

## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

The planning process for the Longmont Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan included multiple forums for community members to provide input about their recreation preferences, needs and priorities. Findings from the public involvement activities were directly incorporated into the master planning effort in multiple ways, including in developing analysis criteria, crafting prioritization criteria, and preparing recommendations.

This appendix summarizes the outreach process and findings<sup>1</sup>, and is organized as follows:

- Key Themes, a summary of themes that have emerged from the multiple input opportunities;
- Outreach Strategy, a description of the outreach strategy, which was designed to ensure that the process and the data collected are demographically representative of the community;
- Methodology, a description of the specific activities; and
- Demographic and Participation Results, providing data on participants.

### Key Themes

Reviewing all of the public involvement activity results, the planning team synthesized a set of themes that describes the attitudes and beliefs of the participants. These themes, along with supporting statements from input activities, are presented below.

#### ***Frequent visitors with high expectations***

Park users visit their local parks frequently, make extensive use of the facilities, and rate the quality of facilities with a sharp eye.

- Questionnaire and intercept respondents overwhelmingly rate parks as extremely important to Longmont's quality of life.
- Most questionnaire respondents indicate there is room for improvement in the quality of maintenance and the quality of facilities in parks.
- Comments from multiple focus groups support the impression that Longmont's parks and facilities are great, but they could be better.
- 72% of respondents to the questionnaire visit the park nearest their home at least a couple of times per month.

#### ***Walking, running, and biking as key recreation activities***

Participants clearly see the recreation value of trails and want them to serve not just as a way to get to destinations, but also as a recreation experience in and of themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> This summary report is supported by individual public involvement activity summaries that present specific findings from the major outreach opportunities.

- Trails are the most important facility to have close to home, according to input shared across all outreach activities.
- The need to connect the community north to south and to the regional trail system was a main point shared at the community visioning workshop.
- Expanding and connecting the greenway trail system was the overwhelming top choice for the most important thing the City can do to improve parks, recreation and trails in Longmont.
- St. Vrain Greenway is seen as the “backbone” of the future park system.
- Nearly as many participants are walking and biking to parks as are driving.

### ***Strong interest in “destination” parks and facilities***

Community members have a high level of interest in parks that provide opportunity for varied, high quality experiences and that present a unique identity.

- A high percentage of questionnaire respondents shared that they “never” visit large parks with a sports focus (such as Garden Acres and Clark Centennial).
- Parks with greater variety of experience, such as Sandstone Ranch and Roosevelt, were visited by almost all respondents and were frequently praised in other activities.
- Outreach participants ranked large parks that serve the entire community ranked above smaller, close-to-home parks as preferred additions to the system.

### ***Active community supporting a wide range of recreation activities***

There are many things that people want to do in Longmont’s parks, encompassing expansions of some elements already present as well as new additions.

- Intercept participants would like to see more walking/biking, lake and river activities and swimming.
- Questionnaire respondents expressed a desire for more team and individual sports, walking/biking, and playing.
- Overall, participants enjoy special events and would like to see more unique community gatherings.
- Many new program and activity ideas were offered, and specific suggestions are available in individual public involvement summaries.

### ***Need to renew and maintain the system***

The public expressed a strong desire to maintain and reinvest in the parks and recreation assets already available, and to carefully balance new additions with maintenance and renewal of the entire system.

- Respondents to the questionnaire were asked pointed questions about new financial resources; more were willing to pay more than to sacrifice the number of parks or facilities.
- Many participants expressed concern about building new parks and facilities until renewal and maintenance needs are addressed.

## **Outreach Strategy**

Planning for parks and recreation is a community-wide effort. Broad input was critical to ensure that the Parks, Recreation, and ADA Plans reflect community diversity—including different ethnic/cultural backgrounds, ages, and interests. Early in the planning process, the Project Team worked with the Community Involvement Steering Team to create a public involvement plan for the project. The plan identified community characteristics that were important to represent in the planning effort, identified target audiences, and identified potential methods.

### ***Targeted Audiences***

Utilizing current U.S. Census data, the Project Team identified key community characteristics that would impact the public involvement effort. For example, the high proportion of Hispanic residents (with 20% of the City's population speaking Spanish at home), the significant percentage of renters (i.e., renter-occupied housing), and the large percentage of people under age 19 created the need for specific outreach methods and process flexibility in order to reach these groups.

Overall, the following groups were targeted for inclusion in the master planning process.

- General public
- Demographic subgroups
  - Hispanic/Latino, including those who are primarily Spanish-speaking
  - Teens and young adults
  - Renters
  - Seniors
- Community organizations
  - Neighborhood leaders
  - Service groups
  - Sport leagues and clubs (including private clubs)
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Longmont Visitors Association
  - Longmont Downtown Development Authority
  - Special event organizers
- Community of people with disabilities
- Partner agencies and other community recreation providers
  - Boulder and Weld County
  - St. Vrain Valley School District
  - YMCA
- Environmental groups
- City Council/Boards
- City staff

## ***Levels of Involvement***

The community involvement process applied a variety of different outreach activities organized by levels of involvement.<sup>2</sup> These levels include:

- Inform: Providing balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives, and/or solutions.
- Consult: Obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- Involve: Collaborating directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.
- Partner: Partnering with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. All participant input is equally valued.

The public involvement plan utilized this framework to balance the level of involvement across the range of outreach activities.

## **Methodology**

The Project Team designed, facilitated and recorded a wide variety of outreach activities specifically designed to maximize representation of the community and provide useful direction in guiding the future of the park, recreation and trails system.

### **Web Page**

The City hosted a project web page throughout the process at <http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/parkmasterplan/> where any interested party could check in on the project. The web page content was regularly updated and included a description of the project, frequently asked questions, the latest meeting and analysis summaries, contact information and the link to the online questionnaires (during the collection period).

### **Focus Groups**

Eight focus group meetings were held between September 10 and 19, 2012 with one additional meeting with the Youth Council held on October 24, 2012.

Participants represented the following groups:

- Environmental leaders;
- Longmont Resident Feedback Panel;
- Neighborhood group leaders;
- Park and Recreation Advisory Board;
- Center for People with Disabilities;
- Recreation programs, facility users & sports groups;

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<sup>2</sup> This public involvement framework has been adapted from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). The definitions are from the Longmont's Engaging Citizens: Public Involvement Resource & Training Manual.

- Seniors;
- Special event organizers; and
- Youth Council.

Each focus group was provided an agenda and a set of discussion questions meant to stimulate conversation. However, the conversations were, by design, free-flowing and open-ended to maximize the opportunity to identify issues important to the group. Forty-nine (49) people participated. The Project Team documented these discussions.

### **Intercept Events**

Intercept events capture information and ideas from the public by going to where people are, such as to community events, and asking for quick participation. Major intercept events were held in conjunction with the Festival on Main (8/24/12) and Art Walk Longmont (9/21/12). More than 350 people participated in an interactive voting exercise, answering six questions by placing sticky dots on display boards. This input was summarized by the Project Team. Additional intercept opportunities were utilized: handing out information about the project at Rhythm on the River and the Halloween Parade and attending the Multi-Cultural Business Expo.

### **Questionnaires**

The questionnaires served as a tool for broadening and validating the input received in other public involvement activities. Two questionnaires were developed: one for adults and one designed specifically for youth. English and Spanish versions were available for each. The questionnaire provided the most flexibility both for the respondent (by allowing them to provide input on their own schedule and giving open-ended opportunities to make comments) and for the planning team (available in multiple forms, easily distributed, self-entry allows for large numbers of respondents at a low cost) of any of the planned activities. Seven hundred (700) questionnaires were collected online and on paper (including both youth and adult versions), with results analyzed as a single data set.

### **Hispanic/Latino Outreach**

As the process progressed, the Project Team identified the need for supplemental outreach to target the Hispanic/Latino community for additional input. Using staff translation resources and connections to existing groups, the Project Team reached out to engage the following organizations:

- El Comité
- Casa Esperanza
- Intercambio
- Multi-Cultural Steering Committee
- Latino Chamber of Commerce Boulder County
- Youth Center Neutral Zone

- Low Rider Bike Club
- Peruvian Soccer Club
- Latino Leaders Group
- Parenting Place

### **Community Visioning Workshop**

The Community Visioning Workshop (held September 19, 2012) was an interactive community meeting designed to identify the key directions for the park system in Longmont, including key features. The specific interactive exercises were developed based on preliminary input from the community, staff and observations on the ground. The two-hour workshop was attended by approximately forty (40) participants and included three major parts. A preliminary presentation set the context for the planning effort, small group exercises allowed for discussion within groups of Longmont residents, and finally, the results of the exercises were shared with the full group to identify common themes in a facilitated discussion about the future direction of the system.

### **Staff Workshop**

The staff visioning workshop (held on September 19, 2012) provided an opportunity for City of Longmont staff to share their knowledge and insights into the needs, opportunities and challenges faced by the parks, recreation and trails system. This workshop included a presentation and an interactive exercise that provided the participants an opportunity to draw their ideas onto a map of the system as part of a small group. Following the small group exercise, the Project Team facilitated a brief discussion that included collecting the key elements from each small group and reflecting on the commonalities. Fourteen (14) staff members from a wide range of City departments and divisions participated in this workshop.

### **Community Prioritization Workshop**

The Community Prioritization Workshop (held on January 24, 2013) was designed to require participants to prioritize projects within a limited budget, reflecting the real world trade-offs that will be necessary and also educating participants about the resource constraints. Participants were organized into small groups and received a list of projects to choose from, with a budget that did not allow all of the projects to be funded. Each individual was asked to prioritize projects, based on their personal preferences. Following the initial individual prioritization, the groups were presented with the option of voting for additional capital and operating funding and asked to negotiate amongst themselves to identify a package of projects for the table. The results of this group negotiation process were reported to the full group in a final discussion which was recorded at the front of the room.

### **Comment Log**

Throughout the planning effort, community members were given Longmont Project Manager Kathy Kron’s email and contact information and encouraged to send specific comments. All outreach materials and the project website encouraged comments. Over the course of the project, specific comments were received, logged, and tracked.

## **Community Characteristics**

According to recent Census and American Community Survey data (2010), Longmont’s demographic make-up is as follows:

### **Race/Ethnicity:**

White	83%
Hispanic	25%
Black or African American	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1%
Asian	3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%
Some Other Race	9%
Two or More Races	3%

### **Age:**

Less than 19	29%
20 to 34	19%
35 to 44	15%
45 to 54	15%
55 to 64	11%
65 to 74	6%
75 +	5%

### **Housing Occupancy**

Owner Occupied	66%
Renter Occupied	33%

In terms of language spoken at home, 20% of the population speaks Spanish at home and 10% speaks English less than very well.

## Demographic and Participation Results

Table 1 lists all of the outreach activities, organized by level of participation. Throughout the process, the Project Team tracked demographics using a set of questions provided on a small card or as part of the questionnaires. As noted in the table, over 1,300 people participated in the planning process, resulting in 790 documented demographic responses.

The Project Team can use this demographic data to evaluate the public input process. Key findings include the following:

- 16% participants identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.
- 98 youth (18 and under) responded to the questionnaire.
- The majority of participating adults were in the 25-44 age range.
- 63% identified themselves as homeowners, 10% as renters, and 27% as “not known/visitor”.

These results cannot be directly compared to the community’s demographic breakdown, but they do indicate success in reaching the full range of Longmont residents, particularly target audiences including youth, Hispanic/Latino residents and renters, who are typically the most difficult to reach.



**Table 1: Public Involvement Methods**

<b>Level 1: Inform</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Estimated # of Participants</b>	<b>Demographic Tracking Responses</b>
<b>Project website</b>			
Posted information	Ongoing	N/A	0
<b>Project Updates</b>			
Contact list	Ongoing, Periodic Updates	78	0
<b>Level 2: Consult</b>			
<b>Intercept Events</b>			
Rhythm on the River	7/13/12	N/A	0
Festival on Main	8/24/12	300	44
ArtWalk Longmont	9/21/12	100	4
Multi-Cultural Business Expo	10/23/12	N/A	1
Halloween Parade	10/27/12	N/A	0
<b>Focus Groups</b>			
Park and Recreation Advisory Board	9/17/12	10	0
CPWD Peer Group	9/17/12	3	0
Recreation, Programs & Facilities	9/17/12	9	0
Neighborhood Group Leaders	9/17/12	2	0
Seniors	9/18/12	3	3
Special Event Organizers	9/19/12	5	5
Environmental Leaders	9/19/12	3	3
Resident Feedback Panel	9/19/12	4	4
Youth Council	10/24/12	10	7
Developers	12/11/12	8	0
<b>Questionnaires (Online and Paper)</b>	<b>Available</b>		
Adult English	9/17/12 – 10/31/12	561	493
Youth English	9/17/12 – 10/31/12	64	53
Adult Spanish	10/3/12 – 10/31/12	41	33
Youth Spanish	10/3/12 – 10/31/12	34	33

**Table 1: Public Involvement Methods**

<b>Level 2: Consult</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Estimated # of Participants</b>	<b>Demographic Tracking Responses</b>
<b>Hispanic Community Outreach</b>			
Intercambio Level 7 English Class	10/9/12	3	3
Casa Esperanza Youth	10/10/12	29	Incl. in questionnaire count
Parenting Place Latino Parenting Class	10/16/12	15	
Casa Esperanza Adults	10/17/12	18	
El Comite Survey Distribution	10/31/12	12	
<b>Public Comments (Email/Phone)</b>			
Comment Log	Ongoing	26	N/A
<b>Level 3: Involve</b>			
<b>Workshops</b>			
Staff Workshop	9/18/12	14	7
Community Visioning Workshop	9/18/12	40	29
Prioritization Workshop	1/24/12	41	35
<b>Core Staff Team</b>	Ongoing	10	N/A
<b>Park and Recreation Advisory Board</b>	Ongoing	7	N/A