

1 INTRODUCTION

2
3 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* is the latest in the City of Longmont's
4 efforts to plan for its future. City planning cannot be a static process. It must be
5 flexible and continuously revised to reflect changing circumstances and
6 community values, particularly in a dynamic, growing city such as Longmont.

7
8 The Longmont community has a tradition of city planning that dates back to the
9 establishment of the Chicago Colorado Colony in 1871. With the adoption of
10 the *St. Vrain Valley Plan* in 1974, the City solidified this tradition in response to a
11 period of rapid growth and change. The City revised the *St. Vrain Valley Plan* in
12 1982. In 1986, the City of Longmont again revised the *St. Vrain Valley Plan*, in
13 response to conditions affecting the City at that time, and renamed it the
14 *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*. The City updated the *Longmont Area*
15 *Comprehensive Plan* in 1995 and again in 2003.

16
17 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* establishes the type of city residents
18 want Longmont to become by presenting a comprehensive view of the
19 community, defining the visions of the City's future, and establishing general
20 methods by which to realize those visions. Its purpose is to articulate the
21 collective desires of the community. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* is
22 second only to the *Municipal Charter* as the City's most important document.

23
24 The updated *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* is designed to be process-
25 oriented in guiding the growth and development of the City. It establishes a
26 policy framework for the City to use to discuss and evaluate key issues facing the
27 City, amendments to the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* and to City
28 regulations, and development proposals. It is flexible in its support of planned
29 unit developments. By submitting a planned unit development to more stringent
30 review criteria, the City may approve densities or land uses that are not shown
31 for a particular location on the Comprehensive Plan Map. For example, the City
32 may approve a planned unit development with higher residential densities if the
33 planned unit development includes more amenities and higher development
34 standards.

35
36 The City of Longmont's mission statement succinctly states the focus of the
37 updated *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*:

38
39 *Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for those*
40 *who live in, work in, or visit our community.*

41
42 What many people value about Longmont is its "small town, friendly
43 atmosphere." People know their neighbors. They care about the community
44 and routinely invest their time and money to make Longmont a better place to
45 live. They find it a good place to raise a family.

1 The challenge in implementing the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* as
2 Longmont grows is to use the plan to enhance the aspects of the City that the
3 community values. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* is a guide to help
4 the City make decisions that recognize, incorporate, and strengthen the physical
5 and nonphysical aspects that make Longmont a great place. Regardless of
6 Longmont's size in the future, people should still be able to say they value its
7 small town, friendly atmosphere.

8
9 This document contains the goals, policies, and strategies of the *Longmont Area*
10 *Comprehensive Plan*. Other important documents are useful to consider as
11 components in the City's planning process. *Envision 2020: A Strategic Plan for*
12 *the Community of Longmont* captures the community's dreams of what it wants
13 Longmont to be in the future and makes specific recommendations to achieve
14 those dreams. Functional master plans deal with specific topics, such as the
15 water and wastewater systems, the airport, and the downtown, and provide
16 specific guidance for particular areas. The *Longmont Community Profile*
17 provides the database for planning. The *Capital Improvement Program*
18 prioritizes available funding for public improvements. The Metro Vision 2020
19 tracking system monitors urban area so that the City is aware of the amount of
20 land consumed for development.

22 **2003 Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan Emphasis**

23
24 The emphasis on certain issues facing Longmont naturally changes if the City is to
25 continue to grow and mature. The outward growth of the City has been and still
26 is important to the City. However, the City recognizes that quality of life and
27 other issues are equally important to a thriving and vibrant community. As the
28 community grows and matures, its focus will naturally shift from outward growth
29 to more emphasis on internal development, through infill, redevelopment, and
30 reinvestment.

31
32 The updated *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* recognizes that its current
33 residents are the stewards of the community charged with ensuring that its future
34 growth is sustainable. A sustainable community seeks to balance economic
35 growth, community development, and environmental conservation to
36 anticipate and accommodate the needs of current and future residents.

37
38 The chapters of the plan emphasize a wide range of goals and policies intended
39 to achieve the City's vision of a community that is sustainable in the long term
40 and that provides a high quality of life for residents, as described below. Each
41 chapter also contains a list of benchmarks and indicators designed to help the
42 City weigh decisions about growth and development as they relate to the goals
43 and policies within the chapter. These indicators are described at the end of this
44 chapter.

46 **Growth of the City: Balancing Objectives to Achieve Sustainable Quality of Life**

1 The Longmont community supports growth and development that balances
2 economic vitality, environmental health, and community well being over the
3 long-term. This concept is also known as sustainability, which can be defined as
4 meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future
5 generations to meet their own needs. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*
6 incorporates goals and policies to support moving in the direction of becoming
7 a community that is sustainable in the long term, and to further explore what this
8 concept means to the City.

9
10 The City's existing quality of life benchmarks program helps it to make decisions
11 about growth and development, and this plan includes additional indicators
12 designed to measure progress and trends toward or away from individual goals.
13 A sustainable community approach would require that the City consider the
14 trends that these indicators are measuring in a more interconnected way. The
15 indicators can also be used as a sustainable community monitoring tool—to
16 understand a community's strengths and weaknesses. The City will explore ways
17 to adapt the current benchmark programs into a sustainable community
18 program.

19
20 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* has been expanded to promote a
21 balance between economic development, community-building, and
22 environmental quality concerns when making decisions about the provision of
23 public services and facilities to meet the needs of the community.

24 25 **Growth of the City: Balanced Land Uses**

26
27 Longmont has made great strides in changing itself from a bedroom community
28 to a community with a stronger economic base. The *Longmont Area*
29 *Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes the notion of land use balance between
30 residential and non-residential land uses in comprehensive planning, and
31 between housing and jobs, to incorporate the concept that a variety of land
32 uses will provide a high quality of life for Longmont's residents. Furthermore, this
33 balance of land uses needs to generate revenues sufficient to build and
34 maintain the public facilities necessary to serve those uses.

35 36 **Land Use and Urban Design: Quality Development**

37
38 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes that development should
39 enhance the community's image and the overall quality of life for new and
40 existing residents. Development should make a positive contribution to
41 Longmont and not merely mitigate the negative impacts of development. The
42 *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* encourages people to do more than meet
43 the City's minimum standards. Goals, policies, and strategies encourage quality
44 design into new development. Pedestrian-friendly site design, buildings of
45 human scale and landscaping integrate new development with the immediate
46 neighborhoods. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* also continues to
47 emphasize preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods.

1
2 **Housing: Wide Range of Quality Housing Options for Residents**

3
4 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* promotes housing options for
5 Longmont’s residents and promotes the availability of housing types that are in
6 short supply, including affordable housing.
7

8 **Economic Development**

9
10 The Economic Development chapter goals emphasize a well-balanced,
11 diversified, and stable economic base for Longmont. The *Longmont Area*
12 *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the importance of quality educational
13 opportunities and community services as complementary to a good business
14 environment. The City emphasizes retaining primary businesses in Longmont as
15 well as locating new primary businesses to Longmont.
16

17 **Commercial Development**

18
19 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* promotes the integration of
20 commercial development within its immediate neighborhoods so that it is an
21 enhancement to the neighborhoods. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*
22 also embraces the notion of having more than one regional commercial center
23 in Longmont, and provides for regional commercial centers on the north and
24 east sides of the City.
25

26 Furthermore, it also includes a new mixed-use ~~commercial~~ corridor concept for
27 the lands north of State Highway 66. This area is intended to facilitate the
28 development of *a mixed-use area that is unique to Longmont: one that has a*
29 *special “sense of place”. A place that has a balanced mix of uses*
30 *(entertainment, retail, residential, employment, civic, recreation) and a strong*
31 *pedestrian orientation with frequent outdoor gathering spaces. This mix of uses*
32 *will have uses that are destination anchors as well as those that are*
33 *neighborhood-oriented.* ~~planned commercial centers and office and industrial~~
34 ~~parks with supporting residential uses where appropriate that~~ *The mixed-use*
35 *corridor will* incorporate well-planned access and parking areas, landscaped
36 areas, and high-quality architectural design.
37

38 *To encourage the quality development that the City expects in the mixed-use*
39 *corridor in the Terry Lake neighborhood planning area, the City Council has*
40 *approved the Highway 66 Mixed Use Corridor Framework Master Plan and*
41 *Design Guidelines (August 30, 2006). This document is incorporated into, and*
42 *made a part of, the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan by reference. The*
43 *Highway 66 Mixed Use Corridor Framework Master Plan and Design Guidelines*
44 *(August 30, 2006) will be used when the City reviews planned unit developments*
45 *to realize the strong and consistent community design necessary to create a*
46 *unique sense of place in the mixed-use corridor in the Terry Lake neighborhood*
47 *planning area.*

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Central Business District

The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* supports continued revitalization of the Central Business District. The policies in the Central Business District chapter support enhancing the downtown’s appearance and vitality, creating a pedestrian-friendly district, enhancing the quality of business opportunities, and encouraging compatibility between the Central Business District and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Public Improvements

The Public Improvements chapter outlines goals, policies, and strategies that guide the City in determining what public improvements the City needs, when the City needs them, and who should pay for them. This chapter further refines how development pays its fair share of the public improvements necessary to serve it.

Transportation

The Transportation chapter focuses on having an acceptable level of mobility as Longmont continues to grow. Ease of travel around Longmont contributes to its desirability as a place to live, work, and visit. Goals, policies, and strategies support the continued development of a multi-modal transportation system that is capable of serving existing and proposed land uses and that encourages travel by means other than single-occupant automobiles.

The Transportation chapter also incorporates recommendations from the Bicycle Task Force and the Transportation Demand Management Task Force. New policies also reiterate the pursuit of commuter rail from Boulder to Longmont as part of the Regional Transportation District’s FasTracks proposal and incorporate the *State Highway 119 Diagonal Highway Alternatives Assessment: Boulder County Transportation System Study (July 2001)* recommendations for multi-modal enhancements to the State Highway 119/Diagonal Highway. Although not included in a formal policy, a discussion of tradeoffs in the transportation planning and decision-making process is included in the Transportation chapter.

Human Services, Culture, and Education

The Human Services, Culture, and Education chapter’s goals, policies, and strategies support and enhance a wide range of resources so that all of Longmont’s residents have an equal opportunity to maximize their potential. This chapter also supports efforts to improve cultural opportunities and to foster an appreciation of cultural diversity. Longmont’s residents have a history of caring for each other, a quality that contributes to Longmont’s small town, friendly atmosphere.

1 Quality educational opportunities in Longmont are a key ingredient to
2 Longmont’s continued growth and prosperity. The *Longmont Area*
3 *Comprehensive Plan* includes goals, policies, and strategies that allow the City in
4 partnership with educational providers to evaluate methods for ensuring those
5 opportunities.
6

7 **Environmental Quality and Resources Conservation**

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9 The Environmental Quality and Resources Conservation chapter includes goals,
10 policies and strategies concerning environmental health, the preservation of
11 wetlands and other natural areas, and the extraction of subsurface resources
12 such as aggregates, oil, and gas. The plan emphasizes preserving environmental
13 resources and unique natural areas, maintaining a high-quality domestic water
14 supply, reducing energy and water consumption, reducing solid waste, and
15 minimizing the public’s exposure to hazardous materials.
16

17 **Parks, Greenways, and Open Space**

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19 The Parks, Greenways, and Open Space chapter describes the public system of
20 parks, greenways and open space designed to serve residents, the workforce,
21 and visitors of Longmont. It includes location and design criteria so that the City
22 will contain adequate parks to serve recreation needs. It also includes policies to
23 develop a greenway system and sets forth policies to preserve natural and
24 cultural resources of the Longmont area to help maintain the City’s separate
25 identity, provide connections to useable open space, provide low impact
26 passive recreation, and enhance scenic entryway corridors to the City.
27

28 **Role of Government: Partnerships**

29

30 The City has the power of local self-government and home rule. City
31 government will implement the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* in
32 partnership with the people of Longmont, the business community, and other
33 service providers. In addition, local government can influence the private sector
34 to help implement the plan through many different mechanisms, including
35 regulations, incentives, information, education, advocacy, and budgeting
36 expenditures. The City’s relationships with Boulder and Weld Counties are
37 especially noteworthy in the context of the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*
38 since Longmont is in both these counties. Goals, policies, and strategies
39 throughout the plan support coordination and cooperation.
40

41 **Tourism and Recreation Element**

42

43 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* includes elements regarding tourism
44 and recreation to comply with House Bill 1006 (Colorado legislation) concerning
45 tourism and recreation uses. The Central Business District; Human Services,
46 Culture and Education; and Parks, Greenways, and Open Space chapters

1 include modifications to address the provision of recreational opportunities for
2 visitors as well as Longmont area residents.

4 **Sustainable Community Indicators and Benchmarks**

6 Indicators are measures of economic, community, and environmental trends.
7 When used individually, indicators provide a relative measure of change with
8 respect to specific goals. When evaluated collectively, the composite analysis
9 will show the City if it is achieving its goals for sustainability, balance, and
10 improving the general quality of life. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*
11 incorporates indicators to help the City measure its progress towards achieving
12 its goals and policies.

14 The purpose of the indicators is to:

- 16 ■ Enable the City to improve quality of life and achieve balance by evaluating
17 conditions across economic, environmental, and community categories;
- 19 ■ Identify specific indicators where action is needed, and to increase
20 awareness of how actions may impact other goals of the City; and
- 22 ■ Integrate current indicator and benchmark analysis with *Longmont Area*
23 *Comprehensive Plan* goals and policies.

25 A series of indicators have been linked to each chapter of the *Longmont Area*
26 *Comprehensive Plan*, which measure a specific condition related to the
27 economy, the environment, or the community. The strength of indicator
28 programs lies in the ability to evaluate trends collectively. While many issues in a
29 community can be evaluated independently, the relationships between specific
30 indicators provide insight into sustainability and balance among a broad range
31 of goals. Examples of how data can be used to understand the inter-
32 relationships among the indicators are provided in Appendix A. It is
33 recommended that an indicators report be provided to the City Council
34 annually, providing baseline information for each measurement, trend data as it
35 becomes available, as well as correlations among key related indicators.

37 The indicators included in the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan have been
38 selected using the following criteria:

- 40 ■ They reflect existing community goals related to the long-term economic,
41 environmental, and community health of the City.
- 43 ■ They are statistically measurable, and relevant data are readily available.
- 44 ■ They represent issues that City policy can influence.

- 1 ▪ They include a majority of the City's quality of life benchmarks (first approved
2 in October of 2000), as well as benchmarks incorporated into the *Land*
3 *Development Code*.

4
5 City actions to solve individual problems will have ramifications on other
6 important concerns of the community. A solution to one problem can make
7 another problem worse. Therefore, understanding the interdependent nature of
8 the indicators is key to understanding balance. It is this balance that will lead to
9 improving the community's quality of life. The purpose of incorporating the
10 indicators is to help the community understand the connections between
11 categories to achieve balance among the community, economic, and
12 environmental concerns of the City.

13
14 Some indicators included in the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*, have
15 associated benchmarks or standards that set a measurable goal for the
16 community. While some of the indicators do not have specific benchmarks, the
17 annual or quarterly measurements of specific conditions in the community will
18 provide valuable trend data. Over time, the trend data will show how much
19 progress Longmont has made towards the goals listed in the *Longmont Area*
20 *Comprehensive Plan* and may be used to set benchmarks in the future. The City
21 may initiate action to address certain trends and solve problems based on
22 quantifiable conditions identified through monitoring these indicators.

23 24 **Implementation**

25
26 City government makes decisions, particularly decisions concerning land use,
27 based on the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*. It is a guide and not a
28 regulation. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* is of value only if the City
29 accepts it as a guide for making decisions. Since the *Longmont Area*
30 *Comprehensive Plan* does not have the force of law, the City must adopt and
31 rely on other measures to implement it, such as regulations that the City uses to
32 review individual development applications. The *Land Development Code*,
33 public improvement plans, annual City Council work program, annual *Operating*
34 *Budget*, *Capital Improvement Program*, annexations, and other ordinances are
35 all methods of implementing the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*. *For*
36 *development in the mixed-use corridor in the Terry Lake neighborhood planning*
37 *area, the City will use the Highway 66 Mixed Use Corridor Framework Master Plan*
38 *and Design Guidelines (August 30, 2006) to evaluate planned unit developments*
39 *to ensure quality development that contributes to a unique "sense of place" in*
40 *Longmont.* The Metro Vision 2020 tracking system is a tool the City uses to
41 monitor urban area so that Longmont's growth and development are consistent
42 with *Metro Vision 2020*, the comprehensive guide for the development of the
43 Denver metropolitan region.

44
45 The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* includes strategies that attempt to tie
46 the plan more closely with implementation devices. Each strategy links to a

1 specific policy and sets forth actions that the City should take to implement the
2 policy. Some of the strategies are more specific than others, and some may be
3 relatively simple to implement compared to others.

4
5 Many competing goals, policies, and strategies exist within the *Longmont Area*
6 *Comprehensive Plan*. While the City attempts to integrate the various goals,
7 policies, and strategies in its actions, it will necessarily emphasize some goals,
8 policies, and strategies over others depending on the circumstances associated
9 with a particular issue.

10
11 The indicators program and monitoring approach incorporated into the 2003
12 update to the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* give the City an opportunity
13 to weigh trends and evaluate progress toward achieving goals. The City will
14 then be able to determine when the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* may
15 need to be updated, or whether new goals, policies, and strategies may be
16 necessary to achieve balance in the community. On the other hand, if the basic
17 goals remain valid over time, the City may need to decide if it should take other
18 actions to foster a balanced community if the indicators show trends away from
19 achieving the City's goals.

20
21 In order for the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* to be a useful document,
22 the City must update it to respond to changing conditions and community
23 values. Amendment procedures allow the City to change specific elements of
24 the plan. Evaluation of the entire plan on a continuing basis is also important to
25 ensure that the underlying assumptions and philosophies remain valid. The City
26 should initiate a review of the entire document no later than January 1, 2013 to
27 determine whether or not the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* needs
28 another comprehensive update. When the City does initiate a comprehensive
29 update, the City will carry out its commitment to follow certain fundamental
30 principles for amending comprehensive plans that are specified in the *Mile High*
31 *Compact*, an intergovernmental agreement between jurisdictions within the
32 Denver Regional Council of Governments.