekend. Natural areas teach future generations about the environment and provide critical habitat for wildlife. Trees within public rights-of-way and parks provide shade that reduces urban heat island impacts while streets move people, cars, bikes and buses through the city. Recreation centers become neighborhood hubs and bring people together for fitness opportunities.

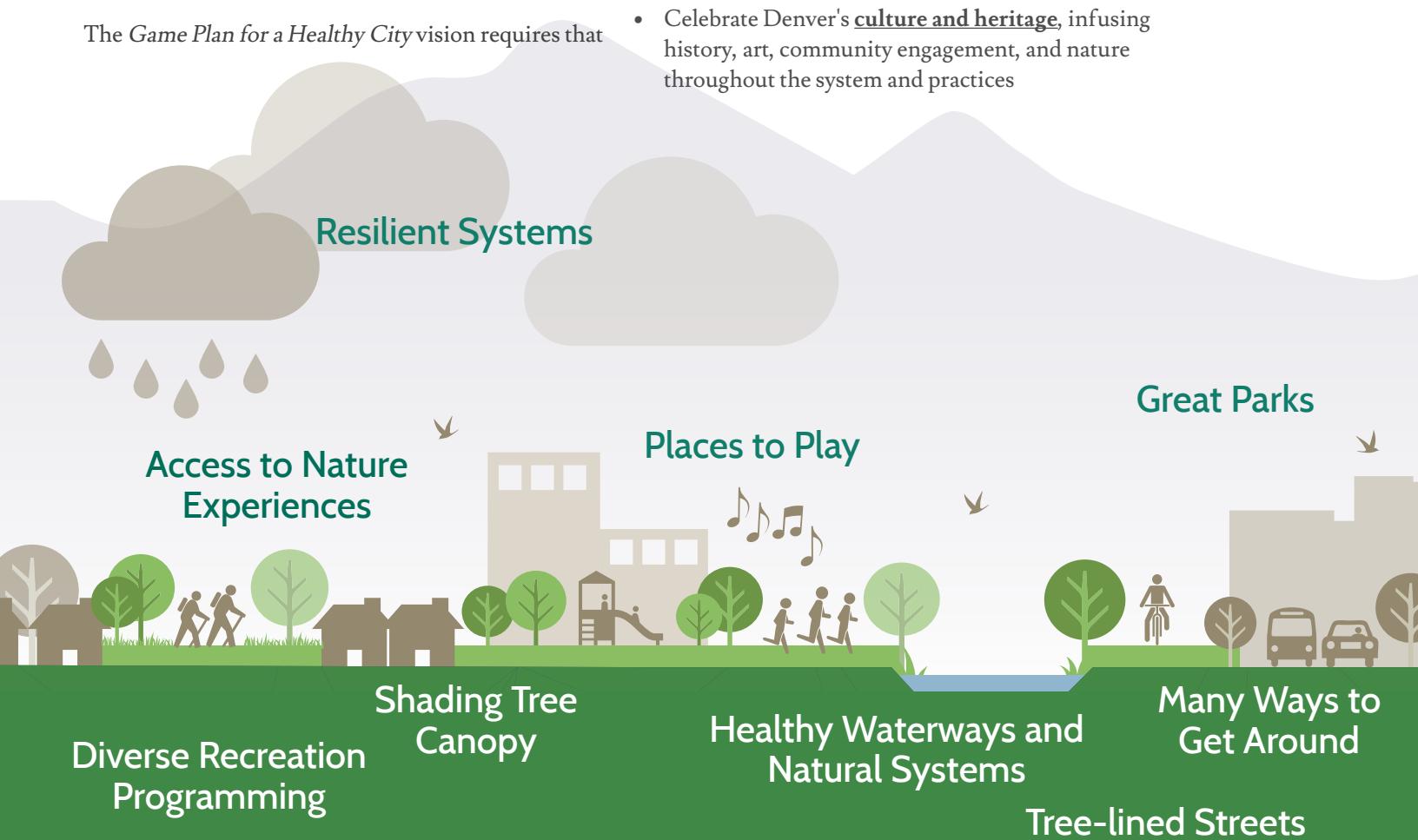
As basic as a street or utility line, parks and recreation centers are no longer individual elements distributed across a city; rather, they are fundamental parts of a city's infrastructure that keep the community running well.

The *Game Plan for a Healthy City* vision requires that

the understanding of park and recreation assets shifts toward their role as quality-of-life infrastructure—the essential foundation that creates Denver's high-quality public realm. This chapter describes the fundamental change in perspective needed to live up to this vision. By recognizing parks and recreation for the transformative role they play in the city, we open up a broader range of implementation solutions.

The *Game Plan* vision relies on DPR and the City and County of Denver to do the following:

- Move towards **systems-thinking** that recognizes all open space and recreation amenities as part of a connected, dynamic environment
- Move towards a **performance-based approach** for service delivery that measures success based on equity and outcomes
- Move towards an **ecological approach** that protects and reveres the environmental diversity and changing needs of the system
- Celebrate Denver's **culture and heritage**, infusing history, art, community engagement, and nature throughout the system and practices



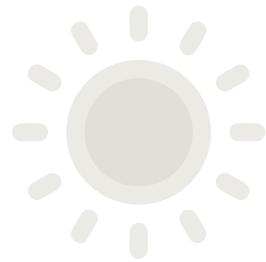
DPR VISION STATEMENT

Denver Parks and Recreation will be the foundation for the physical and environmental health of the city and its residents by wisely using resources to create dynamic and sustainable public spaces, innovative programs, and neighborhood connections that are a catalyst for community-building and high quality-of-life for all residents.

DPR MISSION STATEMENT

As stewards of a legacy park system, Denver Parks and Recreation is dedicated to customer service and enhancing the health of residents and the environment through innovative programs and safe, beautiful and sustainable places.

Game Plan for a Healthy City is a call to action for the community and DPR to meet Denver's current and future needs around personal and environmental health. To better reflect this important shift, DPR staff revised their mission and vision statements (shown above).



A Healthy City



A Healthy City: Integration and Collaboration

Integrating city systems is critical to achieving a truly healthy city

The five Denveright plans address several critical city systems, including the built fabric, mobility and transportation (including vehicular roadways, transit infrastructure, and pedestrian/bike networks), and parks and recreation. Other city systems include utilities—like potable water, stormwater, sewer, electric, or gas, and social networks—such as schools, libraries, community centers, and police and government functions.

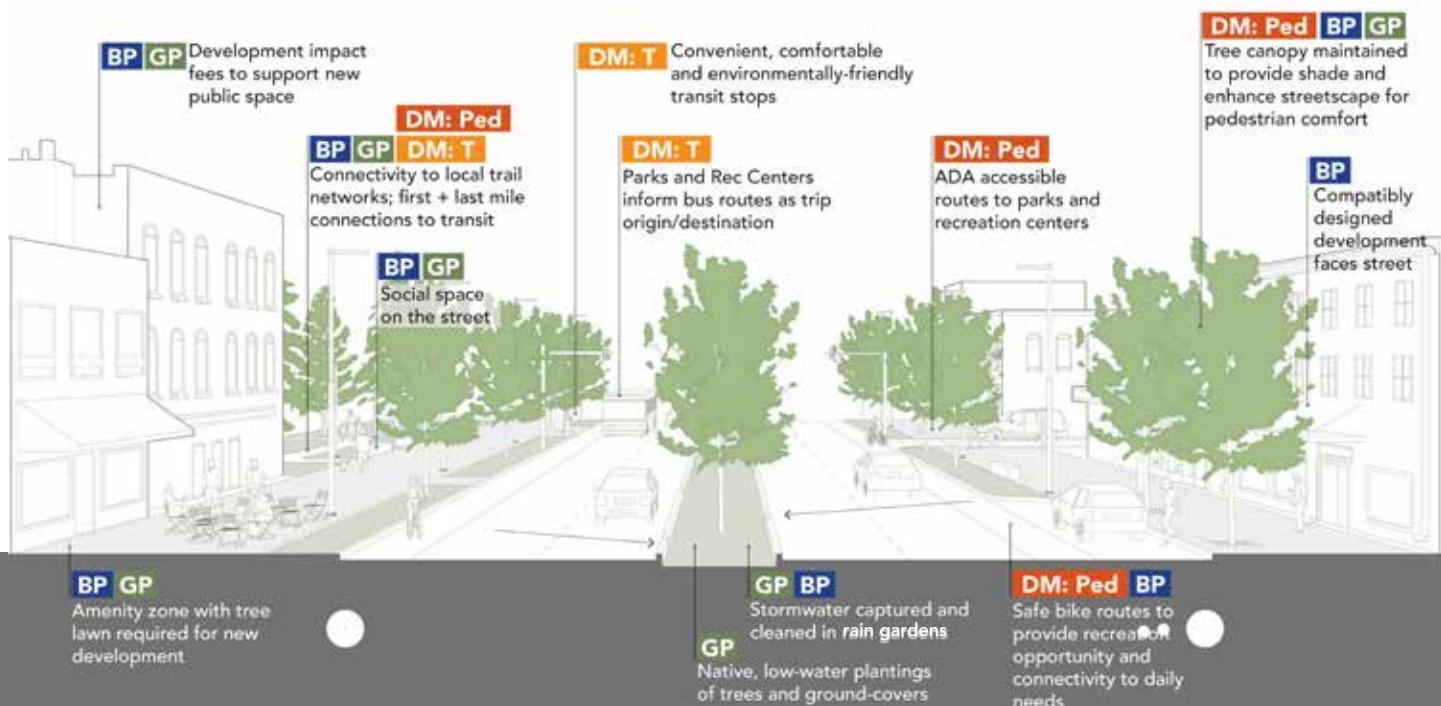
Parks and recreation, once considered a non-essential bonus addition to basic city infrastructure, are now valued as critical contributors to the city's environmental and human health and as providers of green infrastructure to the city. Trees and vegetation in our parks as well as along our parkways and

streets help clean the air we breathe and provide shade that decreases the cooling load on our energy infrastructure during our hot months. Our parks and urban forests hold, clean, and infiltrate stormwater, decreasing the load on our storm sewer system. Bikeways through our linear parks create important mobility conduits that promote fitness and relieve commuter traffic on congested streets. Investment in parks and recreation infrastructure has a positive ripple effect of benefits throughout our city.

Interagency collaboration and community engagement are critical to the success of multi-benefit solutions. As an unprecedented opportunity to align citywide planning efforts, Denveright has convened conversations that facilitate a healthy, functional city greater than the sum of all its independent systems.

EXAMPLE:

The graphic below explores a holistic look at city systems within a typical street right-of-way. Multi-benefit solutions are managed by multiple city agencies and promoted as goals in each different Denveright plan.



Game Plan Guiding Principles

The *Game Plan for a Healthy City* outlines the ways in which DPR, as an independent, healthy, and resilient city system, contributes to the broader health and well-being of the city. *Game Plan's* four guiding principles reflect this overall contribution.

Spurred by the call to action around issues of environmental health, human and social well-being, economic sustainability, and cultural vitality, the *Game Plan* focuses strategies and moves toward achieving four guiding principles.



Every Drop



Every Person



Every Dollar



Uniquely Denver

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

EVERY DROP

Denver Parks and Recreation will provide leadership to be a more resilient and environmentally sustainable organization





The compounding challenges of rising temperatures, severe droughts, and increasingly intense storms are putting unprecedented pressures on our limited resources.

As the world around us changes, it is critical to adapt. DPR, as the custodian of the most significant green infrastructure system in the city, is uniquely positioned to model and showcase best practices for this evolution.

Every Drop embodies the idea that we can maintain and improve each natural resource—including our water, our trees and open spaces, and our unique wildlife—to position Denver as a resilient and sustainable city. DPR will deepen its focus on innovative environmental planning, design, and management, maximizing the benefits of ecosystem services provided by the urban forest, open spaces, and facilities.

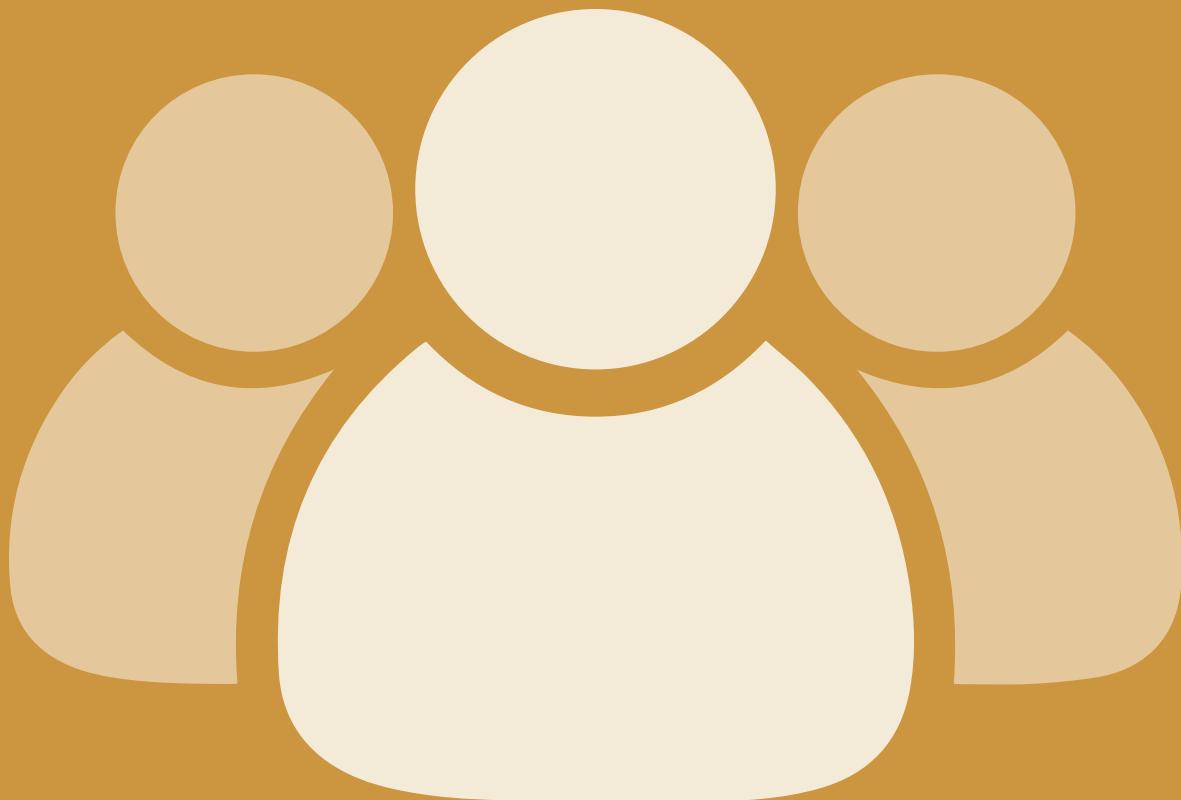
GOALS

- Goal 1: Protect water quality and manage water use.
- Goal 2: Protect and expand the urban forest.
- Goal 3: Protect and restore healthy wildlife habitats and functional ecosystems.
- Goal 4: Employ best sustainable practices for operational resilience.
- Goal 5: Increase opportunities for people to experience and connect to nature.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2

EVERY PERSON

DPR will ensure equity in the distribution of resources and access to our services. DPR will provide programs, places, and facilities that promote healthy lifestyle options for all residents.





In light of Denver's rapid population growth and diversification, DPR faces pressure to keep pace with increasing density and changing needs.

The *Game Plan* sets up DPR to meet the needs of every person, ensuring that park and recreation facilities are accessible and welcoming to all Denverites.

Focusing on equitable distribution of resources and programming throughout the city, especially for currently underserved communities, will support healthy and cohesive communities. As a valuable community partner, DPR's ability to listen and evolve to Denver's changing needs will foster a welcoming environment that promotes a diverse framework of health for all residents.

GOALS

- Goal 6: Ensure that parks, facilities, programs, and staff contribute to a high-quality, safe, and meaningful experience for park users and program participants.
- Goal 7: Achieve equitable access for underserved communities to parks and recreation amenities for all members of the community.
- Goal 8: Make decisions informed by an understanding of community perspectives.
- Goal 9: Provide quality programs and places that respond to Denver's evolving needs.
- Goal 10: Foster a work culture that embraces teamwork, increases job satisfaction, and creates successful ambassadors to the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

EVERY DOLLAR

Denver Parks and Recreation will model best practices in fiscal and resource management to ensure the long-term economic and operational health of the system.





The future of Denver's park and recreation system rests in the City's ability to protect and care for its physical resources

In an era where municipal governments are consistently challenged to do more with less, finding ways to make every dollar count is becoming more and more important.

Denver's long legacy of excellent parks and recreation resources is in need of investment—physical facilities need upgrading, staff need training to support their development and retention, and the system needs data to aid decision-making and streamline operations.

The *Game Plan* supports DPR in identifying diverse new sources of revenue and managing expenses intelligently to ensure that every dollar accounted has lasting benefit for the system.

GOALS

- Goal 11: Explore alternative and additional funding options for park, trail, and recreation needs.
- Goal 12: Broaden system investments and services with allied individuals, agencies, organizations, and the community.
- Goal 13: Increase the supply of parks, facilities, and resources relative to Denver's population growth.
- Goal 14: Deliver high-quality service efficiently and effectively to all sectors of the city.
- Goal 15: Recognize parks and public spaces as vital elements of urban infrastructure for the city.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4

UNIQUELY DENVER

Denver Parks and Recreation will provide high-quality parks, facilities, and programs that reflect Denver's community and cultural identity.





There is no question that Denver is a great place to live, work, and play. Spanning from the mountains to the urban core, our diverse and high-quality parks and recreation system is a defining feature of our city's culture and identity.

As our population grows and diversifies, it is important to protect and enhance our parks, facilities, and programs to ensure they continue to reflect who we are and what makes our city so special.

The *Game Plan* highlights ways to celebrate historic, cultural, social, and environmental resources within our system while simultaneously tailoring and adapting facilities to meet emerging movements of cultural expression within the city.

GOALS

- Goal 16: Protect and enhance Denver's legacy pathways: its parkways, greenways, and trails.
- Goal 17: Highlight and protect the system's unique historic, social, and cultural resources.
- Goal 18: Celebrate the breadth of Denver's diverse ecological system, spanning from the prairie to the tundra.
- Goal 19: Design parks, facilities, and programs that reflect Denver's distinct places and neighborhood identities.
- Goal 20: Provide opportunities to expand Denver's healthy, outdoor lifestyle to all.

Chapter 3

Implementing the Game Plan: Strategies & Recommendations

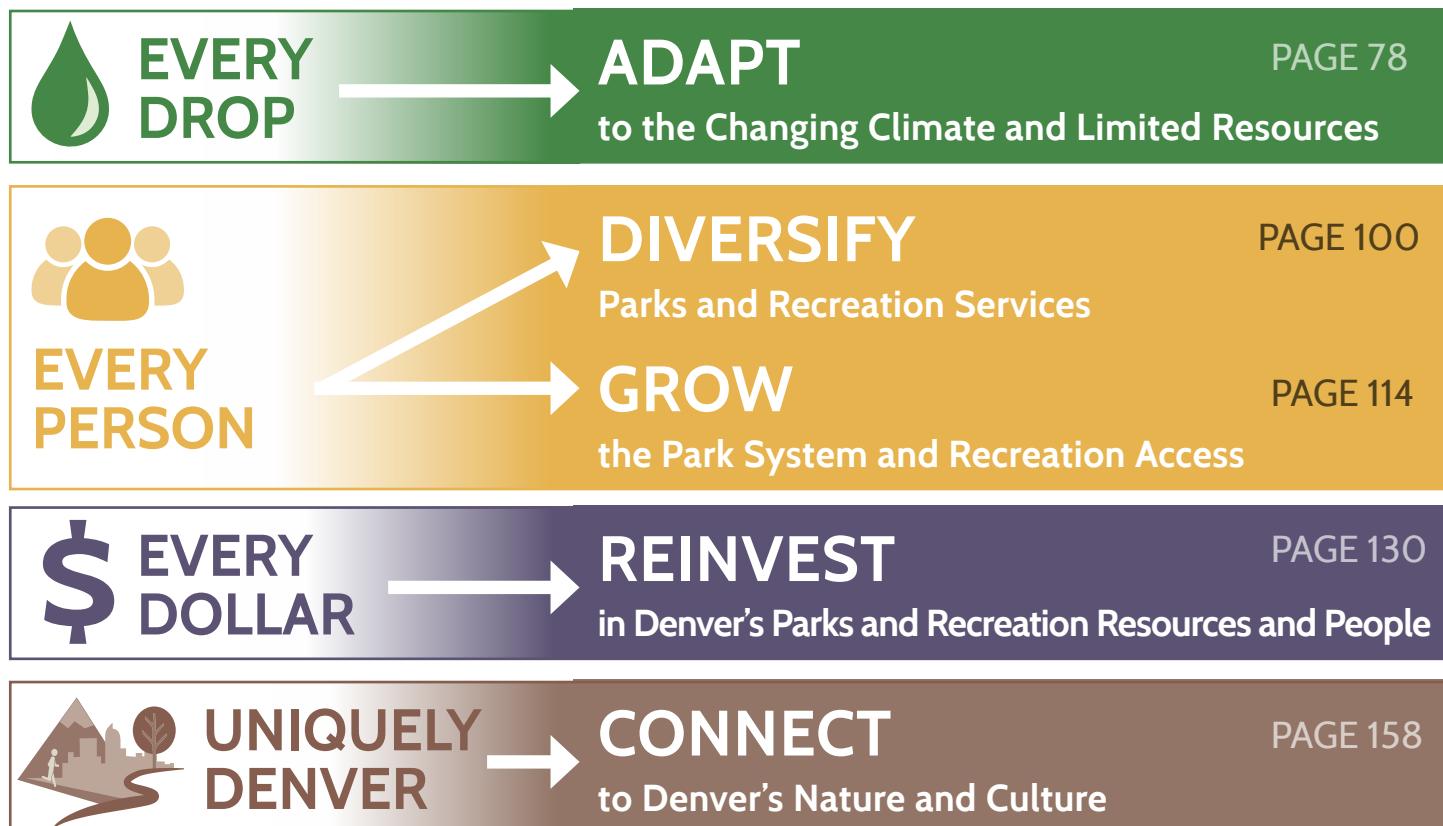


CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter outlines the strategies and recommendations we can take to create a healthier city, with enhanced parks, recreation, open spaces, and the urban forest.



CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES



Implementation Roadmap

This chapter provides a roadmap for implementation, showing how the Game Plan's Vision is supported through strategies, recommendations, policy guidance, metrics, action steps, and through coordination with Denveright and Blueprint Denver's recommendations.



Strategies

APPROACH TO ACHIEVING VISION

Connecting with the *Game Plan's* four principles, the strategies provide a long-term framework for DPR to implement over time.

Recommendations

DIRECTING IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation recommendations provide a foundation for the three year action plan by highlighting areas for priority action steps, providing guidance for the 3 Year Action Plan.

Policy and Regulatory Guidance

GUIDING DECISION-MAKING

Supporting implementation, policy and regulatory directions provide suggestions for future policy development and regulatory measures to reinforce the Department's commitment to the vision of the Game Plan.

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Adapt to the Changing Climate:
Strategies and recommendations begin on page 78
- Diversity Parks and Recreation:
Strategies and recommendations begin on page 100
- Grow the Park System and Recreation Access:
Strategies and recommendations begin on page 114
- Reinvest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People:
Strategies and recommendations begin on page 130
- Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture:
Strategies and recommendations begin on page 158

SEE PAGE 180



Metrics

TRACKING PROGRESS

Measurements that are monitored over time to track improvements in the health of our parks, recreation, and urban forest.

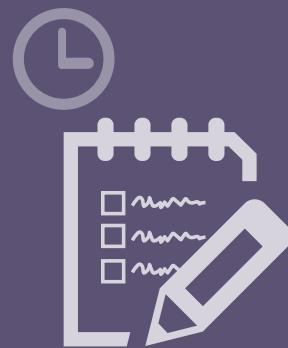
SEE PAGE 182

Coordination with Denveright

WORKING TOGETHER

Describing how *Blueprint Denver* and *Game Plan* are working together to promote more livable neighborhoods with parks, recreation, and urban forests as vital quality of life infrastructure.

SEE PAGE 56



Three Year Action Plan Appendix

SETTING INITIAL ACTIONS

The 3 Year Action Plan sets out the first phase of implementation by outlining actions the Department will undertake or begin within the next three years, along with clear milestones for measuring outcomes. The 3 Year Action Plan is planned to be a “Living Document” and renewed every three years.

SEE APPENDIX,
PAGE 209

Want to see how these strategies will make a difference?



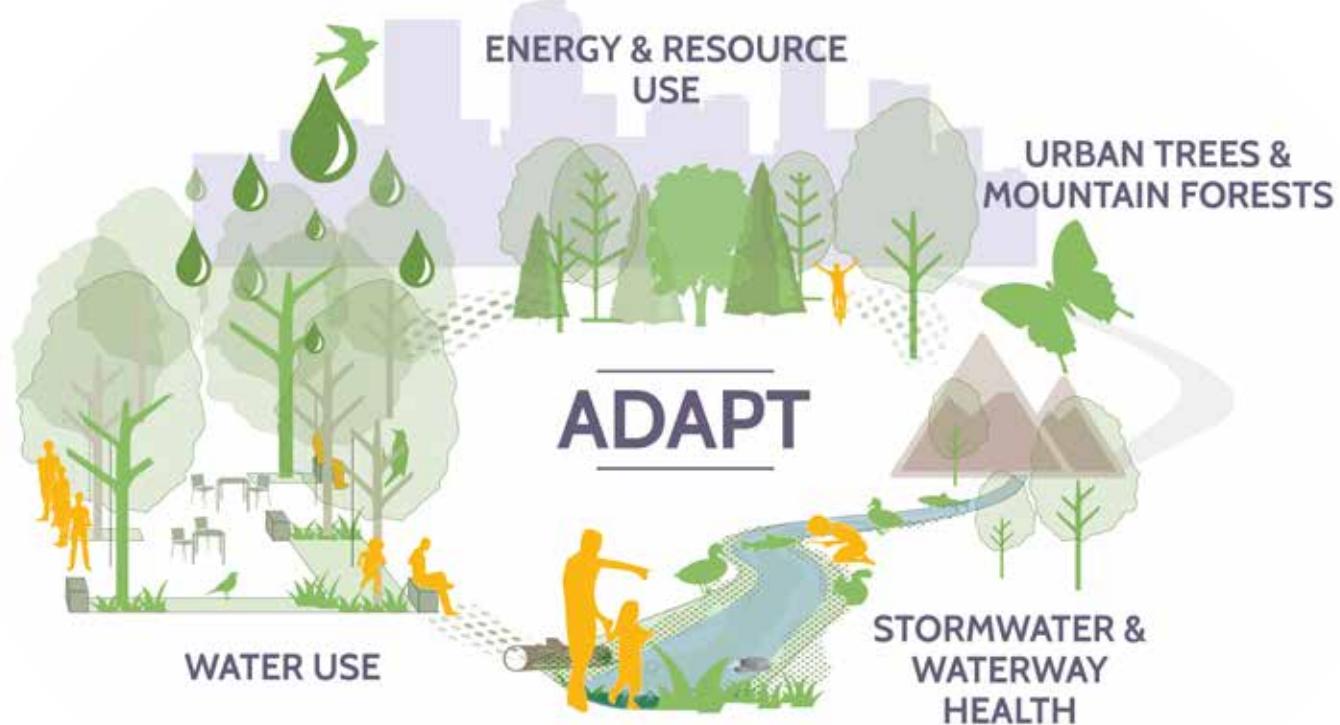
Visualizing Outcomes

Visualizing the outcomes of implementing strategies to our neighborhoods, mountain parks, urban forest, parks, open spaces, linear parks, and recreation facilities. Together, the strategies create a **Healthy City**.

SEE PAGE 186

ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE AND LIMITED RESOURCES

Denver's climate and environment will be challenged in the coming years. The community and the DPR must remain committed to conservation and sustainable practices to support the environmental health of the city. To meet this challenge, the *Game Plan* offers strategies for water use; stormwater and waterway health; urban trees and mountain forests; and energy and resource use to adapt to the changing climate and limited resources.





STRATEGIES:

WATER USE

See page 80

- 1.1: Partner with Denver Water to expand use of recycled water and accelerate the implementation of other water-saving technologies.
- ★ 1.2: Create select park areas to incorporate climate-resilient landscape and drought tolerance.
- 1.3: Enhance the technical expertise and operational capacity to expand our low-water and naturalized landscapes.

STORMWATER & WATERWAY HEALTH

See page 84

- 1.4: Work with partners to expand or modify existing open space that effectively treats urban runoff and reduces flood risk.
- ★ 1.5: Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lakes.

URBAN TREES & MOUNTAIN FORESTS

See page 88

- ★ 1.6: Protect and expand tree cover in rights-of-way, public places and areas of high urban heat.
- 1.7: Develop policies and standards to effectively protect trees in the right-of-way (ROW) and public places.
- ★ 1.8: Redefine municipal roles and responsibilities for the maintenance standards, establishment, preservation and replacement of trees in the ROW and public places.
- 1.9: Research and implement best practices to address threats of invasive and nuisance species.
- 1.10: Continue to educate and inform the public and implement EAB mitigation program.
- 1.11: Identify and restore vacant or underutilized urban land for open space and ecological value.
- ★ 1.12: Work with regional partners to research and develop best practices for Mountain Park forest management and fire mitigation.

ENERGY & RESOURCE USE

See page 96

- ★ 1.13: Make facilities more energy-saving and efficient, reducing energy use in park and recreation operations by 25 percent in 10 years.
- 1.14: Review and revise park design standards and specifications to foster environmental responsibility.
- ★ 1.15: Address waste more efficiently, increase user responsibilities, and expand recycling in parks and recreation facilities.

★ Priority Strategy



WATER USE

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSERVATION AND ADAPTATION

Despite significant strides in reducing water use over the last decades, water remains a significant expense for the department. In the future, periods of drought are expected to lengthen and water shortages to intensify, so continuing to conserve and use water wisely will remain an important priority.

58%

of Denver's urban parkland consists of irrigated landscapes

75+

parks use controlled irrigation systems for automatic watering, lowering water use

71%

of respondents believe water conservation in parks is a high priority [PF]

11%

of the parks' annual operating budget is spent on water for irrigation

Strategies

Strategy 1.1

Partner with Denver Water to expand use of recycled water and accelerate the implementation of other water-saving technologies.

Denver is located in a semi-arid climate where water is a limited resource. Expanding the use of recycled water and exploring new water-saving technologies and management practices will continue to help DPR save money and increase resiliency. For example, partnering with Denver Water could include developing informational displays or exhibits within DPR areas to encourage residential outdoor water efficiency.

Since the 2003 plan, DPR has converted 581 park acres from potable water irrigation to treated recycled water irrigation. Using recycled water is not without its complications: salt content must be carefully controlled to prevent tree mortality, as occurred during one of the pilot programs in the Washington Park conifer grove. Additional research and monitoring will be needed to identify and mitigate potential impacts of recycled water use on the health of park vegetation.

Additional education around water use and actions residents can take to improve water quality could further support this strategy.

RELATED STRATEGIES:

4.15: Enhance partnerships with Denver Water, Urban Drainage and other external agencies to protect and improve waterways and public resources.

Strategy 1.2

PRIORITY STRATEGY*

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY**

Create select park areas to incorporate climate-resilient landscape and drought tolerance.

Although the system has added 700 acres of urban parkland since 2003, the department now uses 850 million gallons less water to irrigate urban parks. Over 75 parks now use controlled irrigation systems providing automatic watering resulting in lower water use, and hundreds of acres of bluegrass have been replaced with lower-water-use varieties.

As Denver continues to grow, water efficiency will become more important. Incorporating native, low-water-use, or drought tolerant vegetation species into existing DPR areas, as well as modifying existing irrigation practices, will help DPR develop more climate resilient landscapes. Successful conversations will need to carefully consider the impacts of changing irrigation practices on existing public trees in order to minimize potential negative impacts.

The Natural Resources group is currently developing landscape typologies, which will help inform this strategy.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance the technical expertise and operational capacity to expand our low-water and naturalized landscapes.

Converting bluegrass to low-water and naturalized landscapes can significantly help reduce irrigation needs—an important objective in today's environmental and economic context. These new types of landscapes bring different maintenance needs than traditional grassy lawns and fields. Successful conversion of additional acres of parkland to low-water and naturalized landscapes will require parallel investments in enhancing technical expertise and operational capacity of maintenance staff. In parallel, educational efforts focused towards staff and residents will also support this work.

* **Priority Strategies** have actions prioritized in the 3 Year Action Plan because they respond to pressing needs and feedback. There are twenty-five priority strategies overall.

****Cross-over Strategies** are points of collaboration between Blueprint Denver and Game Plan. These plans are working together to support more livable neighborhoods, the urban forest, and parks and recreation as quality of life infrastructure for our city.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR - Office of the City Naturalist
Department of Public Works
DPR - Office of the City Forester

POLICY DIRECTION / REGULATORY GUIDANCE

Climate Resilient and Sustainable Landscapes

RECOMMENDATION 1

Identify DPR areas to implement climate-resilient landscapes and develop implementation action plans.

- Identify areas where native and drought-tolerant vegetation can be planted, including large trees.
- Retrofit low-use turf areas in parks with suitable drought-tolerant grasses, rather than bluegrass species.
- Identify high-value established trees and develop action plans with goals of protecting tree health.
- Upgrade and retrofit existing irrigation systems to improve water efficiency.
- Implement more efficient use of irrigation systems by designing and implementing techniques (such as hydrozones) to concentrate water only where it is absolutely needed.
- Assess existing parks for climate-resilient landscape implementation, and create action plans outlining the proposed changes, estimated costs, and potential funding sources.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop a drought action plan for traditional park spaces.

- Develop a traditional park drought action plan that creates a unified plan between Forestry, Park Ops, Recreation, Permitting, and Denver Water and that identifies, within every park, irrigation zone numbers for irrigation: trees, athletic fields, turf only.

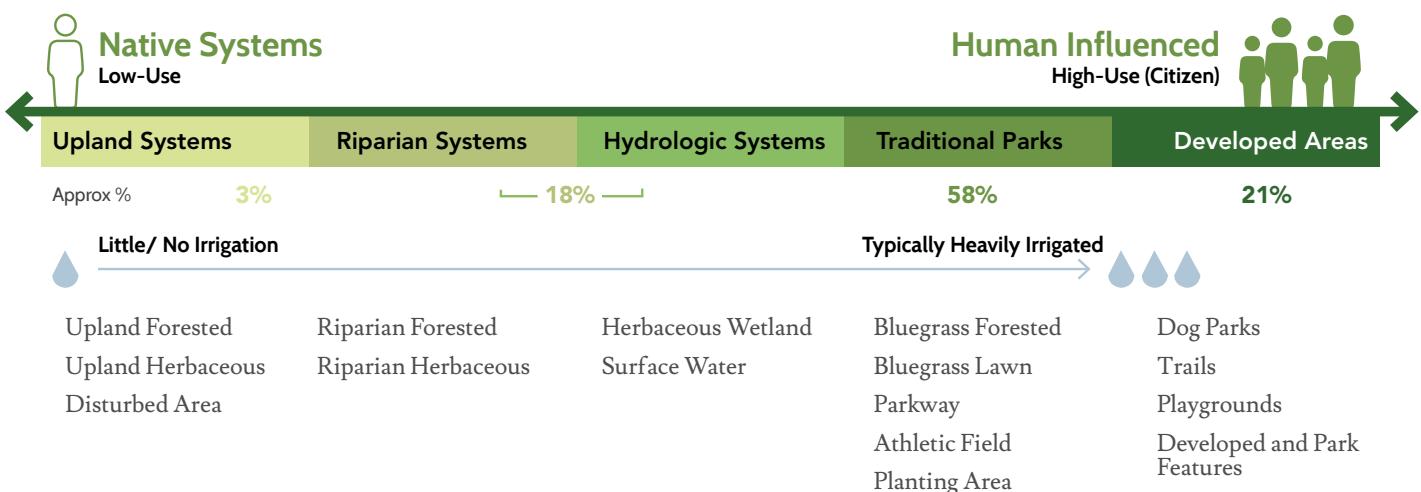


Babi Yar Park: Prairie Meets Lawn

Nowhere is the divide between natural prairie and manicured landscapes more evident than at Babi Yar Park in the SE quadrant of the city. Completed in 1982 and renovated in 2011, Babi Yar was designed as a memorial to the victims of the 1941-42 Nazi massacre of Ukrainian Jews and others in Kiev. The design inscribes a perfectly rendered circle of manicured parkscape and memorial into a native prairie meant to inspire reflection and ecological aesthetic. Willow, Cottonwood and native prairies make up the majority of the park eliminating the need for heavily irrigated lawns.

Landscape Typology Spectrum

Denver Parks and Recreation Natural Resources Division is in the process of quantifying data in relation to parks and landscape typology classification. The data below is a broad overview based on work completed thus far.





STORMWATER AND WATERWAY HEALTH

Denver's parks and open spaces play important roles in managing stormwater and promoting healthy waterways. Green spaces can help absorb pollutants, creating cleaner rivers, creeks, and lakes. With the potential for increased flooding from intense rainfalls, parks play an important role in creating a more prepared, resilient city.

18% **10-20%**

of urban parkland (85 parks) lies within a floodplain

potential increase in winter and fall precipitation in future

90% **\$804K**

see parks as important for improving water and air quality (96%) as well as reducing flooding and cooling the environment (90%) [SVS]

water pollution reduction/ cost of treating stormwater in Denver Parks

RELATED STRATEGIES:

1.9: Research and implement best practices to address threats of invasive and nuisance species.

4.15: Enhance partnerships with Denver Water, Urban Drainage and other external agencies to protect and improve waterways and public resources.

[SVS] = Statistically Valid Survey

Strategies

Strategy 1.4

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Work with partners to expand or modify existing open space that effectively treats urban runoff and reduces flood risk.

Open space performs many roles in Denver. This strategy focuses on enhancing the capacity of open spaces to absorb and clean stormwater—helping to improve downstream water quality and reduce flood risk. Partnerships, like working with Denver Public Works' Wastewater Management Department or private developers, can help expand and modify existing open space to help it contribute to better water quality. Green infrastructure and transitions to native landscapes can absorb rainfall and help clean it before it flows into local water bodies.

Permeable paving is one example of a strategy that can help improve the health of local waterbodies. It is designed to allow rainfall to absorb through it into the soil, reducing the amount of runoff that flows off of it. In contrast, conventional paving increases the speed and quantity of water runoff, which carries trash, oil, and other debris from the pavement into local waterbodies. The higher amounts of runoff from conventional paving can also contribute to erosion along creek and stream banks.

Strategy 1.5

PRIORITY STRATEGY

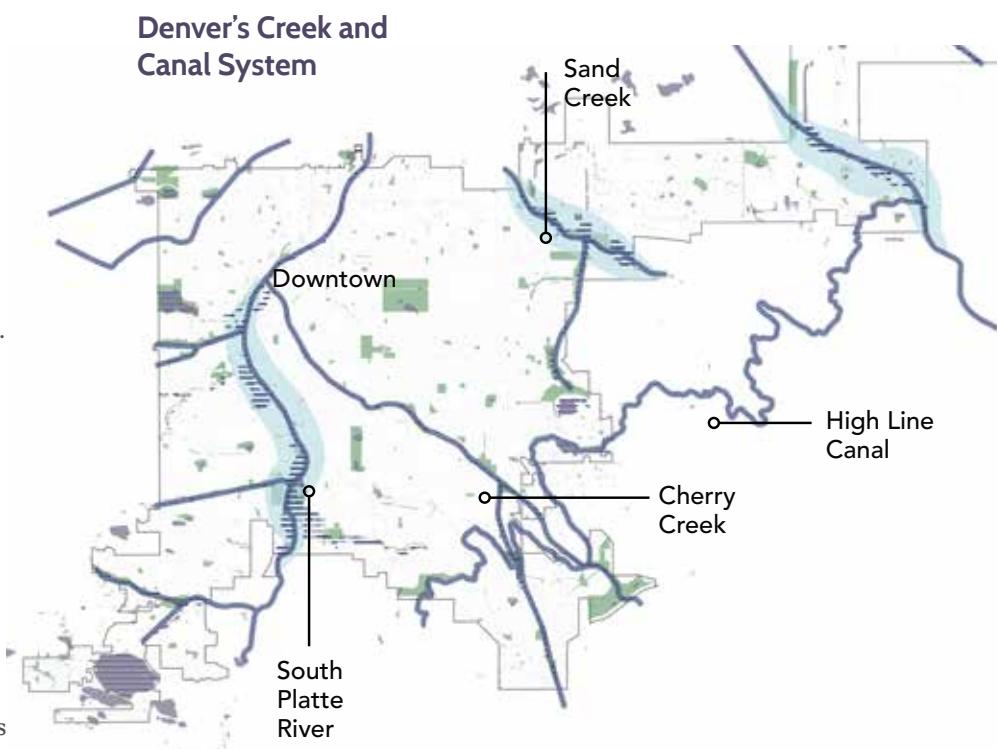
CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lakes.

Healthy waterways and lakes are critical to sustaining wildlife and ecosystems in Colorado. While wetland and riparian habitats are sparse in this arid region, most wildlife species rely on wetlands, lakes, and streams at some point in their survival.

Many reaches of major creeks and rivers in the city are public ROW, and a variety of ownerships that limits DPR jurisdiction for law enforcement and resource management. Given these limitations DPR has established management and enforcement authority through various memorandums and agreements covering the Platte River and Cherry Creek corridors that allow appropriate actions and improvements.

Creating functional, healthy waterways and lakes means addressing three interconnected issues: improving water quality, managing or expanding stormwater functionality, and restoring natural habitat along waterways and lakes. Currently, there are significant issues with invasive species and eroded banks along the urban waterways. DPR has several existing programs and projects dedicated to managing and improving stream health; however, coordination is needed to streamline and direct future efforts. Previous DPR Lake and Stream Management activities include the 2004 *Lake Management and Protection Plan*.¹



¹ Maureen Dudley, Lake Management and Protection Plan (City and County of Denver, April 2004), https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/747/documents/news_events/natural_resources/LakeMgmtAndProtectionPlan.pdf.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR - Office of the City Naturalist

Department of Public Health and the Environment

Department of Public Works

Urban Drainage and Flood Control District

DPR - Office of the City Forester

RECOMMENDATION 1

Identify natural habitat areas along DPR waterways and lakes.

- Inventory and summarize existing or new efforts to improve natural habitat along DPR lakes and waterways.
- Identify and prioritize DPR lakes and waterways where natural habitat improvement is feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 2

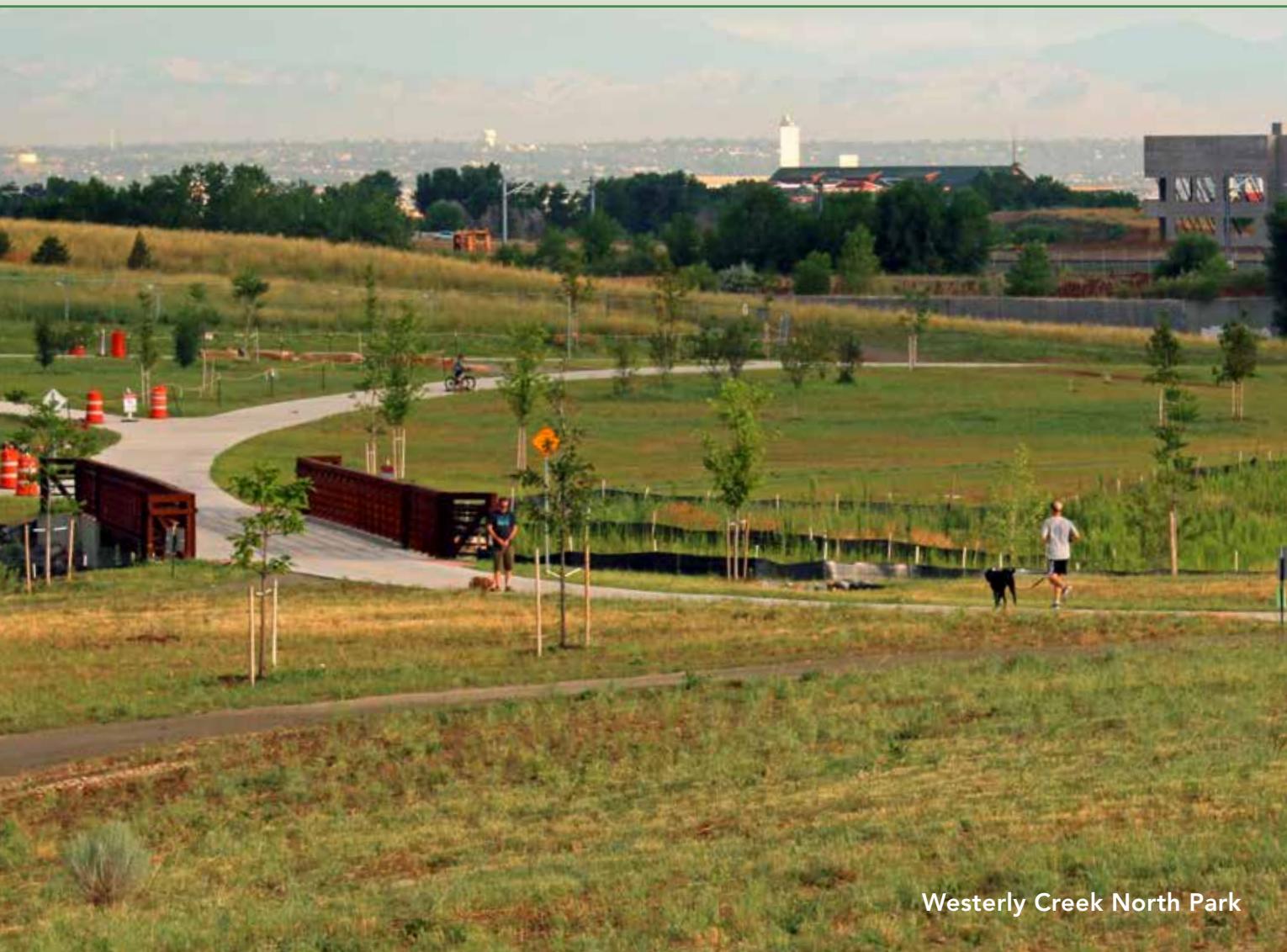
Develop action plans.

- Develop action plans for priority DPR areas to help meet existing City of Denver water-quality goals and improve natural habitat in DPR lakes and waterways. Include possible phased approaches, estimated costs, and potential funding sources, as well as management and operational guidelines and improvements.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Working with the city's partners, identify and prioritize DPR areas to help meet existing city water-quality goals.

- Identify existing, DPR applicable city water-quality goals.
- Identify DPR areas with water quality issues.
- Inventory and prioritize existing and new DPR efforts to improve water quality.



Westerly Creek North Park

EXISTING CITYWIDE WATER QUALITY GOALS

Agency or Organization	Water Quality Goal
DPHE	Fishable and swimmable waters in all our lakes and streams by 2020.
DPW--Wastewater Management, ² Water Quality Section:	Ensure compliance with programs for the City and County of Denver's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit with the State of Colorado Water Quality Control Commission's water quality standards

² City and County of Denver, "Wastewater Management," City and County of Denver website, accessed May 2018, <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/wastewater-management/stormwater-quality/green-infrastructure.html>.



URBAN TREES AND MOUNTAIN FORESTS

Changing climate conditions, the emerald ash borer, and future development pose a significant threat to the Denver urban tree canopy. Action is crucial because trees are a critical part of a healthy city. They provide cooling shade, filter pollutants from the air, absorb stormwater, and create greener neighborhoods.

13%

tree canopy coverage
in Denver

1:6

trees in Denver are an
ash tree (threatened by
the emerald ash borer)

98%

of public meeting
respondents said
city trees are of high
importance to them [PF]

\$122M

total annual value of
ecosystem services
provided by urban tree
canopy in Denver

RELATED STRATEGIES:

4.18: Work with other City agencies to establish regulations and guidelines to ensure compatibility of new development with adjacent parks and parkways.

*5.3: Expand a system of tree-lined streets to improve mobility, tree canopy, and water quality.

5.5: Improve local trail corridors, in particular gulch corridors, to provide interconnectivity and park access.

5.14: Protect the unique forest ecosystems by partnering with allied agencies and private land owners.

[PF] = Public Forum 1

Strategies

Strategy 1.6

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Protect and expand tree cover in rights-of-way, public places and areas of high urban heat.

Denver's urban forest currently shades 13 percent of the city with over 2.2 million trees citywide. Denver's parks and rights-of-way are home to over 242,000 of these trees (11 percent), overseen by DPR's City Forester's Office. Tree canopy is greatest in the older suburban southeast quadrant of the city, and least along the industrial corridor of the South Platte River and in the downtown core. Developing neighborhoods in the northeast also have relatively low tree canopy cover. While Denver as a whole is close to meeting the citywide canopy goal, many neighborhoods are falling short. A lack of tree canopy contributes to higher experienced air temperatures for residents caused by the urban heat island effect.

San Francisco's *Urban Forest Plan*¹ is a great example of how collaboration can support the growth and enhancement of a city's urban forest. In San Francisco, an interagency collaboration between San Francisco Public Works, the Urban Forestry Council, and Friends of the Urban Forest provides a long-term vision and strategy to improve the health and sustainability of San Francisco's urban forest.

¹ City and County of San Francisco, "Urban Forest Plan," City and County of San Francisco website, accessed May 2018, <http://sf-planning.org/urban-forest-plan>.

Strategy 1.7

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Develop policies and standards to effectively protect trees in the right-of-way (ROW) and public places.

DPR's City Forester's Office is the city agency responsible for trees in the public parks, parkways, and other public property and has code enforcement jurisdiction over trees upon private property and within the public right of way.² This strategy focuses on internal policies to protect trees more effectively than are within the ROW. Policies should address, for example, replacement and long-term forest health, management against potential disease and pests (see also Strategy 1.10 addressing emerald ash borer), planning for a changing climate and drought situations, and protection during construction.

DPR could evaluate design practices and consider recommending best practices for soil volumes, tree spacing, drainage, and protection from compaction or other disturbance from ROW uses. For additional details on collaboration with other departments and the private sector, see the following Strategy 1.8.

Strategy 1.8

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Redefine municipal roles and responsibilities for the maintenance standards, establishment, preservation and replacement of trees in the ROW and in public places.

DPR's Forestry Office is the city agency responsible for trees in public parks, parkways, and other public property. Denver's street trees are under regulation of the City Forester, but their maintenance is a responsibility shared by adjacent property owners.³ Denver's fragmented ROW tree responsibilities make maintenance and long-term success challenging.

² City and County of Denver, "Code of Ordinances", accessed July 2018, https://library.municode.com/co/denver/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITIIREMUCO_CH57VE; Chapter 57 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code.

³ City and County of Denver, "Denver Parks and Recreation: Forestry (Trees)," City and County of Denver website, accessed May 2018, <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-parks-and-recreation/trees-natural-resources/forestry-trees-.html>.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 1.9

Research and implement best practices to address threats of invasive and nuisance species.

In 1996 the state passed the Colorado Noxious Weed Act (Title 35, Article 5.5) to control noxious weeds, which typically invade and eventually displace native vegetation, disrupting ecosystem functions. Ongoing efforts by the Office of the City Naturalist to manage and eradicate noxious weeds in urban natural areas, native landscapes, and open spaces, as well as in Denver mountain parks, have been limited.

It is not practical or effective to try to eliminate all noxious weed species. Instead, setting ambitious yet attainable noxious weed reduction goals can help focus the success of noxious weed elimination. Researching and developing new noxious weed tracking tools and management strategies can help DPR meet these goals.

In addition to invasive and nuisance species in our plant communities, some wildlife communities present challenges, such as managing Canada Geese in our parks and their waste impacts on park landscapes. Denver Parks takes an approach that attempts to balance the needs of wildlife with the needs of people using the best wildlife management practices available.

Canada geese are a protected species under the Federal Migratory Bird Act (FMPA). The availability of turf within Denver parks has provided an ideal habitat for geese (food, water, shelter and space). Under Federal and State authority, we will implement strategies that include modifying vegetation in parks to discourage geese habitation and allowable population control measures.

Strategy 1.10

Continue to educate and inform the public and implement emerald ash borer (EAB) mitigation program.

After the initial 2013 detection of the EAB in Colorado, DPR's Forestry Office launched the Be a Smart Ash campaign to inform Denver residents about the EAB, and about potential treatment options for ash trees. With an estimated 1.45 million ash trees in the Denver metro area, proactive management measures are vital to avoid major urban tree loss.

Strategy 1.11

Identify and restore vacant or underutilized urban land for open space and ecological value.

Natural landscapes in urban settings have an important social, community, and habitat value, even if the ecological value is limited. DPR will collaborate with Public Works to identify opportunities for restoring degraded urban land, such as areas of grey hardscape, to more natural conditions. These areas could become new natural areas or complement existing parks or natural landscapes. Restoring land can help grow access to natural landscapes for residents, providing more opportunities to enjoy natural settings and wildlife within the city. In addition, these restored landscapes can showcase and demonstrate best practices in water quality features and habitat restoration.

Strategy 1.12

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Work with regional partners to research and develop best practices for Mountain Park forest management and fire mitigation.

In the face of expanding mountain communities and a changing climate, diligent forest management practices in the mountain parks will be critical for wildfire mitigation and ecosystem health. The DPR Natural Resource Division will work with key partners—including federal, state, and county agencies, local governments, and private landowners—to develop comprehensive plans for mountain parks forest management, with targeted management prescriptions and monitoring protocols.

These planning and management efforts should consider multiple objectives, including, but not limited to, forest stand diversity, disease prevention, wildfire mitigation, noxious weed management, wildlife conservation, wetland and watershed enhancement, viewshed protection, and recreational use. DPR will leverage its partnerships to obtain state and federal grants and to develop the mountain parks management plans.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR - Planning

DPR - Office of the City Forester

Denver Public Works

City Forester

Development Services

Community Planning and Development

RECOMMENDATION 1

Identify and prioritize areas with low tree canopy cover that are not meeting the citywide goal. These neighborhoods are especially vulnerable to heat waves.

- Use DPR's Tree Report Card.¹
- Update and maintain Denver's public tree inventory as a critical management tool.
- Identify areas prone to EAB (see also Strategy 1.10).
- Identify areas of valueless hardscape and develop greening projects with long term protection of planting spaces.

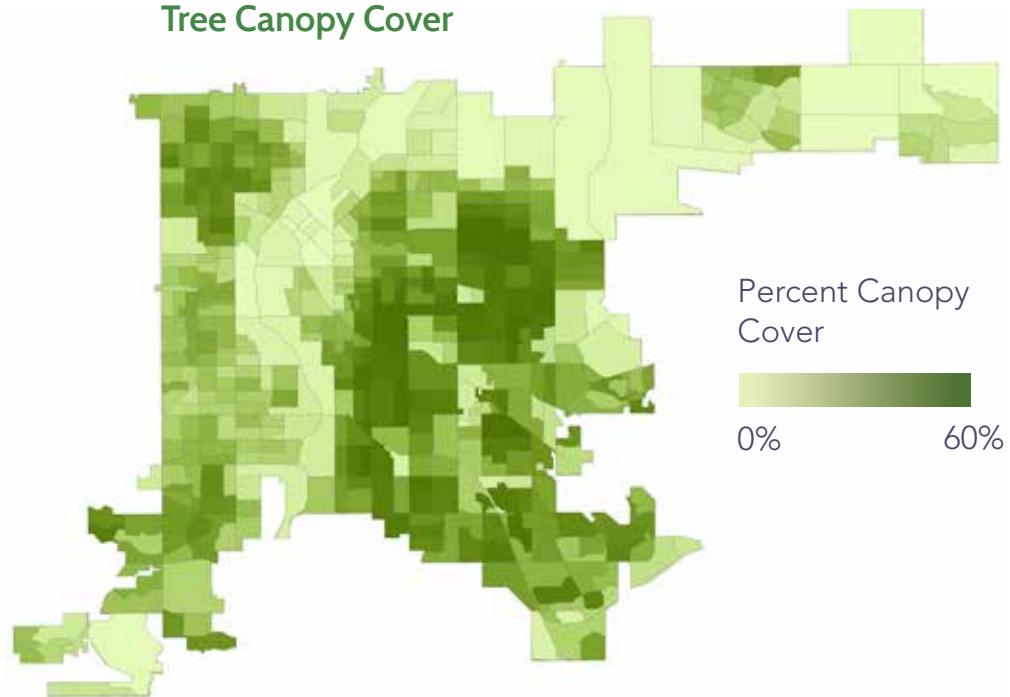
RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop an urban forest plan to include an increase in the canopy goal, preservation of the existing canopy, maintenance, implementation, and funding.

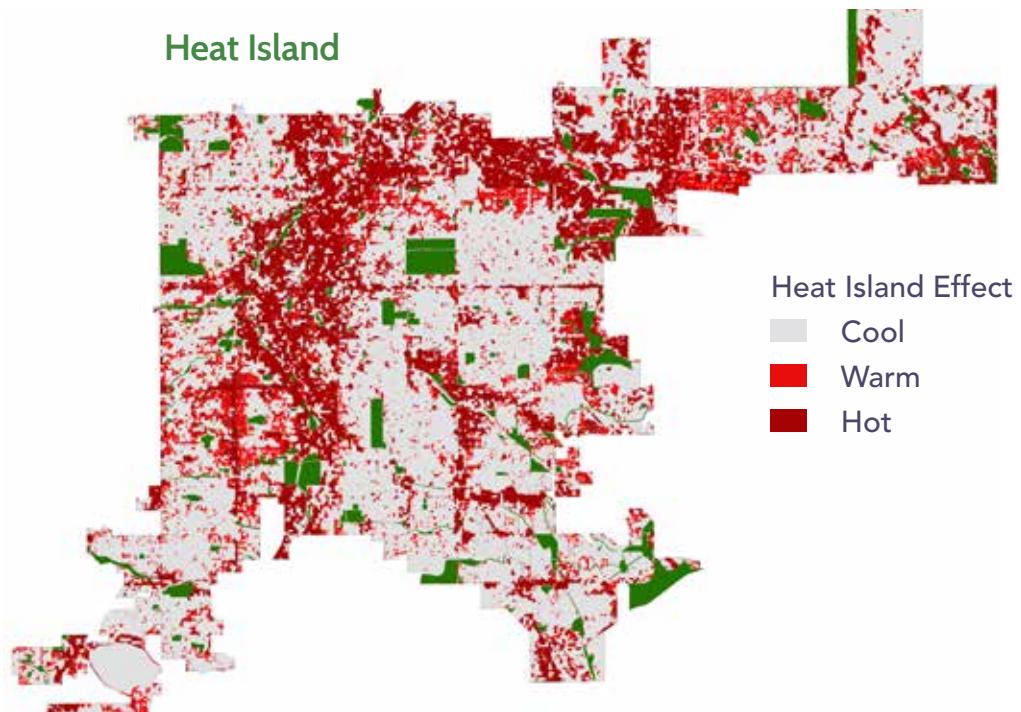
- Explore using zoning and development regulatory reform to transform the urban forest program from protection to promotion.
- Work with partners to preserve, incorporate, or mitigate losses to the urban forest as part of land and infrastructure development.
- Proactively maintain, supplement, and protect diverse forest types in parks and parkways.
- Include management strategies to deal with periods of drought in the region.
- Unify and systematize management of underground utilities to better provide for more trees in the public ROW.
- Fully establish a public tree maintenance and protection program that meets industry standards and increases canopy protection.

¹ Denver Parks and Recreation, Treeport Cards web tool, accessed May 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/yag9s9ya>

Tree Canopy Cover



Heat Island



See the Existing Conditions Report for larger versions of these maps.

Recommendations, continued.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Analyze redefining the city and owner shared responsibilities and requirements for trees in ROW and in private developments.

- DPR should review the current practice of transferring maintenance responsibility for street trees to private property owners to address maintenance needs, possibly with private support or other means.
- Privately maintained street trees generally fare worse than publicly maintained trees. Cities recognized as urban forestry leaders—Santa Monica, Sacramento, Minneapolis, New York, and Chicago—all manage and maintain their city's street trees.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Develop a review process for projects that impact existing and proposed trees in the ROW.

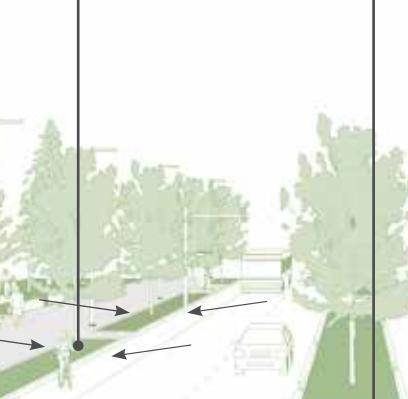
- Create a tree ordinance for large, heritage trees with an identified diameter at breast height (DBH) that also defines replacement regulations and policies. The heritage tree policy should be used to govern internal decision-making as well as to preserve large, heritage trees throughout the city.
- Evaluate a supporting funding source, including, for example, considering an impact fee for future maintenance.
- Fully establish Forestry plan review, tree protection enforcement, and construction compliance monitoring program.

Partnerships with Private Developers to Enhance Streets



Best Practices for Urban Trees

Green Infrastructure to Improve Water Quality

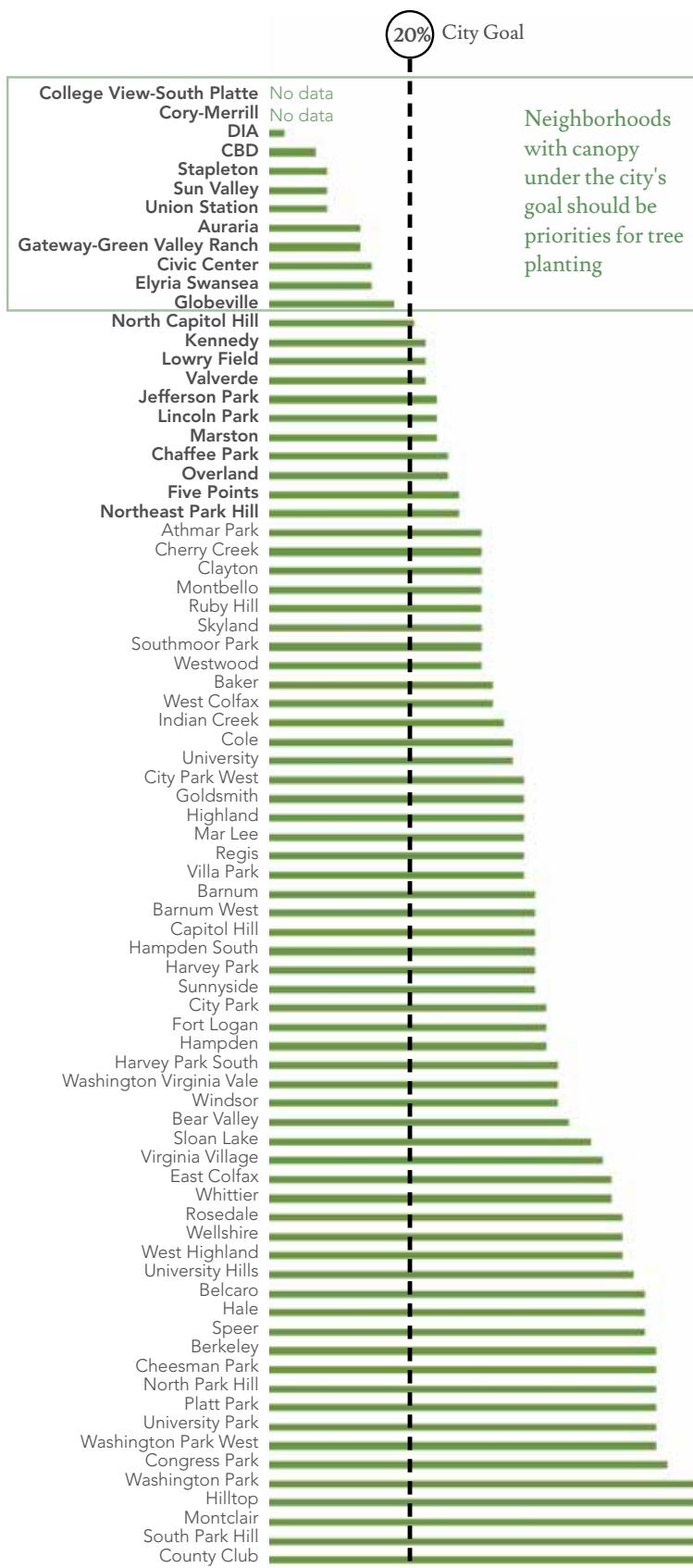


Adequate Soil Volume to Maximize Tree Health



Healthy Spacing of Trees in ROW

EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD TREE CANOPY



City Goal

Neighborhoods with canopy under the city's goal should be priorities for tree planting

How does Denver's 20% canopy goal compare?

Increasingly, cities and communities of all sizes recognize the importance of their tree cover and the need for plans to manage that natural resource. Here are other canopy cover goals from across the country:

Austin, TX:	40%
Chicago, IL:	25%
Los Angeles, CA:	28%
Phoenix, AZ:	25%
Sacramento, CA:	35%

Source: Michael Leff, The Sustainable Urban Forest: A Step-by-Step Approach (Davey Institute/USDA Forest Service, USFS Philadelphia Field Station, September 27, 2016), http://www.itreetools.org/resources/content/Sustainable_Urban_Forest_Guide_14Nov2016.pdf.



ENERGY AND RESOURCE USE

Energy and resources use is an important consideration for Denver's parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities. Building on current efforts, these strategies focus on further reducing energy use and promoting behaviors to reduce waste and increase recycling, reducing the carbon footprint of the system.

6,000 **50%**

tons of waste generated
by visitors to Denver's
parks each year sent to
landfills

of the 6,000 tons could be
collected and recycled

80%

reduction in carbon
emissions from 2005
levels by 2050 is a
citywide goal

Strategies

Strategy 1.13

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Make facilities more energy-saving and efficient, reducing energy use in park and recreation operations by 25 percent in 10 years.

DPR has set a target of reducing energy use in park and recreation operations and facilities by 25 percent in 10 years. DPR has been making strides in reducing energy use since the 2003 *Game Plan*. The department has performed energy audits for most buildings and recreation centers, which has resulted in decreased energy use and improved operations. DPR has made upgrades to pools, HVAC systems, and other consumptive systems with efficiency in mind.

As summers become hotter, energy loads from cooling recreation centers and other DPR buildings will increase. Continuing to reduce energy will conserve resources and also help reduce costs.

Strategy 1.14

Review and revise park design standards and specifications to foster environmental responsibility.

The 2003 *Game Plan* included goals to "plan and build with the best sustainable practices" and "incorporate design standards (regarding environmental responsibility)." Since 2003, DPR has implemented many efforts to reduce water use, including replacing hundreds of acres of bluegrass with low water-use grass varieties and installing controlled irrigation systems in more than 75 parks to reduce water use. Today DPR uses 850 million gallons less irrigation water than in 2003. DPR has written and implemented best management practices (BMPs) for water quality. The department has performed energy audits and system upgrades for many buildings and recreation centers, resulting in decreased energy use and improved operations. The Central Park and Carla Madison Recreation Centers are LEED Certified®, and per executive order all new city buildings must meet or exceed LEED Silver® requirements.

Moving forward, this strategy builds on existing momentum and advocates increasing environmental best practices across the landscapes, facilities, and other resources of the parks and recreation system. For example, staff feedback has suggested the development of a DPR SITES program, expanding low-impact development (LID) practices, and certifying two to four properties annually through the Certified Wildlife Habitat (CWH) program.

A key element of this strategy is continuing to develop methods for communicating sustainable maintenance practices and performance measures to the public.

Strategy 1.15

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Address waste more efficiently, increase user responsibilities, and expand recycling in parks and recreation facilities.

Despite growing recognition of the role of waste in environmental sustainability concerns nationally, many communities struggle to implement programs to minimize waste and increase recycling. According to one 2009 study by Keep America Beautiful, only 12 percent of public locations within the study survey included recycling facilities. Even more challenging, recycling infrastructure alone will not address the human challenges of confusion and perceived inconvenience.

In 2014, DPR and DPW made this issue a visible priority by implementing a joint recycling program. The department should undertake efforts to learn from early pilots and adapt existing programs for increased efficiency and effectiveness, including expanding recycling facilities and increasing user awareness. At the same time, the department can continue its leadership on this issue by exploring programs and policies to reduce consumption and increase productive reuse (e.g., composting).

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Park Operations

DPR--Recreation

Department of Public Works

CCD Sustainability Office

Xcel

Waste Management, Inc.

DPR - Office of the City Forester

RECOMMENDATION 1

Develop and implement an Energy Conservation Program.

- The National Parks and Recreation (NRPA) Conservation Task Force recommends the following steps for developing an energy conservation program.¹
 - Measure existing energy use, preferably documenting baseline energy use for a full year.
 - Evaluate existing programs and measures for reducing energy use.
 - Set goals and develop policies for energy consumption.
 - Implement programs and projects, and continue to monitor energy use. Start with simple energy conservation measures, and look for smart designs in retrofits and capital projects. NRPA suggests measuring energy reductions in both energy units and monetary savings.
 - Training staff and educating the public are also important considerations.
- Involve recreation center employees and facility services team in annual facility energy audits and have them participate in implementing recommendations.

¹ NRPA Conservation Task Force, "How to Develop an Energy Conservation Program for Your Agency," Parks and Recreation, November 2011, 12-13, https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpaorg/About_NRPA/Initiatives/Conservation-Agencies.pdf.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Continue to implement and expand recycling, reuse, and composting programs in parks to achieve 35% landfill deduction.

- Conduct an assessment of the existing joint recycling program between DPR and DPW.
- Identify challenges and opportunities for improvement.
- Evaluate existing signage and recycling bin design/placement and consider potential improvements to increase proper use of recycling bins to reduce cross-contamination or intermingled materials.
- Implement identified changes to increase recycling use and user awareness.
- Monitor programs and continue to make improvements or pilot new ideas to further meet recycling and reuse goals.
- Identify opportunities to expand composting.
- Implement a wood reuse and recycling program to better utilize wood resource from public tree removals, wood from fuel thinning projects and EAB program wood waste.

RECYCLING BEST PRACTICES¹

- Bin color: Blue is the preferred color for recycling bins, followed by green as a secondary option.
- Bin shape: Square bins are more commonly associated with recycling (vs. round for trash)
- Opening shape: Small circle, slit, or otherwise restricted openings encourage recycling.
- Place both cans directly side-by-side, and put signage where someone will easily notice it.
- For signage, simpler is better. Confusing or too much information usually results in people ignoring all of it. Pictures can actually make things more confusing.
- Use words of recyclable objects instead of describing materials: "bottles" and "cans" instead of "plastic" and "aluminum"; for bins that can collect multiple types of materials, preferred language is "mixed recycling" rather than "co-mingled" or "single stream"
- Test and monitor: review results across parks to see what adjustments may be needed. Are there materials that are typically ending up in the wrong place? Consider changing the signage / wording. In some places, switching location of trash and recycle can may be enough to encourage desired behavior.
- Recycle ambassadors or public art can compliment efforts and help educate users. For example, "The World's Deepest Bin" plays a cartoon sound of an object falling into a very deep hole before hitting the bottom when someone recycles an object. The goal is to increase recycling by making it fun.²

1 - Sources:

Brenda Pulley, Kelley Dennings, and Kaitlin Phelps. "Bin the know." Resource Recycling, December 2015. <https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2017/07/17/bin-the-know/>

Development of Best Practices in Public Space Recycling; https://americarecyclesday.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EurekaPublicSpaceRecyclingfinal2011_Part1of3.pdf

Keep America Beautiful - <https://www.kab.org/resources/improve-recycling>

2 - World's Deepest Bin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=cbEKAwCoCKw>

DIVERSIFY PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Caring for and supporting the health of every person in Denver today is fundamental. To achieve this, the *Game Plan* recommends strategies for parks and recreation programming and for enhancing engagement, outreach, and communications in order to diversify parks and recreation services.





STRATEGIES:

PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAMMING

See page 102

- 2.1: Reassess rules and regulations that limit flexibility and responsiveness in parks and recreation programming.
- ★ 2.2: Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.
- ★ 2.3: Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.
- 2.4: Attain national accreditation for meeting high standards for staff performance, customer service and departmental success.
- 2.5: Continuous improvement of safety outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT, OUTREACH, & COMMUNICATIONS

See page 110

- 2.6: Ensure transparency of departmental decision-making for internal and external partners.
- ★ 2.7: Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives and needs.
- 2.8: Recruit and hire staff to reflect ethnic and language diversity.

★ Priority Strategy



PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMMING

From growing marketing and awareness, to improving existing program quality and further responding to emerging trends and diverse neighborhood needs, these strategies focus on enhancing parks and recreation programming. These strategies will help promote healthier lifestyles and active recreation.

93%

of Denver's youth had a MY Denver Card in 2016, granting them FREE access to Denver's Recreation Centers and Pools

80%

of respondents indicated the programs they participated in were either "fair" or "poor" [SVS]

**Arts/Culture,
Aquatics, &
Fitness**

programs ranked as the highest priority for respondents [SVS]

30%

of respondents have participated in recreation programs offered by DPR in the past year [SVS]

Barriers to using Denver Parks and Recreation Facilities more often
[SVS--Top 4 Answers]

30%

Not knowing what is offered

22%

Times are not convenient

17%

Facilities and Programs are too far from residents

14%

Fees are too high

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*2.6: Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives, and needs.

*5.9: Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health.

5.10: Develop more active program opportunities in the city center.

5.11: Reimagine Recreation Centers as meeting places and community hubs and catalysts for park activation.

Strategies

Strategy 2.1

Continue reassessing rules and regulations that limit flexibility and responsiveness in parks and recreation programming.

Parks and recreation programming rules and regulations impact the ability of residents to use and enjoy DPR's resources. Ensuring rules are clear, uniformly enforced, and support safe and enjoyable behavior maximizes use of parks, open spaces, and recreation centers. Currently, some regulations are perceived as being overly restrictive or burdensome, and as a result have the effect of restricting use. Rules and regulations to assess include permitting processes, ticketed events and space rental, and alcohol policies.

Strategy 2.2

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.

Today, Denver's 28 recreation centers—including 10 neighborhood centers, 10 local centers, and 8 regional centers—provide places throughout the city for resident use. The centers are vital cultural and recreational destinations within the city—places to get fit, build relationships, learn new skills, and play team sports. Community engagement with the existing centers is fair, but could improve. Community support exists for the creation of new facilities or expansion of existing facilities to better meet need.

Results from the statistically valid survey indicated that use of recreation center programming in Denver (30 percent) aligned closely with national averages (34 percent). However, assessments of the quality of recreation programming in Denver vary dramatically from national averages, with 80 percent of Denver residents considering programs "fair" or "poor" in comparison with 10 percent similar ratings nationwide. Chief among respondents' lists of desired programming was increased access to arts- and culture-based offerings, followed by aquatics and fitness.

Throughout Denver, continuing to support accessibility and ensuring facilities and programming are accessible to all is a priority.

Continue to pursue enhancements to the website applications to improve the ease of signing up and scheduling programs and increasing the ease of park facility and picnic site permit applications.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 2.3

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.

One of the greatest challenges and most exciting opportunities of providing parks and recreation services is the speed of change. Keeping up with this change is necessary to maintain community support, maximize revenue-generation potential, and ensure long-term engagement; the original *Game Plan* understood this and recommended that the department track annual trends. Yet, like many departments nationally, DPR still lacks resources to track trends and pilot recommendations. Funding and staffing this need should be a priority.

The statistically valid survey yielded desire and support for investment in various amenity areas with a particular emphasis on socially based recreation opportunities (e.g., dog parks and community gardens) over recreation-based amenities (e.g., fields and courts). Moving forward, such information, when yielded consistently and frequently, can help to shape recreational offerings ahead of community need by focusing on methods of forecasting and identifying upcoming trends. By acknowledging the need for proactive and real-time data, DPR can stay ahead of community need, more efficiently refine delivery of desired recreational opportunities, and minimize less-desirable programs and services.

Strategy 2.4

Attain national accreditation for meeting high standards for staff performance, customer service and departmental success.

This strategy focuses on attaining national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). CAPRA accreditation is a quality-assurance and quality-improvement process demonstrating commitment to employees, volunteers, patrons, and the community.

The CAPRA accreditation process includes submission of a preliminary application, development of a self-assessment report, visit by a peer review team for on-site evaluation, and then the final review and decision by the CAPRA Commission. Accreditation is based on compliance with a series of standards.¹ The accreditation process is a five-year cycle.

Nationally, 165 park and recreation agencies are currently accredited, including Washington DC, Miami, Chicago, San Diego, and Atlanta. In Colorado, accredited entities include Durango, Golden, Lafayette, Jefferson County, Wheat Ridge, Fort Carson, Castle Rock, and Erie.²

Consider identifying staffing to coordinate accreditation and compliance reporting. NRPA reports that software management applications can also support compilation and tracking of accreditation materials.³

¹ Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, CAPRA National Accreditation Standards, 5th Edition (NRPA, 2017), <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/capra-standards-5th-edition-2014.pdf>.

² NRPA, "CAPRA Accredited Agencies," NRPA website, accessed May 2018, <https://www.nrpa.org/certification/accreditation/capra/accreditedagencies/>.

³ The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has shared their Data Management System as a resource for other agencies. It is available on the NRPA website. http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Professional_Development/Accreditation/CAPRA/M-NPPC-CAPRA-E-Library-Overview.pdf.

Strategy 2.5

Continuous improvement of safety outcomes.

Providing a safe environment that the public perceives as such is a core foundation of a successful, well-utilized park and recreation system. In the statistically valid survey, 10 percent of respondents stated that safety concerns prevented them from using DPR facilities.

With a mission to maximize public safety, protect park resources and provide services to visitors, the Denver Park Rangers have become an integral part of the Denver Park system for both urban and mountain parks. Park rangers have the ability to issue citations for park rule violations and collaborate with local law enforcement on larger issues.

This strategy focuses on improving safety by first identifying metrics and measuring public perception over time. Safety actions could include continuing to work with the safety team to get all staff trained on safety protocols, evaluating existing lighting levels, and establishing a safety-related inventory at each center with corresponding procedures to standardize resources and expectations across all centers and programs. In addition, identifying and implementing park ranger service standards citywide can ensure program equity and timely response to service calls. DPR should also increase communications about what actions they are taking to increase safety.

Related social issues of homelessness, drug use, and street crime have impacts on parks; improving safety will require cross-agency collaboration and partnerships with nonprofits and other organizations to improve quality of life for all residents.

Like most cities of its size, Denver has a significant homeless population that uses park amenities for daily needs like restrooms and sleeping. Traditionally around the country, local departments of health and human services or non-profits and faith-based organizations have taken the lead on addressing homelessness in communities.¹

In Denver, DPR staff work alongside local social service agencies to keep this population safe and to direct people in need to services and service providers. Everyone has a right to enjoy parks during operating hours, and parks should feel welcoming to all users.

A recent city program called Denver Day Works is piloting temporary jobs for Denver's homeless population, offering an opportunity to work on a day-to-day basis for DPR or Denver Public Works. Participants in the DPR program help maintenance crews with general park maintenance, including cleaning and monitoring restrooms, planting trees, raking, trash collection, clearing flower beds and other routine tasks. Although small, the program has been widely considered a success.

¹ NRPA. "Homelessness in Parks: A summary of results from an NRPA membership survey." The survey results indicate addressing homelessness is most commonly led by nonprofits and faith-based organizations, the local department of health and human services, or the police department. In comparison, only 11% of park and recreation directors reported taking a leadership role. Full report available here: <https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/f768428a39aa4035ae55b2aaff372617/homelessness-in-parks-survey-report.pdf>

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Recreation

Denver Arts and Culture

DPR--Planning

POLICY DIRECTION

Culturally Sensitive and Relevant
Recreation Programming

Permits / Space and Field Rental

RECOMMENDATION 1

Create outreach and diversification strategies specific to existing centers.

- Allow and encourage staff time for engagement with ongoing neighborhood planning initiatives and partner organization events.
- Recruit center ambassadors to enable greater exchange and train front desk staff to be community engagement specialists, so their daily interactions with residents can inform future programs and services.
- Explore the potential of new arts and culture programming in a structured, consistent manner (e.g., create center-specific calendars with quarterly experimental program pilots).
- Expand communications and marketing specific to programs, particularly new offerings, to ensure residents are aware of what is offered.
- After implementing key initiatives, conduct a follow-up survey to measure impact and customer satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Increase cultural competencies and diversity of DPR staff.

- Prioritize aspects of diversity—including cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as multilingual capacities—in departmental hiring practices, particularly for roles with high community engagement or service provision potentials. (See also Strategy 2.8: Recruit and hire staff to reflect ethnic and language diversity.)
- Offer cultural competency training for staff and implement a certification program (look to the Minneapolis Park Board as a best practice example).
- Institute regular job training and skill development workshops focused on cultural sensitivity and preferences.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CULTURAL PREFERENCE IN RECREATION?

A recent study *Serving Culturally Diverse Visitors to National Forests in California*,¹ published by the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, sought to illuminate recreation preferences based on cultural background. Created for a very different context—to better align expectations and experience of Northern California's forests—the study shows how knowledge of community cultural context informs recreational offerings.

A summary of key findings included preferences as follows:

- Immigrant populations more often use recreational facilities and parks to practice and preserve cultural traditions.

¹ Nina S. Roberts, Deborah J. Chavez, Benjamin M. Lara, and Emilyn A. Sheffield, *Serving Culturally Diverse Visitors to Forests in California: A Resource Guide* (Albany, CA: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, June 2009), <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/advocacy/Cultural-Diversity-Visitors-forest-trails.html>.

- California's growing Latino populations tend toward forested spaces with water features that enable extended-family social outings with extensive onsite meal preparation.
- Four different Asian populations surveyed in the Bay Area look to parks and recreation for access and connection to natural scenery, described as feeling "close to the land."

Consistent among all of California's diverse parks and recreation user groups, communication is key. Users tend to get information in many different ways, so broad and multi-faceted outreach has clear resonance. Users also feel more comfortable seeking help or resources when the staff is diverse and multi-lingual. This reinforces the need for DPR to prioritize diversity in its hiring and retention practices.

Recommendations, continued.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Implement arts and culture programming.

- Research best practices from other urban parks and recreation systems and develop an agenda of potential new arts and programming offerings.
- Create a public-facing campaign to crowdsource ideas for new programming. Before implementing, ensure there is in-house competency to offer and manage arts programming.
- Conduct outreach to select arts and culture organizations to develop joint-programming potentials.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Improve the quality of programs.

- Complete a series of focus groups to determine root causes of areas that resulted in needed program quality improvements.
- Create a program quality work group charged with implementing improvements.
- Develop a system-wide approach to measuring customer satisfaction toward program quality and track year to year improvements.
- Develop an audit system to measure quality on an ongoing basis.



WHAT IS A TRENDS TEAM?

DPR can dedicate specific processes and resources in order to actively research, test, and implement new types of facilities and programs. A cross-functional trends team can continuously research park and recreation trends. This team can develop a charter and mission, identify sources for industry trends, and research innovative park and recreation agencies that are modelling best practices. The team can further share trend information broadly in the department, using tools like a semi-annual trends report. The trends team can also be responsible for making recommendations about new programs and facilities, as well as monitoring ongoing program success.

The team can bridge design, planning, and programming, bringing a collaborative approach and innovation in future facilities and programs. The recommended trends team can serve as the scouts for recruiting ideas—both programmatic and physical—that may not originate in traditional outreach.



ENGAGEMENT, OUTREACH, AND COMMUNICATIONS

These strategies focus on improving communications and engagement between DPR and residents, other departments, and external partners. These strategies focus on outreach and communications related to decision-making, promoting existing services, collecting feedback, and enhancing customer service.

5,900+

Denverites weighed in throughout
the *Game Plan* process

27%

of Denver residents
speak a language other
than English at home

145

languages spoken by
Denver Public Schools
students' families

Strategies

Strategy 2.6

**Ensure transparency of
departmental decision-making
for internal and external
partners.**

Community members sometimes express a need to know more information about how decisions—like the number of permits issued—are made.

This strategy focuses on making decision-making processes more transparent and communicating them better, providing greater context for the rationale and process of decisions. Existing processes are standardized, and major decisions have a process for public input. The public, however, has expressed a desire to better understand how DPR uses that input, makes decisions, and takes other data sources into account. Improving communication could include partnering with Marketing or exploring other social media tools.

In addition, this strategy also supports improved internal communication between managers and staff.

RELATED STRATEGIES:

2.3: Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.

4.6: Improve internal and external collaboration and communication to more effectively and efficiently deliver services and increase customer satisfaction.

Strategy 2.7

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives, and needs.

Understanding, outreach, and communication are critical inputs to a successful department. By better understanding perspectives and desires, DPR can more effectively and efficiently meet community needs. This strategy has three distinct components:

1. Expand and enhance engagement related to design and planning processes.
2. Grow DPR communications to increase awareness of existing resources.
3. Increase research, customer evaluation survey data, and other data gathering to better understand diverse community needs.

Fulfilling this strategy will require a combination of customer service training, staff skill building, and new programs for expanding departmental research, data collection, and communications. Through these efforts, DPR can customize parks and recreation services and programs to meet needs of surrounding neighborhoods and to respond to expressed needs.

In implementing this strategy, consider potential technological and language barriers that could inadvertently limit input from some. For example, distributing bilingual paper copies of surveys or plans could provide more input options for limited English speakers with limited access to online resources.

Strategy 2.8

Recruit and hire staff to reflect ethnic and language diversity.

DPR values diversity and would like to ensure department staff reflect Denver's ethnic and language diversity. To increase hiring of diverse staff, DPR will focus on three areas: job descriptions, active recruiting, and the selection process.

First, write job descriptions to emphasize and demonstrate DPR's commitment to diversity and to encourage application by diverse candidates. For example, the job description should emphasize the importance of experience working with diverse populations. DPR could consider offering incentives for specialized skills (for example, bilingual capability) to further encourage diverse candidates to apply. The job description should provide examples of DPR's commitment to diversity.

Second, an important part of identifying candidates is undertaking targeted recruitment activities. Targeted recruitment, for example, could include attending a job fair at a community college or other setting where underrepresented populations may be present.

Third, best practices for the selection and hiring process include choosing a diverse hiring committee to ensure diversity will be valued meaningfully in the selection process, and asking at least one diversity-related question during the interview. For example, the committee could ask about candidate's experience serving a diverse population.¹

¹ For additional information, a helpful resource on best practices for hiring a more diverse workforce is A Toolkit For Recruiting And Hiring A More Diverse Workforce (Berkeley, CA: University Health Services, University of California, Berkeley, April 2013), https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/recruiting_a_more_diverse_workforce_uhs.pdf.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

DPR--Communication

RECOMMENDATION 1

Prioritize customer service training.

- In onboarding new staff and providing ongoing training for all full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees, highlight organizational focus on the role of customer experience in individual and collective success.
- Employ the use of technology to record customer satisfaction and track employee performance in delivery of excellence, using both data sets to constantly and consistently improve customer service.
- Develop programs and events to celebrate and reward customer service excellence among employees.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Institute job training and workshops to build staff skill sets.

- Implement training to strengthen capacity in the interpretation of data to communicate key messages to various department constituents (customers, elected officials, decision-makers, partners, employees, etc.).
- Ensure resources to enable mastery of social media, mobile communication, app use/development, and other creative and innovative communication skills department-wide.
- Focus expansion of employee performance to include knowledge and skill sets related to partnership-building and interagency cooperation.
- Develop training sessions that include participatory activities, engaged use of technology/media, and creative team-building exercises to maximize engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Develop new programs for expanding departmental research, data collection, and communications.

- Create a comprehensive community engagement policy to guide DPR's planning, design, and implementation activities and ensure department-wide consistency.
- Develop processes and metrics to evaluate the success of the engagement policy over time and mechanisms for its continued refinement.
- Add a link to the DPR Annual Budget from the DPR website.



RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF AN ENGAGEMENT PLAN

As planning for parks and recreation resources becomes more sophisticated and communities increase in diversity, many cities have struggled with providing an appropriate level of community engagement and/or demonstrating a rigorous and quantifiable engagement process. Rather than develop a new approach to engagement from scratch, there can be merit to creating a comprehensive public engagement policy, or set of best practices, that can be used as guidelines and tailored to each unique process. A clear mission statement about engagement can set the tone and emphasize the importance of an effective and efficient process that fairly and equitably maximizes citizen input and support.

Based on models across the country, an effective engagement plan may contain the following components: 1) Guidelines that suggest best practices, formats, methods and techniques that should be considered; 2) policies or principles of public participation and suggestions of roles and responsible parties; and 3) a manual describing specific procedures, documents the roles, and information on processes and procedures.

GROW THE PARK SYSTEM AND RECREATION ACCESS

Amid estimates that population growth will continue in the Denver region, DPR must continue to provide excellent service and enhanced access to more people. Strategies for park, facility, and program expansion, as well as improved mobility and access, will provide the ability to grow the park system and recreation access.





STRATEGIES:

PARK, FACILITY, & PROGRAM EXPANSION

See page 116

- ★ 3.1: Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals.
- ★ 3.2: Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion.
- 3.3: Leverage partners to create programs/events of regional and national significance.
- 3.4: Develop citywide proximity standards for all recreation facilities, services, and specialized park amenities.

MOBILITY & ACCESS

See page 126

- ★ 3.5: Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood.
- ★ 3.6: With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.
- 3.7: Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide and regional amenities.



PARK, FACILITY, AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

As Denver continues to grow, so does the need for additional parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities. Supporting increasing demand will require new partnerships, acquisition and new park construction, and program expansion.

86%

of Denver's residents have access to a park within a half mile (about 20% above the national median)

<9

acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, below the national median of 13 acres per 1,000 residents

91%

respondents were "very supportive" or "somewhat supportive" of purchasing land for new urban parks with or without tax dollars [SVS]

11%

growth in Denver's population from 2010 to 2016

600+

acres growth in Denver's park space from 2010 to 2016

175K

additional Denver residents by 2040

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*4.1: Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity.

4.2: Identify and focus park and programmatic resources in underserved neighborhoods.

*4.12: Develop a citywide mutually beneficial relationship with DPS to share resources.

4.13: Work more closely with local community organizations to enhance programmatic value and resident service.

4.14: Work with partners, concessionaires, and sponsors to invest in park facilities and programs.

*4.16: Work with other City agencies to secure participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.

4.17: Work with the private sector to provide public amenities within private developments.

Strategies

Strategy 3.1

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals.

Looking ahead, Denver's population is projected to increase by another 150,000 residents in the next 10 years.¹ Denver will need new park space to meet growing demands, as well as to provide more green space fitting to the city's desired character. To increase the level of service to 13 acres per thousand residents for Denver's projected population, an additional 4,700 acres of park space is needed.

Strategy 4.16 describes the role new development should play in contributing to meeting the needs of new residents. To maintain existing levels of service (9 acres per thousand residents), Denver will need 1,350 acres of new park space over the next 10 years. If Denver's level of service increases to 13 acres per thousand residents, the city would need 1,950 acres of new park space to support new residents at that level of service.

The planning and construction of new parks and recreation amenities should integrate strategies to understand and mitigate the involuntary displacement of residents and businesses. Locating new parks to be walkable and/or connected by transit access will support greater use.

Downtown neighborhoods should be evaluated for increased access to parks and open space due to higher development densities.

Strategy 3.2

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion.

Partnerships can help meet current and future needs for recreation amenities, programs, and park space. Working together is a way to expand access and avoid offering duplicative programs. Partnerships could include complementary programming or provide services that DPR does not provide.

DPR currently maintains partnership agreements with over 200 organizations, businesses, schools, individuals, and governmental entities within the city. Partnerships generally fall into four main categories: institutional, operational (including funding), programmatic, and volunteer.

Programmatic partners are the most diverse partnerships; they allow DPR to enrich and expand the variety of program opportunities the system can offer within its facilities without placing additional burden on existing staff. Existing programmatic partners include the Boys and Girls Clubs (recreational activities, camps, and field trips for youth), the YMCA (full operation of a former DPR recreation center, and programs at others), 4-H (STEM and nutrition/cooking programs for youth), and Colorado UpLift (recreation, team building, and leadership training for youth).

¹ City and County of Denver, Denveright: Blueprint Denver (City and County of Denver, May 19, 2017): 5, https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denveright/documents/Blueprint/Meeting_Archive/CommunityProfile.pdf.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 3.3

Leverage partners to create programs/events of regional and national significance.

This strategy focuses on expanding programs and events of regional and national significance. The success of Red Rocks is a model for other parks in the system—both mountain and urban alike. Partnerships can further grow the reach of events and programs by providing additional resources, broadening communication, and expanding potential participants. Given the scale of these events, focused on regional and national audiences, growing DPR staff to manage these efforts internally is not practical; therefore, partnerships are an essential component of this strategy.

For example, this strategy could include partnering with Denver Arts and Venues, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Denver Zoo, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Art Museum, and Four Mile Historic Park to expand cultural and entertainment special events and exhibits.

Strategy 3.4

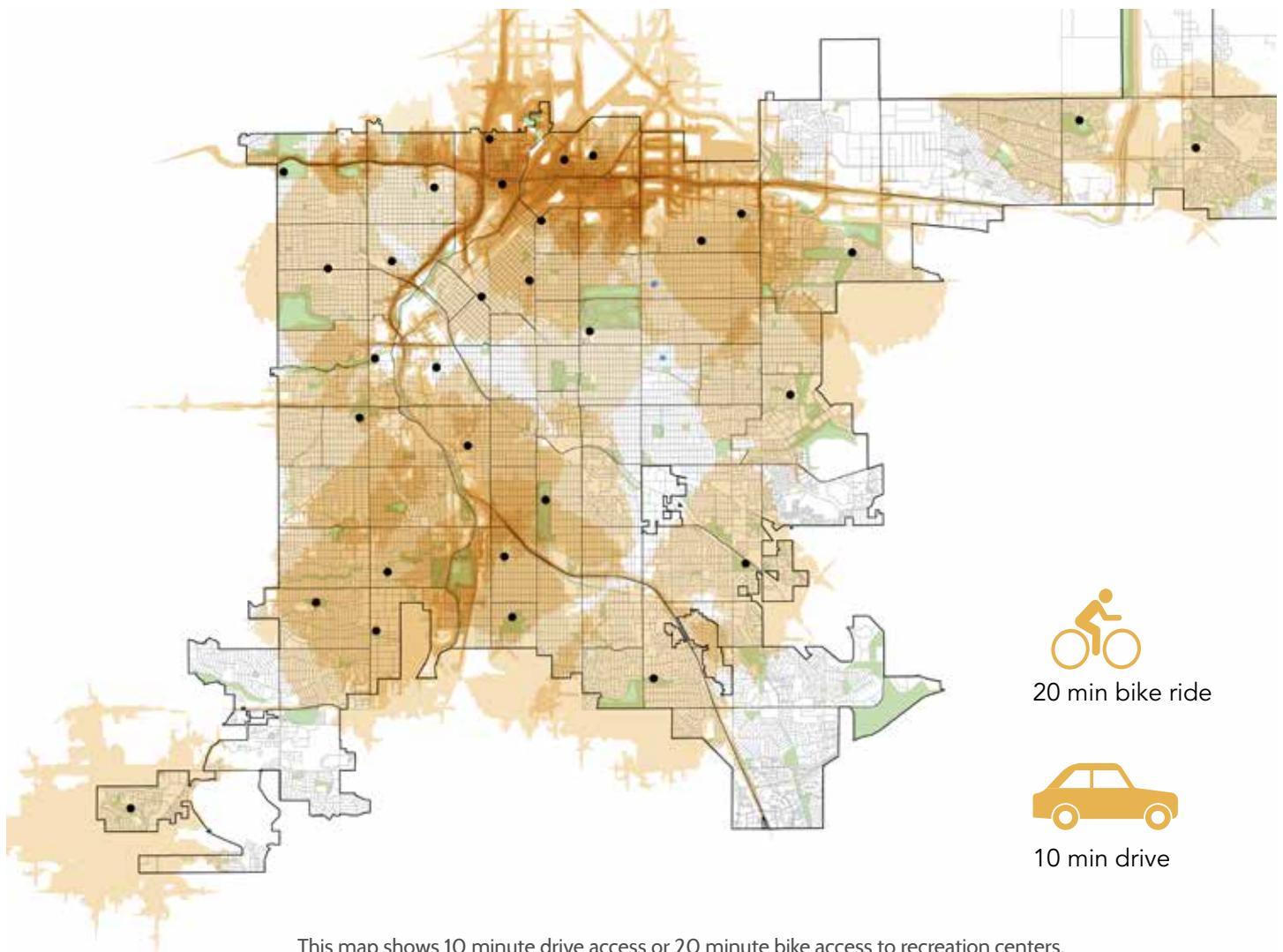
Develop citywide proximity standards for all recreation facilities, services, and specialized park amenities.

Proximity standards define acceptable distances from recreation facilities, services, and specialized park amenities for residents. Different types of amenities will have different thresholds; for example, residents would typically expect more walkable access to a playground than to a recreation center or more specialized park amenities. These standards help promote equity across the city by setting consistent targets for access.

These standards, along with the level-of-service targets (see Strategy 4.1) will provide a baseline for evaluating how well existing parks and recreation facilities are meeting demands and identifying gaps in the system. DPR should make closing gaps in high-need neighborhoods an implementation priority (see Strategy 4.2).

Siting and design of restrooms should also be considered. A critical part of park infrastructure, restrooms should be provided where needed for convenience and health. They should be sited and designed with long-term management, maintenance, and safety in mind. The Restroom Master Plan should be revisited and updated. Park and recreation restrooms are one part of the public restroom system, which also includes libraries, other public buildings, and mobile units. Addressing the public restroom need will require collaboration across multiple city departments.

Access to Recreation Centers



This map shows 10 minute drive access or 20 minute bike access to recreation centers. The new Carla Madison Recreation Center south of City Park helps to address a previous gap in the inner-southeast. A gap in recreation center access still exists in the inner southeast and the outer southeast parts of the city.

PARK, FACILITY, AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

Community Planning and Development

POLICY DIRECTION

Ten Minute Walk Access for All

Acquisition Policies

RECOMMENDATION 1

Complete a park and recreation need assessment. Quantify future needs based on level-of-service targets, proximity standards, and projected growth.

- Quantify citywide demand as well as demand by neighborhood (or neighborhood planning area).
- Address deficits with new parks or recreation facilities, as well as partnership opportunities to meet needs.
- Integrate the identification of necessary action steps and their implementation with ongoing planning, including, for example, the NPI (see Strategy 3.5 for more details).

RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop an acquisition policy, which sets out evaluation criteria and a process for identifying and prioritizing land acquisition for future parks and open space.

- For example, priorities should include: 1) land located within in or adjacent to high-need neighborhoods and/or 2) with significant environmental value and/or along waterways
- In the policy, set minimum requirements for consideration, including a minimum size threshold to ensure meaningful value and promote efficient maintenance, and accessibility and visibility considerations to ensure safety and park activation.

RECOMMENDATION 3

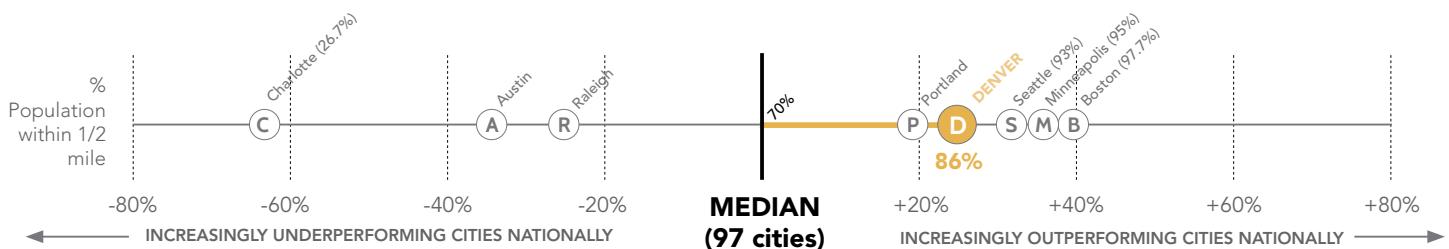
Identify areas lacking walkable park access and prioritize high-need neighborhoods for improvements.

- See the maps on the following pages for areas that currently lack park access within a ten minute walk.
- These maps highlight which of these areas should be prioritized for new parks, based on demographic characteristics. "High need" neighborhoods with higher percentages of lower income households and less access to personal vehicles should be the highest priorities for addressing existing deficits.



PEER CITIES COMPARISON

The chart below compares Denver to its peer cities for the percentage of population within a 10 minute walk or within a half mile of a park or open space. Overall 86% of Denver's residents have access to a park within a half mile, placing Denver about 20% above the national median but below cities like Seattle (93%), Minneapolis (95%), and Boston (98%).



Recommendations, continued.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Address park deficits through the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI)

The first step in addressing deficits is to develop plans for neighborhoods with documented needs for parks and/or recreation facilities. Integrating this process within Denver's Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) is an opportunity for integrated planning, reducing the need for a parallel, separate planning process focused solely on parks and recreation.

The NPI should address underserved parks and recreation areas by increasing the quantity of recreation, social, and nature opportunities, as well as improving access to existing parks, facilities, and programs. Plans should identify clear action steps to address existing and projected deficits in recreation, social space, and nature experiences, especially in underserved, high-need areas. The goal is to support healthier neighborhoods by expanding access to parks and recreation. This action step will include collaborations with CPD and other agencies.

RFP language and the approved project scope should integrate park and recreation considerations. Integrating DPR in the process and providing *Game Plan* data to teams will further support integrated recommendations, ensuring the plans will result in increases for parks and recreation opportunities for neighborhoods. High-need neighborhoods should receive the highest priority in closing existing gaps.

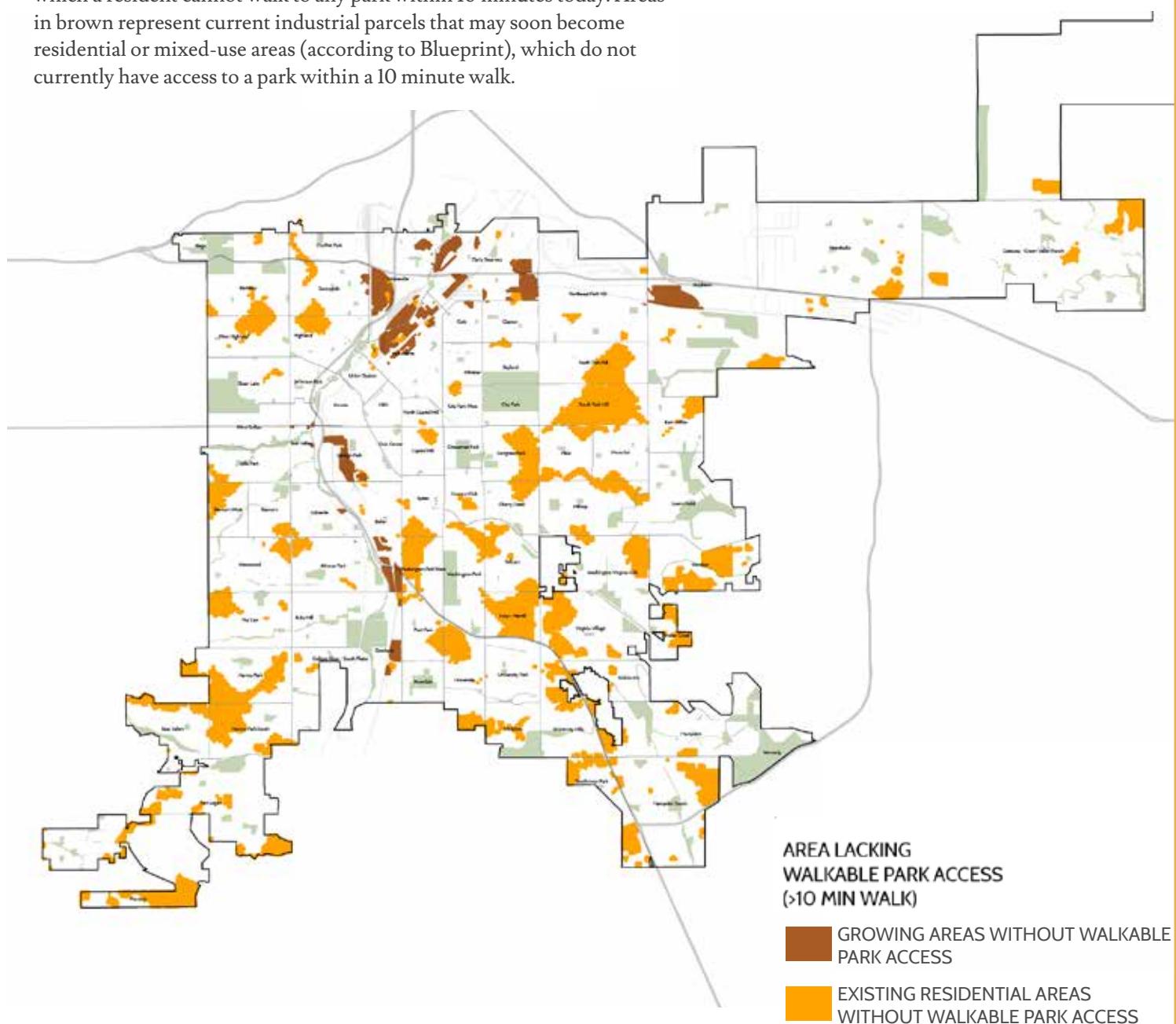
Other Action Steps:

Implementing other strategies will help grow walkable park access, increasing the percentage of residents who can walk to a park in less than 10 minutes. See these other strategies for additional supporting actions to expand parks and improve access:

- 3.1: Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet service goals.
- 3.6: With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.
- 4.12: Develop a citywide mutually beneficial relationship with DPS to share resources.
- 4.16: Work with other City agencies to secure participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.

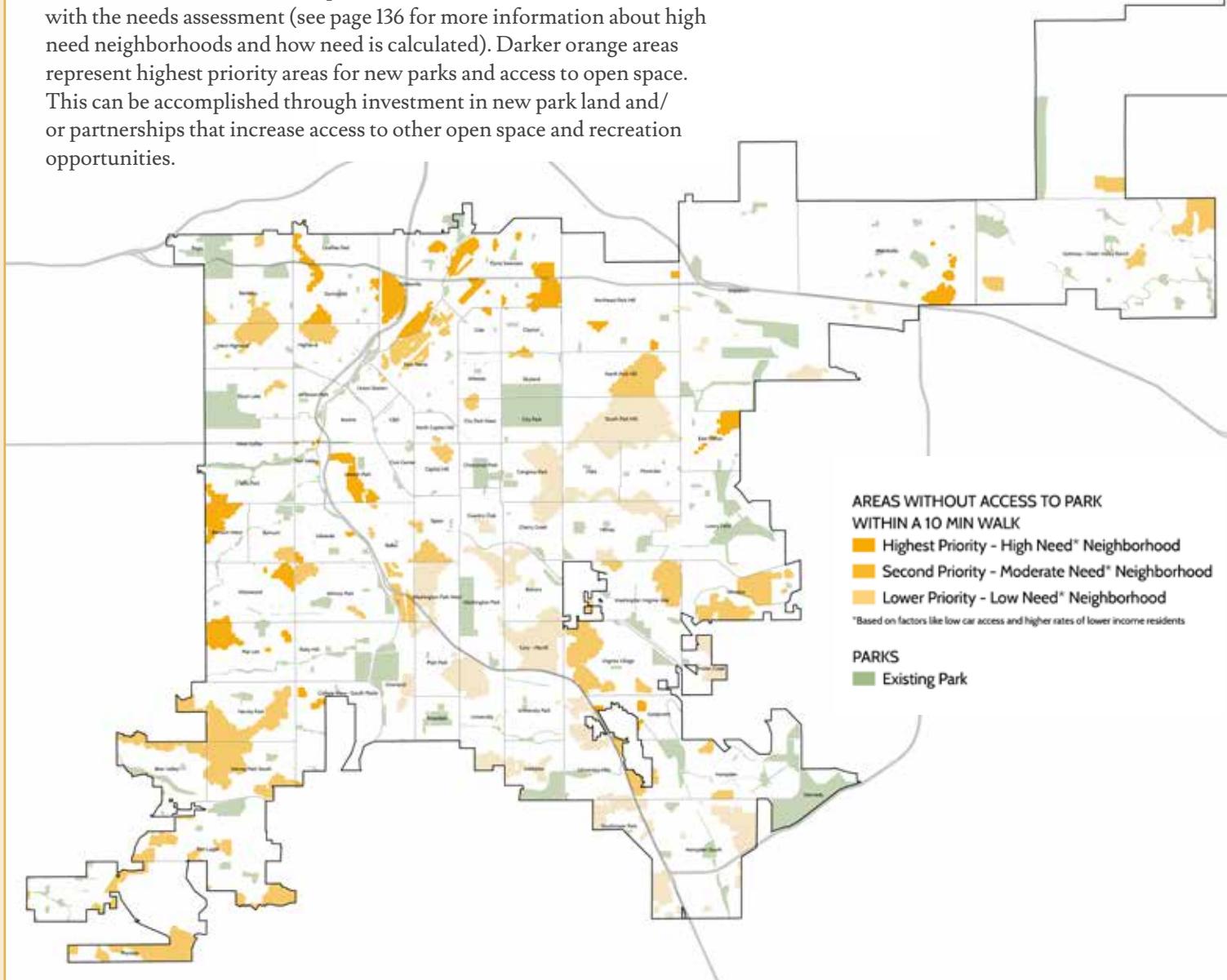
WALKING ACCESS TO PARKS

Areas shown in orange on the map represent the residential parcels from which a resident cannot walk to any park within 10 minutes today. Areas in brown represent current industrial parcels that may soon become residential or mixed-use areas (according to Blueprint), which do not currently have access to a park within a 10 minute walk.



PRIORITY AREAS FOR NEW PARKS

Here, areas without access to a park within 10 minutes have been overlaid with the needs assessment (see page 136 for more information about high need neighborhoods and how need is calculated). Darker orange areas represent highest priority areas for new parks and access to open space. This can be accomplished through investment in new park land and/or partnerships that increase access to other open space and recreation opportunities.



Summary: High Priority Areas for New Parks

High-Need Neighborhoods with significant areas lacking walkable park access	Moderate-Need Neighborhoods with significant areas lacking walkable park access
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elyria SwanseaGlobevilleSunnysideLincoln ParkBarnum WestWestwoodMar LeeEast ColfaxMontbello	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BerkeleyWest HighlandHighlandFive PointsHarvey ParkHarvey Park SouthBear ValleyMarstonCBD <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fort LoganBakerSpeerCapitol HillNorth Park HillWashington Virginia ValeVirginia VillageWindsorUnion Station

NPI Opportunities to Address Park Deficits

This table provides a preliminary summary of neighborhoods with significant zones lacking walkable park access. In addition, Neighborhood plans should also consider access to recreation amenities and facilities (e.g., recreation centers, sports fields, playgrounds), nature experiences, and related programs. Level of service standards and proximity standards (strategies 3.4 and 4.1) will also provide relevant data on deficits to support neighborhood planning.

High priority areas for new parks

Neighborhood Planning Areas	High-need neighborhoods with significant areas lacking walkable park access	Moderate-need neighborhoods with significant areas lacking walkable park access	Lower-need neighborhoods with significant areas lacking walkable park access
Far Northwest		Berkeley West Highland	
Near Northwest	Sunnyside	Highland	
North	Elyria Swansea Globeville		
Near Northeast		North Park Hill	
Northeast			
North Central		Five Points	
Far Northeast	Montbello		
West	Barnum West		
Central	Lincoln Park	CBD, Union Station	Auraria
East Central		Capitol Hill	Congress Park
East	East Colfax		South Park Hill
Southwest	Westwood Mar Lee		Overland
South Central		Baker Speer	Washington Park West
Southeast Central			Cherry Creek Washington Park Belcaro Cory-Merrill
Southeast		Windsor	
Near Southeast		Washington Virginia Vale Virginia Village	Indian Creek
Far Southwest		Harvey Park Harvey Park South Bear Valley Fort Logan Marston	
South			University Wellshire University Hills
Far Southeast			Southmoor Park Hamden South



MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Parks and recreation services can only be successful if they are well-connected and easily accessible to the Denver community. Safe routes to parks and centers are tied to continuous sidewalks, paths, and bikeways; to connection to the public transit system; and to clear wayfinding and signage. In coordination with the *Blueprint Denver* and the *Denver Moves* implementation plans, these strategies support mobility improvements for better, more equitable connections to services.

#1

97%

improving access to parks and recreation was the number one strategy favored by residents at public meeting 3 [PF]

of respondents would be supportive of developing new walking and bicycling trails and connecting existing trails with or without tax dollars [SVS]

RELATED STRATEGIES:

5.1: Develop new standards to protect legacy parkways and educate the community about their value.

5.2: Consider the addition of new parkways with contemporary standards throughout the city (Lowry, Stapleton, Auraria).

*5.3: Expand a system of tree-lined streets to improve mobility, tree canopy, and water quality (Federal, Colorado).

5.4: Upgrade and expand regional trail system to meet new standards to improve safety, connectivity, wayfinding, and access.

5.5: Improve local trail corridors, in particular gulch corridors, to provide interconnectivity and park access.

[PF] = Public Forum 1

[SVS] = Statistically Valid Survey

Strategies

Strategy 3.5

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood.

Today, 86 percent of Denver residents live within a half mile (about a 10-minute walk) of a park. Walkable park access is critical to supporting active, healthy lifestyles. Studies show that residents—both youth and adults—who live near a park are more likely to exercise more frequently than residents without a park near their home.¹ For example, when parks are closer to home, children's use of parks increases by 400 percent and all age groups have a reduced risk of obesity.²

Denver is one of many cities around the country striving to increase walkable access to parks. Denver is one of 134 cities who have partnered to support a nationwide campaign for all to live within a 10-minute walk to a high-quality park or open space.³

¹ NRPA, Parks & Recreation in Underserved Areas: A Public Health Perspective, http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Parks-Rec-Underserved-Areas.pdf

² The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, and ULI, [10minutewalk.org](https://www.10minutewalk.org), <https://www.10minutewalk.org>.

³ NRPA, "Nation's Mayors Launch Groundbreaking 10-Minute Walk to a Park Campaign," NRPA.org, October 10, 2017, <https://www.nrpa.org/About-National-Recreation-and-Park-Association/press-room/nations-mayors-launch-groundbreaking-10-minute-walk-to-a-park-campaign/>.

Strategy 3.6

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.

Denver is continually improving transportation systems citywide, addressing growth through strategic investment and expansion of mobility options. While DPR continues to invest in its own infrastructure—like trails and wayfinding systems—opportunities exist to partner with providers of new forms of mobility to enable better and more efficient connectivity between facility and park assets. Programs like MyRide allow for cross-departmental collaboration to meet broader community mobility needs. Additionally, bike and scooter sharing programs abound—like the dockless scooter program—that would easily find a home in Denver's parks and park edges. My Denver Bikes is a growing opportunity for partnerships. This program provides access to bikes and bike education for the community.

One important aspect of mobility is connecting high-need neighborhoods to parks and recreation facilities. For example, high-priority transit service could connect underserved, high-need neighborhoods to recreation centers and parks. Coordinating public transit with park and recreation access will help promote healthy living.

This and other mobility-focused strategies suggest the need for a deeper partnership with Public Works to provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists to and through parks.

Strategy 3.7

Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide and regional amenities.

DPR invested in a comprehensive signage strategy for its parks and facilities in 2014—an investment that has resulted in a memorable and clearly visible identity to the system. This system has served the city well, and DPR should take care to ensure that the existing signs are well-maintained and in good operating condition.

In addition, opportunities now exist—particularly in an era of increasingly digital and mobile wayfinding—to invest in ways of better connecting users to parks and facilities. This can manifest in expanded systems of wayfinding, such as signage and placemaking that directs users to parks and recreation resources. It could further mean exploring and implementing more sophisticated online and digital wayfinding techniques and apps.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

Community Planning and Development

Department of Public Works

DPR - Office of the City Forester

RECOMMENDATION 1

Continue investing in mobility infrastructure, trails, and wayfinding systems.

- Implement pedestrian and bicycle connections that are priorities from *Denver Moves: Pedestrian and Trails*.
- Coordinate with efforts to increase mobility systems that fall outside the department's purview including coordination with recommendations from *Denver Moves: Transit*.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Partner with mobility providers to enable better and more efficient connectivity between facility and park assets.

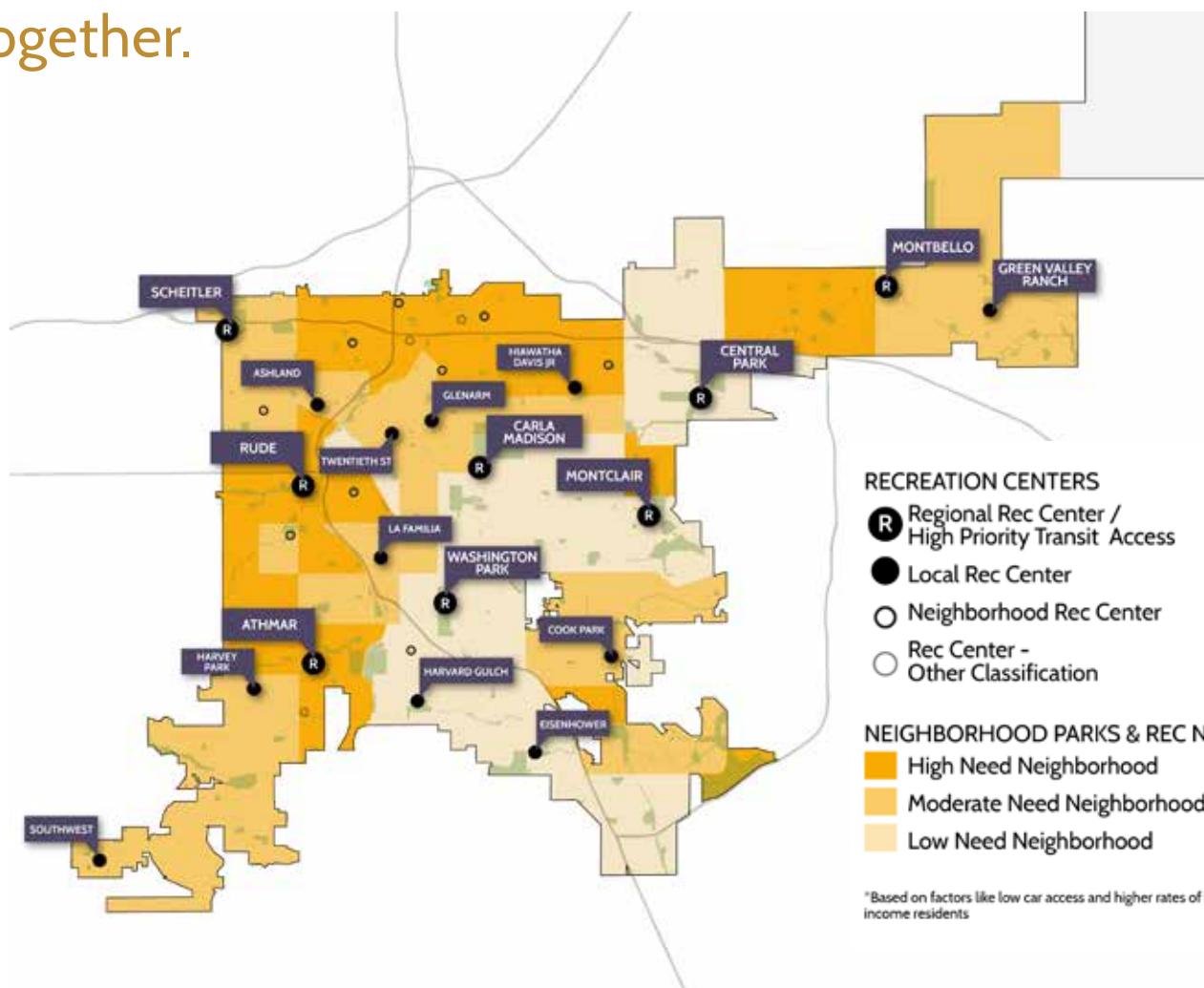
- Coordinate with local and regional public transportation providers to ensure that transit options are maintained or created to connect residents to city parks and facilities.
- Partner with transit providers to include major and/or regional parks on websites, public transportation maps, and other transportation plans.
- Explore collaboration and integration potential with programs like MyRide to meet broader community mobility needs.
- Coordinate with bike sharing programs like the B-cycle program to ensure integration of resources in parks and at recreation centers.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Advocate for mobility improvements that improve access to facilities in high-need areas.

- Prioritize connections that link high-need neighborhoods to parks and recreation facilities.
- Consider prioritizing facility improvements and program expansions at recreation centers with a high degree of mobility and transit connectivity.

City-wide mobility improvements and recreational resources should be prioritized together.



Transit Priority Recreation Centers

Regional and local recreation centers in or near high-need neighborhoods:

- Scheitler
- Ashland
- Rude
- Athmar
- Harvey Park
- Hiawatha Davis Jr
- Glenarm
- Twentieth St
- La Familia
- Washington Park
- Cook Park
- Montclair
- Central Park
- Montbello
- Green Valley Ranch

REINVEST IN DENVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES AND PEOPLE

The *Game Plan* will only be successful if there are adequate resources to support operations and staff. To reinvest in Denver's parks and recreation resources and people, the *Game Plan* includes strategies in the areas of equity; funding, operations, and staff; partnerships; and collaboration with the private sector.



\$ STRATEGIES:

EQUITY

See page 132

- ★ 4.1: Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity.
- 4.2: Identify and focus park and programmatic resources in underserved neighborhoods.

FUNDING, OPERATIONS, & STAFF

See page 138

- ★ 4.3: Explore alternative funding strategies to address unmet standards and expand and enhance Department services.
- 4.4: Support the development or enhancement of a comprehensive nonprofit to help promote and fund park and recreation improvements and awareness.
- 4.5: Achieve cost recovery targets for park and recreation facilities and services and adjust as needed.
- 4.6: Improve internal and external collaboration and communication to more effectively and efficiently deliver services and increase customer satisfaction.
- ★ 4.7: Support and invest in staff development and professional growth to support engagement and retention.
- 4.8: Invest in data gathering, analysis, and upgraded technology to improve operations and user satisfaction.
- ★ 4.9: Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.
- 4.10: Enhance opportunities to utilize golf courses for a variety of functions, events, and experiences consistent with their core function as golf facilities.

PARTNERSHIPS

See page 146

- 4.11: Create new opportunities to significantly increase volunteerism.
- ★ 4.12: Develop a citywide mutually beneficial relationship with DPS to share resources.
- 4.13: Work more closely with local community organizations to enhance programmatic value and resident service.
- 4.14: Work with partners, concessionaires, and sponsors to invest in park facilities and programs.
- 4.15: Enhance partnerships with Denver Water, Urban Drainage and other external agencies to protect and improve waterways and public resources.

COLLABORATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

See page 154

- ★ 4.16: Work with other City agencies to seek increased participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.
- 4.17: Work with the private sector to provide public amenities within private developments.
- 4.18: Work with other City agencies to establish regulations and guidelines to ensure compatibility of new development with adjacent parks and parkways.
- 4.19: Align park system growth with *Blueprint Denver* while striving to preserve neighborhood character and maintain service standards.



EQUITY

All Denver residents should have equitable access to parks and recreation facilities and services. These strategies focus on promoting equity through access standards and department decision-making to focus investments in underserved neighborhoods.

16%

of residents without a park within 10 min. walk are lower-income residents

22

of Denver's neighborhoods are "High need" neighborhoods for parks, based on income, density, lack of vehicular access, and other demographic factors

9

of these high-need neighborhoods have significant areas lacking walkable park access

See page 136 for a map of high-need neighborhoods

RELATED STRATEGIES:

3.4: Develop citywide proximity standards for all recreation facilities, services, and specialized park amenities.

Strategies

Strategy 4.1

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity.

Level-of-service (LOS) targets evaluate the desired quantity of park and recreation facilities relative to population (for example, provide 10 acres of park space per thousand residents). National data can support this process, but Denver should evaluate and customize targets in light of the city's unique context.

These standards, along with citywide proximity standards (see Strategy 3.4) will provide a baseline for evaluating how well existing parks and recreation facilities meet demands and identifying gaps in the system. DPR should make closing gaps in high-need neighborhoods an implementation priority (see Strategy 4.2).

Implementing strategies to close gaps should take a performance-based approach. A performance-based approach focuses on achieving the goal without focusing on one specific method to get there. This type of process opens up more opportunities to think creatively about possible solutions, with the added possibility of reduced overall costs and additional staffing requirements. For example, in an area where a recreation center is lacking, DPR could focus on partnerships with DPS, YMCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs to increase access to existing indoor recreation and programming; increase public transit access to recreation centers in nearby neighborhoods; and consider mobile programming opportunities to bring more recreation opportunities into the neighborhood.

Strategy 4.2

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Identify and focus park and programmatic resources in underserved neighborhoods.

DPR aspires to enhance equity with the parks and recreation system. In support of this goal, focusing resources in underserved, high-need neighborhoods will ensure equitable access to safe and walkable parks, places to play, and active recreation options for sports and recreation. Some neighborhoods today have unequal access to parks and recreation opportunities, so this strategy focuses on improving access, with a special focus on high-need neighborhoods where it is needed most.

Policies and actions together can support this strategy. DPR should ensure current policies support equitable outcomes and should create new policies or modify existing ones as needed.

To ensure underserved neighborhoods receive priority, DPR should identify existing deficits with a focus on core needs for high-need neighborhoods: active recreation opportunities and facilities, social spaces and passive recreation, and access to nature. Identifying existing deficits will be supported with the development of proximity standards (see Strategy 3.4) and LOS targets (see Strategy 4.1) for facilities and programming.

DPR could consider designating Equity Zones based on high-need neighborhoods.

After DPR identifies gaps, the department should prioritize actions in high-need neighborhoods. To close gaps DPR could consider new investments, partnerships, or programs. These opportunities could be an element to study within the NPIs to promote integrated solutions.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

Community Planning and Development

POLICY DIRECTION

Focus Resources in Underserved Neighborhoods

RECOMMENDATION 1

Develop LOS targets for facilities and programming.

- The 2003 *Game Plan* included LOS targets for some amenities (e.g., one baseball or softball field for every 5,000 residents, one indoor pool for every 15,000 residents, one gymnasium for every 12,000 residents, one soccer or multi-use field for every 5,000 residents). While some of these provided reasonable, achievable standards, others were considered unrealistic. For example, according to these standards the department would need 45 indoor pools and 56 indoor gyms.
- Evaluate and revise targets for facilities and programming. This process should consider national trends and data, and Denver's context and demographics, along with the presence of other service providers.
- Develop targets for access to natural areas, in addition to traditional recreation amenities and facilities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Evaluate current service and identify existing and projected gap areas.

- Using the LOS targets along with the proximity standards (see Strategy 3.4), evaluate existing service and identify both existing and future gap areas.
- Integrate projected increases in population into this analysis (using information from *Blueprint Denver* and future land use changes)
- Quantify and map existing and projected needs by neighborhood. Provide this information to CPD for integration into NPI planning.

Paco Sanchez Park expands play, recreation, and open space in an area that has historically lacked sufficient parks and recreation.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Using a performance-based approach, develop implementation strategies to address gaps, prioritizing high-need neighborhoods; integrate this process with the NPI process where possible.

- Prioritizing high-need neighborhoods, identify options to close existing gaps, either by building new DPR parks or facilities or by leveraging partnerships with existing facilities or programs (for example, partnering with DPS to develop a strategy for increasing access to school facilities; see Strategy 4.12).

Equity Focus Area: High Need Neighborhoods

Defining High Need Neighborhoods

Neighborhood overall demand for park and recreation facilities is determined by overlaying a series of population demographic metrics, taken from the 2010 US Census as well as recent aggregated estimates from the American Community Survey (2011-2015). Data analyzed to identify high-need neighborhoods includes the following:

- Lack of car ownership (less access to a car = higher park need)
- Ethnic and racial diversity (greater diversity = higher park need)
- Population density (denser neighborhoods = higher park need)
- Income (lower income = higher park need)
- Health (greater levels of obesity and chronic disease = higher walkable park need)

Combining these individual data points yields a picture of overall park and recreation demand highest in the northern and western parts of the city. It is assumed that neighborhoods in the inner southeast with their relatively higher incomes, whiter and healthier populations, more cars, and less density have more available resources to meet their park and recreation needs.

It is important to note that this map describes park demand based on need and demographics only, not whether these populations are already being served by an abundance of park and recreation center facilities. Community demand provides an important first lens for viewing all other spatial data around access to facilities within the city.

These geographic areas can be continuously assessed and redefined as the city grows and changes.

High Need Neighborhoods

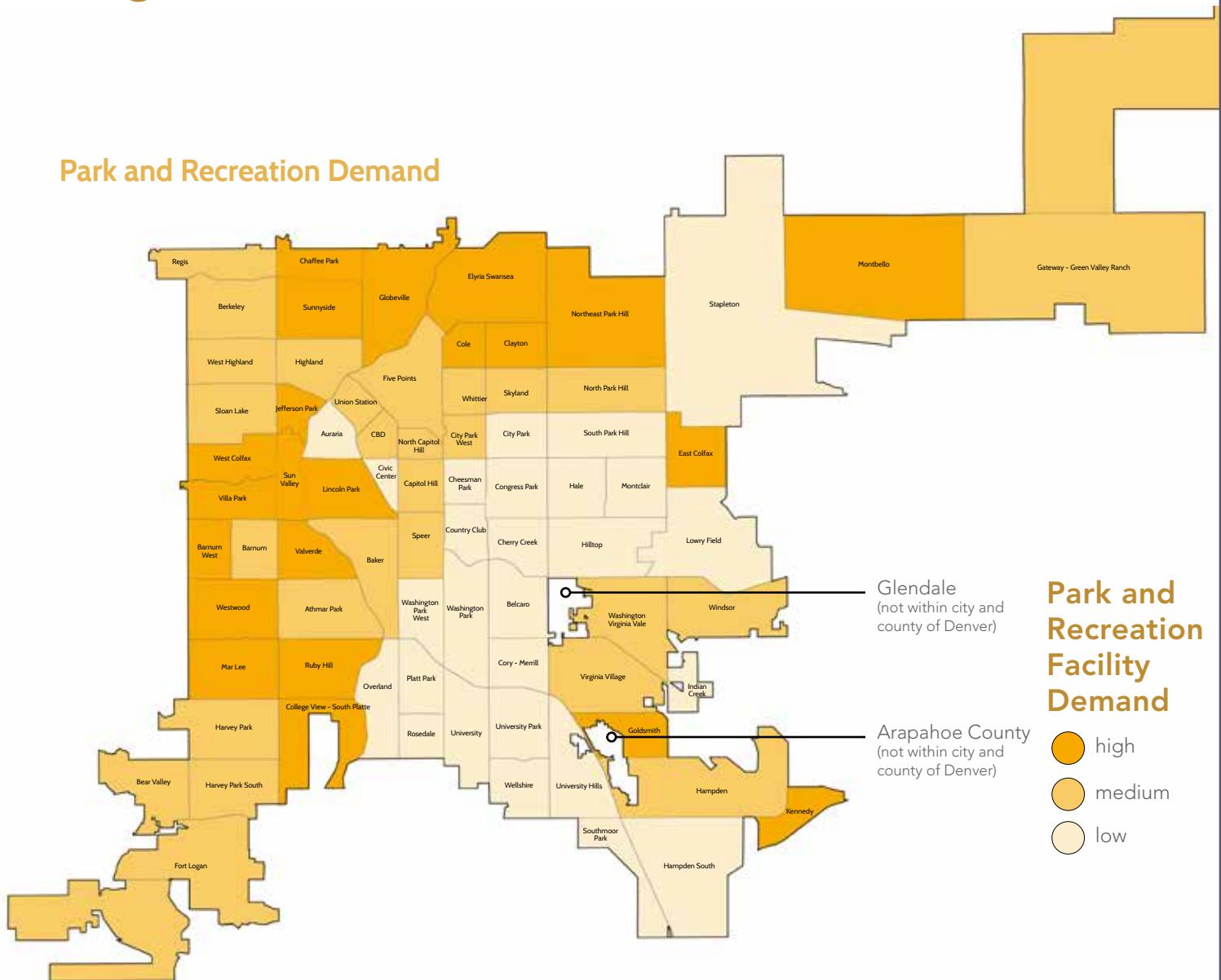
Barnum West	Montbello
Chaffe Park	Northeast Park Hill
Clayton	Ruby Hill
Cole	Sunnyside
College View	Sun Valley
East Colfax	Valverde
Elyria Swansea	Villa Park
Globeville	West Colfax
Goldsmith	Westwood
Jefferson Park	
Kennedy	
Lincoln Park	
Mar Lee	

Medium Need Neighborhoods

Athmar Park	Harvey Park South
Barker	Highland
Barnum	North Capitol Hill
Bear Valley	North Park Hill
Berkeley	Regis
Capitol Hill	Skyland
CBD	Sloan Lake
City Park West	Speer
Five Points	Union Station
Fort Logan	Virginia Village
Gateway/Green Valley Ranch	Washington Virginia Vale
Hamden	West Highland
Harvey Park	Whittier
	Windsor

Implementation should prioritize addressing unmet needs in high-need neighborhoods.

Park and Recreation Demand





FUNDING, OPERATIONS, AND STAFF

With a continually growing city increasing demands on the park and recreation system, now is an important time to identify new funding sources, revenue opportunities, and opportunities to decrease costs while maintaining service levels. Costs have been rising faster than funding, and the system needs additional investments to keep pace with population growth.

29%

Increase in expenses
from 2014 to 2017

\$92

annual operating
spending per resident:
greater than the national
median but less than
most peer cities

18%

of respondents identify
lack of sufficient funding
as one of the greatest
challenges for parks and
recreation [MS]

*Expenses are significantly outpacing
funding growth.*

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*2.2: Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.

2.6: Ensure transparency of departmental decision-making for internal and external partners.

*2.7: Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives, and needs.

2.8: Recruit and hire staff to reflect ethnic and language diversity.

*3.2: Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program

expansion.

4.14: Work with partners, concessionaires, and sponsors to invest in park facilities and programs.

*4.16: Work with other City agencies to secure participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.

4.17: Work with the private sector to provide public amenities within private developments.

5.11: Reimagine Recreation Centers as meeting places and community hubs and catalysts for park activation.

Strategies

Strategy 4.3

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Explore alternative funding strategies to address unmet standards and expand and enhance Department services.

This century has seen a renewed interest in and understanding of parks and recreation as central to the livability, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness of our urban centers. Catalyst projects, new forms of public/private partnerships, and increased visibility in the public sphere all speak to this growing awareness of park and recreation's value. In our statistically valid survey, 99 percent of respondents said they believe parks and recreation improves quality of life, preserves open space, and contributes to community health! Along with this awareness and need also comes greater financial burden and the need to grow alternate funding as a share of the Department's funding sources. Community expectations of parks and recreation have never been higher.

Despite this burgeoning renaissance, many cities, including Denver, have yet to parlay the public's perception of the value of parks and recreation into sustainable funding mechanisms. There is much to be learned from those who have, including new economic mechanisms for growing parks alongside private development, and leveraging public will for increased public contribution.

Strategy 4.4

Support the development or enhancement of a comprehensive nonprofit to help promote and fund park and recreation improvements and awareness.

With finite resources and high demands, parks and recreation departments around the country are working with new formations of partnerships to both raise awareness of parks and recreation's value and enable higher levels of service. Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington among many other cities nationwide are finding success with the support and advocacy of a parks foundation. These groups can harness the partnership power of diverse public, private, and advocacy-based community groups to build support for selected initiatives and implement specific policies, programs, and projects to better meet community needs. For Denver, a department-wide foundation can help to promote parks and recreation improvements, raising awareness both of the department's work and its extraordinary resources.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 4.5

Achieve cost recovery targets for park and recreation facilities and services and adjust as needed.

Denver's Department of Parks and Recreation is funded by the General Fund which is made up of several diverse sources such as sales tax, property tax as well as fees such as recreation fees and various City imposed fines. Denver supports Parks and Recreation through General Fund dollars because it is a community benefit. Additionally, there are opportunities for individuals or small groups to take advantage of recreation activities or parks amenities and the City has a policy in place to recover all or a partial amount of the costs associated with those individual or small group benefits.

Even though DPR is not funded on a revenue recovery basis, some level of cost recovery is essential to fiscal health and sustainability of the department's facilities and services while maintaining accessibility and affordability. In 2013, DPR completed a resources and priority plan (RAPP) to support this goal; however, it was never fully implemented. The department should review, update, and continue to implement those recommendations to improve its cost recovery. DPR should identify the core park and recreation facilities, programs, and services to include in the establishment of cost recovery efforts. Restricting evaluation to the core programs will prevent efforts from becoming overly complex or unwieldy. Cost recovery modeling should include an approved cost recovery/subsidy-level policy, methods for defining cost recovery calculations including identification of direct and indirect costs, and targets at a cost-center level. DPR should undertake this for selected services based on three years' history of results and in concert with the staff in charge of the program/facility. DPR should develop an agency revenue policy. Pricing of programs and services should be reviewed annually to ensure optimization of revenue while also ensuring equitable access to services in accordance with DPR's existing cost recovery policy and in compliance with DPR's existing RAPP.

Ongoing monitoring and consistent training are key to the success of cost recovery efforts. This should include a training program for staff to learn about cost recovery, its importance, and how it is derived. Further, the development of a dashboard can list the effort's baseline performance and allow for ongoing monitoring.

Strategy 4.6

Improve internal and external collaboration and communication to more effectively and efficiently deliver services and increase customer satisfaction.

With tight budgets and rising demand, it is increasingly important to identify how to deliver services more efficiently while maintaining a high quality of service. Collaboration—both internal and external—can be an opportunity to work together for increased efficiency. Marketing and communications can be opportunities to collaborate internally, and external partnerships can also help expand certain types of recreation offerings more efficiently than the department may be able to do on its own.

Continuing to share information about the financial spending and costs through the department's annual report will support ongoing transparency about parks and recreation spending.

For additional information, see Strategy 4.12: Develop a citywide mutually beneficial agreement with DPS to share resources; Strategy 4.13: Work more closely with local community organizations to enhance programmatic value and resident services; and Strategy 5.8: Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events.

Strategy 4.7

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Support and invest in staff development and professional growth to support engagement and retention.

Creating a positive work culture is key to supporting staff engagement, retention, and professional growth. In turn, a positive work environment will help contribute to improved customer service.

Main elements of this strategy include measuring and tracking existing employee satisfaction levels and employee turnover, considering succession plans to ensure success is sustainable, strengthening onboarding training for new employees, and developing competencies and career development plans supported by training.

Developing better information about current trends will help track issues. Actions DPR could take include tracking employee turnover as a key performance indicator, and developing a baseline survey. This survey can gauge current levels of employee satisfaction and measure training and development, retention, and engagement. Survey results can then serve as the basis for developing an action plan for improvements. Implementation of the action plan could be supported by a cross functional team of employees focused on improvement areas.

Succession plans are important to ensure continued success and function as employees change. Developing succession plans for key leadership positions, centers, and programs will support long-term success and knowledge transfer.

The beginning of an employee's tenure is an important time for setting up that individual's future success in the department. Two actions DPR could take to give new employees a great start are strengthening the onboarding process—particularly for supervisors and coordinators—and establishing a departmental mentoring program for new full-time employees.

DPR can support the ongoing success of employees at all levels through three additional actions: developing functional competencies, establishing career development plans, and developing training plans. These steps include identifying needed competencies for organizational, divisional, and individual positions; identifying existing gaps in competency; and providing training opportunities to improve skill sets. This step should consider two levels: current gaps in skill sets and gaps for skills needed in the future. One option is to consider developing a departmental university that trains staff in identified organizational competencies. Staff have suggested establishing a departmental approach for required credentials and determining what training and continuing education the department will financially support. Establishing career development plans for professional positions and identifying career paths that are supported with training will further help promote long-term tenure and professional growth within DPR.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 4.8

Invest in data gathering and analysis and upgraded technology to improve operations and user satisfaction.

Data and technology is a crosscutting issue that could support enhanced operations and cost savings, reduced water and energy consumption, and improved user satisfaction and safety. DPR has already been investing in new technologies. For example, over 75 parks now use controlled irrigation systems providing automatic watering resulting in lower water use; energy audits and resulting improvements to HVAC and building systems have decreased energy use in pools and other facilities.

New technologies can also complement traditional play and exercise equipment in parks, further promoting active play. Interactive play structures or energy-generating fitness equipment can encourage more use by children and adults alike.

Staff suggestions for enhancing technology include expanding WiFi access, developing mobile applications to share information and collect feedback, and continuing to deploy automation and electronic administrative tools that support good business practices and operational reporting.

Maintenance facilities and recreation centers are two locations described by staff as needing improved technology. (For more details, see Strategy 4.9: Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.)

Strategy 4.9

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.

Maintenance facilities, which serve as a hub for employees to clock in and out, check email, manage assignments, and gather tools or materials for work, are distributed throughout the city. Staff describe many of these facilities as in need of upgrades, particularly in terms of energy efficiency and technology. Recent innovations include mobile tablets for certain maintenance teams to better track areas where work is needed as well as progress on task orders. Staff touted how efficient these new systems were and advocated for their rollout more generally.

A recommended action item is to work with DPW to integrate and cooperate on maintenance facilities and equipment upgrades.

Considering necessary technology upgrades at recreation centers like computers, internet, and wifi is also part of this strategy.

Continuing to promote universal access in keeping with Denver's existing commitment to accessibility is also an important part of meeting baseline standards.

In addition to meeting baseline standards in facilities, this strategy also supports ensuring basic amenities (like water fountains and benches) are included in parks as appropriate.

See also Strategy 3.4 which includes considering public restroom siting and design.

Strategy 4.10

Enhance opportunities to utilize golf courses for a variety of functions, events, and experiences consistent with their core function as golf facilities.

DPR owns and operates eight public golf courses. Denver Golf manages the courses as an independent enterprise fund; profits from sales are reinvested directly into golf facilities and services, and the division maintains its own website and communications arm separate from DPR.

Following the 2011 Golf Strategic Plan, two key program areas have received significant investment in the last five years: golf education and course sustainability. Denver Golf has partnered with the First Tee of Denver to provide affordable lessons for youth as young as four. Six of Denver's courses have recently become Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries, and Evergreen is scheduled for certification within the next four years.

As trends in golf evolve, sustaining Denver's golf courses will require continuing to diversify offerings:

- Complete research on what other courses around the country are doing to diversify revenues and golf course related experiences.
- Market golf course clubhouses for off-season rentals and special events.
- Develop a marketing plan to increase tournaments and outings.
- The existing vision and mission of the courses refers to environmentally sustainable operations—develop an open house for golfers that reviews the courses' commitment to sustainable practices. In order to draw people to the program, personalize it and let golfers know how they can contribute to sustainable practices.
- Offer general recreation programs at clubhouses that can accommodate a group of class participants.
- Monitor demand and use, and consider conversion of selected holes or courses to different park and recreation amenities if demand significantly drops.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

Community Planning and Development

POLICY DIRECTION

Transparent, Data-Driven Decision-Making

Hiring Policies for Diversity

Pricing and Affordability Policies for Programs

Cross-Departmental Collaboration

RECOMMENDATION 1

Leverage public support for increased public and partner contributions.

- Use the *Game Plan* and its priority actions to increase public awareness about how the Department is funded and operated.
- Gather public input on any proposals for increased funding or partner requirements.
- Seek concession opportunities in parks where appropriate.

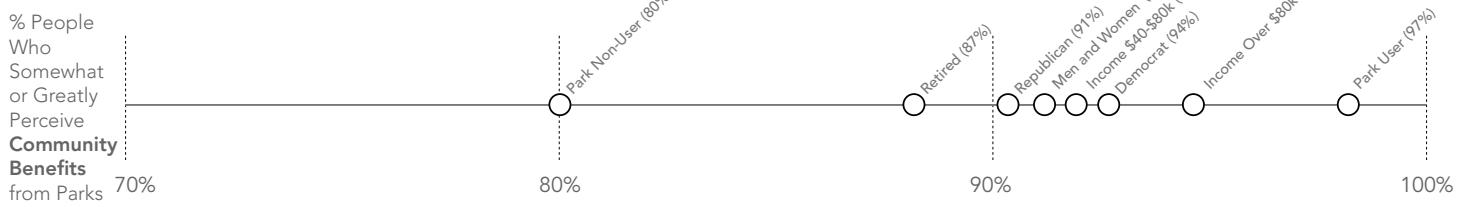
RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop a strategic approach to sponsorships.

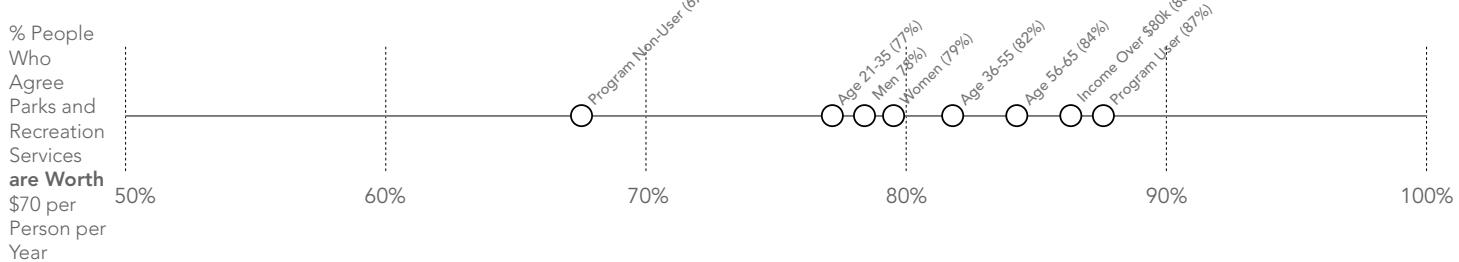
- Prioritize the evaluation and pursuit of alternative revenue options such as corporate support and development of parks partners to address resource needs.



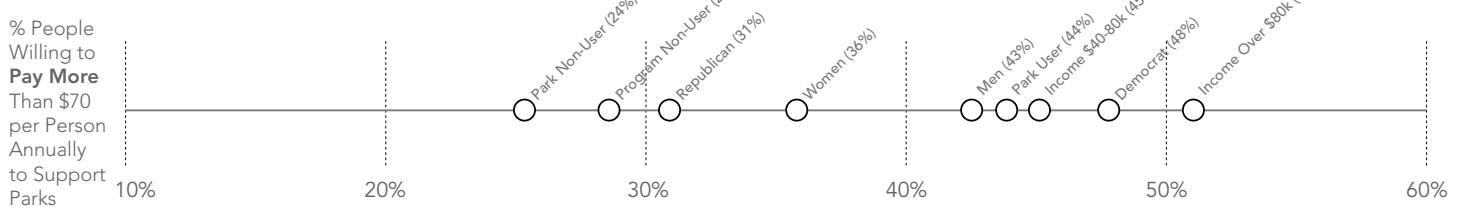
Americans see local park and recreation services as an important part of healthy living.



4 in 5 Americans say their local parks are well worth the average annual spending of \$70 per person.



Even non-park users see tax spending on local parks as a good investment.



These graphs created from data in "Americans' Broad-Based Support for Local Recreation and Park Services," National Recreation and Parks Association, 2016.



PARTNERSHIPS

DPR's current programmatic, operational, and funding partners provide significant support to the department, and the opportunity to both deepen and broaden these partnerships cannot be overlooked. In a climate of limited city budgets, partnerships will become increasingly important as a means of financial and operational support for park and recreation facilities.

>200% 200+

growth in volunteer hours between 2010 and 2016

existing partnerships with organizations, businesses, schools, individuals, and governmental entities within the city.

Strategies

Strategy 4.11

Create new opportunities to significantly increase volunteerism.

DPR's volunteer programs and partnerships have grown significantly in the past five years. In 2016 more than 11,000 volunteers spent more than 46,000 hours working to maintain parks, playgrounds, trails, tree-lawns and other critical facilities—more than double the number of volunteer hours logged in 2010.

Volunteer efforts are a significant value to DPR; the department estimates these service hours brought over \$830,000 in benefit to the department in 2016 alone. Although many of these volunteers are recruited and managed directly by DPR's park stewardship program, a significant number also come through partner organizations. In particular, the Park People and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado offer significant support to maintenance efforts.

Creating new opportunities can increase stewardship of the system, and it should be accompanied by appropriate increases in DRP staff time to coordinate efforts and manage and train volunteers.

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*3.1: Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals.

*3.2: Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion.

3.3: Leverage partners to create programs/events of regional and national significance.

*4.1: Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity.

4.2: Identify and focus park and programmatic resources in underserved neighborhoods.

*5.8: Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events.

Strategy 4.12

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Develop a citywide mutually beneficial relationship with DPS to share resources.

In Denver, a joint use agreement between DPS and DPR could significantly increase access to recreation spaces, including in many underserved communities. A joint use agreement (or shared use agreement) is a formal agreement to share facilities, making recreation facilities available to the community. Local schools offer many similar recreation resources to neighborhood parks and recreation centers, but they may be locked outside of school hours. Developing partnerships to provide public access to these facilities outside of school hours could help expand recreation opportunities in many neighborhoods.

Joint use agreements are especially common in California, but are in use in Colorado as well. For example, Highlands Ranch Metro District and Douglas County entered into a joint use agreement in 2008 to allow shared use of outdoor facilities at elementary schools.

Despite the benefits, schools can be reluctant to open their facilities after hours due to concerns about safety, liability, insurance, and maintenance. A 2006 study found only 29 percent of schools opened their recreational facilities after school hours.

Agreements to formalize shared use, however, can help address these challenges. A joint or shared use agreement specifies the terms of the sharing and clarifies responsibilities.

Strategy 4.13

Work more closely with local community organizations to enhance programmatic value and resident service.

Many local community organizations share complimentary missions to DPR towards growing a healthy city. Partnerships with these organizations can expand available programs for residents. For example, Denver Urban Gardens supports food to nourish the community, Denver Inner City Parish provides programming at College View Recreation Center, and Cooking Matters provides healthy cooking classes for all. Continuing to expand these partnerships can provide even more options for local residents for recreation, healthy living, outdoor recreation, and beyond.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 4.14

Work with partners, concessionaires, and sponsors to invest in park facilities and programs.

Partners, concessionaires, and sponsors can provide additional investments and programs for both urban and mountain parks. To best leverage these partnerships, first develop a policy governing partner investments and identify staff responsibilities and accountability to oversee this area. Next, identify a listing of partners, concessionaires and sponsors that are value-aligned with DPR and create a framework for investment opportunities that outlines the benefits to partners. Then, provide an education session for the various groups to share departmental opportunities. Develop an ongoing communication program with the various groups, and host a formal recognition ceremony for all groups who have made investments in DPR. Finally, evaluate the program and make recommended improvements.

DPR could update current sponsorship policies to better leverage corporate and health care funding partners to support specific recreation center and programing improvements.

Strategy 4.15

Enhance partnerships with Denver Water, Urban Drainage and other external agencies to protect and improve waterways and public resources.

Denver has made great strides toward rediscovering its natural waterways and water bodies, such as the South Platte River, Cherry Creek, and the High Line Canal. Once primarily used for agriculture, industry, and landfills, Denver has remediated and converted miles of rivers and creeks into ecological and recreational resources. Since 2003, Denver has restored 2.5 miles of gulch waterways. Furthermore, the establishment of native vegetation along the river edges, increased green infrastructure, and stormwater basins in the park system have contributed to improved water quality by reducing the amount of sediments and inorganics entering the natural waterways. In the mountain parks system, trail and parking improvements at Summit Lake, Red Rocks, and Genesee have helped limit erosion and protect the watersheds.

DPR, however, can only make improvements on parkland, and many non-park areas—like industrial areas, parking lots, and other roads—still drain into Denver's waterways, carrying pollutants and trash. Continuing to work with Natural Resources Division, DPW, UDFCD, Denver Water, and other partners will help restore and maintain riparian and wetland ecosystems in parks and greenways, and across the city as a whole.

Programmatic Partners

Programmatic partners differ from institutional partners in that they do not have significant physical facilities on DPR land; rather, they operate programs and activities on DPR land or within DPR facilities. Programmatic partners are the most diverse partnerships, and allow DPR to enrich and expand the variety of program opportunities the system can offer within its facilities without placing additional burden on existing staff.

Examples of Programmatic Partners: (not an exhaustive list)

- Denver Urban Gardens: cultivating food to nourish the community
- The Boys and Girls Club: recreational activities, camps and field trips for youth
- The YMCA: full operation of a former DPR recreation center, and programs at others
- Birdseed Collective: occupation and programming at Globeville Recreation Center
- 4H: STEM and nutrition/ cooking programs for youth
- UPLIFT: recreation, team-building and leadership training for youth
- Revolution Foods: provides snacks and meals for youth and seniors
- Cooking Matters: healthy cooking classes for all
- The AARP: driving and tax-assistance classes for seniors

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

DPS

DPR - Office of the City Forester

POLICY DIRECTION

Partnership Policies

RECOMMENDATION 1

Explore a Joint-Use Agreement with DPS

In Denver, a joint-use agreement between DPS and DPR could significantly increase access to recreation spaces, including in many underserved communities. A joint-use agreement (or shared use agreement) is a formal agreement to share facilities, making available recreation facilities to the community.

Joint use agreements are especially common in California, but are in use in Colorado as well. For example, Highlands Ranch Metro District and Douglas County entered into a joint use agreement in 2008 to allow shared use of outdoor facilities at elementary schools. The purpose of the agreement is "to maximize the efficient use of both park and elementary school athletic fields, shelters, and restrooms ('Outdoor Facilities') to further recreation and athletic opportunities available in Highlands Ranch." The agreement covers scheduling priority, annual review process, maintenance, rental fees, insurance, outdoor field improvements, and other topics.¹

¹ Intergovernmental Agreement Between Highlands Ranch Metropolitan District and the Douglas County School District Re.l. Highlands Ranch Elementary School Outdoor Facilities. Agreement dated September 1, 2008. <http://highlandsranch.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Douglas-County-School-District-Cooperative-Use-Agreements.pdf>

SPECTRUM OF JOINT USE

Adapted from Playing Smart: A National Joint Use Toolkit⁴



BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF JOINT USE

Promoting physical activity:

Shared use of school facilities provides more access to recreation opportunities for surrounding communities. Studies in cities like Boston, Cincinnati, San Diego, and New Orleans show that providing access to playgrounds, courts, or fields after school hours encourages more frequent physical activity for youth.¹ For example, one study compared changes in physical activity in two lower-income New Orleans communities; one community's schoolyard was opened and supervised after hours, while the other remained closed after school. After two years, the study compared physical activity rates between the two communities and found "the number of children who were outdoors and physically active was 84 percent higher in the intervention neighborhood than the comparison neighborhood. Survey results showed that children in the intervention school reported declines relative to the children in the comparison school in watching television, watching movies and DVDs, and playing video games on weekdays."² By encouraging physical activity, shared use helps reduce the risk of obesity.

Enabling better use of resources and sharing costs:

In today's era of tight budgets, shared use of school facilities can help communities maximize previous investments. Sharing of existing facilities can be more cost-effective than building duplicative recreational facilities to close existing service gaps. Maintenance efforts can also be shared.

Challenges:

Despite the benefits, schools can be reluctant to open their facilities after hours due to concerns about safety, liability, insurance, and maintenance. A 2006 study found only 29 percent of schools opened their recreational facilities after school hours.³

Agreements to formalize shared use, however, can help address these challenges. A joint or shared use agreement specifies the terms of the sharing and clarifies responsibilities.

¹ Durant N, Harris SK, Doyle S et al. Relation of school environment and policy to adolescent physical activity. *J Sch Health*. 2009;79(4):153–159. quiz 205–156. [PubMed] & Farley TA, Meriwether RA, Baker ET, Watkins LT, Johnson CC, Webber LS. Safe play spaces to promote physical activity in inner-city children: results from a pilot study of an environmental intervention. *Am J Public Health*. 2007;97(9):1625–1631. [PubMed], both articles cited in Young, D. R., Spengler, J. O., Frost, N., Evenson, K. R., Vincent, J. M., & Whitsel, L. (2014). Promoting Physical Activity Through the Shared Use of School Recreational Spaces: A Policy Statement From the American Heart Association. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104(9), 1583–1588. <http://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301461> (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4151914/#bib20>)

² Farley TA, Meriwether RA, Baker ET, Watkins LT, Johnson CC, Webber LS. Safe play spaces to promote physical activity in inner-city children: results from a pilot study of an environmental intervention. *Am J Public Health*. 2007;97(9):1625–1631. [PubMed]

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS). *Healthy People 2020: Physical Activity Objectives*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS). *Healthy People 2020: Physical Activity Objectives*. Washington, DC: HSS, PA-10, 2010. Available at: www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/objectiveslist.aspx?topicid=33, cited in Playing Smart Maximizing the Potential of School and Community Property Through Joint Use Agreements. Edited by Manel Kappagoda, JD, MPH, and Robert S. Ogilvie, PhD (ChangeLab Solutions). 2012. http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Playing_Smart-National_Joint-Use_Toolkit_Updated_20120517_0.pdf

⁴ Four types of shared use adapted from Playing Smart: A National Joint Use Toolkit, http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Playing_Smart-National_Joint-Use_Toolkit_Updated_20120517_0.pdf

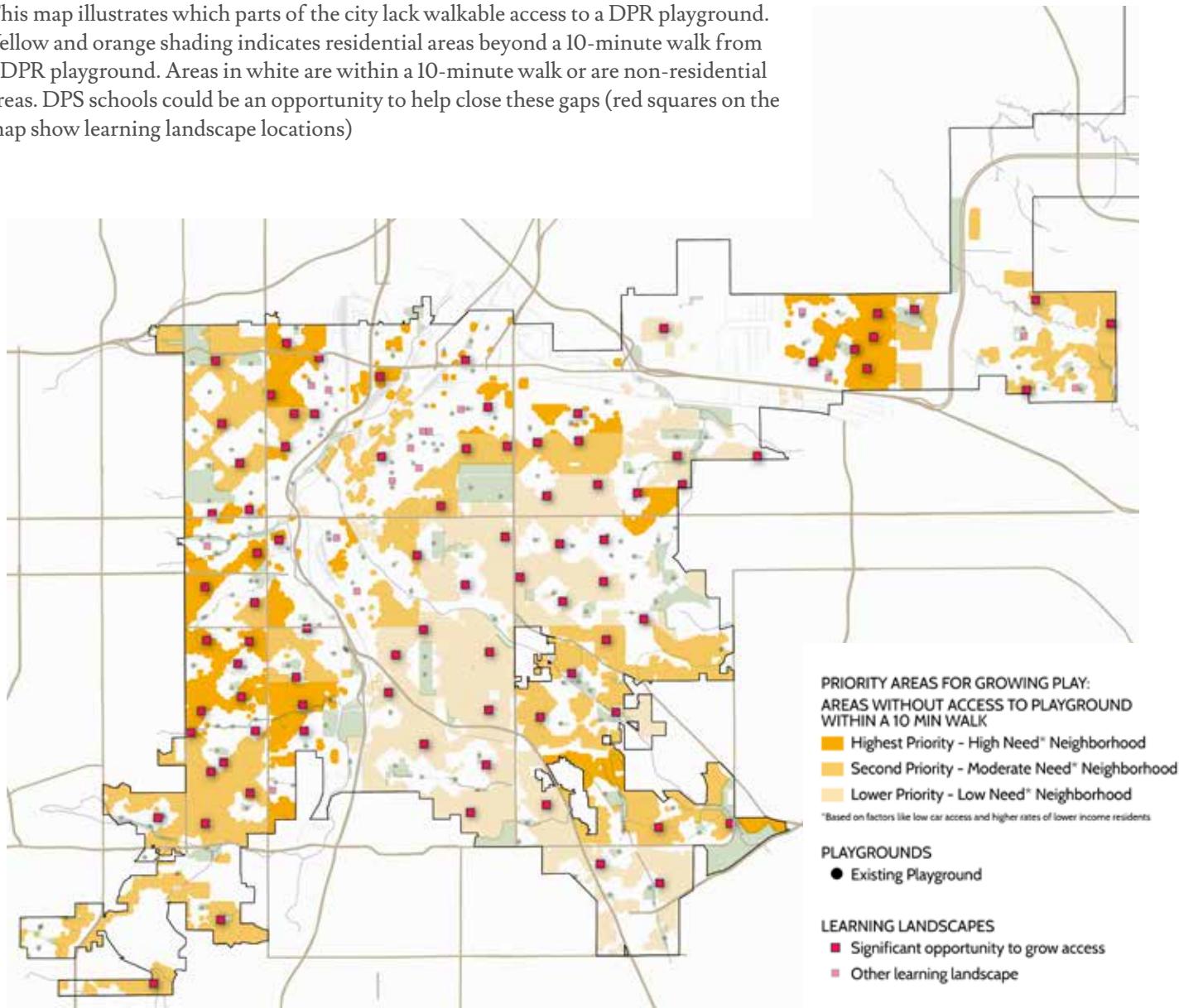
EXAMPLE: PLAYGROUNDS

Shared use could increase play access in Denver, especially in underserved communities.

Today, 18 percent of Denverites are under 18 years old, yet 52 percent of Denver residential parcels cannot access a playground within 10 minutes. In many areas of Denver with limited access to DPR playgrounds, DPS playgrounds and learning landscapes could expand access to play opportunities. These places of play are neither owned nor operated by DPR and may vary in terms of amenities, hours, and accessibility. A shared use agreement could provide an additional 20 percent of Denver parcels access to a playspace.

Priority Areas for Increasing Play and Opportunity of Schools

This map illustrates which parts of the city lack walkable access to a DPR playground. Yellow and orange shading indicates residential areas beyond a 10-minute walk from a DPR playground. Areas in white are within a 10-minute walk or are non-residential areas. DPS schools could be an opportunity to help close these gaps (red squares on the map show learning landscape locations)



Currently 52% of residential parcels do not have access to a DPR playground within a 10 minute walk of their home. An estimated 20% more homes could have play access with a joint-use agreement in place.

CHECKLIST OF COMMON CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CREATING A JOINT USE AGREEMENT ADAPTED FROM PLAYING SMART: A NATIONAL JOINT USE TOOL

*Playing Smart: A National Joint Use Tool*¹ provides a guide to the basic considerations of creating a joint use agreement.² Initial steps to lay the groundwork for a joint use agreement include the following.

- 1. Identify community and school needs.** Inventory facilities to determine what is available and most suitable to meeting unmet needs (considering, for example, location, type of facility and condition, degree of support).
- 2. Identify potential properties.** Inventory facilities to determine what is available and most suitable to meeting unmet needs (considering, for example, location, type of facility and condition, degree of support).
- 3. Identify partner organizations.** Will other organizations and nonprofits like YMCAs and sports leagues be part of the shared use agreement? If so, consider inviting them to sit on a joint use task force or participate in the negotiations.
- 4. Build relationships with the appropriate decision makers.** Identify and build relationships with supportive decision makers (school board members, city council members, other public officials).
- 5. Make sure the concept is approved.** The school board and the governing entity of the city, county, or town should approve the concept of developing a joint use agreement before the agreement is created.

For additional details and next steps in the process of creating a joint use agreement, see the *Playing Smart* report.

¹ 2012. Produced by NPLAN and KaBOOM! with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Kresge Foundation. See pages 14-17 for the detailed checklist.

² For another set of considerations, see page 9 of Development of joint-use educational facility agreements between California Public School districts and community entities: A cross-case analysis of strategic practices, barriers, and supportive elements, excerpted from a dissertation by Kenneth Charles Testa (University of La Verne, 2000). Although tailored to joint use agreements in California, it is another resource for identifying key topics to cover in an agreement. <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/joint-use.pdf>.



COLLABORATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Collaborating with the private sector will help meet the park and recreation demand of new residents. With the citywide population projected to continue increasing, working together will be increasingly important to ensure Denver's park system is meeting the needs of all residents.

150K+

projected new residents
in Denver in the next 10
years

1,350

new acres of park space
needed to maintain
existing service levels

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*3.1: Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals.

*3.2: Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion.

Strategies

Strategy 4.16

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Work with other City agencies to seek increased participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.

Denver's population continues to climb, but park space growth is not keeping pace. Looking ahead, Denver's population is projected to increase by another 150,000 residents in the next ten years.¹ To maintain existing levels of service (9 acres per thousand residents), the city will need an additional 1,350 acres of new park space over the next 10 years to support these new residents. If level of service increases to 13 acres per thousand residents, the amount of new park space to support new residents would be 1,950 acres.

Explore policies that seek to capture value from new development and channel it into enhanced and new resources for the community. This should include a robust framework that includes criteria for geographic distribution, services provided and measures for success.

¹ City and County of Denver, Denveright, *Blueprint Denver* (City and County of Denver, May 19, 2017): 5, https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denveright/documents/Blueprint/Meeting_Archive/CommunityProfile.pdf.

Strategy 4.17

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Work with the private sector to provide public amenities within private developments.

This strategy focuses on working with the private sector to increase public amenities, like parkland or trails, within private developments. As new developments are created, the resulting new residents increase the demands on the park system. Particularly in denser areas, other opportunities to acquire land and increase park access may be limited or cost prohibitive for DPR. Working with the private sector can help meet park and recreation needs, and in return, the onsite public spaces can help increase property values.

Implementing this strategy will require collaboration both internally and externally, and DPR should consider it in connection with Strategy 4.16.

Strategy 4.18

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Work with other City agencies to establish regulations and guidelines to ensure compatibility of new development with adjacent parks and parkways.

Successful parks and recreational resources do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are often deeply shaped by the communities that surround them, and strongly influenced by the adjacent urban form. Said another way, great parks and parkways often have great edges. Given the known value parks create for the private development often spurned by their presence, opportunities exist to leverage this value into a more holistic design process to ensure development does not in any way minimize or impede that value.

DPR should work closely with city agencies to establish clear regulations and guidelines that can help ensure new development reinforces and positively influences park and parkway character. Consideration should include massing, setbacks, environmental impacts (e.g., sun, shade, wind), openness, circulation, and architectural expression. Working together will ensure joint, synergistic success and more cohesive neighborhood identity.

Strategy 4.19

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Align park system growth with *Blueprint Denver* while striving to preserve neighborhood character and maintain service standards.

Blueprint Denver—originally adopted in 2002 and currently being updated as the lead planning effort of the Denveright initiative—is a comprehensive plan for Denver's transportation and future land use. The most recent effort has involved extensive community engagement and has resulted in a clear vision of a more inclusive city with strong and authentic neighborhoods. Currently, the *Blueprint Denver* planning team is working on a comprehensive approach to forecasting and managing land use change in the city while acknowledging that all parts of Denver are constantly evolving, ideally toward a more complete, diverse, and affordable city.

The confluence of the *Blueprint Denver* planning process with this *Game Plan for a Healthy City* offers the unique opportunity to align recommendations for maximum benefit. Where *Blueprint Denver* might predict growth and change, DPR can use that information to identify opportunities to grow offerings in areas that require more open space, activity, and recreational programming. Collectively, *Blueprint Denver* and the *Game Plan* can identify the physical, cultural, and economic qualities that define neighborhood character and identity, working together to ensure preservation of the unique places that comprise Denver's thriving and diverse urban fabric.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

Community Planning and Development

REGULATORY GUIDANCE

Guidelines for New Development
Adjacent to Parks and Parkways

RECOMMENDATION 1

Develop a new people, new parks policy, requiring a financial or onsite provision for new development.

An initial step is creating a citywide policy that new development should support new parks necessary to meet the increase in demand for parks and recreation services resulting from the development's new residents.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Conduct a study that would identify the means and best practices to involve the development community in cost sharing for park, open space, and recreation amenities.

Many cities around the country have adopted ordinances to ensure new development supports the parks and recreation needs of its new residents. As of 2010, the Center for City Park Excellence reports that 36 of the main park and recreation agencies within the 100 most populous US cities had some variation of shared funding and support that received \$55.5 million and over 200 acres of parkland in FY 2010.¹

An initial step in considering a shared funding strategy, this study should include the following:

- Summary of the legal context, including survey of relevant Colorado state law, and compliance with each requirement
- Park cost recommendations: methodology (including assumptions, formulas, and variables that are the basis for the calculations), maximum and recommended cost schedules, and comparisons with other peer cities
- Fund program implementation and administration
- Growth estimates/new parks demand

Reports by Shoreline, Washington, and Santa Monica, California, provide examples of this type of study.²

¹ Coleen Gentles, "Developer Impact Fees Pay for Parks," City Parks Blog, February 29, 2012, <https://cityparksblog.org/2012/02/29/developer-impact-fees-pay-for-parks/>.

² Shoreline, WA: CAI Community Attributes, Inc., "Rate Study for Impact Fees for Parks, Open Space and Recreation Facilities" discussion draft (City of Shoreline, May 9, 2017), <http://www.shorelinewa.gov/home/showdocument?id=31341>. Santa Monica, CA: Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., Parks and Recreation Development Impact Fee Study (City of Santa Monica, August 2013), https://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/CCS/Homepage_Promos/2013-August_Parks%20and_Rec_Devt_Impact_Fee_Study.pdf.



CONNECT TO DENVER'S NATURE AND CULTURE

Ultimately, the *Game Plan* is a way to protect what is special about Denver, linking residents to the incredible natural setting. Strategies for Denver's parkways, tree-lined streets, and trails; arts, culture, and history; innovative parks and recreation; and nature and outdoor recreation will work together to continue to connect to Denver's nature and culture.





STRATEGIES:

PARKWAYS, TREE-LINED STREETS, & TRAILS

See page 160

- 5.1: Develop new standards to protect legacy parkways and educate the community about their value.
- 5.2: Consider the addition of new parkways with contemporary standards throughout the city.
- ★ 5.3: Expand a system of tree-lined streets to improve mobility, tree canopy, and water quality.
- 5.4: Upgrade and expand regional trail system to meet new standards to improve safety, connectivity, wayfinding, and access.
- 5.5: Improve local trail corridors, in particular gulch corridors, to provide interconnectivity and park access.

ARTS, CULTURE, & HISTORY

See page 166

- 5.6: Develop a thorough inventory of all park historic structures and prioritize for preservation and restoration.
- 5.7: Celebrate the history and culture of our unique neighborhoods and reflect that in the design of parks and facilities.
- ★ 5.8: Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events.

INNOVATIVE PARKS & RECREATION

See page 170

- ★ 5.9: Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health.
- 5.10: Develop more active program opportunities in the city center.
- 5.11: Re-imagine Recreation Centers as meeting places and community hubs and catalysts for park activation.

NATURE & OUTDOOR RECREATION

See page 174

- ★ 5.12: Create nature experiences and access to natural areas in every community.
- ★ 5.13: Expand access, amenities, programs, and ease of use to improve the experience of the mountain parks to encourage more use by Denver residents.
- 5.14: Protect the unique forest ecosystems by partnering with allied agencies and private land owners.



PARKWAYS, TREE-LINED STREETS, AND TRAILS

Denver's city grid is defined by its characteristic parkways and natural gulches. This linear system reflects the city's early City Beautiful era planning by Charles Mulford Robinson and George Kessler, as well as its natural systems. These strategies aim to protect, celebrate, and expand the city's parkways, tree-lined streets, and natural trail systems.

50%

Nearly half of
respondents use
Denver's trails daily,
weekly or monthly [SVS]

62

miles of parkway are
maintained by DPR,
containing 13K trees

87%

of respondents see
parkways as a beautiful
asset to the city [PF]

77%

of respondents indicated
a high need for regional
and multi-use trails [SVS]

Strategy 5.1

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

**Develop new standards to
protect legacy parkways and
educate the community about
their value.**

While Denver's parkways are often cited as some of the most memorable and character-defining landscapes of the city's public realm, this legacy requires continual upkeep and protection to ensure its identity and longevity. Many designations are in place that relate to the parkways, including their role in the National Register of Historic Places nomination and in local historic districts. In 2005, a manual of Design Guidelines for Denver's Designated Parkways and Boulevards was created to codify and regulate existing parkways. Since this time, many environmental, cultural, and economic changes have occurred that affect the parkway landscapes. The current guidelines should be considered for any policy or process discussions that may be needed to continue to protect and enhance the physical, spatial, and temporal qualities that define the parkways' heritage and aesthetic value.

As the city and street system evolves, DPR can place more emphasis on celebrating the role of the parkways in Denver's public realm fabric through their branding and signage as well as in the department's marketing and communication materials. A dedicated campaign or series of communication strategies could help to better make visible and express the value of the existing parkways, and their history and role in contemporary civic life.

RELATED STRATEGIES:

3.6: With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.

3.7: Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide and regional amenities.

[PF] = Public Forum 1

[SVS] = Statistically Valid Survey

Strategy 5.2

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Consider the addition of new parkways with contemporary standards throughout the city.

While Denver's historic parkways are heralded as foundational to the city's identity and valued by the community, these legacy parkways are not fully developed citywide. Opportunities exist to expand the parkway system, as originally envisioned, to impact the city more broadly and to include new elements that help meet today's needs. For example, historic parkways do not integrate contemporary mobility principles or plantings that address current drought or maintenance concerns; yet, new parkways have the opportunity to reconsider this composition.

Some of Denver's newer neighborhoods or areas of high growth and change like Lowry, Stapleton, and Auraria are excellent opportunities to expand the legacy of parkways. This could include creating new parkways or adapting existing roadways into parkways—and implementing new models for parkway landscape design. On the latter, contemporary parkway design could explore the integration of stormwater (capture and cleansing) infrastructure, drought-tolerant plantings, high-efficiency lighting, integrated bicycle and transit connections, and more diverse paving systems.

As lead agency to manage and protect parkways, DPR will continue to work with the Denver Landmark Commission to steward historic resources (both parks and parkways), promote historic preservation and create resource-conscious landscapes. DPR will also work with Public Works to increase mobility options along these corridors.

Strategy 5.3

PRIORITY STRATEGY

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Expand a system of tree-lined streets to improve mobility, tree canopy, and water quality.

From New York and Philadelphia to San Francisco and Portland, cities are adopting green streets as a significant means of addressing multiple benefits that are meaningful to city dwellers. Green streets—by prioritizing holistic and healthful design—diversify mobility options, introduce more vegetation and tree cover, and integrate meaningful water quality measures that go above and beyond traditional benchmarks.

For Denver—the "City in a Park"—green streets can build on a legacy of open space connectivity and parkways in a contemporary and more holistic way. DPR can expand the system of green streets, including Federal Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard, to further its aspirations of providing a greener, more connected, and more healthful public realm citywide. For historic parkways, enhancements to mobility, such as trails, sidewalks and bike lanes, should be undertaken in consideration of existing design guidelines to ensure changes are sensitive to the historic character.

Strategies, continued.

Strategy 5.4

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Upgrade and expand regional trail system to meet new standards to improve safety, connectivity, wayfinding, and access.

Over 80 miles of off-street and multi-use trails provide a connected web of mobility corridors between neighborhoods, downtown, and, often, the city's waterways. Recently, the *Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails* plan looked carefully at this existing system, making recommendations for it along with recommendations for on-street facilities citywide. These recommendations will strengthen and grow Denver's trail system over the next years, linking together and making more walkable Denver's many diverse corners.

At the same time, regional trail systems extend beyond the city limits, well beyond the official jurisdiction of DPR, connecting the communities that comprise the metropolitan area to Denver's urban core. In the statistically valid survey, 77 percent of respondents indicated a high need for regional and multi-use trails. DPR should collaborate and actively advocate for the continuous upgrade and expansion of the regional trail system, providing leadership, resources, and standards to improve their safety, connectivity, wayfinding, and access.

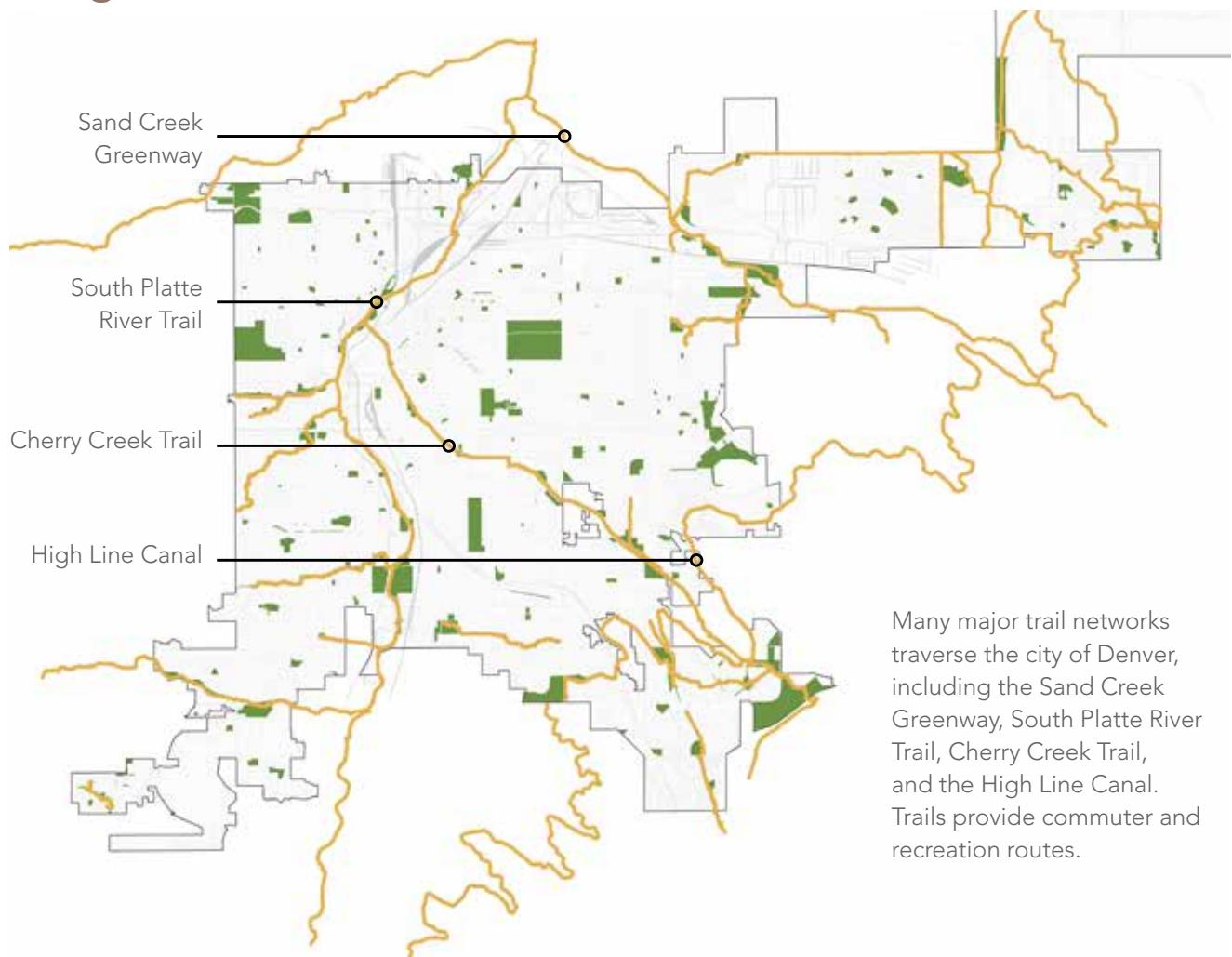
Strategy 5.5

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Improve local trail corridors, in particular gulch corridors, to provide interconnectivity and park access.

Many of Denver's most cherished trail systems follow the region's water courses—from the much beloved Cherry Creek Trail to the bicycle facilities along the Platte River. One largely untapped or under-developed resource is the system of gulches that connect many of Denver's most dense and diverse urban neighborhoods. The gulches provide a natural network of open spaces that can host a unique trail and connectivity experience. While some—like the Sanderson Gulch Trail—are successful in integrating trails alongside these intermittent streams, far more opportunities exist to plan, design, and implement trail corridors. DPR should give priority to those corridors that provide greater connectivity to existing parks assets or enable more equity of service by connecting users to resources in high need areas.

Regional Trail Network



Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

- DPR--Planning
- Community Planning and Development
- Department of Public Works
- DPR - Office of the City Forester

POLICY DIRECTION / REGULATORY GUIDANCE

- Park, Parkway, and Greenway Standards (update)

RECOMMENDATION 1

Leverage the Department's resources toward the creation of more tree-lined streets and Parkways.

- Develop an interagency Great Streets, Greener Streets Task Force to look critically at barriers and opportunities to collaborate on implementation of innovative streetscape projects.
- Seek opportunities to pilot and test non-traditional streetscape projects that showcase environmental, social, and economic sustainability.
- Using *Game Plan* inventory and analysis findings, identify target areas for future tree-lined and complete street implementation, prioritizing areas that do not have traditional parkways and are places of high-need, challenged connectivity, and low levels of service. For these areas, the Department can explore integration of a modern, contemporary parkways system.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop knowledge-base about the role and value of great streets in successful parks and recreation systems.

- Identify and celebrate the role of realized streetscape projects in the city that demonstrate connectivity between parks and recreation resources.
- Create a departmental committee to benchmark and broadly share streetscape projects from around the country that model successful multi-modal, economic, and environmental sustainability strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 3

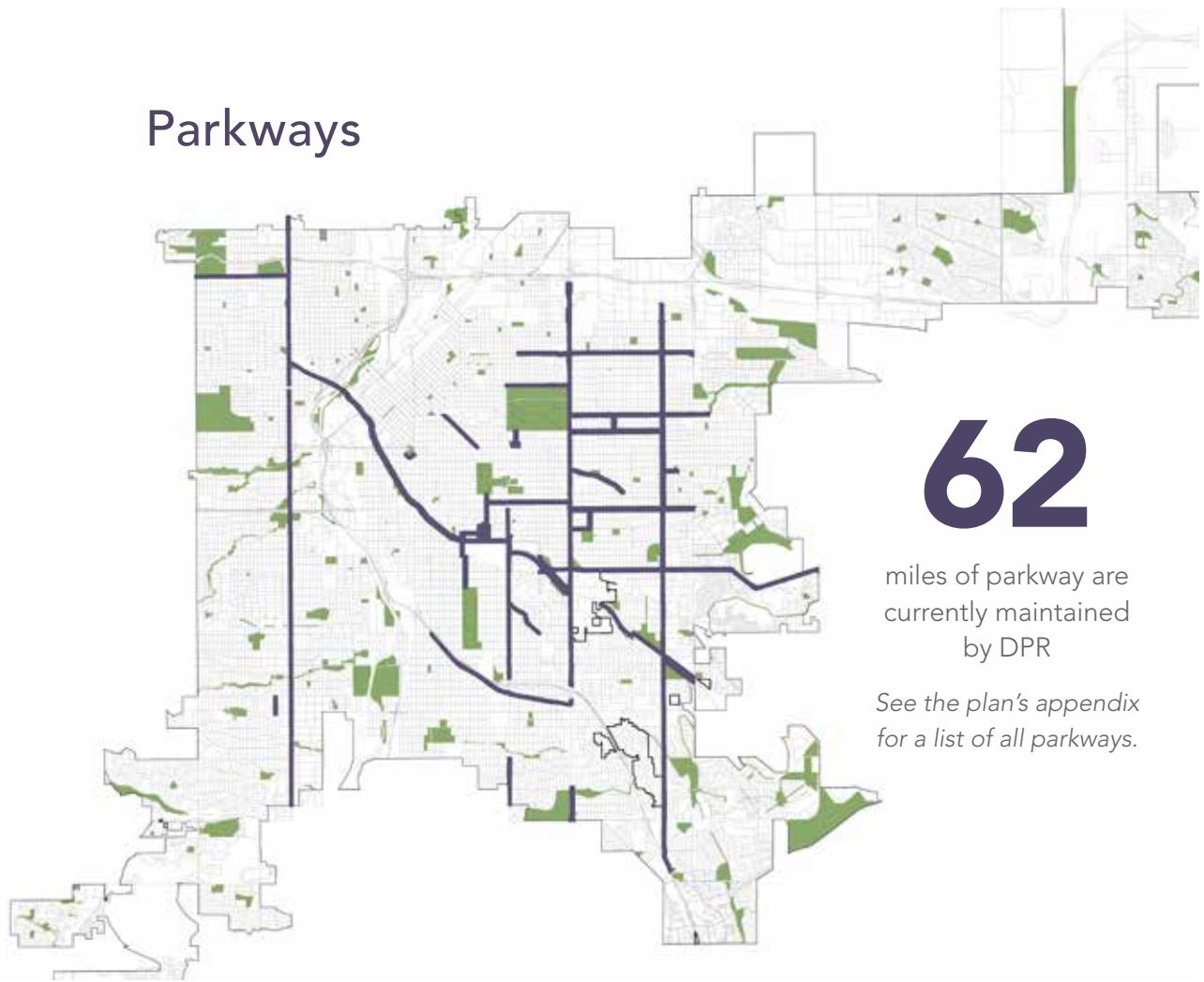
Conduct a rigorous process to understand and advance the condition of the City's legacy parkways.

- Conduct a comprehensive survey of the legacy parkways to understand their condition, integrity and character today. Identify priority areas for preservation and protection of existing parkways.
- Develop a process to study alternative potential strategies to better align parkways with contemporary maintenance practices and sustainability goals (including the integration of green infrastructure, multi-modal services and pedestrian amenities).
- Consider updating the 2005 Designated Parkways and Boulevards Design Guidelines to revise recommendations for the landscape and adjacent development to reflect current climate and development patterns.

*Design Guidelines for Denver's Designated Parkways and Boulevards (2005) -for more information see Strategy 5.1 - Develop new standards to protect legacy parkways and educate the community about their value.



Parkways





ARTS, CULTURE, AND HISTORY

The parks and recreation system—like Denver as a whole—includes a rich legacy of arts, culture, and history. These strategies focus on advancing this legacy through expanded programming, partnerships, and documentation.

Arts & Culture Programming

ranked as the highest priority for
respondents (along with aquatics and
fitness programs) [svs]

81%

of respondents believe
that arts, culture and
creativity help develop
active and unique
neighborhoods [SVS-I2020]

66%

of respondents would
like to participate more
in arts, culture, and
creativity [SVS-I2020]

Strategies

Strategy 5.6

Develop a thorough inventory of all historic park structures and prioritize them for preservation and restoration.

Denver's park system is unique against its urban peers in many ways—from scale to breadth to diversity. One arguably undervalued yet distinctive asset is a wealth of historic structures, cultural assets, and heritage places that speak to the city's earliest days as a community. From pavilions in the city's legacy park spaces to heritage structures that speak to the city's earliest settlers, this layer of culture and history provides a strong sense of place and identity, rooting the community in its past.

To honor and enhance this unique heritage, DPR should undertake a thorough inventory of all historic park structures and places, identifying location, condition, and level of significance. Further, this information should help the department to prioritize and implement preservation and restoration strategies in a focused and strategic way.

RELATED STRATEGIES:

3.3: Leverage partners to create programs/events of regional and national significance.

[SVS] = Statistically Valid Survey, Game Plan

[SVS-I2020] = Statistically Valid Survey, Imagine 2020: Denver's Cultural Plan

Strategy 5.7

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Celebrate the history and culture of our unique neighborhoods and reflect that in the design of parks and facilities.

Denver is home to a diverse mosaic of neighborhoods. This strategy focuses on ensuring parks and recreation design and offerings reflect their local neighborhood context. Demographic characteristics, neighborhood history, local culture, and environmental context can all be inputs to inform the design of local parks. Strengthening the local connection will be possible through expanded feedback processes, identifying opportunities to expand participation in design and planning processes. Strategy 2.7 supports this process with its focus on growing departmental capabilities to deepen community outreach.

Strategy 5.8

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events.

Partnerships play an important role in supporting the life of our park system by helping activate parks with arts, cultural, and social community events. DPR is already collaborating with many agencies and organizations, and this strategy focuses on deepening and broadening these partnerships. Developing clear policies around partnerships and events will help govern actions to support desired outcomes. For example, DPR could determine which parks could benefit from additional activation and then identify potential partners who could support that programming.

See Strategy 3.3 for additional details about partnerships to promote events of regional and national significance.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Planning

Denver Arts and Venues

RECOMMENDATION 1

Partner with Denver Arts and Venues.

- Partner with Arts and Venues and identify opportunities to increase art, culture, and related programs within parks and recreation centers.
- Identify how DPR can support recommendations in *Imagine 2020: Denver's Cultural Plan*, which focuses on expanding access to arts, culture, and creativity for all
- Identify how DPR can work with Denver Arts and Venues in supporting Denver Public Schools' arts education strategic plan
- Implement shared and coordinated calendars

RECOMMENDATION 2

Increase arts, culture, and social events in high-need neighborhoods and in underutilized parks.

- Identify parks where arts, culture, and social events could help activate the spaces, increase use, and/or support local needs
- *Imagine 2020* recommended inventorying the availability of arts, culture and creativity in every neighborhood, noting cultural deserts. This analysis could be a helpful resource to inform DPR decision-making.
- Identify potential partnerships to support activation in targeted locations



RECOMMENDATION 3

Implement physical improvements to support arts and culture events.

- In target parks, identify necessary physical improvements to support events while minimizing environmental and maintenance burdens. This could include, for example:
 - Reinforced turf or hardscape areas for frequent event use to reduce soil compaction and grass health
 - Pavilions, benches, or other features to support gathering
 - Lighting or other features to improve safety
- Work with the surrounding community to identify features that would enhance park use and reflect neighborhood identity

RECOMMENDATION 4

Develop DPR policies to support arts, culture, and community events.

- Policies could address, for example: priority uses, scheduling/frequency, accessibility, locations for public art within parks, sponsorships, waste/recycling, and maintenance/cleanup.
- Consider if physical standards or maintenance guidelines are needed.



INNOVATIVE PARKS AND RECREATION

Diversifying and continuing to innovate will ensure Denver continues to be known for promoting outdoor lifestyles, active recreation, and healthy living. These strategies focus on adapting existing parks and recreation facilities to meet evolving needs and test new types of parks and recreation.

DPR HAS BEEN RESPONDING TO
EMERGING TRENDS BY ADDING:

1

nature play
area

2

bike skills
courses

3

disc golf
courses

... along with skateparks, BMX bike courses, disc golf, horseshoes, outdoor fitness zones, racquetball, pickleball

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*2.2: Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.

*2.3: Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.

4.6: Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.

Strategies

Strategy 5.9

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health.

DPR has a history of making capital investments in innovative new parks and recreation facilities. Most recently, the department has researched new thinking in playground design nationwide and added exciting new nature play opportunities like Pasquinel's Landing, and active adventure playscapes like Paco Sanchez Park. Investments in new bike skills courses, like the one at Ruby Hill Park, and disc golf courses are attracting new users of DPR's parkland. The Pop-Up Park at 21st street has brought green space, informal activity and multi-modal amenities to a dense urban neighborhood previously lacking park space. This strategy focuses on increasing DPR's capacity to track trends and innovations in park and recreation amenities nationwide, and to apply those to Denver's context.

DPR should continue to send staff to parks and recreation conferences and to visit other departments nationwide in order to bring fresh emerging ideas about urban facilities back to Denver. Capital investments in parks and recreation amenities should capture contemporary thinking in how visitors of all demographics want to use the new space. Temporary or pop-up interventions should be deployed in order to test new ideas and amenities in advance of larger-scale investment.

Strategy 5.10

Develop more active program opportunities in the city center.

Currently there are 152 acres of parks downtown. Open spaces range in size and character from Commons Park (large, landscaped) to Skyline Park (midrange, urban landscaped) to Wynkoop Plaza at Denver Union Station (small, hardscaped). The 2016 Outdoor Downtown Plan established a goal to create vibrant outdoor spaces in the urban core, and DPR has since partnered with the Riverfront Park Association to provide free programming in Commons Park throughout the summer—including weekly fitness and wellness classes like yoga, tai chi, and interval training, and a regular schedule of concerts. This strategy focuses on expanding both the breadth and depth of this programming downtown. Diversifying locations for programming beyond Commons Park, as well as diversifying the type of programming offered, could help attract active new users of the public park system and instill a culture of wellness in downtown neighborhoods. DPR should conduct a tally of who is currently taking advantage of the free fitness and wellness classes, and inventory private groups who are providing similar fitness and wellness services in both public and private areas downtown. This data will inform the development of niche programming to target audiences.

Strategy 5.11

Reimagine Recreation Centers as meeting places and community hubs and catalysts for park activation.

Recreation centers are important community hubs. This strategy focuses on six ways to strengthen the role of recreation centers in promoting healthy living, supporting community connections, and enhancing indoor-outdoor connectivity.

Recreation centers can help activate parks by increasing indoor/outdoor connections and related programming. In addition, mobile and portable recreation programs can also expand the reach of recreation centers beyond center walls, reaching people who may not otherwise have convenient access to recreation programming.

Recreation centers can further act as community hubs and support active living through expanded programming, events, and partnerships. For example, recreation centers could host farmers' markets or health fairs, or provide space for community group meetings.

Recreation centers can also provide places for residents to experience nature through nature walk loop trails, offering outdoor recreation or environmental education programming, or acting as mini visitor centers for mountain parks.

Improving access to recreation centers could include working with public transportation providers and other city agencies and wayfinding improvements.

Improving technology at recreation centers is addressed in Strategy 4.9: Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Recreation

DPR--Planning

Community Planning and Development

Department of Public Works

POLICY DIRECTION

Recreation Centers as Community Hubs

RECOMMENDATION 1

Support pop-up and pilot projects to test new types of parks and public spaces.

- Building on the success of the 21st Street Pop-up park, pilot other new types of parks and support innovative design ideas.
- Prioritize temporary and low-cost tactics to test new ideas.
- Monitor outcomes and incorporate lessons from these temporary pilots into the design of permanent parks and public spaces.
- Prioritize projects with an equity focus or that expand parks and recreation opportunities in high-need neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Prioritize methods for real-time community input on new programs, parks, and pilots.

- Incorporate public feedback into the ideas and design of new spaces and pilot projects.
- Gather feedback while the new park or public space is in use to inform future pilots and permanent projects.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Expand recreation center offerings beyond recreation center walls, enhancing connections to communities and nature.

- Increase indoor/outdoor connections by offering complimentary programs and activities that span from the recreation center to the surrounding park. For instance, recreation centers could include innovative identities or programming such as indoor fieldhouses, ice-skating rinks, nature centers, action sports parks, or multi-action aquatics facilities.



21st Street Pop-up Park

- Expand mobile and portable recreation programs to expand recreation programs in communities without a recreation centers nearby. For example, a recreation center could support a mobile recreation van that could travel to underserved, high need neighborhoods, bringing temporary programming and play equipment to youth.
- Promote healthy, active living through expanded programming, events, and partnerships. For example, recreation centers could host farmers' markets or health fairs. DPR could create new opportunities for health programs and strategies in recreation centers through partnerships, sponsorships, and collaborative funding.
- Enhance recreation centers to support greater connections and access to nature experiences. For example, create nature walk loop trails and expand outdoor recreation or environmental education programming. Recreation centers could even act as mini visitor centers for mountain parks, providing places to learn about the mountain parks, rent outdoor equipment, or catch a shuttle.
- Expand the role of recreation centers as community meeting spaces. Increase facility rental use for community meetings and expand engagement with other businesses, nonprofits, and city agencies.



NATURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Denver's beloved character is tied to its rich environmental setting and access to open space. The following strategies focus on sustaining Denver's heritage, further infusing active, outdoor lifestyles into everyday living through expanding access to nature both within the city as well as to the mountain parks.

72%

of Denver's park land
is in the Mountains
(14,000+ acres)

5

Designated Natural
Areas within the
urban system

86%

of respondents have
visited a mountain park
at least a few times this
year [SVS]

45%

of respondents believe
conservation vs. public
access + amenities should
be balanced [PF]

RELATED STRATEGIES:

1.11: Identify and restore vacant or underutilized urban land for open space and ecological value.

*1.12: Work with regional partners to research and develop best practices for Mountain Park forest management and fire mitigation.

5.11: Reimagine Recreation Centers as meeting places and community hubs and catalysts for park activation.

[SVS] = Statistically Valid Survey
[PF] = Statistically Valid Survey

Strategies

Strategy 5.12

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Provide residents with nearby access to nature experiences in the urban system.

This strategy focuses actions in two main areas: 1) expanding outdoor recreation, environmental education, and nature-based programs and 2) increasing the presence of natural areas in and near neighborhoods.

Positioned at the juncture between the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, Denver boasts a rich environmental setting. However, access to outdoor recreation and places to experience nature is limited for many residents, especially households without vehicles. The city has five Designated Natural Areas¹ but their location at the edges of the city means access is not walkable for many neighborhoods. Greenways, creeks, and gulches offer other natural corridors through Denver, but some areas have room for improvement in maintenance and access.

Furthermore, parks could offer expanded natural landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities for residents. Although the vast majority of Denver's land area was prairie prior to the city's development, Denver's urban parkland represents very little native prairie today. Currently, over half of Denver's urban parkscapes are irrigated. These traditional green landscapes contribute to Denver's identity, sense of beauty and livability as a city; however, maintaining such lush vegetation in an environment that would naturally support dry prairie comes at a cost. Expanding prairie or other native, natural landscapes within parks could grow walkable access to nature experiences within neighborhoods.

¹ A Designated Natural Area is city-owned land that has been designated by the DPR Executive Director based on ecological function and condition, outdoor education potential, and connection to the community; the Office of the City Naturalist coordinates management.

Strategy 5.13

PRIORITY STRATEGY

Expand access, amenities, programs, and ease of use to improve the experience of the mountain parks to encourage more Denver residents.

Denver's mountain parks are a unique asset for residents of the city and region. Proposed by the City as a method for preserving the magnificent beauty of the Rocky Mountains within the city's viewshed, the Olmsted brothers identified the best acreage for the mountain park system in 1912. The system now includes 22 accessible parks and 24 conservation areas that extend across four counties, range in altitude from 6,000 to 13,000 feet and encompass more than 14,000 acres. These diverse landscapes are home to six main plant communities and abundant wildlife, including two healthy bison herds, elk, and mountain goats.

In the statistically valid survey, although 86 percent of respondents report visiting a mountain park at least a few times this year, many residents think the system is not well-known by many Denverites and access is limited for residents without cars.

This strategy focuses on increasing access, awareness, diverse programming, and amenities, while balancing use with the sensitive environmental systems of these parks. In addition, continuing to document and preserve the historic elements of the mountain parks will ensure their rich cultural legacy is safeguarded as well. Funding, stewardship, and partnerships will be important tools in implementation.

Strategy 5.14

CROSS-OVER STRATEGY

Protect the unique forest ecosystems by partnering with allied agencies and private land owners.

Ranging from foothills shrublands to alpine tundra, Denver's mountain park system protects unique and sensitive forest ecosystems that have importance beyond the boundaries of the city property. To protect these resources, the DPR Natural Resource Division will continue to work with partner agencies, including Jeffco Open Space, Douglas County Open Lands, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado State Forest Service, and the US Forest Service, to develop and implement plans and practices to protect important resources as a critical component of the landscape.

Collaborative landscape planning efforts (such as those described in Strategy 1.12) are important in identifying unique forest ecosystems, and the existing threats and opportunities to those ecosystems. The mountain park management plans should consider measures to protect sensitive forest ecosystems, and balance visitor use management. A key component to ecosystem protection is clear communication, education, and suitable public access, so residents and visitors understand and appreciate the need for conservation. Establishment of a mountain park ecosystem classification system that identifies conservation-oriented areas and outlines their importance can help protect these sensitive areas.

Recommendations

COLLABORATORS

DPR--Mountain Parks / Rangers

DPR--Planning

DPR--Recreation

DPR--Office of the City Naturalist

DPR--Office of the City Forester

POLICY DIRECTION

Access to Nature for All

RECOMMENDATION 1

Expand outdoor recreation and nature-based programs, particularly for youth, in parks and recreation centers.

This action focuses on expanding outdoor recreation, environmental education, and nature-based programs, with a particular focus on programs for youth.

Partnerships—for example, DPS, non-profits, and other organizations—will be an important part of implementing this strategy. Staff have suggested expanding or developing a junior ranger educational program at DPS schools and recreation centers or mobile environment education programs. DPR could consider creating an environmental education coordinator position to manage and expand environmental education and related partnerships. In addition, DPR should promote and capitalize on ranger-provided environmental education programs.

Developing guided nature walk programs in urban parks, greenways, natural areas, and the mountain parks could promote stewardship and make outdoor recreation more accessible.

As described in Strategy 5.11, recreation centers and parks can grow opportunities for residents to experience nature by offering nature walk loop trails, expanded outdoor recreation or environmental education programming, or even by acting as mini visitor centers for mountain parks. Recreation centers could be places to learn about the mountain parks, rent outdoor equipment, or catch a shuttle to visit.

Outdoor recreation programming could be primarily offered within the city, but could also provide a bridge to recreation opportunities within the mountain park system. For example, gear rental stations—or even a check-out-a-ranger program—could make outdoor experiences more accessible.

RECOMMENDATION 2

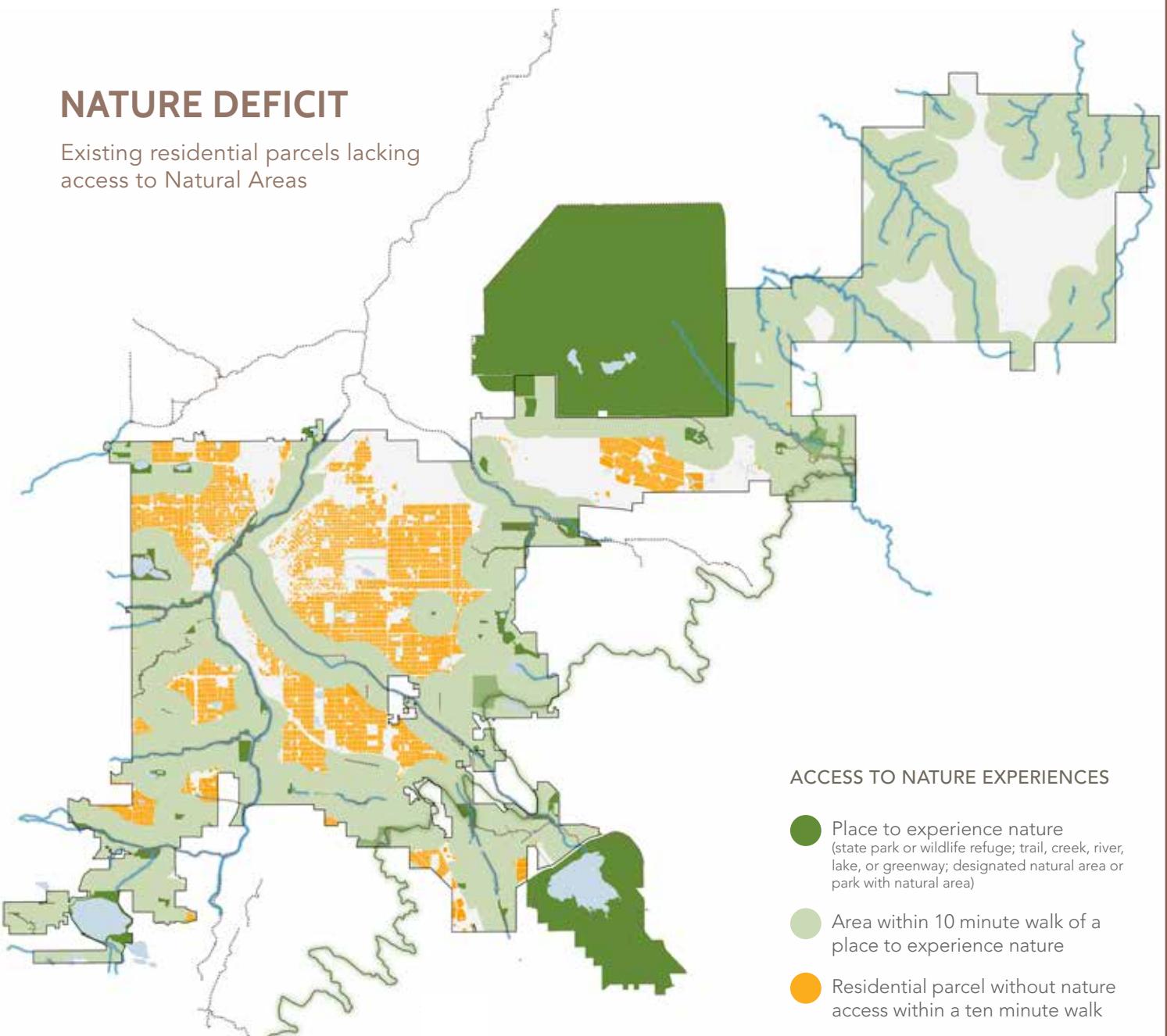
Increase the presence of natural areas in and near neighborhoods.

This could include restoring natural landscapes within parks or creating new natural areas. See Strategy 1.11.

In addition, DPR should expand nature play opportunities for children.

NATURE DEFICIT

Existing residential parcels lacking access to Natural Areas



Recommendations, continued.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Develop and implement a mountain parks communications campaign.

Improve outreach efforts to highlight the natural and recreational opportunities in the mountain parks, as well as their value to the city. Develop a marketing plan and implement a communications campaign.

Consider developing an economic impact study to measure the value of the natural resources and ecosystem services provided by mountain parks—clean air and water, education and recreation value, and beyond. DPR could use results from this study as part of the communications campaign.

Recreation centers could also be a tool to promote access, awareness, and use (see Strategy 5.11 for more details about how recreation centers could act as mini visitor centers for mountain parks by offering information or even outdoor equipment rentals).

Consider other opportunities to increase the presence of the mountain parks within the city; for example, a mountain park outpost downtown could be a place for both residents and tourists to learn more.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Conduct a mountain park community survey.

As a complement to the communications campaign and to gauge community preferences, conduct a survey (preferably using a statistically valid process) to measure mountain park awareness, perceptions, preferences, and use. Repeat this survey annually or every two years to track changes in preferences and awareness.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Facilitate opportunities for public transportation, park shuttle, and other mobility options to expand access to the mountain parks.

Currently, the easiest way to access the mountain parks is to drive yourself; this limits access for Denverites who do not or cannot drive or own a car. Growing public transportation options, developing carpool or shared transportation options, or creating corporate sponsorships could increase options for accessing the mountain parks. For example, a park shuttle could depart from Union Station on weekends or in the summer, making stops at a few recreation centers on its way to the mountain parks. An added benefit of these alternative transportation options would be a reduced environmental footprint from transportation (fewer emissions because of shared transportation).

RECOMMENDATION 6

Diversify programs and activities in the mountain parks.

Ensure a diversity of outdoor recreation options to attract a broader range of residents. Today, public perception could largely be that mountain parks are places for hiking or looking at wildlife; these perceptions could limit use by many residents who may be interested in different kinds of outdoor activities. Diversifying activities could be done in partnership with other agencies/jurisdictions, sponsors, or nonprofits. For example, one suggestion from staff is to consider developing an outdoor recreation center at Echo Lake with four-season camping and outfitting for wilderness outings.



RECOMMENDATION 7

Increase access to the mountain parks for underrepresented populations, especially for youth.

Increasing access for underrepresented populations, especially for youth, could include, for example, school programs, sponsored environmental education, overnights, and other outdoor recreation opportunities. DPR should grow partnerships with allied organizations like Environmental Learning for Kids, or attract funding from corporate sponsors or grants to support in implementing this action step.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Develop vision and action plans for the mountain park system to expand access while balance visitor use with sensitive environmental areas.

Identify locations where conservation should be the highest priority and where increased visitor use could be carefully encouraged without compromising long-term environmental health. These plans could study potential enhancements to further diversify use, culture/historic legacy, visitor stewardship and environmental education, and environmental health. For example, staff have suggested developing a vision plan for Lookout Mountain to include an enhanced visitor experience that features a repurposed Pahaska Tepee (highlighting Buffalo Bill and western memorabilia) and an introduction to mountain park conservation legacy and contemporary uses and values.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Continue to document and preserve historic legacy and structures in the mountain parks.

The Denver mountain parks system is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and preserves a significant cultural as well as ecological legacy for Denverites. This action step focuses on documenting and identifying opportunities to preserve and share that legacy. For example, staff have suggested restoring and activating the Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Red Rocks and continuing to implement the stewardship center to teach preservation trades to preserve historic structures.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Explore a mountain parks funding and stewardship strategy.

Identify existing and projected funding needs to implement these actions and identify funding and staffing resources to address identified gaps. Consider, for example, grant funding, volunteers, partnerships, and corporate sponsors. This study should evaluate whether one or more mountain parks should charge a parking or admission fee, either for everyone or non-Denver residents only. DPR should carefully consider fees from an equity perspective so they do not create an additional barrier to access.

Policy and Regulatory Guidance

The strategies and recommendations suggest the creation of policies and regulatory measures to support the implementation of a Healthy City with access to parks, recreation, programs, and the urban forest for all residents. Summarized on this page, the policy directions and regulatory guidance provide a framework for future policy development.

The development of Policies and Regulations are a departmental responsibility with advice from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and approval by the Executive Director

Policy: an institutional commitment that expresses values to guide future decisions.

Regulations: rules that define and control the activities that are allowed or the way something is done. They have the effect of a law.



Topics for Future Policy Development

Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Landscapes

Culturally Sensitive and Relevant Recreation Programming

Transparent, Data-Driven Decision-Making

Hiring Policies for Diversity

Ten Minute Walk Access for All

Acquisition Policies

Partnership Policies

Permits / Space and Field Rental

Focus Resources in Underserved Neighborhoods

Pricing and Affordability Policies for Programs

Cross-Departmental Collaboration

Recreation Centers as Community Hubs

Access to Nature for All

Inclusion Policy

Equity Policy

Topics for Future Regulatory Guidance

Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Landscapes

Street Tree Protection

Park, Parkway, and Greenway Standards (update*)

Guidelines for New Development Adjacent to Parks and Parkways

*Design Guidelines for Denver's Designated Parkways and Boulevards (2005) -for more information see Strategy 5.1 - Develop new standards to protect legacy parkways and educate the community about their value.

Metrics

Metrics are a tool to measure improvements in the health of our parks, recreation programming, and neighborhoods. By tracking these 24 factors over time, we can see the impacts of implementing the Game Plan's strategies.

These metrics should be tracked and shared annually as a report card or as an online dashboard. Step one is completing a study to identify baseline values for each metric.



EVERY DROP

These metrics measure the environmental health of our city, and resource consumption by DPR.

		EQUITY OVERLAY
1. WATER USE	» Metric: Total DPR water use (include individual measures for irrigation water use and facility water use)	N/A
2. HEALTHY WATERWAYS	» Metric: Number of water bodies that do not meet fishable and swimmable water standards	<i>Access to clean, safe water bodies in high-need neighborhoods.</i>
3. URBAN TREE CANOPY	» Metric: Tree canopy cover by neighborhood	<i>Tree canopy cover in high-need neighborhoods</i>
4. ENERGY USE	» Metric: Total energy use in park and recreation operations	N/A
5. WASTE AND RECYCLING	» Metric: Total volume of recycling, waste, and compost collected by DPR	N/A

EQUITY OVERLAY: Equity is a critical component of a Healthy City. Equity is integrated in the metrics as an overarching idea; many of the metrics include an "equity overlay"—an additional metric or subset to measure to track how a particular aspect of a metric relates to equity. High-need neighborhoods refer to areas that have been identified as having greater population density, lower median income, less access to vehicles, and more children per household. These geographic areas can be continuously assessed and redefined as the city grows and changes.



EVERY PERSON

These metrics measure the quantity and quality of our parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

		EQUITY OVERLAY
6. PARKS PER CAPITA	» Metric: Acres of park space per thousand residents	<i>Acres of park space per 1,000 residents in high-need neighborhoods</i>
7. PARK ACCESS	» Metric: Percentage of residents who live within a ten minute walk of a park or open space (at least 0.5 acre in size)	<i>Percentage of residents in high-need neighborhoods who live within a ten minute walk of a park (at least 0.5 acres)</i>
8. PLAY ACCESS	» Metric: Percentage of children who live within a ten minute walk of a playground (could be DPR, partnership with DPS, or similar partnership)	<i>Percentage of children in high-need neighborhoods who live within a ten minute walk of a playground</i>
9. PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY	» Metric: Survey to gauge perceptions of safety in parks and trails and documentation of reported safety incidents in and near parks and trails	<i>Safety perceptions and incidents in high-need neighborhoods</i>
10. RECREATION PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	» Metric: Percentage of residents who participated in recreation programs offered by DPR in the past year	<i>Percentage of residents in high-need neighborhoods who participated in DPR programs</i>
11. RECREATION PROGRAM QUALITY	» Metric: Percentage of participants who give DPR programming "good" or "excellent" scores	<i>Percentage of program participants in high-need neighborhoods who give the program a "good" or "excellent" score</i>
12. PROGRAM SUCCESS RATE	» Metric: Ratio of programs that "go" (attain adequate enrollment to be offered) versus total programs originally proposed. The national benchmark is 80-85%.	<i>Percentage of programs that "go" versus total programs offered in high need neighborhoods</i>
13. PARK AND FACILITY QUALITY	» Metric: Parks and facility report card rating (drawing from the FCAP for buildings and Conditions Assessments for other assets, the report card can list important park/facility attributes, including an audit system of inspections)	<i>Comparison of average report card scores in high-need versus all neighborhoods</i>
14. CONTRIBUTION FROM NEW DEVELOPMENT	» Metric: Developer contribution to new acres or amenities added in accordance with new housing units	<i>N/A</i>

Metrics, continued.

\$ EVERY DOLLAR

These metrics measure the fiscal health, department operations, and work place culture.

	EQUITY OVERLAY
15. COLLABORATION » Metric: Number of projects that included departmental collaboration	<i>N/A</i>
16. FUNDING GROWTH » Metric: Growth of funding options and amounts to meet the growing parks, trails and recreation needs	<i>N/A</i>
17. COST RECOVERY » Metric: Cost recovery in accordance with the City's approved policy	<i>Number/ability to offer scholarships or costs savings to those in need.</i>
18. STAFF SUCCESS » Metric: Internal collaboration measure; retention or employee satisfaction	<i>N/A</i>
19. PARTNERSHIPS » Metric: Number of formal partnership agreements	<i>Number of partnerships serving high-need neighborhoods</i>



UNIQUELY DENVER

These metrics measure how well the system connects residents to art, culture, history, and nature experiences.

	EQUITY OVERLAY
20. ACCESS TO NATURE IN THE CITY » Metric: Percentage of residents who live within a 10 min walk of a place they can experience nature	<i>Percentage of residents in high-need neighborhoods living within a 10 min. walk of place to experience nature</i>
21. ACCESS TO THE MOUNTAIN PARKS » Metric: Percentage of residents who visit the Mountain Parks at least once per year	<i>Number of residents in high need neighborhoods who are accessing the mountain parks through programming</i>
22. ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMS » Metric: Number of arts and culture events/programs per year	<i>Number of arts and culture programs in high-need neighborhoods</i>
23. PLANNING AND OUTREACH » Metric: Number of residents engaged in DPR planning projects	<i>Number of residents engaged in high-need neighborhoods</i>

Metrics & Implementation

The 24 metrics provide a cross-cutting set of measures for DPR. This table summarizes how the metrics relate to the strategy topic areas.

	ADAPT	DIVERSIFY	GROW	REINVEST	CONNECT
DPR water use	✓			✓	✓
Number of water bodies not meeting fishable/swimmable standards	✓	✓			✓
Tree canopy by neighborhood	✓		✓	✓	✓
Total energy use in park and recreation operations	✓		✓	✓	
Acres of park space per thousand residents		✓	✓		✓
Percentage of residents who live within a 10 min. walk of a park		✓	✓		✓
Percentage of children who live within a 10 min. walk of a playground		✓	✓		✓
Safety and safety perception		✓		✓	✓
Percent of participants who give DPR programming "good" or "excellent" scores		✓	✓		
Ratio of programs that "go" versus total programs offered.		✓	✓	✓	
Parks and facility report card rating	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acres or amenities contributed by new development		✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of projects that included departmental collaboration				✓	
Funding growth		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ratio of tax to non-tax revenue		✓	✓	✓	
Cost recovery		✓		✓	
Internal collaboration measure; retention or employee satisfaction		✓		✓	
Number of formal partnership agreements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Percent of residents living within a 10 min walk of a place to experience nature	✓	✓	✓		✓
Percentage of residents who visit the Mountain Parks at least once per year	✓	✓	✓		✓
Number of arts and culture events/programs per year		✓	✓		✓
Number of residents engaged in DPR planning projects		✓	✓		✓

Envisioning a Healthy City

STRATEGY OUTCOMES

Let's imagine a
Healthy City!

What are the results of implementing these strategies? This section illustrates the potential improvements to our:

- Urban Parks and Streetscapes**
- Downtown Parks and Streetscapes**
- Linear Parks and Greenways**
- Recreation Centers**
- Urban Open Space**
- Mountain Parks**

OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

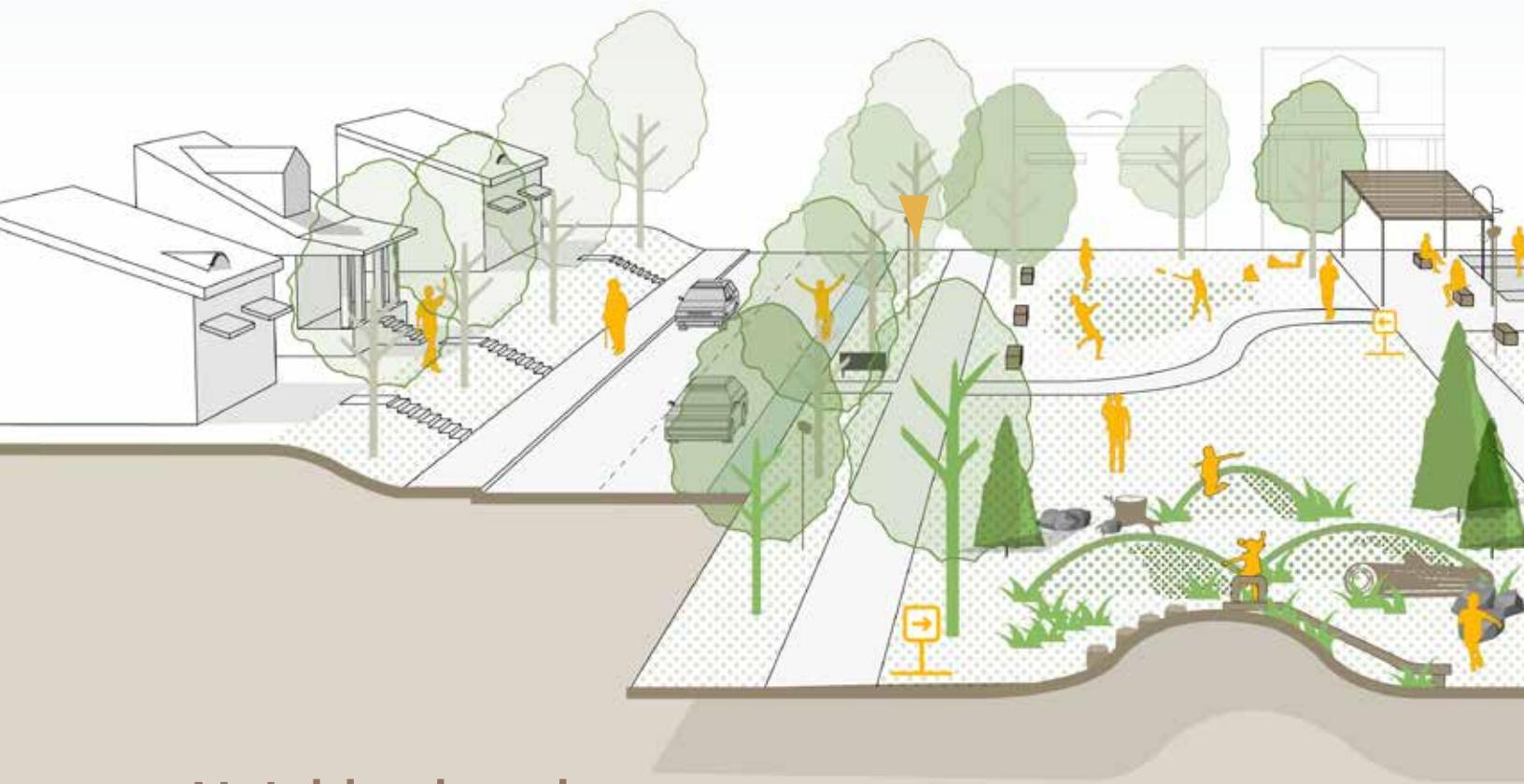
Urban Parks and Streetscapes

Greener Streets

healthy right-of-way trees. green infrastructure for stormwater management. complete streets.

Activated Parks and Inclusive Programming

diversity of programming. partnerships with arts and culture organizations. events and uses to activate parks



Neighborhood-oriented Design

park design and programming that responds to surrounding context and community needs

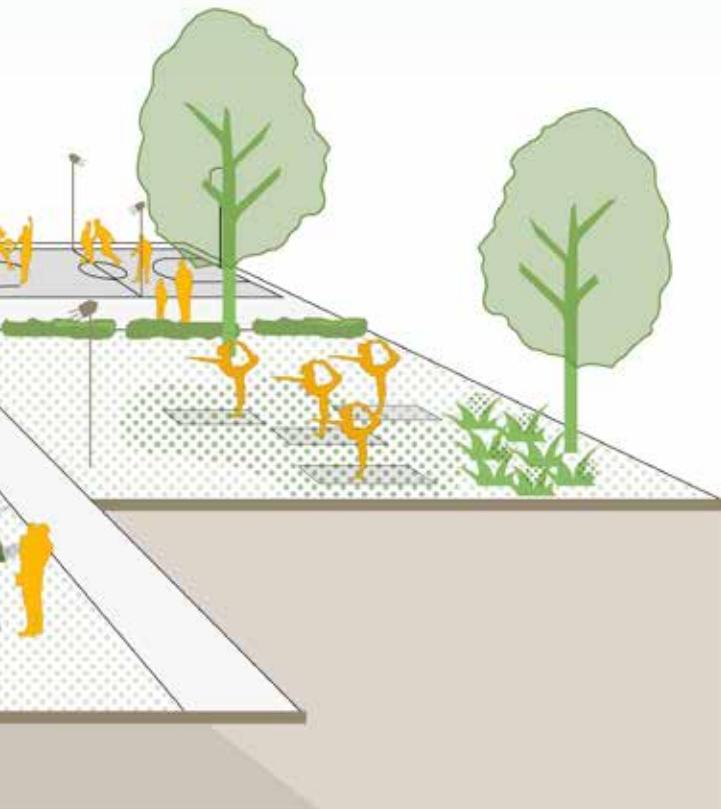
Resilient Landscapes

flood & drought-resilient & naturalized landscapes. climate appropriate species

EXAMPLE STRATEGIES

More Accessible Parks

improved walking and bicycling connections . wayfinding . transit access



Adapt to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

1.2 Create select park areas to incorporate climate-resilient landscape and drought tolerance.

1.6 Protect and expand tree cover in rights-of-way, public places and areas of high urban heat.

Diversify Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

2.2 Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.

2.3 Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.

Grow Parks and Recreation Access

3.5 Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood.

3.7 Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide and regional amenities.

Re-invest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

4.1 Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity.

4.14 Work with partners, concessionaires, and sponsors to invest in park facilities and programs.

Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture

5.8 Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events.

5.12 Create nature experiences and access to natural areas in every community.

OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

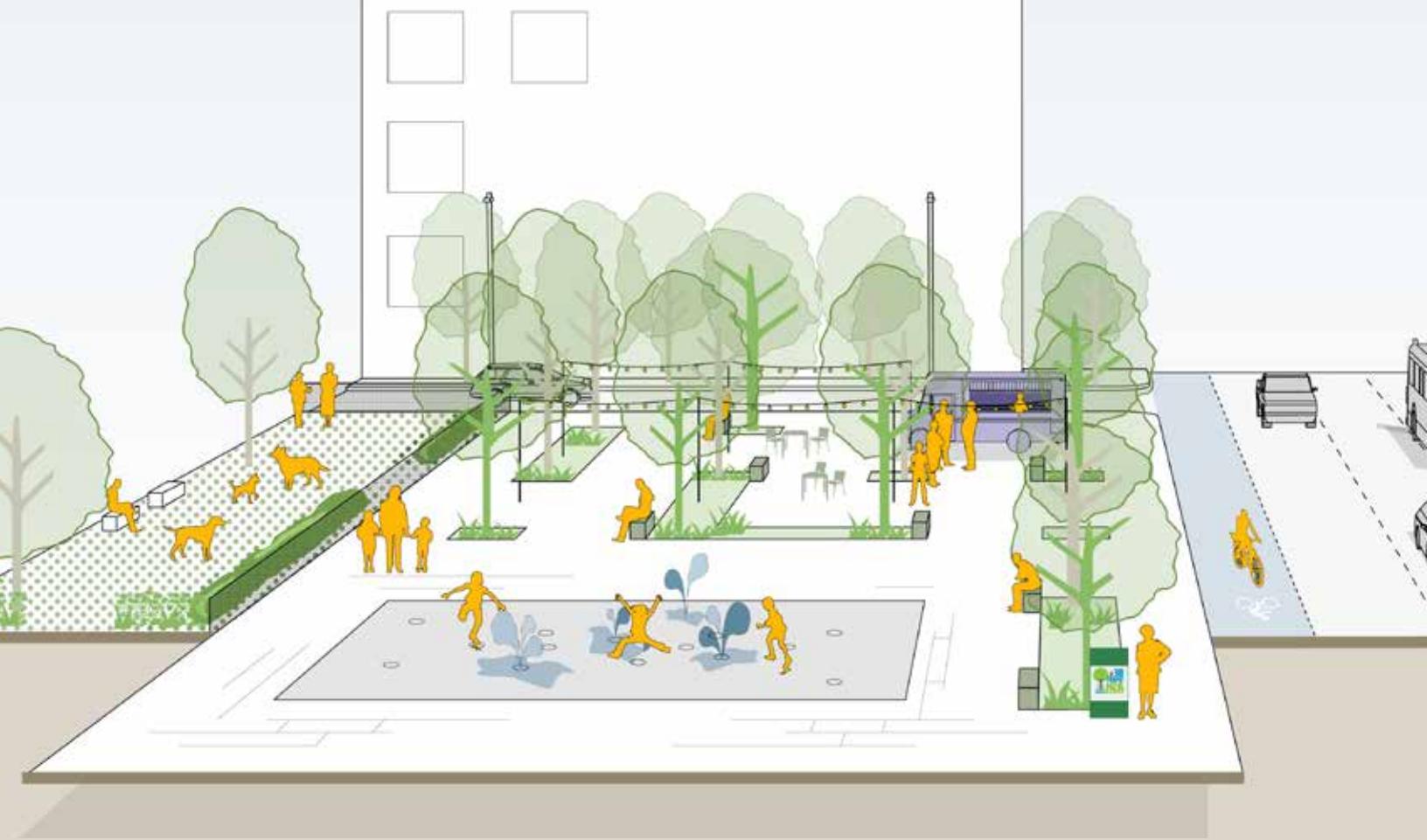
Downtown Parks & Streetscapes

Diversity of Programming

*greater variety of programming,
providing activities for full
diversity of Denver's population*

More Active Recreation

*promoting active, healthy
lifestyles and opportunities to
play and exercise*



Reduced Heat Island and Cooler City

*urban tree canopy and green space
shades and cools surrounding area*

More Access to Nature

*shuttles to Mountain Parks; gear check-out
stations; urban nature programming*



Enhanced, Multiuse Public Realm

multimodal streets; gathering and social spaces; green infrastructure; festivals and event space

EXAMPLE STRATEGIES

Adapt to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

1.10 Continue to educate and inform the public and implement EAB mitigation program.

1.11 Identify and restore vacant or underutilized urban land for open space and ecological value.

Diversify Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

2.3 Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.

2.5 Continuous improvement of safety outcomes.

Grow Parks and Recreation Access

3.2 Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion.

3.6 With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.

Re-invest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

4.16 Work with other City agencies to secure participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents.

4.18 Work with other City agencies to establish regulations and guidelines to ensure compatibility of new development with adjacent parks and parkways.

Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture

5.9 Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health.

5.12 Provide residents with nearby access to nature experiences in the urban system.

OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

Greenways and Linear Parks

More Diverse Programming

greater variety of activities to enjoy along trails

Better Neighborhood Connections

enhanced access from trails to the community



Improved Trail Experience

enhanced quality of trail experience, including safety, connectivity, and wayfinding

Healthier Waterways

restored ecosystems; cleaner water; improved habitat and natural systems

EXAMPLE STRATEGIES

Adapt to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

1.5 Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lakes.

1.15 Review and revise park design standards and specifications to foster environmental responsibility.

Diversify Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

2.1 Reassess rules and regulations that limit flexibility and responsiveness in parks and recreation programming.

Grow Parks and Recreation Access

3.5 Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood.

3.6 With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.

Re-invest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

4.2 Identify and focus park and programmatic resources in underserved neighborhoods.

4.15 Enhance partnerships with Denver Water, Urban Drainage and other external agencies to protect and improve waterways and public resources.

Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture

5.5 Improve local trail corridors, in particular gulch corridors, to provide interconnectivity and park access.

5.12 Provide residents with nearby access to nature experiences in the urban system.

5.14 Protect the unique forest ecosystems by partnering with allied agencies and private land owners.



Recreation Centers

Improved Experience

enhanced program quality and customer service; greater variety of programs responding to emerging trends

Expanded Sustainable Practices

continued reduction in energy and water use; sustainable operations; and sustainable landscape practices around buildings



EXAMPLE STRATEGIES

Adapt to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

- 1.13** Make facilities more energy-saving and efficient, reducing energy use in park and recreation operations by 25 percent in 10 years.
- 1.14** Address waste more efficiently, increase user responsibilities, and expand recycling in parks and recreation facilities.

Diversify Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

- 2.1** Reassess rules and regulations that limit flexibility and responsiveness in parks and recreation programming.
- 2.2** Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community.

Grow Parks and Recreation Access

- 3.1** Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals.
- 3.4** Develop citywide proximity standards for all recreation facilities, services, and specialized park amenities.

Re-invest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

- 4.4** Support the development or enhancement of a comprehensive nonprofit to help promote and fund park and recreation improvements and awareness.
- 4.15** Achieve cost recovery targets for park and recreation facilities and services and adjust as needed.

Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture

- 5.9** Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health.
- 5.17** Reimagine Recreation Centers as meeting places and community hubs and catalysts for park activation

Greater Indoor/Outdoor Connectivity

greater connections between recreation centers and surrounding parks; complimentary programming and nature walks



Neighborhood-specific Programming

greater variety of programming, responding to context of surrounding community; partnerships to broaden offerings

OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

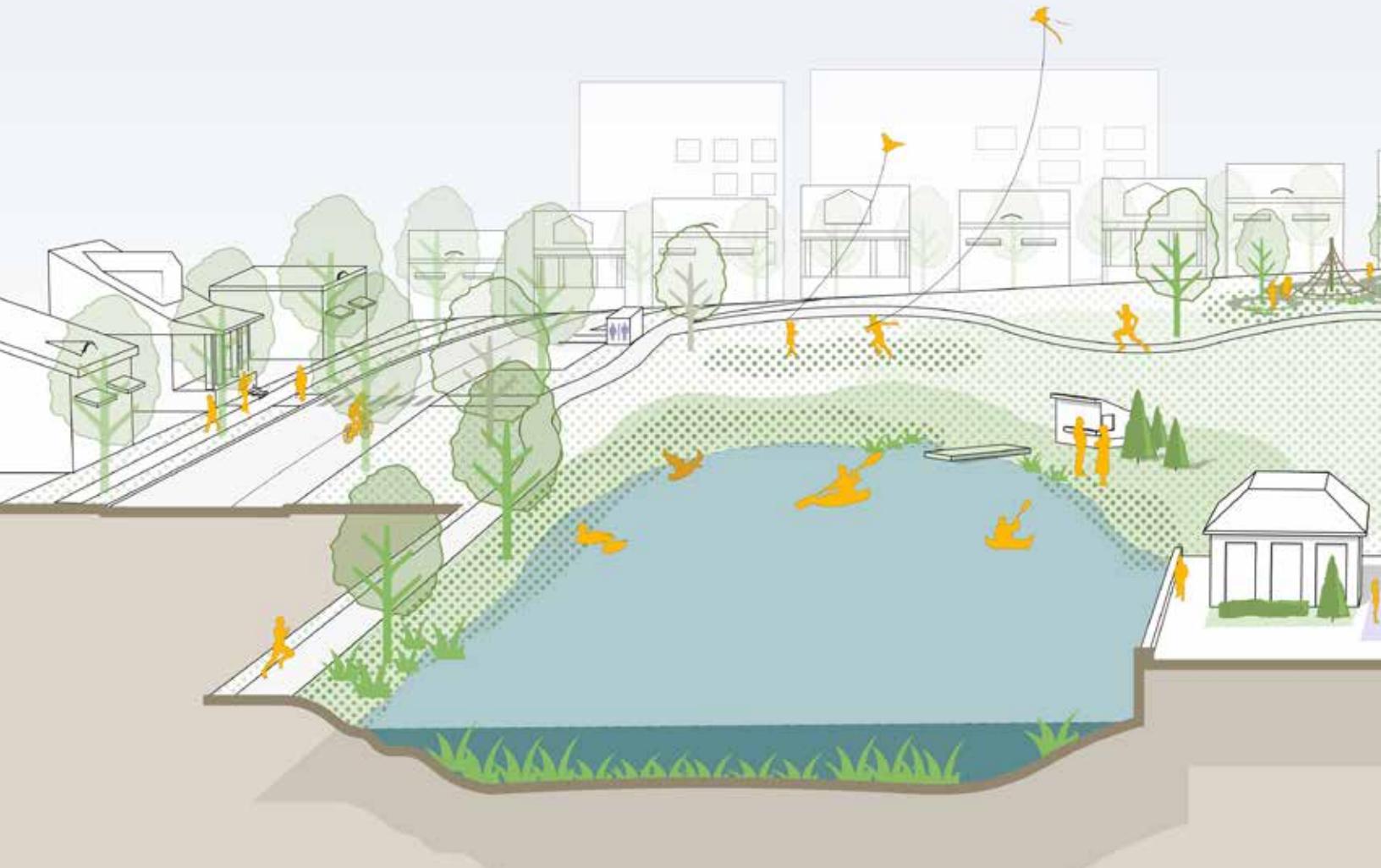
Urban Open Space

Nature Play

opportunities to play and explore

Increased Access to Natural Experiences

more access to natural areas closer to home



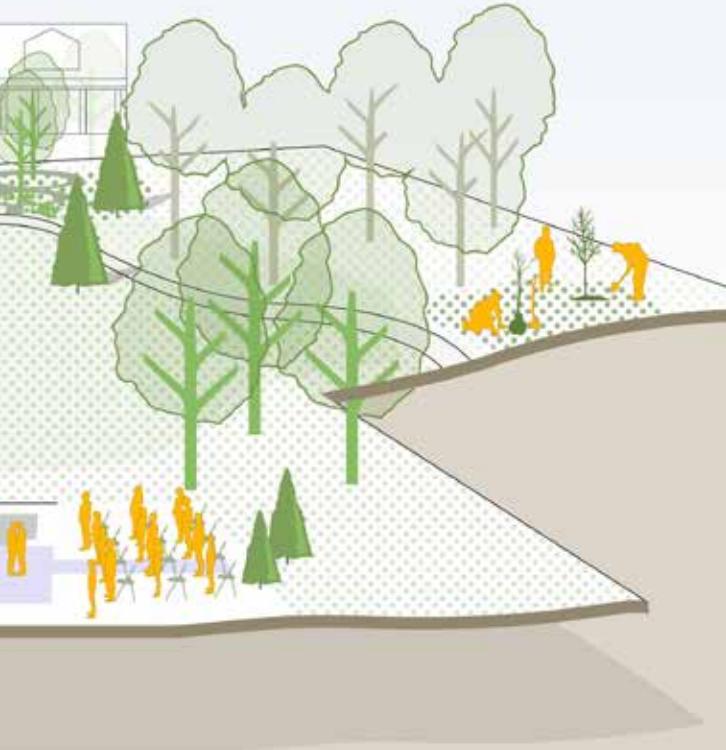
Expanded Education and Partnerships

environmental education opportunities and programs; guided nature walks

Environmental Benefits

reduced heat island; filtering stormwater; expanded natural habitat

EXAMPLE STRATEGIES



Adapt to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

1.2

Create select park areas to incorporate climate-resilient landscape and drought tolerance.

1.3

Enhance the technical expertise and operational capacity to expand our low-water and naturalized landscapes.

Diversify Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

2.7

Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives, and needs.

Grow Parks and Recreation Access

3.5

Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood.

3.6

With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues.

Re-invest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

4.9

Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards.

4.19

Align park system growth with Blueprint Denver while striving to preserve neighborhood character and maintain service standards.

Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture

5.6

Develop a thorough inventory of all historic park structures and prioritize them for preservation and restoration.

5.7

Celebrate the history and culture of our unique neighborhoods and reflect that in the design of parks and facilities.

OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

Mountain Parks

Greater Access and Awareness

shuttles and expanded transportation options; programs to increase access to children and others; communications campaigns

More Diverse Activities and Programming

more variety of things to do beyond hiking and wildlife watching; environmental education programming



Expanded Amenities and Events

more activities and events celebrating nature, culture, history, and outdoor recreation

Strengthened Funding and Operations

investigate new revenue sources; staffing and maintenance needs; partnerships and volunteers

EXAMPLE STRATEGIES

Adapt to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

1.5

Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lakes.

1.12

Work with regional partners to research and develop best practices for Mountain Park forest management and fire mitigation.

Diversify Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

2.4

Attain national accreditation for meeting high standards for staff performance, customer service and departmental success.

Grow Parks and Recreation Access

3.3

Leverage partners to create programs/events of regional and national significance.

3.7

Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide and regional amenities.

Re-invest in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

4.11

Create new opportunities to significantly increase volunteerism.

4.15

Enhance partnerships with Denver Water, Urban Drainage and other external agencies to protect and improve waterways and public resources.

Connect to Denver's Nature and Culture

5.4

Upgrade and expand regional trail system to meet new standards to improve safety, connectivity, wayfinding, and access.

5.13

Expand access, amenities, programs, and ease of use to improve the experience of the mountain parks to encourage more Denver residents.

Healthier Mountain Ecosystems

resilient, healthy forests; balancing conservation with visitor use



Preserved Historic Resources

historic preservation and documentation; interpretive signage and events

Appendices

Glossary

Blueprint Denver: a citywide planning process that is one of the five Denveright plans. *Blueprint Denver* focuses on links between land use and transportation. It develops blueprint for an inclusive city made up of "complete" neighborhoods with infrastructure and amenities, diversity of housing choices, further attention to urban design, and more.

Denveright: Denveright is a community-driven planning process focused on land use, mobility, parks, and recreational resources. It includes five separate plans: *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, *Blueprint Denver*, *Game Plan*, *Denver Moves: Transit*, and *Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails*.

Designated Natural Area: city-owned land that has been designated by the DPR Executive Director based on ecological function and condition, outdoor education potential, and connection to the community; the Office of the City Naturalist coordinates management.

Designated Park: DPR owned land that has been formally designated for public park use and may not be transferred or used for other non-park purposes.

DPR: Denver Parks and Recreation

DPS: Denver Public Schools

EAB: Emerald Ash Borer: an exotic beetle that kills ash trees by feeding on their bark. It has already killed hundreds of millions of trees around the country¹ and poses a significant threat to Denver, where 1 in every 6 trees is an ash tree.

Equity: a condition when everyone has the opportunity to thrive, reducing or eliminating persistent institutional biases and barriers based on race, ability, gender identity and sexual preference, age, the environment, and other factors.

Goals: The desired results in support of the principles (for example, protect water quality and manage water use.)

Guiding Principles: Aspirations describing how we desire the system to be (for example, Every Drop)

High-need neighborhood: neighborhoods with a greater demand for park space based on demographic, health, and urban context. High need neighborhoods have a higher percentages of lower income households, less access to personal vehicles, and higher obesity rates and other health disparities so having walkable park access is particularly important. (see page 166-167 for more details)

Implementation Recommendations: Provide implementation guidance and directions for the Action Plan.

LOS: Level-of-service: Level of service targets are goals describing how many amenities of various types are required to meet the demand of a certain number of residents. For example, level-of-service targets could include 1 baseball or softball field for every 5,000 residents or one indoor pool for every 15,000 residents. Level-of-service targets can help gauge how well the City is providing parks and recreation amenities to meet resident demand.

Metrics: Measurements that are monitored over time to track improvements in the health of our parks, recreation, and urban forest (for example, percentage of residents living within a ten-minute walk of a park)

NPI: Neighborhood Planning Initiative: Denver's Neighborhood Planning Initiative is a new long-term commitment to ensure 100% of the city can enjoy the benefits of an area plan. Over the next 10 to 14 years, residents, neighborhood groups, and community leaders will work alongside the city's neighborhood planning team to create a vision and plan for their specific area. More information is available on Denver's Neighborhood Planning website: http://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/community-planning-and-development/planning-and-design/Neighborhood_Planning_Initiative.html

Open Space: Park lands that are acquired and managed with an emphasis on aesthetic and natural resource values and are frequently more passive than active in development and use patterns.

Park: Lands and landscape that are acquired, developed, and managed for enjoyment by people, promotion of physical fitness, enhancement and preservation of the environment, and conservation of natural resources.

Parkway: a wide grand tree-lined streets with a park-like setting; Denver has 35 streets that are designated as a parkway or boulevard by City ordinance.

Policy: an institutional commitment that expresses values to guide future decisions.

ROW: Right-of-way: The publicly-owned area encompassing the street, sidewalks, and other areas between other properties.

Strategies: The approach and recommendations to accomplish the goals (for example, create select park areas to incorporate climate-resilient landscape and drought tolerance.)

Urban heat island: The effect of pavement and buildings to absorb heat and increase the air temperature of surrounding areas. "Urban heat island" refers to an area with a concentration of pavement and buildings that feels hotter than surroundings. In contrast, parks and green space have a cooling effect on air temperature.

Designated Parkways

This table provides a list of Denver's existing, designated parkways, including a description of their location. See the glossary on page 203 for a definition.

Designated Parkway Name	Description
Bonnie Brae Blvd Parkway	University Blvd at Exposition Ave to Mississippi Ave at Steele St
Buchtel Blvd Parkway	Clarkson St to Colorado Blvd
Cherry Creek Drive North Parkway	University Blvd to Quebec St
Cherry Creek Drive South Parkway	University Blvd to Quebec St
City Park Esplanade Parkway	Colfax Ave to 17th Ave
Clermont Street Parkway	3rd Ave to 6th Ave
Colorado Blvd Parkway	Hampden Ave to Dartmouth Ave; Valley Hwy to 44th Ave
Downing Street Parkway	3rd Ave to Bayaud Ave
East 17th Avenue Parkway	Colorado Blvd to Monaco St
East 1st Avenue Parkway	Downing St to University Blvd
East 26th Avenue Parkway	York St to Colorado Blvd
East 3rd Avenue Parkway	Colorado Blvd to Clermont St
East 4th Avenue Parkway	Williams St to Gilpin St
East 6th Avenue Parkway	Colorado Blvd to Quebec St
East 7th Avenue Parkway	Williams St to Colorado Blvd
East Alameda Avenue Parkway	Steele St to Quebec St (Building line setbacks apply between Quebec St & Havana St)
Federal Blvd Parkway	South City Limits/Floyd Ave to 25th Ave; 26th Ave to North City Limits/ Columbine Rd
Forest Street Parkway	17th Ave to Montview Blvd
Franklin Street Parkway	1st Ave to 4th Ave
Gilpin Street Parkway	1st Ave to 4th Ave

Gilpin Street Parkway	1st Ave to 4th Ave
Hale Parkway	12th Ave at Colorado Blvd to 8th Ave at Grape St
High Street Parkway	1st Ave to 4th Ave
Josephine Street Parkway	1st Ave to 2nd Ave
Martin Luther King Blvd Parkway	Elizabeth St to Quebec St
Monaco Street Parkway	Quincy Ave to 40th Ave/Smith Rd
Montview Blvd Parkway	Colorado Blvd to Syracuse st
Park Avenue Parkway	Colfax Ave at Franklin to 20th Ave at Washington St
Richthofen Place Parkway	Monaco St to Oneida St
South Irving Street Parkway	W. Evans Ave to W. Jewell Ave
South Marion Street Parkway	Bayaud Ave to Virginia Ave
Speer Blvd Parkway	Federal Blvd to Downing St
University Blvd Parkway	South City Limits/Floyd Ave to Yale; Iowa Ave/Valley Hwy to 6th Ave
West 14th Avenue Parkway	Bannock St to Broadway
West 46th Avenue Parkway	Federal Blvd to Sheridan Blvd
Williams Street Parkway	8th Ave to 4th Ave

List of Parklands

This table provides a list of Denver's existing parklands, including each site's classification and acreage as calculated through GIS data.

Location Name	Classification	GIS Acres
20th St Rec Center	Recreation Center	0.3
Alamo Placita Park	Neighborhood	4.6
Aqua Golf at Overland	Golf	14.1
Argo Park	Neighborhood	12.1
Ash Grove Park	Neighborhood	7.3
Ashland Recreation Center	Recreation Center	1.4
Aspgren (Clifford) Park	Neighborhood	3.7
Athmar Park	Neighborhood	3.3
Aztlan Park	Neighborhood	3.7
Babi-Yar Park	Community	25.2
Barnum East Park	Athletic Complex	11.8
Barnum Park	Community	34.0
Bayaud Park	Linear	7.0
Bear Creek Canyon Tract	Mountain	127.0
Bear Creek Park	Regional	86.4
Bear Valley Park	Linear	72.1
Bell Park	Mountain	477.1
Benedict Fountain Park	Neighborhood	2.9
Bergen Park	Mountain	21.2
Bergen Peak Tract	Mountain	621.4
Berkeley Lake Park	Regional	81.2
Berrian Mountain Tract	Mountain	481.4
Bezoff (Ben) Park	Neighborhood	5.3
Bible (James A) Park	Community	66.2

It is DPR policy to formally designate all park lands that are eligible. In 2018, 84% of urban parks and 100% of mountain parks were formally designated parks. The 15% of urban parks not designated include land not owned by DPR, lands in the public ROW but managed by DPR, or lands subject to other land rights that preclude formal designation.

Birch Hill Tract	Mountain	163.7
Bonnie Brae Park	Neighborhood	1.5
Bow Mar Heights Park	Neighborhood	18.0
Boyd (J. Langston) Park	Neighborhood	4.9
Broadway Triangles	Pocket	0.4
Buchtel Centennial Park	Pocket	0.4
Bulk Fuel Farm	Undeveloped	23.7
Burns (DC) Park	Neighborhood	12.4
Camp Rollendet	Special Use	7.0
Capitol Hill Reservoir	Athletic Complex	7.1
Carla Madison Rec Center	Recreation Center	2.9
Carpio Sanguinette Park	Neighborhood	14.3
Centennial Gardens	Special Use	5.5
Central Park	Regional	76.1
Central Park Rec Center	Recreation Center	10.6
Chaffee (Jerome B) Park	Neighborhood	5.0
Chambers Rd	Linear	13.1
Chavez (Cesar E) Park	Neighborhood	2.5
Cheesman Park	Regional	80.8
Cheesman Park Esplanade	Neighborhood	2.7
Cherry Creek Park	Linear	2.4
Ciancio Park	Neighborhood	4.0
City of Axum Park	Neighborhood	5.1
City of Brest Park	Community	16.4
City of Chennai Park	Neighborhood	8.1

List of Parklands (continued)

City of Cuernavaca Park	Community	24.8
City of Karmiel Park	Linear	3.3
City of Kunming Park	Neighborhood	3.6
City of Nairobi Park	Neighborhood	2.3
City of Potenza Park	Neighborhood	4.6
City of Takayama Park	Linear	6.1
City of Ulaanbaatar Park	Neighborhood	5.2
City Park	Regional	314.4
City Park Municipal Golf Course	Golf	138.8
Civic Center Park	Regional	10.6
Colorado Blvd Park	Linear	1.5
Colorow Point Park	Mountain	0.3
Columbus Park	Neighborhood	2.3
Commons Park	Community	17.6
Community Plaza Park	Pocket	1.0
Confluence East Park	Community	0.9
Confluence Park	Community	2.9
Congress Park	Community	19.2
Cook (Judge Joseph E) Park	Community	37.9
Corwina Park	Mountain	277.8
Cranmer Park	Community	24.2
Creekfront Park	Pocket	0.8
Crescent Park	Neighborhood	7.2
Crestmoor Park	Community	37.3
Cuatro Vientos / Four Winds Park	Neighborhood	1.2
Cub Creek Park	Mountain	521.7
Dailey Park	Neighborhood	2.7

Daniels Park	Mountain	984.5
Dartmouth Gulch Park	Open Space	3.3
DeBoer (SR) Park	Neighborhood	4.7
Dedisse Park	Mountain	420.6
Deer Creek Tract	Mountain	88.8
DEN Open Space	Open Space	198.2
Denison Park	Neighborhood	2.4
Denver Botanic Gardens	Special Use	22.8
Denver Skate Park	Special Use	1.9
Derby Canal	Undeveloped	6.6
Derby Lateral/Highline Canal	Linear	9.7
Diamond Hill Promenade	Linear	2.0
Double Header Mountain Tract	Mountain	42.6
Douglass (Fredrick) Park	Pocket	0.5
Downtown Playground	Pocket	0.8
Dreiling (Ruth Lucille) Park	Linear	5.8
Dunham (Lee) Park	Neighborhood	2.5
E 56th Ave	Linear	10.0
Eastmoor Park	Neighborhood	12.0
Echo Lake Park	Mountain	602.8
Eisenhower (Mamie Doud) Park	Community	20.2

List of Parklands (continued)

Elephant Butte Tract	Mountain	630.0
Elmendorf Park	Neighborhood	5.8
Elyria Park	Neighborhood	2.6
Falcon Park	Neighborhood	9.6
Fenders Tract	Mountain	40.5
Ferguson (WH) Park	Pocket	0.3
Fillius Park	Mountain	109.4
First Creek - Dunkirk to Tower	Undeveloped	12.2
First Creek Open Space	Open Space	37.8
First Creek Park	Undeveloped	6.3
First Creek Village	Open Space	13.8
Fishback Park	Neighborhood	2.2
Flores (Hector M) Park	Pocket	0.4
Flying J. Ranch Tracts	Mountain	77.1
Ford (Barney L) Park	Neighborhood	4.4
Ford Pl	Linear	1.4
Forsberg Park	Mountain	3.2
Four Mile Historic Park	Special Use	10.9
Franco (Bernabe Indio) Park	Pocket	0.6
Frog Hollow Park	Linear	5.7

Frontier West	Neighborhood	2.8
Fuller Park	Neighborhood	5.9
Garfield Lake Park	Community	29.0
Garland (David T) Park	Community	50.3
Garland North Greenbelt	Linear	5.4
Garland South Greenbelt	Linear	2.5
Gates Crescent Park	Neighborhood	10.8
Gates Tennis Center	Special Use	4.6
Genesee Park	Mountain	2407.0
Glenarm Recreation Center	Recreation Center	1.0
Globeville Landing Park	Neighborhood	8.0
Globeville Recreation Center	Recreation Center	0.2
Godsman Park	Neighborhood	5.1
Golden Key Park	Neighborhood	2.8
Goldsmith Gulch	Linear	2.5
Goldsmith Gulch North	Linear	5.4
Goldsmith Gulch North Middle	Open Space	4.5
Governors Park	Neighborhood	2.0
Grant Frontier Park	Neighborhood	8.9
Grant-Humphrey's Mansion Park	Special Use	1.9

List of Parklands (continued)

Great Lawn Park	Community	43.5
Green Valley Ranch East Park	Community	13.5
Green Valley Ranch West Park	Neighborhood	3.5
Greenway Park	Linear	40.5
Hallack Park	Neighborhood	3.0
Hampden Heights Park	Community	32.5
Hampden Heights West Park	Linear	4.3
Harvard Gulch East	Linear	10.7
Harvard Gulch Golf Course	Golf	13.0
Harvard Gulch Mini Park	Pocket	0.6
Harvard Gulch North Park	Athletic Complex	8.2
Harvard Gulch Park	Community	38.1
Harvard Gulch West	Linear	12.0
Harvey Park	Community	24.5
Hentzell (Paul A) Park	Open Space	59.2
Heron Pond/Heller Open Space	Open Space	42.9
Hicks Mountain Tract	Mountain	790.8
Highland Gateway Park	Pocket	0.9
Highland Park	Neighborhood	7.0
Highland Senior Center Park	Neighborhood	1.9

Highline Canal (Colorado to Parker)	Linear	61.7
Highline Canal (GVR Golf)	Linear	10.6
Highline Canal (GVR)	Linear	27.0
Highline Canal (Maxwell to 56th)	Undeveloped	4.3
Highline Canal (Orleans to Nepal)	Linear	1.0
Highline Canal (Parker to Havana)	Linear	28.8
Highline Canal (Picadilly to Orleans)	Linear	2.8
Hirshorn Park	Neighborhood	2.2
Hobbs Peak Tract	Mountain	38.8
Hungarian Freedom Park	Neighborhood	1.7
Huston Lake Park	Community	32.7
Hutchinson (Theodore A) Park	Open Space	16.3
Hutchinson East Park	Linear	5.7
Inspiration Point Park	Community	25.5
Jackie Robinson Fields	Athletic Complex	19.9
Jacobs (Frances Weisbart) Park	Neighborhood	12.0
Jefferson Park	Neighborhood	6.6
Jefferson Square Park	Neighborhood	4.6
Johnson-Habitat Park	Community	7.7
Katherine Craig Park	Mountain	52.4

List of Parklands (continued)

Kelly Open Space	Open Space	59.5
Kennedy (John F) Municipal Golf Course	Golf	273.0
Kennedy Ballfields Complex	Athletic Complex	56.7
Kennedy Soccer Complex	Athletic Complex	39.2
Kittredge Park	Neighborhood	2.2
La Alma / Lincoln Park	Community	15.0
La Familia Recreation Center	Recreation Center	0.9
La Lomita Park	Neighborhood	5.8
Lake of Lakes Park	Open Space	5.6
Lakewood / Dry Gulch Park	Linear	55.9
Lawson (Sonny) Park	Neighborhood	2.5
Legault Mountain Tracts	Mountain	134.8
Lindsley (Henry S) Park	Neighborhood	7.1
Little Park	Mountain	412.9
Lookout Mountain Park	Mountain	75.1
Loretto Heights Park	Neighborhood	13.8
Lower Lakewood Gulch	Open Space	6.6
Lowry Dam	Open Space	46.1
Lowry Open Space	Open Space	56.6
Lowry Sports Complex	Athletic Complex	51.5

MacIntosh (Kenneth M) Park	Pocket	0.3
Maestas (Eddie) Park	Special Use	0.4
Magna Carta Park	Neighborhood	3.6
Manley (James N) Park	Neighborhood	1.4
Marrama Park	Neighborhood	1.5
Martin Luther King Park	Neighborhood	11.3
Martinez (Joseph P) Park	Neighborhood	12.2
Mayfair Park	Neighborhood	4.9
McClain (Thomas Ernest) Park	Pocket	0.3
McDonough Park	Neighborhood	3.7
McNichols (William H) Park	Neighborhood	3.3
McWilliams (Robert H) Park	Neighborhood	7.9
Mestizo-Curtis Park	Neighborhood	8.5
Milstein (Phil) Park	Linear	5.5
Montbello Central Park	Community	36.9
Montbello Civic Center Park	Neighborhood	6.7
Montbello Open Space	Open Space	5.6
Montclair Park	Neighborhood	2.4
Montclair Recreation Center	Recreation Center	5.6
Morrison (George Sr) Park	Neighborhood	3.8

List of Parklands (continued)

Mount Falcon Tract	Mountain	84.4
Mount Judge Tract	Mountain	349.2
Mount Lindo Tract	Mountain	153.1
Mount Pence Tract	Mountain	552.2
New Freedom Park	Neighborhood	2.1
Newton Park	Mountain	435.9
North Turkey Creek Tract	Mountain	39.1
Northfield Athletic Complex	Athletic Complex	20.9
Northfield Pond Park	Open Space	33.6
Observatory Park	Neighborhood	10.4
O'Fallon Park	Mountain	814.6
Old Cavalcade Trail	Linear	1.9
Overland Municipal Golf Course	Golf	139.1
Overland Pond Park	Open Space	8.5
Park Ave Parks	Neighborhood	2.7
Parkfield	Regional	88.3
Parmalee Gulch Tract	Mountain	2.7
Pasquinel's Landing	Neighborhood	3.4
Pence Park	Mountain	298.6
Pferdesteller Park	Neighborhood	3.0

Pinecrest Village Park	Neighborhood	7.1
Pinehurst Park	Neighborhood	13.7
Pioneer Monument Park	Pocket	0.3
Platt (James H) Park	Neighborhood	3.7
Platte River at Elitch Gardens	Linear	6.7
Prairie Park	Linear	7.4
Prairie Uplands Park	Open Space	44.5
Pulaski Park	Neighborhood	8.8
Quality Hill Park	Pocket	0.3
Quick (Lenore B) Park	Pocket	0.4
Railyard Dog Park	Special Use	0.8
Red Rocks Park	Mountain	732.6
Richthofen Memorial Fountain	Pocket	0.1
Robinson Park	Neighborhood	6.8
Rocky Mountain Lake Park	Community	55.6
Rosamond Park	Community	35.6
Rosedale Park	Neighborhood	12.8
Ruby Hill Park	Regional	81.9
Rude Park	Neighborhood	10.4
Russell Square Park	Neighborhood	2.3

List of Parklands (continued)

Sanchez (Paco) Park	Community	29.9
Sand Creek Open Space	Undeveloped	102.9
Sanderson Gulch	Linear	52.3
Sanderson Gulch - Florida & Raritan	Linear	15.6
Sanderson Gulch - Irving & Java	Linear	6.6
Sandos (M.L. Sam) Park	Athletic Complex	16.2
Schafer (Martin J) Park	Neighborhood	8.9
Sculpture Park	Special Use	2.5
Silverman (Melvin F) Park	Neighborhood	9.0
Skyland Park	Neighborhood	8.1
Skyline Park	Special Use	2.6
Sloan's Lake Park	Regional	284.2
Snyder Mountain Tracts	Mountain	234.5
Southmoor Park	Community	17.3
Southwest Auto Park	Neighborhood	1.5
Southwest Recreation Center	Neighborhood	6.2
Speer Blvd Park	Neighborhood	3.5
St. Charles Place Park	Neighborhood	2.5
St. Patrick's Neighborhood Park	Pocket	0.3
Stanley Park Tract	Mountain	74.3

Starbuck Park	Mountain	10.7
Steele St Bikeway	Linear	0.6
Stout Street Children's Park	Pocket	0.2
Strain Gulch Tract	Mountain	38.7
Summit Lake Park	Mountain	161.6
Sunken Gardens Park	Neighborhood	11.1
Swansea Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	3.3
Swansea Park	Neighborhood	10.7
Swift Property	Undeveloped	9.4
Tennessee Utility Easement	Linear	4.2
Thomas (Fred N) Park	Community	29.4
Town Center Park	Community	25.6
Turkey Creek Park	Mountain	58.7
Union & Dudley	Linear	0.7
Unnamed 29th & Fairfax	Undeveloped	0.4
Unnamed 34th & Arkins	Undeveloped	2.1
Unnamed 41st & Ensenada Park	Neighborhood	5.1
Unnamed 42nd & Lisbon Park	Community	18.0
Unnamed 46th & Pecos Park	Neighborhood	3.5
Unnamed 47th & Telluride Park	Undeveloped	13.2

List of Parklands (continued)

Unnamed 51st & Broadway	Neighborhood	1.3
Unnamed 51st & Zuni Park	Neighborhood	12.8
Unnamed Bates & Hobart Park	Neighborhood	6.4
Unnamed Berkeley & Burlington Park	Pocket	0.3
Unnamed Bryant & Ellsworth Park	Pocket	0.5
Unnamed Byers & Pecos Park	Pocket	1.0
Unnamed Garland & Saratoga Park	Neighborhood	5.1
Unnamed Garrison & Union Park	Neighborhood	4.7
Unnamed Hillcrest & Ithica	Pocket	0.1
Unnamed Jefferson & Kendall Park	Neighborhood	2.4
Unnamed Kentucky & Irving	Undeveloped	0.3
Unnamed Kentucky & Knox Park	Pocket	0.4
Unnamed Quebec & Wesley Park	Pocket	0.6
Unnamed Stanford & Balsam Park	Open Space	10.2
Valverde Park	Athletic Complex	5.8
Vanderbilt East Park	Undeveloped	3.5
Vanderbilt Park	Community	24.4
Verbena Park	Neighborhood	7.2
Veterans Park	Community	16.2
Viking Park	Neighborhood	5.8

Village Place Park	Neighborhood	9.8
Wagon Trail Park	Linear	16.0
Walker (Madame CJ) Park	Pocket	1.0
Wallace (George M) Park	Neighborhood	24.8
Wallace (George M) Park North	Neighborhood	7.7
Washington Park	Regional	157.5
Weir Gulch Marina Park	Neighborhood	6.7
Weir Gulch Park - North	Linear	14.7
Weir Gulch Park - South	Linear	10.5
Wellshire Municipal Golf Course	Golf	133.9
West Jefferson School Tract	Mountain	79.6
West-Bar-Val-Wood Park	Neighborhood	12.7
Westerly Creek (Lowry)	Linear	2.3
Westerly Creek Park	Open Space	69.0
Westwood Park	Neighborhood	5.1
Westwood Utility Easement	Linear	3.4
Williams (Dr. Daniel Hale) Park	Pocket	0.6
Willis Case Municipal Golf Course	Golf	119.4
Yeagge Peak Tract	Mountain	41.1
Zeckendorf Plaza Park	Pocket	0.3

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all community members, stakeholders, officials and passionate users of the Denver Park and Recreation System for your support and engagement thus far in planning for the future of the Denver's Park and Recreation System. Over the course of this planning process, we engaged with thousands of members of the public through community forums, outreach events, and online surveys. The guidance and information provided by the Game Plan Task Force, DPR staff, and the Game Plan Ambassadors, as well as citywide staff from Community Planning and Development and Public Works, have proved invaluable in furthering our collective understanding of the depth and breadth of the system.

Game Plan Task Force

Special thanks to the members of a dedicated volunteer committee of residents, partner organizations, and advocates.

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3 Year Action Plan

3 YEAR ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

A living document to support on-going implementation and inform annual departmental work plans

The 3 Year Action Plan is a framework for keeping the Game Plan for a Healthy City a "living" document over the course of its 15-20 year planning horizon. As such, it is intended to be renewed and updated every 3 years for the life of the Game Plan.

The true value of the 3 Year Action Plan is as a guide to inform key parts of the Annual Work Plans developed by the Department's various functional Divisions. The Divisions use these Annual Work Plans to guide their day-to-day operational priorities and establish milestones for measuring progress. The actions and recommendations in the 3 Year Action Plan come directly from the priority strategies identified in the Game Plan document and are meant to clearly identify to internal staff, the public, and stakeholders, how the department will be taking more specific actions on the various phases of plan implementation. Collaboration is a key goal for this Action Plan; it identifies opportunities for internal and external collaboration to work together towards shared goals.

It should be noted that some of these actions and recommendations in the 3 Year Action Plan may already be happening and some may not be fully realized or completed within the 3 year action plan horizon. However, it's anticipated that the 3 year duration will allow an appropriate timeframe for Divisions to assess progress on realizing the current phase of actions and recommendations.

The 3 Year Action Plan provides clear milestones for measuring progress and sets up a framework for reporting progress that could be shared on a regular basis, through an annual report or an online dashboard.

At the end of an Action Plan duration, documentation would be developed noting an action as achieved, or still a priority (added to the next 3 Year Action Plan), or given changed circumstances, no longer a priority. As the new Action Plan process begins, priority strategies would be identified for the next three years.

ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE AND LIMITED RESOURCES



Water Use

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 80

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Align efficient water resources, irrigation, and horticultural best practices with established landscape types, including renovating areas with new plant material and irrigation.	Golf, Park Operations	Planning, Natural Resources, Forestry	Denver Water, CSU Extension	<p>Golf: Use turf guard moisture meters. Install weather stations at each golf course to provide daily Evaporation Rate data for efficient irrigation. Implement IPM program to improve plant health. Healthy plants need less water. Expand water window to maximum, cycle soak, annual audits, updating hydrographs, pump monitors. GPS spraying and GPS mapping to improve efficiency.</p>	<p>CSU: CSU Extension will connect DPR with CSU expertise in the following areas: turf, trees and woody plants, pesticides, bugs and plant disease, invasive plants and bugs, green roofs, water quality/Quantity/ Policy, National Western Center, Emergency Management, Social Work, Applied Research, Value-chains (economic development), Ag Economics.</p>	1.2
				<p>Park Ops: Continue with water conservation program: 50% completed; 50% to do; Finish installing Central control system using Irrigation crew for installation/renovations.</p>	<p>Forestry: Report from Forestry on trees that have shown tolerance of recycled water to ensure good diversity in our park system and BMPs for renovating areas with trees to be retained.</p>	
Enhance landscape maintenance capacity/capabilities/training for full range of naturalized lower-water landscapes .	Park Operations	Natural Resources, Human Resources		<p>Park Ops: Currently have 75% completed and ongoing annually; Conduct staff training for increased management of landscapes with training and standards; Lake edge conversions completed at Sloans, Berkely and Rocky Mountain.</p>		1.2

ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE AND LIMITED RESOURCES

Stormwater & Waterway Health

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 84

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Assess and improve lake and stream water quality utilizing mechanical, biologic, and technological tools.	Planning	Park Operations, Golf, Natural Resources	Colorado State, DPW, DEH	Planning: Complete inventory and qualitative assessment of all water resources in all urban parks and Mtn Parks (Echo Lake, Summit Lake, Bear Creek).	CSU: CSU Extension will assist in creating a liaison between the City and Specialists on Campus. Natural Resources: Complete implementation recommendations from the Lake Management Plan for urban lakes.	1.5
Reduce pesticide use and convert out of play areas into low-water, low-maintenance areas, to preserve and enhance habitat.	Golf	Natural Resources		Golf: Low-water areas have been maximized already; Apply pesticides only when necessary; Choose pesticides with a clear understanding of the cost and benefit along with any potential adverse effects to the environment; Use only pollinator safe insecticides to control turf insects; Implement resistance management practices for weeds and disease; Use laboratory testing for disease diagnosis to make an informed decision on what fungicide to apply; Do not use multi-mode fungicides unless there are pathogens that require multi-mode fungicides; Implement IPM programs with pesticide resistance management as a major determination on what products to use; Prohibit use of insecticides for ornamental plantings; Use only pollinator safe insecticides to control turf insects.		1.5
Consider range of management tools from organic to conventional for management of soils, vegetation, and control of Noxious Weeds.	Natural Resources	Park Operations	CSU Extension	Natural Resources: *Control all State listed Noxious Weeds. *Meet State requirements for noxious weed management.	Park Ops: Utilize BMP's and Park Standards to maintain healthy plants in parks.	1.5
Continue to work with partners to help restore and maintain riparian and wetland ecosystems in parks and greenways.	Natural Resources	Park Operations, Mountain Parks, Planning	Public Works, Urban Drainage, Denver Water, Corp of Engineers	Natural Resources: Prioritize land acquisition opportunities with UDFCD and PW to restore greenways in Denver for flood mitigation, habitat connectivity and recreation.	Planning: Designate liaison/representative to the Bear Creek Watershed Group; Continue to pay membership dues; Identify one project suitable for implementation with BCWG.	1.5
Establish funding source to provide contracted maintenance of trees along the highline canal to meet expectations of multi-agency MOU.	Forestry	Planning, Finance, BMO	Denver Water Board	Forestry: Secure budget funding to support need.		1.5



Urban Trees and Mountain Forests

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 88

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Incorporate urban heat analysis into the Urban Forestry Master Plan.	Forestry	Planning	Consultant	Forestry: Completed master plan.		1.6
Correct the past six year trend of removing more park trees than park trees planted.	Forestry	Natural Resources, Planning, Finance, BMO		Forestry: Increase Forestry capacity through establishment of additional tree planting crew to ensure more park trees are planted than removed annually.		1.6
Establish and fund urban tree canopy protection and establishment success program.	Forestry	Natural Resources, Planning, Finance, BMO		Forestry: Establish funding to measure urban tree canopy changes and maintain Denver's public tree inventory through an annual update program.		1.6
Update Forestry Rules and Regulations For The Protection of Trees Upon Public Right-of-ways and Other Public Places (last updated in 1971).	Forestry	Natural Resources, Planning, Public Works, Community Planning and Development	PRAB	Forestry: Adopted Rules and Regulations.		1.7
Develop a new MOU between Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Community Planning and Development to cooperatively establish priorities and actions to promote improved planting space standards, successful tree establishment, and protection of sustained right-of-way tree growth.	Forestry	Planning, Natural Resources	Public Works Transportation and Wastewater, Community Planning and Development	Forestry: Signed and implemented MOU.		1.8
Develop recommendations for Forestry right-of-way tree emergency response to eliminate expenses falling to Denver residents.	Forestry	Natural Resources, Finance, BMO		Forestry: New process created and actions in place to eliminate expenses placed upon property owners.		1.8
Evaluation of Denver's role in the maintenance of street trees.	Forestry	Natural Resources, Planning, Finance, BMO		Forestry: Report on budget impacts and capacity needs for Denver to take on maintenance of street trees within target streets of higher public interest, and evaluate cost-share options for establishment and removals of street trees due to public safety impacts.		1.8

ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE AND LIMITED RESOURCES

Urban Trees and Mountain Forests , continued.

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 88

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Address gap in Denver's EAB response program by taking action on smaller ash trees which currently are not addressed in the plan.	Forestry	Natural Resources, Finance, BMO	INC, PRAB	Forestry: Initiate ash tree removal and replacement program for public ash trees less than 12 inches in diameter.		1.9
Develop a new MOU with Public Works to promote cooperative, funded and sustainable maintenance of Median and ROW trees (in tree lawns and medians) and green infrastructure improvements.	Planning	Natural Resources/Forestry, Park Operations	Public Works Transportation and Wastewater	Planning: Complete MOU.		1.8
Develop forest management plans for Mtn Park units that include sustainable monitoring programs.	Mountain Parks	Planning, Natural Resources	Jeffco Open Space, CSFS, USFS	Mtn Parks: Complete plans for 50% of Mountain Park conservation area properties.		1.12
Implement forest management activities on Denver Mountain Park properties.	Mountain Parks	Planning, Natural Resources	Jeffco Open Space, CSFS, USFS	Mtn Parks: Implement forest management plan and monitoring on 1000 acres.		1.12
Develop and implement a range management program in Denver Mountain Parks.	Mountain Parks	Planning, Natural Resources	Jeffco Open Space, CSFS, USFS	Mtn Parks: Ensure Bison range is in good or better condition, treat all A list noxious weed species. Complete/update bison range assessment.		1.12



Energy and Resource Use

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 96

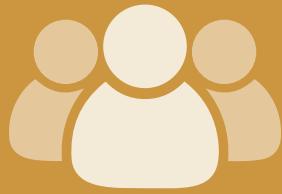
Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Involve recreation center employees and facility services team in annual facility energy audits and have them participate in implementing recommendations.	Park Operations	Recreation	Public Works, CCD Sustainability Office, Xcel; CSU Extension	<p>Park Ops: Conduct energy consumption quarterly reviews; 2020 goals.</p>	Recreation: *Recreation Administration will work with Department of Public Health & Environment to develop training for Recreation Supervisors on relevant environmental and energy use related topics. *Partner with Dept. of Public Health and Environment to provide an annual report on water and energy usage to center supervisors. *Recreation Admin will review energy use and trends of patron use at Centers over the next three years.	1.13
					CSU: CSU Extension has an Energy Specialist on campus who can assist the Recreation Division.	
Golf Cart Conversion	Golf			Golf: Switch gas golf carts to electric; switch lead acid batteries to lithium ion batteries; Meet 100% conversion 12/31/19.		1.13
Continue to implement and expand recycling, reuse, and composting programs in parks to achieve 35% landfill deduction.	Park Operations	Mountain Parks, Forestry, Marketing	Public Works, Waste Management Inc.	Park Ops: In 2019 Parks began trash routes with new barrel truck and recycling will start late summer in SW. Expand to pilot parks in East and NW in 2019. All districts will have recycle and trash barrel truck serving all urban parks; Achieve 25% landfill reduction in 9 parks.	Mountain Parks: Achieve 25% landfill reduction in 3 parks.	1.15
					Forestry: Program up and running within three years.	
Implement a wood reuse and recycling program to better utilize wood resource from public tree removals, wood from fuel thinning projects, and EAB program wood waste.	Forestry	Mountain Parks	Public Works, Waste Management Inc.	Forestry: Program up and running within three years.		1.15

DIVERSIFY PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Parks and Recreation Programming

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 102

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Create new health-oriented and intergenerational programming in recreation centers through partnerships, sponsorships and collaborative funding.	Recreation	Marketing,	Colorado Health Foundation, local hospitals, CSU Extension	Recreation: Develop new health programming for aquatics and assess the feasibility of the Outdoor Fitness Court Model City Program grants with the National Fitness Campaign.	CSU: CSU Extension can assist in creating a liaison between the City and Specialists on Campus.	2.2
Create urban gardens near recreation centers (w/) that serve as learning labs to teach organic and sustainable gardening practices to the community.	Recreation	Planning, Park Operations, Marketing	Denver Urban Gardens, CSU Extension	Recreation: Recreation will work with Planning, DUG, CSU, and other field partners to determine potential funding streams and a strategic location to pilot.	CSU: CSU Extension can assist in creating a liaison between the City and Specialists on Campus.	2.2
Develop ways for communicating sustainable maintenance practices and performance measures to the public.	Marketing and Communications	Park Operations, Mountain Parks, Natural Resources		Marketing: Identify sustainable maintenance practices and performance measures for the department and outline a plan to promote key stakeholders and to the general public through strategic communication tools.		2.2
Establish Mountain Park activity centers that provide instruction and programming for seasonal mountain adventures.	Outdoor Recreation	Mountain Parks, Planning, marketing	Jefferson County Open Space, Clear Creek County, REI, DMPP	Outdoor Recreation: Further develop quality programming at Genesee, Echo, Evergreen Parks. In 2019, work to access the feasibility of hiring an outdoor recreation coordinator dedicated to activating Mtn. Parks. Work with Mtn. Parks team on collaborative training opportunities.	Natural Resources: Open additional lakes to use and provide additional access to the S. Platte River. Mtn Parks: Identify three suitable locations for activity centers; develop a list of programs specific to Mtn Parks and provide to Recreation/partners.	2.3
Expand water based recreational opportunities on park lakes and the South Platte River.	Recreation	Mountain Parks, Rangers, Planning	Greenway Foundation	Recreation: Establish a set of boats and paddle boards housed at Evergreen Park for activation of summer season boating programs on the lake with DPR registrations and My Outdoor Colorado program partners.		2.3
Diversify golfer experiences through foot golf, night golf and golf socials. Expanded first tee use and development.	Golf	Marketing and Communications		Golf: Continue night socials; Increase 10% participation through foot golf, night golf and golf socials; First Tee course at Overland opens Sept. 2019 - 5 First Tee Courses; Serve 10,000 youth by 2020.		2.3



Engagement, Outreach, and Communications

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 110

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Track customer satisfaction to build service consistency and meet operational priorities.	Recreation	Park Operations, Permitting		Recreation: Conduct an Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey and comparing year to year.		2.7
Expand citizen engagement through volunteers to improve the visitor experience and resource protection. Build on the volunteer courtesy bicycle patrol to establish volunteer patrollers in parks.	Park Rangers	Mountain Parks, Marketing and Communications	DPD	Rangers: Expand volunteer courtesy patrol to include foot patrollers in City Parks and Mountain Parks, to build awareness of park resources and provide additional services and presence in Parks.		2.7
Establish a robust Denver Mountain Parks volunteer program that supports and supplements education, stewardship, and resource management objectives.	Mountain Parks	Rangers, Planning, Recreation	DPS, Zoo, Tall Bull, Big City Mountaineers, JCOS	Mtn Parks: Increase number of volunteer projects in Mountain Parks by 20% (75 projects to 90 projects).		2.7
Create a communications and outreach plan that positions Mountain Parks as "Denver's Mountain Experience Close to Home."	Mountain Parks	Marketing and Communications, Planning, Rangers, Recreation,	Visit Denver, Denver Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson County Open Space, Clear Creek County, REI	Mtn Parks: Complete plan and present to local partners, begin active implementation and market activities; Develop key messages; Identify target publics; position Denver Mountain Parks as a tourism destination.		2.7
Establish contacts between park district staff, mountain operations, rangers, and community groups and RNO's.	Marketing and Communications	Park Operations	INC	Marketing: Assess current practices of how operation staff engages with local community, throughout the various park districts. Establish guidelines and recommendations. Replicate community engagement process developed for recreation. Hire additional community engagement staff to support department wide efforts.		2.7
Expand citizen engagement through volunteerism to improve the visitor experience and resource protection.	Rangers			Rangers: Build on the volunteer courtesy patrol to establish volunteer patrollers in parks: to build awareness of park resources and to provide additional services and presence in parks.		2.7

GROW THE PARK SYSTEM AND RECREATION ACCESS

Park, Facility, and Program Expansion

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 116

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Expand opportunities, including a joint-use agreement, to utilize DPS grounds for DPR use outside of school hours with DPR funding support.	Admin/Finance	Planning, Permitting	DPS	Admin: meet with DPS officials to determine the feasibility of utilizing their property. If feasible, determine the framework for such use.		3.2
Identify a sustainable land acquisition funding source and prepare a growth acquisition plan.	Planning	Admin/Finance	CCD Real Estate	Planning: Develop acquisition criteria for Mtn Parks.	Mtn Parks: Coordinate and hold yearly meetings with Jefferson County Open Space.	3.1
Update current Goose Management Plan and implement prescriptions.	Natural Resources	Golf, Park Operations	Colo Div of Parks and Wildlife	Natural Resources: Hire APHIS federal contractor to plan and implement control measures.		3.3
Address the backlog of Mountain Park facility maintenance for sites and structures.	Mountain Parks	Planning, Park Operations	HistroCorps, Jefferson County Open Space, Clear Creek County	Mtn Parks: Address all poor ratings for facilities, roads, trails and infrastructure.		4.9
Develop a Natural Resources Operations Group to address noxious weed and wildlife management across the park system.	Natural Resources	Planning, Park Operations	CO Dept. Ag, Environmental Health, Neighborhood Inspection	Natural Resources: Hire an Operational Supervisor to oversee and supervise a seasonal Natural Resource Operational group.		3.3
Expand outdoor recreation and nature-based education programming.	Recreation	Park Operations, Mountain Parks, Planning, Rangers, Natural Resources	DPS, education non-profits, CSU Extension	Recreation: In 2019, develop strategies for Outdoor Recreation Gear Library Pilot in Westwood for Group users. Increase outreach to partnerships for use and amount of people served in Outdoor Recreation and Nature, Environmental Education.	CSU: CSU Extension can suggest design ideas and programs on the ground. Mtn Parks: Identify and promote resident and youth programming in Denver Mountain Parks.	3.3
Expand youth involvement in golf activities.	Golf			Golf: Partnership with JGAC (Junior Golf Alliance of Colorado) for reduced youth fees; 1,000 youth by 2020 in First Tee of Denver.		4.10



Mobility and Access

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 126

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Work with transportation providers and other City Agencies to enhance connectivity to Recreation Centers by developing way finding and public transportation guides.	Recreation	Planning, Park Operations, Marketing/communications	RTD	Recreation: Explore partnership options.		3.6
Work with Public Works to develop a safe and consistent approach to managing new mobility devices such as scooters and electric bikes.	Rangers	Planning, Park Operations	Public Works, DPD, Bike Denver	Rangers: Develop policies and implement appropriate signage and park regulations.		3.6
Work with Outdoor Recreation and other partners to provide mountain park bus/shuttle service for organized events and camping experiences.	Recreation	Mtn Park Operations, Rangers, Planning, Marketing/ Communications	RTD	Recreation: Work with Mountain Parks to develop strategies for Mtn. Parks programming that includes program partners (Non-profits and School District) use of Mountain Parks. Develop a sustainable fleet dedicated to Mountain Parks activation.		3.6
Create overnight (i.e. yurt) rental accommodations in the mountain parks for seasonal activities snowshoe, ski, hiking excursions.	Recreation	Mtn Park Operation, Rangers, Planning, Marketing/ Communications	REI, HistoriCorps, Mtn. Park Foundation	Recreation: Department will develop fees associated with Group Rental for overnight camping at Genesee. Groups renting the Yurts and Camping Space at Genesee will have options.	Mtn Parks: Purchase and install up to four yurts at Genesee Park Base Camp.	3.6

REINVEST IN DENVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES AND PEOPLE

Equity

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 132

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Develop dedicated funds for investment in maintenance facility upgrades to ensure safety and operational efficiency across the park system.	Park Operations	Admin/Finance, Permitting, Mtn Parks, Planning		Park Operations: Begin planning and funding for upgrades of 3 maintenance facilities.	Mtn Parks: Determine and Identify future maintenance facility requirements for Mtn Parks that bring buildings to modern standard.	4.1
Implement a citywide Park Ranger service level to address visitor safety and regulatory compliance across all park areas.	Rangers	Planning, Finance, Communications	DPD, Environmental Health	Rangers: Hire appropriate Ranger Supervisors and Senior Rangers to train and oversee a growing seasonal ranger force.		4.1
Continue to upgrade maintenance facilities, so staff have connectivity to technology, training, including infrastructure, hardware, and software that supports operational effectiveness.	Admin/Finance	Park Operations/ Recreation, Mtn Parks	Tech Services	Admin/Finance: Invest \$300k-\$500k annually in upgrades, training, hardware, and software.	Mtn Parks: Install Wifi technology at Mountain Park office buildings.	4.1

Funding, Operations, and Staff

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 138

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Increase access to leadership development training for staff with incentive programs and recognition.	HR	Parks Operations, Recreation, Natural Resources, Human Resources		HR: Measuring and tracking employee satisfaction and employee turn over, creating a performance based coaching organizational culture, enhancing leadership capability and competencies throughout the organization, building succession plans to ensure business continuity, encouraging career development and continuous improvement supported by training.		4.7
Cross train maintenance staff for a variety of roles and functions to support professional development and operational efficiency.	Mountain Parks	Natural Resources, Rangers, Planning, Safety, HR	HistoriCorps	Mountain Parks: Invite City staff to participate in projects and programs unique to DMPs. Send DMP staff to City training opportunities to learn new skills and approaches.		4.7



Funding, Operations, and Staff, continued.

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 138

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Better integration and sharing of operational services, trades, and equipment between the mountain parks with urban park system to enhance maintenance capacity, technical expertise, and service provision.	Park Operations	Mountain Parks, Natural Resources, Planning	HistoriCorps	Park Ops: Continue with supporting project and equipment requests within division. By cross training parks personnel and providing certified and licensed technicians. To be accomplished thru shared positions and job shadowing opportunities (Investing Every Dollar and Every Person) Data captured in INFOR will be the tool used to document cost and labor efficiencies.		4.9
Establish a Park Ranger Training Coordinator to implement service standards for the Ranger Program to address officer safety, recruitment, retention, and diversity.	Rangers	Human Resources, Safety	DPD	Rangers: Hire Training Coordinator and implement service standards.		4.9
Develop sustainable dedicated funding sources to support meeting maintenance standards and hazard abatement.	Park Operations	Forestry, permitting, Admin/Finance	Budget Office	Park Ops: 85% of standards met.		4.9
Develop maintenance and service standards for Denver Mountain Parks which includes facilities, programming and natural resource management.	Mountain Parks	Human Resources, Safety	Jefferson County Open Space	Natural Resources: Develop and implement a staffing and service plan service plan that allows for maintenance and protection of park resources. Hire appropriate staff based on the service plan.		4.9
Develop and implement a Park Ranger service standard that allows for consistent and equitable patrol and monitoring of all park areas.	Rangers	Human Resources, Safety	DPD	Natural Resources: Develop and implement a park ranger service plan that allows appropriate ranger staffing for all districts and programs citywide. Hire appropriate staff based on the service plan. Rangers: Develop and implement a park ranger service plan that allows appropriate ranger staffing for all districts and programs citywide. Hire appropriate staff based on the service plan.		4.9
Enhance natural resources planning support to adequately plan, design, and implement resiliency projects.	Planning	Human Resources, Safety	Public Works, Urban Drainage	Planning: Complete design for one resiliency project.	Natural Resources: Hire adequate staff to implement resiliency projects as identified in the six year CIP plan.	4.9

REINVEST IN DENVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES AND PEOPLE

Partnerships

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 146

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Provide discounted access to DPS Schools like discounted green fees and practice facilities for HS Golf Teams and the First Tee.	Golf		DPS	Golf: Continue to provide discounts to DPS.		4.12
Explore with DPS the expansion of accessible-for-DPR active field and court facilities, perhaps through a joint-use agreement.	Admin/Finance	Park Operations, Planning	DPS, Budget Office	Admin: meet with DPS officials to determine the feasibility of utilizing their property. If feasible, determine the framework for such use.		4.12
Inventory all DPS trees and provide condition analysis.	Forestry	Planning, PW	DPS	Forestry: Complete inventory and analysis.		4.12
Work closely with partners to enhance Natural Resource activities citywide.	Natural Resources	Park operations, Planning, Permitting	DEN, USFWS, CPW, CDA, CDPHE, CNHP, CSU, DPW, DDPHE	Natural resources: Improve the maintenance, care and treatment of all major waterways across the city.		4.12

Collaboration with the Private Sector

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 154

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Work with CPD and the Mayor's office to approve a park development impact fee on the new construction that adds demand for park and recreation services and facilities.	Admin/ Finance	Planning	Council Offices, Mayor's Office, BMO, CPD	Admin/Finance: Schedule collaborative meetings and create a draft ordinance.		4.16
Update sponsorship policies to better leverage corporate and health care funding partners to support specific recreation center and programing improvements.	Marketing/ Communications	Admin/Finance		Communications/Marketing: Develop a draft sponsorship policy.		4.16

CONNECT TO DENVER'S NATURE AND CULTURE



Parkways, Tree-lined Streets, and Trails

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 160

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Study the expansion of Denver's designated parkway system to include eligible streets in new neighborhoods with suitable conditions for a new forestry supported tree establishment and maintenance program, and potential opportunity corridors in underserved neighborhoods.	Planning	Forestry, PW		Planning: Begin planning effort to update parkway regulations and develop standards for new tree lined street ROW's.	Forestry: Identification of streets within low tree canopy neighborhoods that have the greatest opportunity for successful tree growth, and evaluate resources needed to begin tree establishment and maintenance program.	5.3
Prioritize completing gaps in the regional trail system like Sand Creek and bringing the system up to a current standard.	Planning	Park Operations, Mtn Park Operations, Natural Resources		Planning: Complete Sand Creek trail improvements and plan general system upgrade.		5.3
Seek and identify a consistent funding source to maintain seven year pruning cycle on existing designated parkways and restock planting spaces.	Forestry	Planning, Natural Resources		Forestry: Secured funding for contracted service to meet 7 year pruning rotation standards.		5.3
Converting gray to green through the creation of protected tree planting spaces along the north Broadway Boulevard	Forestry	Planning, Park Operations, Natural Resources, PW		Forestry: Identification of underutilized park or public right-of-way spaces for improvement / conversion to protected green space that will have a large impact on the surrounding area.		5.3

CONNECT TO DENVER'S NATURE AND CULTURE

Arts, Culture, and History

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 166

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Inventory and preserve historic park structures and encourage productive reuse of restored buildings.	Planning	Park Operations, Mtn Parks, Rangers, Permitting	SHPO, Historic Denver	Planning: Complete update to the Mountain Parks District-Wide Historical and Cultural Facilities Assessment.	Mtn Parks: Conduct annual historic preservation projects with HistoriCorps/volunteers/youth.	5.8
Partner to expand cultural and entertainment special events and exhibits, particularly in areas that are deficient.	Admin/Finance	Recreation, Park Operations, Mtn Park Operations	Arts and Venues, DMNS, Denver Zoo and Denver Botanic Garden, DAM and Four Mile House	Admin/Finance: Request funding for additional staff in the annual budgeting process to develop and execute an outreach program designed to identify external partners with the ability to produce cultural and entertainment events and exhibits.	Mtn Parks: Work with DZ/DMNS to increase programs in Mtn Parks by 25%; Partner with National Western and Buffalo Bill Museum to provide BB artifacts/exhibits at new complex.	5.8
Restore and activate the CCC Camp at Red Rocks Park and continue implementing the "Stewardship Center" to teach preservation trades to preserve historic structures.	Mtn Park Operations	Buffalo Bill, Planning, Rangers, Recreation, Communications and Marketing	Mtn. Park Foundation, Historicorps	Planning: Completion of site and space vision plan for CCC Camp/Design plans (CDs) for new Mtn Parks HQ building/Complete utility upgrades.	Mountain Parks: Conduct annual historic preservation projects with HistoriCorps/volunteers/youth.	5.8
Coordinate with partners to promote use of the Lariat Loop National Scenic Byway and Mt Evans National Scenic Byway with driving tours and events at linked parks.	Planning	Mtn Park Operations, Rangers, Recreation, Communications and Marketing	CDOT	Planning: Designate liaison to Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways / Attend yearly commission meetings.	Mountain Parks: Develop and implement an education and interpretive strategy for Denver Mountain Parks.	5.8
Expand the Cultural Resources Program for Denver Mountain Parks to focus on interpretation and education.	Mountain Parks	Buffalo Bill, Planning, Rangers, Recreation, Communications and Marketing	Mtn. Park Foundation, Historicorps	Mtn Parks: Develop an interpretation and education strategy in cooperation with the Tall Bull Memorial Council; Provide a DMP/DPR presence at the annual September Pow-Wow and other events at Tall bull Memorial Grounds; Implementation of a Ethnobotanical study in Mtn Parks.		5.8



Innovative Parks and Recreation

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 170

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Use the newly developed GIS landscape typology to restore damaged park areas.	Planning	Natural Resources	Public Works, Urban Drainage	Planning: Complete landscape typology mapping.	Natural Resources: Develop restoration plans for all landscape areas rated as poor. Restore one poorly rated park area per year.	5.9
Identify and implement resiliency projects that address impacts from climate change and reduce resource consumption.	Planning	Natural Resources	Public Works, Urban Drainage	Planning: Develop a list of resiliency projects in the Mountain Parks.	Natural Resources: Develop a list of resiliency projects that can be added to the 6 year CIP plan. Implement a minimum of two resiliency project per year.	5.9
Promote and improve management of water - based recreation.	Rangers			Rangers: Review, evaluate and make recommendations concerning the regulation of recreational use of lakes and waterways in the City.		5.9

Nature and Outdoor Recreation

Strategies and recommendations start on pg 174

Action	Lead Division(s)	Supporting Division(s)	External Partners	3 Year Milestone	Supporting Actions	Strategy #
Develop a vision plan for Lookout Mountain for an enhanced visitor experience that includes a repurposed Pahaska Tepee (highlighting Buffalo Bill and western memorabilia) and an introduction to mountain park conservation legacy and contemporary uses and values.	Planning	Mtn Parks/Rangers, Admin-Finance	Mtn Park Foundation	Planning: Complete draft vision plan.		5.13
Continue to promote and leverage Evergreen Golf Course as a unique public course in a mountain setting.	Golf			Golf: Develop a marketing plan for Evergreen focusing on the proximity to Denver and the unique foothills scenery and targeting Denver residents and visitors.		5.13
Develop additional educational tools and capability to engage citizens and improve both visitor experience and resource protection.	Rangers			Rangers: Expand on pop-up education stewardship opportunities in parks/trails to increase communication, awareness, and voluntary compliance on a variety of stewardship and safety topics.		5.13

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Your Voice. Our Future.

Comprehensive Plan 2040

The comprehensive plan — an update of the city's guiding vision from 2000 — reflects the voice of Denver today on issues spanning land use, mobility, parks, neighborhood authenticity, equity, economic growth, arts, culture and sustainability. This modern comprehensive plan will chart the course of the Mile High City for 20 years.

Blueprint Denver

Civic leaders who had a vision for Denver in 2002 created Blueprint Denver, a citywide plan to link land use and transportation. Innovative for its time, the plan served us well — promoting a walk- and bike-friendly city, increasing transit service on major corridors, more housing in mixed-use areas, and directing new development to areas where growth is most appropriate. Based on community input, the Blueprint Denver 2019 update focuses on creating a blueprint for an inclusive city made up of "complete" neighborhoods with infrastructure and amenities, diversity of housing choices, further attention to urban design, and more.

Parks & Recreation Game Plan

In a city as active and outdoor-oriented as Denver, a great parks system is essential to our quality of life. In 2003, a community-based process created the first Game Plan, which emphasized the vision of "a city in a park" and set priorities on the environment, engagement, equity and sound economics. With the updated Game Plan for a Healthy City, we're responding to climate change, growth, increased use and a lack of funding by prioritizing new parks, recreation and community programming, drought resiliency and upgrading existing facilities.

Denver Moves: Transit

As our population grows, Denver needs more transportation choices to move more people efficiently and safely on our existing street network. Denver Moves: Transit is Denver's first-ever citywide transit vision to guide improving the quality of transit options in our city — making transit more reliable, more frequent, and more convenient for daily use.

Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails

The Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails plan will help make walking a viable and primary way for people to get around town comfortably and safely. With guidance from the community, the plan identifies citywide needs and defines priorities for improving and connecting Denver's pedestrian and off-street trail network; it also examines costs, funding options and policies to achieve the community's vision.

