

4. FROM PLAN TO ACTION

This chapter includes implementation strategies and tools that Longmont will use to advance the recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan.

Prioritization of Projects

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan generates a large number of projects which will need to be accomplished over time. In the coming years, new projects will also emerge. The process of prioritization can be used during the life of this plan to evaluate whether new ideas should be incorporated into the parks, recreation, and trails system.

By filtering these projects through the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan goals, the implementation will be based on a clear, well-documented and community supported path toward a shared vision for the park system.

Decision Criteria

Decision criteria will help staff, the PRAB, City Council, and the general public sort and make decisions about projects and initiatives in advance of the City's capital improvement planning process and as new projects emerge.

Must-Dos – Safety and Regulatory Projects: Some projects are required by a legal or safety reason, and must move forward quickly. The City's ADA Transition Plan lays out priorities, cost estimates, and a timeline for meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for parks and recreation facilities. In addition, the City has been evaluating the safety of all playgrounds using the Consumer Products Safety Commission and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. Prudent risk management requires resolving the highest priority safety hazards. There are other safety and legal obligations that may affect the parks and trails system (e.g., building and fire code, health codes, noxious weed regulations, and protected flora or fauna), and these requirements will change over the life of this plan. Projects determined to be "must-dos" based on legal or safety requirements should be the highest priority. The City's ADA Transition Plan recommends funding strategies for priority ADA projects.

Low Cost, High Impact Projects: Most of Longmont's parks projects over the past 10 to 20 years have been large projects, even when those projects have been a development phase of an even larger project (e.g., Sandstone Ranch, Dry Creek Park, and Quail Campus). In the future, small projects defined as having low cost to the City and a small footprint warrant special consideration. These interventions in existing parks can provide attention



Blue Skies Park

and create noticeable change that neighbors appreciate. These small projects also offer opportunities to build community ownership through hands-on involvement in the design and even the installation. Highly visible and popular features for renewal or replacement, such as playgrounds in older neighborhood parks, are good examples of smaller projects that the City could target for quick and early action.



Alta Park

Medium and Large Projects: Longmont’s park system has primarily been developed through large-scale projects and the majority of future expansion will be based from projects of this scale. Whether a full park or targeted phase of the park, renewal upgrades are significant for revitalization of the existing parks within the overall park system. The process for deciding what moves forward first needs to be transparent and justifiable to the community. The most direct way to approach these is to systematically address the sites in most need of reinvestment while also including expansion projects to serve a growing population. Ongoing collaboration with the public will be necessary to ensure that the design is responsive to local and overall community needs. Work at this scale will include many site renewal projects as well as new park developments, major recreation facilities, and expansions to the trail system. These projects should continue to be guided by a site master plan, addressing the specific needs of the site within the context of the larger system. They should also continue to look at a balanced, system-wide approach to providing for the entire community and serving all populations. Most of these projects will require design and construction assistance and will be on longer timelines.

Balancing Investment: The implementation of projects within this Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan needs to rebalance the investment that the community makes in the system. This plan does not recommend shifting entirely away from building new parks in favor of repair or renewal projects. Instead the recommended improvements should be focused on meeting multiple goals, spreading the benefits of the system and moving forward with projects that advance the community furthest toward the envisioned future park system. Developing new projects while concurrently repairing and renewing parks should be done as budget is available.

The five goals of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan along with these decision criteria provide both guidance and flexibility for the City to respond to emerging opportunities. These are intended to provide a community supported platform for staff and community members to advocate for the future investment in the park system. However, the criteria and goals are not intended to create a fixed or ranked list of all projects in this plan. Such a list could prevent projects with more potential for political support from being completed. Instead of codifying a ranked list, this plan recommends a process that begins with annual work planning which feeds directly into the City’s capital improvement planning process.

Annual Work Plan

During the budget process, City staff and the PRAB should continue their annual strategic planning meeting to discuss the projects that will be advanced over the coming years. This Plan recommends formalizing this practice into development of a recommended work plan using the goals of the Plan to focus efforts for the year, recognizing the capacity limits of the City including the number of ongoing projects that can be successfully managed, staffing levels, and anticipated financial resources.

The annual work plan recommended to Council by staff and the PRAB will be the basis for the capital improvement plan (CIP) projects and resource requests submitted as part of the budgeting process. This work plan should include:

- A summary of the accomplishments of the past year;
- The previous years projects that carry over into the current year; and
- New projects.

The annual work plan will need to align with the 5-year CIP planning process and will form both the basis for new recommendations to the CIP as well as the continuation of efforts aligned with the adopted CIP. Some projects could be planned for entirely within the annual operating budget process if they fall below the current threshold (\$5,000) of the CIP planning process, and if staff, capital, and maintenance resources allow.

Some project ideas could also surface which have not yet been included in the annual work plan or the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan. These should be documented for future consideration during the annual work plan or the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan update process (described at the end of this chapter). More immediate opportunities may also present themselves and should be considered in accordance with this plan and as directed by the PRAB and City Council as appropriate.

Capital Improvement Planning

The final prioritization of projects for funding will take place during the capital improvement plan (CIP) budget process and will not only rank parks, recreation, and trails projects against each other but will consider the other needs and priorities of the City. The CIP process includes a wide range of criteria to facilitate this complicated prioritization process. The level of investment at a particular site may be increased or limited based on factors such as the current or anticipated use; the portion of the population impacted; the potential impact to the level of service; safety, legal, and health requirements; reduction in ongoing maintenance costs or efficiency improvements; opportunities due to partnerships or outside funding resources; impacts to programs and services offered in multiple departments and divisions; as well as other site impacts and City objectives. A complete

listing of the criteria for ranking projects in the CIP process along with the resulting funded projects for 2014-2018, is included in Appendix C.

Project Timing and Costs

The recommended timing for Plan projects is determined by a mix of prioritization based on the Plan goals and a strategy for implementing projects after the necessary support has been built for new capital and operating funding. Each stage of the implementation timeline is described below:

Short term (1-5 years): projects that have been in development and reflect the priorities of the community. These projects focus on completion of existing sites, trail extensions, and immediate needs for renovation and renewal to build support for additional funding to take the next steps.

Medium term (5-10 years): projects take the first big step in increasing capacity of the system, with a new recreation center and demonstration projects showcasing on-street recreation connections, while continuing with major renewal investment in the existing system.

Long term (10-20 years) Longmont will develop many of the remaining new parks and build out much of the off-street trail system over the long term, while also continuing to maintain a balance with renewal and revitalization.

Very long term (20+ years) Longmont will be wrapping up the reinvestment in the existing system, building out the on-street recreation connections and adding, as opportunity allows, some large-scale recreation facilities that are desired by the community but require further resources. New renewal projects will be added as the system ages.



Stewardship Marker at Blue Skies Park

Total Cost of Ownership

The total cost of owning and operating the system is critical to plan implementation and the build-out of the system. The City of Longmont has the sophistication to critically analyze the full costs of the system and build the decision-making on this understanding.

This plan supports Longmont's effort to define the total cost of ownership by defining the three categories of costs facing the management of Longmont's parks, recreation, and trails system:

- **Capital:** the construction of new park sites and recreation facilities;
- **Operations and Maintenance:** the day-to-day costs to keep the system open, clean, and safe; and
- **Renewal:** the reinvestment in existing sites as major systems and recreation facilities reach the end of their useful life or are no longer serving public needs.

The list of key plan projects, resulting from the recommendations in Chapter 3, is broken down by timing and by these three cost types in tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3.

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Table 4-1: Project List with Capital Costs and Funding Sources

<i>Preliminary Prioritization</i>		<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>										
Capital (2013 Dollars)		Park Improvement Fee	Funding Measure (Sales Tax)	Park Maintenance Fee	General Fund/Public Improvement Fund	Street Fund	Public Buildings Fund	Open Space Fund	Conservation Trust Fund	Grants	User Fees	Partners
		● = identified funding source in current budget (including partial funding) ○ = potential funding source.										
Short Term (1-5 Years)		\$33,750,000										
Immediate Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$9,000,000		○	●	●			●	○	○		○
Implementation of Dickens Farm District Park	\$3,000,000	○	○		○			○	●			○
Completion of Jim Hamm Pond District Park	\$1,000,000	○	○		○			●	○			
Completion of Sandstone Ranch Community Park	\$4,500,000	○	○		○				○	○		
Completion of St. Vrain Greenway (Trail)	\$2,500,000	○	○		○			○	●	○		○
Completion of Spring Gulch #2 Greenway (Trail)	\$5,000,000	○	○		○	●		●	○	○		
Completion of Quail Tennis Complex	\$1,500,000	●	○		○				○	○	○	○
Completion of Longmont Recreation Center Master-Planned Improvements (Fitness Area)	\$2,500,000	○	○		○		○		○	○	○	
Phase 1 Development of P6 (Wertman Site)	\$1,100,000	●	○		○				○	○		
Phase 1 Union Reservoir Master-Planned Improvements (Interim Trail)	\$650,000	○	○		○			○	●			
Short-Term Off-Street Trail Connections	\$3,000,000	○	○		○	●			○	○		○
Medium Term (5-10 Years)		\$46,750,000										
Medium Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$7,000,000		○		○				○	○		○
Development of P3 (Fox Meadows Site)	\$1,250,000	○	○		○				○	○		
New Recreation Center*	\$28,000,000	○	○		○		○		○	○	○	○
Medium Term Off-Street Greenway Connections	\$5,500,000	○	○		○	○		○	○	○		○
Medium Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$5,000,000	○	○		○	○			○	○		
Long Term (10-20 Years)		\$58,450,000										
Long Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$20,000,000		○		○				○	○		○
Completion of Quail Campus (not including Ice Arena)	\$2,000,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Completion of Union Reservoir Master-Planned Improvements	\$9,500,000	○	○		○			○	○	○	○	○
Completion of Dry Creek Park (at P8) (not including aquatics/rec center)	\$6,000,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Development of West Grange Site (at P8)	\$1,500,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Completion of McIntosh Lake District Park	\$700,000	○	○		○			○	○	○		○
Development of P5	\$1,250,000	○	○		○			○	○	○		○
Development of P7 (South Clover Basin Site)	\$2,000,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Long Term Off-Street Greenway Connections	\$5,500,000	○	○		○	○		○	○	○		○
Long Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$10,000,000	○	○		○	○			○	○		○
Very Long Term (20+ Years)		\$96,700,000										
Very Long Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$20,000,000		○		○				○	○		○
Very Long Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$20,000,000	○	○		○	○			○	○		○
Development of P4 (Boulder Creek Estates Site)	\$2,000,000	○	○		○			○	○	○		○
Completion of P6 (Sisters Site)	\$14,000,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Development of P1 (Terry Lake Site)	\$2,200,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Development of P2 (Longmont Tech Center)	\$15,000,000	○	○		○				○	○		○
Ice Arena (Quail Campus)	\$15,500,000	○	○		○		○		○	○	○	○
Outdoor Aquatics Center (Dry Creek Park)	\$8,000,000	○	○		○		○		○	○	○	○
Total System Build Out	\$235,650,000											

*Costs for the new recreation center are based on the assumption that the facility would be a replacement for Centennial Pool, at Clark Centennial Park or another site. Centennial Pool would be closed as soon as the new pool was available.

Table 4-2: Project List with Operations and Maintenance Costs and Funding Sources

<i>Preliminary Prioritization</i>		<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>										
		Park Development Fee	Funding Measure (Sales Tax)	Park Maintenance Fee	General Fund/Public Improvement Fund	Street Fund	Public Buildings Fund	Open Space Fund	Conservation Trust Fund	Grants	User Fees	Partners
		● = identified funding source in current budget (including partial funding) ○ = potential funding source.										
Short Term (1-5 Years)		\$240,000										
Immediate Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$0											
Implementation of Dickens Farm District Park	\$30,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Completion of Jim Hamm Pond District Park	\$5,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Completion of Sandstone Ranch Community Park	\$220,000	○	○	○				○		○		
Completion of St. Vrain Greenway (Trail)	\$8,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Completion of Spring Gulch #2 Greenway (Trail)	\$4,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Completion of Quail Tennis Complex	\$10,000	○	○	○				○		○		
Completion of Longmont Recreation Center Master-Planned Improvements (Fitness Area)	(\$100,000)	○	○	○				○		○		
Phase 1 Development of P6 (Wertman Site)	\$50,000	○	○	○				○				
Phase 1 Union Reservoir Master-Planned Improvements (Interim Trail)	\$6,000	○	○	○			○	○		○	○	
Short-Term Off-Street Trail Connections	\$7,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Medium Term (5-10 Years)		(\$22,000)										
Medium Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$0											
Development of P3 (Fox Meadows Site)	\$51,000	○	○	○				○				
New Recreation Center*	(\$100,000)	○	○	○				○		○	○	
Medium Term Off-Street Greenway Connections	\$18,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Medium Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$9,000	○	○	○				○				
Long Term (10-20 Years)		\$498,000										
Long Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$0											
Completion of Quail Campus (not including Ice Arena)	\$60,000	○	○	○				○				
Completion of Union Reservoir Master-Planned Improvements	\$75,000	○	○	○			○	○		○	○	
Completion of Dry Creek Park (at P8) (not including aquatics/rec center)	\$170,000	○	○	○				○		○		
Development of West Grange Site (at P8)	\$60,000	○	○	○				○				
Completion of McIntosh Lake District Park	\$5,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Development of P5	\$15,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Development of P7 (South Clover Basin Site)	\$80,000	○	○	○				○				
Long Term Off-Street Greenway Connections	\$18,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Long Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$15,000	○	○	○				○				
Very Long Term (20+ Years)		\$1,170,000										
Very Long Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$0											
Very Long Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$45,000	○	○	○				○				
Development of P4 (Boulder Creek Estates Site)	\$15,000	○	○	○			○	○				
Completion of P6 (Sisters Site)	\$280,000	○	○	○				○		○		
Development of P1 (Terry Lake Site)	\$90,000	○	○	○				○				
Development of P2 (Longmont Tech Center)	\$340,000	○	○	○				○		○		
Ice Arena (Quail Campus)	\$300,000	○	○	○				○		○	○	
Outdoor Aquatics Center (Dry Creek Park)	\$100,000	○	○	○				○		○	○	
Total System Build Out	\$1,886,000											

*Costs for the new recreation center are based on the assumption that the facility would be a replacement for Centennial Pool, at Clark Centennial Park or another site. Centennial Pool would be closed as soon as the new pool was available.

Table 4-3: Project List with Renewal Investment Costs and Funding Sources

				<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>										
<i>Preliminary Prioritization</i>	Capital (2013 Dollars)	Annual Contribution to Sinking Fund (2013 Dollars)	Period of Renewal	Park Development Fee	Funding Measure (Sales Tax)	Park Maintenance Fee	General Fund/Public Improvement Fund	Street Fund	Public Buildings Fund	Open Space Fund	Conservation Trust Fund	Grants	User Fees	Partners
Short Term (1-5 Years)	\$33,750,000	\$1,125,000		● = identified funding source in current budget (including partial funding) ○ = potential funding source.										
Immediate Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$9,000,000	\$300,000	30		○	○	○			○	○		○	
Implementation of Dickens Farm District Park	\$3,000,000	\$100,000	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Completion of Jim Hamm Pond District Park	\$1,000,000	\$33,333	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Completion of Sandstone Ranch Community Park	\$4,500,000	\$150,000	30		○	○	○				○		○	
Completion of St. Vrain Greenway (Trail)	\$2,500,000	\$83,333	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Completion of Spring Gulch #2 Greenway (Trail)	\$5,000,000	\$166,667	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Completion of Quail Tennis Complex	\$1,500,000	\$50,000	30		○	○	○				○		○	
Completion of Longmont Recreation Center Master-Planned Improvements (Fitness Area)	\$2,500,000	\$83,333	30		○	○	○		○		○		○	
Phase 1 Development of P6 (Wertman Site)	\$1,100,000	\$36,667	30		○	○	○				○			
Phase 1 Union Reservoir Master-Planned Improvements (Interim Trail)	\$650,000	\$21,667	30		○	○	○			○	○		○	○
Short-Term Off-Street Trail Connections	\$3,000,000	\$100,000	30		○	○	○	○			○			
Medium Term (5-10 Years)	\$47,250,000	\$1,575,000												
Medium Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$7,000,000	\$233,333	30		○	○	○			○	○		○	
Development of P3 (Fox Meadows Site)	\$1,250,000	\$41,667	30		○	○	○			○				
New Recreation Center*	\$28,000,000	\$933,333	30		○	○	○		○		○		○	○
Medium Term Off-Street Greenway Connections	\$6,000,000	\$200,000	30		○	○	○	○		○	○			○
Medium Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$5,000,000	\$166,667	30		○	○	○	○			○			
Long Term (10-20 Years)	\$58,450,000	\$1,948,333												
Long Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$20,000,000	\$666,667	30		○	○	○			○	○		○	
Completion of Quail Campus (not including Ice Arena)	\$2,000,000	\$66,667	30		○	○	○				○			
Completion of Union Reservoir Master-Planned Improvements	\$9,500,000	\$316,667	30		○	○	○			○	○		○	○
Completion of Dry Creek Park (at P8) (not including aquatics/rec center)	\$6,000,000	\$200,000	30		○	○	○				○		○	
Development of West Grange Site (at P8)	\$1,500,000	\$50,000	30		○	○	○				○			
Completion of McIntosh Lake District Park	\$700,000	\$23,333	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Development of P5	\$1,250,000	\$41,667	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Development of P7 (South Clover Basin Site)	\$2,000,000	\$66,667	30		○	○	○				○			
Long Term Off-Street Greenway Connections	\$5,500,000	\$183,333	30		○	○	○	○		○	○			
Long Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$10,000,000	\$333,333	30		○	○	○	○			○			
Very Long Term (20+ Years)	\$96,700,000	\$3,223,333												
Very Long Term Renewal/Revitalization Investment	\$20,000,000	\$666,667	30		○	○	○			○	○		○	
Very Long Term On-Street Recreation Connections	\$20,000,000	\$666,667	30		○	○	○	○			○			
Development of P4 (Boulder Creek Estates Site)	\$2,000,000	\$66,667	30		○	○	○			○	○			
Completion of P6 (Sisters Site)	\$14,000,000	\$466,667	30		○	○	○				○		○	
Development of P1 (Terry Lake Site)	\$2,200,000	\$73,333	30		○	○	○				○			
Development of P2 (Longmont Tech Center)	\$15,000,000	\$500,000	30		○	○	○				○		○	
Ice Arena (Quail Campus)	\$15,500,000	\$516,667	30		○	○	○		○		○		○	○
Outdoor Aquatics Center (Dry Creek Park)	\$8,000,000	\$266,667	30		○	○	○		○		○		○	○
Total System Build Out	\$236,150,000	\$7,871,667												

*Costs for the new recreation center are based on the assumption that the facility would be a replacement for Centennial Pool, at Clark Centennial Park or another site. Centennial Pool would be closed as soon as the new pool was available.

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Cost Model

With the understanding of the three cost elements described in tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3, the planning team developed a model for calculating the capital and operating and renewal costs by site and across the system. This cost model utilizes a series of assumptions about the cost of building, maintaining, and renewing Longmont's parks, recreation facilities and trails. These costs are based on the actual experience of the community as well as additional examples provided from the planning team's combined experience.

The cost model is used to identify the planning level cost for projects. It is important to note that the basis of these costs is an assumption, applied per site, to a percentage of the site, or per unit. This model is useful for generating an initial estimate of the project cost which can then be refined with specifics about the site to reach a project cost presented in this plan. These costs will be further refined as projects move forward toward implementation. A snapshot of the cost model is provided in Appendix F.

Capital

The first version of the project list, presented in Table 4-1, includes the capital costs of each project. These projects are in some cases individual sites or recreation facilities and in other cases are groupings of similar projects (such as packages of site renewals or recreation connections). Capital costs are the category that is most commonly considered, since this represents the cost to acquire, develop, or build the desired park or facility. There is a wide range of funding options for capital costs, with some only applying to certain types of projects.

Operations and Maintenance

The City needs to pay close attention to the impacts of recent and new capital projects have on operations and maintenance funding. This emphasis on operations and maintenance was expressed by the community as applying to not only the existing situation, but also the future as the system grows and matures. Table 4-2 provides an estimate of the ongoing operations and maintenance needs for the projects proposed. These are presented as the additional cost above and beyond the current budget for operations and maintenance. Funding options for operations and maintenance are considerably more limited; however, it is recommended that the City create a policy that capital projects should not be implemented without securing the necessary operations and maintenance funding. The City Council approval for an ongoing Park and Greenway Maintenance Fee is a strong move in this direction, funding for operations and maintenance of capital projects for the next 10 years.

Renewal

The final category of cost can be more challenging to clarify and quantify. Often times, improvements to aging sites and recreation facilities in Longmont have been absorbed in part by capital projects and also by operating budgets, which have contributed to rising operations and maintenance costs (in a time of stable or declining resources this translates to a lower level of maintenance across the system). The final iteration of the project list tables, Table 4-3, provides an estimate of the renewal cost based on the idea of a sinking fund. By adding a portion of the cost (based on an assumed life-span) of replacing the facility or renewing a site to the fund, the City will have the resources available to renew these recreation facilities at the end of their life. Each of these tables also includes the funding sources that are relevant to each project and cost type.

The renewal costs summarized in Table 4-3 are meant to illustrate a concept, rather than provide the actual amount of funding that should be set aside. The renewal funding set aside for future use, along with the park renewal projects laid out in the project list will eventually allow the City to move beyond the cyclical renewal cycle that was started with the waves of major investment 30 or more years ago. If the sinking fund approach is followed, the City will, over time, gain considerable certainty and predictability about the availability of funding to keep the system current. Funding for renewal is similar to capital funding although some sources will not allow the replacement of existing features.

During the planning process, the City created a breakdown of the costs of owning the system that recognizes the impact of renewal. Assembling the total cost of the system requires pulling information from the budgets of a number of divisions and considering the portion of the budget that is associated with deferred maintenance (repairing, adapting to and patching features and recreation facilities that have exceeded their useful life). This information informs the cost model developed for the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, as well as the budget process.

Non-Capital Projects

In addition to the built features of the park system, several recommendations in this Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan address future efforts by the City. These non-capital projects will be conducted largely by staff but may require some professional assistance as well.

- **Wayfinding System:** develop standards and designs for signage to help identify Longmont's parks, recreation facilities, and trails and direct people to the nearby streets and recreation activities they are most interested in.

- **Community Identity Cluster Plans:** develop a plan for each of the five community identity clusters to reinforce the unified look, feel, and purpose of these sites.
- **Maintenance Management Framework:** Establish a structure to balance maintenance and operations funding according to specialized needs of a site or facility (such as type of landscape, play features or the presence of restrooms), the intensity of use, revenue generation potential, and competitive use.

Potential Funding Sources

The realization of new funding could come in a number of different forms, and will likely be a mix of many sources. The following categories of funding are utilized by Longmont in existing and past projects. The description of each category of potential funding is intended to introduce the possibilities. Tables 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3 identify in the applicability of each funding source to projects and categories of funding. Additional information about the funding sources applied to parks, recreation and trails projects is provided in Appendix I: Park, Recreation and Trail Funding History at the end of this document.

Park Improvement Fee

The park improvement fee is charged to residential development per dwelling unit, varying by single family or multi-family unit type, at the time of building permit issuance. Similar to other impact fees, the fee is specifically targeted, by legislation, to adding capacity to the park system to offset the impact of new residential development. As such, these funds can only be used for new or expanding capacity in the system. This funding source cannot be applied to maintenance and operations or to the simple replacement of existing features; however, renewal projects that are expansions and add capacity are allowed. Another important consideration is that as new housing construction slows, either with economic cycles or as the city builds out, the amount of resources available from the park improvement fee will decline.

Funding Measure

The community has chosen in the past to increase tax rates, either sales or property tax, to fund projects of particular importance to the community. This increase can take the form of either a sales tax or an ad valorem (property value) tax. Taxes may be proposed for a limited period of time or as ongoing sources of funding. One example of a limited sales tax is the temporary increase to finance the bond sale for the Longmont Recreation Center. In that case the tax was dedicated to paying back the bond, allowing the money to be available up-front and then paid back over time, with interest.



Roosevelt Park

Park and Greenway Maintenance Fee

Longmont has, since 2010, charged a parks and greenways maintenance fee (park maintenance fee) to each household's water bill. This type of fee (also referred to as a utility fee) is often used to recognize the wide-spread benefits of a parks, recreation, and trails system to each household and provide funding targeted specifically to this system. The original fee was targeted at maintenance of the park and greenway system but there is no limitation on this funding method that limits either renewal or capital projects. From 2010 through 2013, the amount of this fee was \$1 per month per household. In 2013 the City Council voted to increase the fee to \$4 per month per household. Two dollars of the \$4 fee is intended to address ongoing maintenance and renewal needs. The additional \$2 is for repair and recovery efforts related to the 2013 flood and will terminate at the end of 2016.

General Fund

The general fund is the resource the City uses to provide local government services, such as police, fire, parks, recreation, street maintenance, youth and senior services, community resources, planning, code enforcement, building inspections, library, museum, and economic development. In addition, the general fund includes support services that are provided to all of the other City funds and departments. The source of the resources in the general fund includes all of the property taxes and a portion of the sales and use tax. Allocation of resources amongst the many services provided is a reflection of the City's needs and priorities and is set in the annual budget process. While the general fund resources have the most flexibility (general funds can be used for any mix of capital, operations and maintenance, renewal projects, or programs), they are also the most competitive, with nearly all City services drawing upon this resource.

Public Improvement Fund

A portion of the sales and use tax revenues are allocated to the Public Improvement Fund to pay for capital construction projects that build, expand or improve buildings or other public facilities. These facilities include, but are not limited to, the Civic Center, the Longmont Recreation Center, Memorial Building, Senior Center, parks, and pools. This fund is utilized to fund new capital and renewal projects at these facilities. Similar to the General Fund, the Public Improvement Fund can be used for any mix of capital and renewal projects and is drawn on by all City services.

Street Fund

The Street Improvement Fund pays for all maintenance and improvements to the City's street system. The fund's major revenue source is a portion of the City's sales and use tax receipts. Other revenue sources include a portion of the state's highway use tax and a percentage of the county road and bridge property tax. This fund is used for capital projects as well as renewal and operations and maintenance programs but is limited to streets, crossings and related facilities. The City recognizes the importance of on and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities to the City's transportation network and utilizes a portion of the Street Fund for transportation-related bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Public Buildings Fund

The Public Buildings Fund was created in 1993 to provide a portion of the funding for acquiring, constructing, and making capital improvements to public buildings and public building sites. The funding comes from the Public Buildings Community Investment Fee (CIF) which is levied on all new construction (residential, commercial, and industrial) within the City to provide a portion of the capital to meet the demand that new development creates for public facilities.

Open Space Fund

In November 2000, Longmont voters approved increasing the sales and use tax rate by 0.2 cents for twenty years for the acquisition and maintenance of open space. These funds are restricted for use on designated open space lands, acquisition of new open space properties, and the development and maintenance of trails and district parks.

Conservation Trust Fund

The Conservation Trust Fund's revenues are the City's share of state lottery proceeds. By state law, these funds can only be expended for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of new conservation sites or for capital improvements or maintenance for recreational purposes on any public site. Conservation sites means interests in land and water acquired after establishment of a conservation trust fund, for park or recreation purposes, for all types of open space (including floodplains, greenbelts, agricultural lands, or scenic areas) or for any scientific, historic, scenic, recreational, aesthetic, or similar purpose. Public sites are defined as sites that are publicly-owned and may include parks, opens space, athletic fields and courts, community and recreation centers, swimming pools, libraries, museums, fairgrounds, campgrounds, golf courses, zoos, skate parks, skating rinks, shooting ranges, and easements. In the City of Longmont, Conservation Trust Funds have been historically dedicated to St. Vrain Greenway projects. As this project comes closer to completion, a new focus for these funds will need to be identified. The City has had great success in

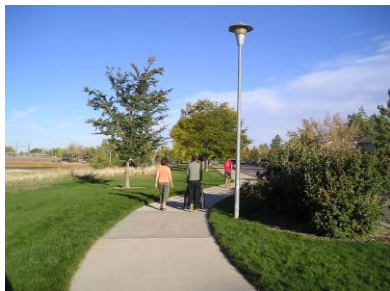
using this source of funding in a concentrated way on the St. Vrain Greenway and would benefit from identifying a similar new focus that is clearly connected to this funding stream. A public process was conducted in 2013 (separate from this Plan) that identified several areas of recommended use.

Grants

Grant funds are available from a wide variety of sources, including public and private foundations as well as State and Federal agencies. Funding is often limited to the topic of interest to the granting foundation or agency. Grant funding is most often applicable only to capital projects, although in some cases grants will fund new programs on a pilot project basis. Great Outdoors Colorado is one grant type that has provided significant funding to Longmont over the past 20 years. Continued leveraging of project funding through grants is an ideal way to stretch limited development dollars.

User Fees

The funds taken in for admittance, programs registration, facility reservations, and memberships flow into the general fund for distribution in the budget process. These are revenues associated with park and recreation facilities; however, the funding is not guaranteed to return to specific programs or recreation facilities in the budget process. As described above, these user fees benefit the City as a whole by supplementing the general fund which is used for any mix of capital, maintenance and operations, or renewal projects.



Dawson Park

Revenue Bond

It is also possible to fund a capital project in part or in whole through a commitment of the revenues from user fees. This could be a budget policy that justifies a project based on the increase in fee revenue, or it could be a revenue bond. A revenue bond is capital dollars secured by the future revenues of a facility, rather than a tax. This approach is most applicable to recreation facilities with strong consistent demand and a willingness to accept a higher user fee. Revenue bonds become more difficult to use when the facility is within a highly competitive market.

Partners

The City has a number of long-term and periodic partners in the development, maintenance, and renewal of the park system. In many cases the contribution made by these partners is financially small (in relation to total project or program budgets) but the impact is large. Aligning community partners to help develop park, recreation, and trails projects builds community ownership and materializes the often unseen support for projects.

In some cases, however, community partners are critical to the development, renewal, or ongoing maintenance of a facility. These examples would include formal partnerships with organizations that may assist in gathering capital or operating resources or investing directly in a new or renewal project. Examples may include Boulder County or the St. Vrain Valley School District. In some special cases, the City may choose to enter into an operating partnership that could range from assisting with the maintenance and operations of a facility to full-time operations responsibility (known as a concession) with the City sharing in the revenues.

Funding Capacity

Current financial pressures, driven by the larger economic cycles locally, regionally, and nationally, have forced questions about the level of investment the community can afford to make in the parks, recreation, and trails system. The value of this system is well recognized by the taxpayers of Longmont, and in multiple outreach efforts associated with this Plan, the community expressed a willingness to provide additional resources for the construction of new sites, renewal, and maintenance of the park system.

Funding Strategies

As this Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan has emphasized, the City needs to address the overall financial approach to funding the park system. For many years, the City has relied largely on the park improvement fee to fund new development in neighborhood and community park sites. This has meant that capital funds have been provided for new parks but funding for renewal or maintenance, budgeted from general funds, has not always been available to support the added infrastructure. The past approach no longer fits. As the City's system approaches build-out, there will be a decline in new parks and recreation facilities that will need to be added; instead, capacity enhancements will need to occur at existing parks, and more resources will need to be devoted to renewing existing parks. New parks that are developed will also need a secure funding source for operations and maintenance and future renewal.



Clark Centennial Park

Updated Park Improvement Fee

As noted above, Longmont has relied on the park improvement fee for much of the new development in the system for the past 21 years. In 2013, driven by the work surrounding the development of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, the City modified the Parks Improvement Fee to base it on a new perspective of the system.

Three changes to Longmont's situation drove the City's decision to establish a new basis for the park improvement fee. First, the City has defined (and will soon reach) the extent of its planned development, through defining the

Longmont Planning Area (LPA), open space buffering, and intergovernmental agreements. Second, the steadily increasing amount per unit that the current fee structure results in has brought external pressure questioning the fee. Finally, the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan effort allowed the City to take a more complete look at the park needs of a fully developed park system.

The updated fee is based on a ten-year set of projects that are needed as a result of residential growth projected during this period. The fee calculation apportions the cost across two categories of residential development, single-family and multi-family, using the average square footage of each type of unit to determine the fee to charge. Full documentation of the 2013 Park Improvement Fee update is available in Appendix H.

One of the important changes in the fee calculation is the recognition of greenway (off-street) trails in the calculation, along with parks. In the past, the fee was not used for developing greenway trails, which have been funded by the Conservation Trust Fund, Open Space Fund, Public Improvement Fund, and Street Fund. This change recognizes the critical role that greenways play in recreation in Longmont and increases the flexibility in funding that the City can apply to these important projects.

Meeting Multiple Objectives

This plan lays out five goals and meeting only one or two of these five goals will not be adequate to accomplish the vision for the parks, recreation, and trails system. At the same time, addressing each goal independently will likely result in duplication of effort and unnecessary cost. The key to maximizing the resulting system is identifying projects that meet multiple goals and build public support from multiple angles.

With projects stemming from different plan goals and related planning efforts, it will be important to establish logical packages of projects to save on the overall cost of implementing this plan. Where a number of small projects can be combined into one renewal package (similar to a complete phase of a new park project), the City will be able to realize efficiencies in management as well as mobilization expenses for construction.

Another type of project combination will also be important. While some projects will have the attention of voters and decision-makers – usually very tangible projects such as a new ball field, updated playground, or new trail – less visible but necessary enhancements such as utility work or irrigation system upgrades will still need to be done. An analogy is a home improvement project – a new furnace will lower operating costs, but most homeowners and home buyers are more excited by a new exterior paint job. Tangible projects both small and large should be bundled with necessary but



Park Plan Community Workshop

less exciting infrastructure projects into a single project. In addition, any major new recreation facilities requiring special funding should be bundled with efficiency-enhancing renewal projects that spread benefits around the system.

Grant Programs

Grant programs can be an important tool in achieving the goals of this Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan. This works in two ways: applying for grants and offering grants to community groups for small local priority projects. Colorado grant programs will continue to be an important source of funding for Longmont's park system. In order to benefit from this resource, the City will need to identify matching funds and continue to devote staff time to tracking, applying, and managing grant programs. The grant program information matrix that is part of the Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan provides the most current information on state grants, and is a tool that should continue to be used by the City.

It is recommended that the City continue to utilize the neighborhood improvement grant program to help fund improvements for partner sites. These small projects would allow community organizations to access a small pool of resources to fund important local projects (e.g., a new component to a playground on a school site, HOA site, or City park). Priority should be given to applying this resource to filling park gap areas. It will be critical for the City to also obtain agreement from the property owner for the anticipated level of public access and clarify the responsibility for ongoing maintenance and future renewal.

Developing Operations and Maintenance Funding

The growing park system will require additional operation and maintenance funding. The City has been investigating options to generate additional resources that can be dedicated to quality maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. Operations and maintenance funding supports both self-directed and programmed activities across the system. The City included questions about two specific ideas to raise additional funds on its 2012 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The first question was regarding an increase to the existing Parks Maintenance Fee, charged on residents' monthly utility bills, to raise it \$1 to \$3 per month. This increase was proposed (for polling purposes) for a period of five years. However, a five year increase would not serve the long-term, ongoing needs of maintenance and operations.

The second question concerned a sales tax (proposed for polling purposes at 0.1% or 10 cents on every \$100 dollars spent) dedicated to maintenance and repair of the system. This tax measure has the potential to be an ongoing

source of revenue that ties the funding to the economic well-being of the community. It also has the benefit of collecting revenue from those who don't live in Longmont but who work in the city or visit for sports tournaments, or use the parks, recreation facilities and trails.

Both of these measures were well-supported as options in the Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2012. An alternative scenario was to reduce or eliminate less used recreation facilities to reduce costs. This alternative had much less support (with more than 50% opposing) than both funding increases. These funding increase options were also included on the adult questionnaire developed for the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan process, with similar patterns in the results.

As noted above, the City Council voted in 2013 to extend and increase the Parks and Greenways Maintenance Fee (to \$4 per month per household). \$2 of the fee is intended to be ongoing for maintenance and renewal, while the other \$2 is a 3-year investment for repair and recovery of parks and greenways after the 2013 flood. This decision will provide a more consistent source of funding for maintenance and renewal projects needed now as well as in the future.

Further exploration of ongoing operations and maintenance funding remains important, as the ongoing cost of the system will increase over time as new park sites and recreation facilities are added.

Investing for Future Renewal

The renewal of the park system is an important part of this plan and a priority of the community. The polling conducted for an operations and maintenance funding measure showed strong support for maintenance and repair, which is relevant to renewal efforts as well. Similar strong support for reinvesting in existing parks and recreation facilities was heard as a theme across many Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan public outreach activities. Renewal presents a special funding challenge because it is a new way of thinking about the necessary reinvestment in the system. Rather than waiting for the end of life or crisis situation at a park or recreation facility and replacing it completely, investing in renewal requires up-front planning and fiscal discipline.

The Parks and Greenway Maintenance Fee includes funding for renewal projects. It is unlikely that this will be adequate to get ahead of the current renewal needs but will add important resources to a specified list of sites and set the City in a positive direction for the future. Over the long-term extensive resources will be needed to sustain the renewal and catch up on



Día de los Muertos in Longmont

the accumulated needs of the system. Additional funding, such as the sales tax option explored by the City could be applied to help create a renewal sinking fund.

Building Support for a Funding Measure

Ultimately, the necessary support will need to come, directly or indirectly, from the voters of Longmont. The City and supporters of the parks, recreation, and trails system should continue to build on the public interest of this planning process with the goal of passing a voter supported funding measure. A funding measure could be structured to include any or all of the funding categories. For example a capital measure could be proposed for renewal of important sites and recreation facilities. Such a measure could also be aimed at building major new recreation facilities. However, the public sentiment expressed during this planning process would suggest that for the best chance of success, the City should combine any new capital or renewal measure with a source for new operations and maintenance to care for the new or refurbished assets.

The 2012 Customer Satisfaction Survey (as well as the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan questionnaire) showed considerable support for a capital funding measure that included a new sales tax dedicated to building out the new parks in the system (supplementing the Park Improvement Fee). This proposal was supported at almost the exact same levels as the two operations and renewal options (60% supporting the new funding).

Building on this support involves good communication of the direction set forth by the community in this plan as well as the successes that show progress toward the vision. The renewal of highly visible aging recreation facilities and the ongoing recognition of the community's investment in parks, recreation programs, recreation facilities, and trails will also enhance the perception of the park system. These efforts, along with a good public information campaign when a funding measure comes to a vote, will pay off at the ballot box.

Plan Stewardship

Ongoing Tools

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan process advanced staff, elected officials, and the community understanding of the system. It supports multiple tools and procedures that will be useful beyond the adoption of this document:

- City GIS and Asset Management Systems;
- Cost Model;
- Planning and Development Guidelines; and
- Annual Work Plan/CIP.

These tools and procedures are important for ongoing use, and will help ensure Longmont keeps moving incrementally toward the Plan vision.

Update Cycle

The vision and goals of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan are designed to serve the community over the long-term. However, the community should be consulted and the implementation of the Plan should be flexible enough to adjust the course as needs change. The annual work plan and CIP process will be an opportunity to formally include any new projects or concepts that have emerged since the adoption of this plan.

Every five to seven years, the City should engage in a check-in with the community to update the Plan. This Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan update should include outreach across the community including a community survey/questionnaire. Community involvement results should be evaluated against past results and the Plan vision and goals to validate that the framework is still on target.

In ten to fifteen years, the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan will need a more extensive revision to adjust to the actual built projects, changes to the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan, and the demographics of the community. This effort is likely to require outside assistance, as it is a more time-consuming and larger effort.