



PARKS, GREENWAYS, AND OPEN SPACE

Longmont's natural setting with its vast open lands, creeks, lakes, and spectacular views is vital to the City's image and identity, its attractiveness to residents, businesses and tourists, and its quality of life. Preserving open areas for the use, enjoyment, and well being of Longmont area residents and visitors is key to the community's quality growth and development. The City's open areas and recreational opportunities areas are categorized into three types: parks, greenways, and open space.

Parks

Parks are those open lands that the City develops for more intense recreation such as field games, court games, swimming, playgrounds, as well as outdoor recreation such as walking, biking, fishing, and picnicking. Longmont's parks system includes neighborhood, community, and district parks in which the City provides a variety of recreational opportunities.

There can be some overlap in the types of facilities that the City provides in each park type. For example, picnic areas/shelters, restrooms, parking lots, and maintenance buildings could be in all three park types. Other facilities will be more common to one particular park type. For example, lighted athletic complexes and indoor recreational facilities will more likely be in community parks.

Facilities commonly found in **neighborhood parks** include playgrounds, picnic areas/shelters, non-lighted playfields, open play areas for informal games, sport courts, parking lots, and restrooms. Other amenities may include off-leash dog areas and small skate facilities.

Community parks include facilities such as lighted athletic complexes, indoor recreational facilities, sport court complexes, concession facilities, picnic areas/shelters, playgrounds, open play areas for informal games, parking lots, and restrooms. Other amenities may include off-leash dog areas and small skate facilities.

District parks commonly include facilities that focus on the attributes or special features of the area that the parks encompass. Typically, they include facilities for outdoor recreation such as hiking, fishing, boating, swimming, and wildlife viewing. Trails, swimming areas, boat ramps, picnic areas/shelters, playgrounds, parking lots, and restrooms can be facilities within district parks.

The small **pocket parks** distributed around the City supplement the public parks system of neighborhood, community, and district parks designed to serve Longmont residents and visitors. Pocket parks are often located within residential developments, are smaller than neighborhood parks, and are typically owned and managed by a homeowners' association or similar group, making them semi-private.

Not every park of the same type will have the same facilities. The City will consider recreational demands of the park's service area, the facilities in nearby parks and school play areas, and the physical attributes of the park site that could foster other activities, such as a fishing pond, in deciding the site-specific facilities for a particular park.



The City periodically evaluates its recreation facilities standards with the goal of providing recreational opportunities to meet the changing desires of Longmont's residents. Together the City's parks system and recreation programs help to meet the diverse recreation interests that Longmont's residents and visitors pursue.

Greenways

Greenways are linear corridors that permit public access. The purposes of greenways are to accommodate trail-oriented recreation, provide for wildlife movement through urban areas, connect residential areas to the bikeway network, and provide for the multiple uses and maintenance of storm drainage corridors. These greenways, in combination with the street bikeway system, connect the City's parks, schools, and other community facilities. There are multiple benefits associated with greenways.

The City designates **primary greenways** that encompass rivers, lakes, ditches, creeks, and other corridors that carry urban storm drainage or that contain utilities. These greenways can include trails for uses such as walking, jogging, biking, and rollerblading. These greenways are designated in the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*.

The purpose of **secondary greenways** is to provide necessary short links between residential areas and bikeways, parks, and schools. These greenways alleviate the need to use streets and enhance alternative modes of transportation. The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* does not show the location of secondary greenways. The City determines their location when reviewing subdivisions.

Open Space

Open space is land that remains in a relatively natural state or use (including agricultural use) and serves one or more of the following functions: (1) preservation of natural areas, wildlife habitat, and wetlands, (2) provision of low impact, passive outdoor recreation, (3) maintenance of Longmont's separate identity, (4) preservation of agriculture, and (5) preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of scenic entryway corridors to the community.

The City's designation of land as open space does not necessarily imply that it will be accessible to the public or in City ownership. For example, it is possible to have open space as part of private development that also preserves natural areas or enhances the community's visual quality. These areas can remain in private ownership. Therefore, when accessibility to the public is not a prime consideration for preserving open space, the City may consider using preservation techniques besides public dedication and acquisition. The *Longmont Open Space and Trails Master Plan* describes the process for acquiring open space and other conservation techniques.



Parks, Greenways, and Open Space Goals, Policies, and Strategies

GOAL P-1: Provide adequate parks to serve the recreational needs of Longmont residents and visitors.

POLICY P-1.1: Develop three types of parks: (1) neighborhood parks, (2) community parks, and (3) district parks, to serve the needs of residents and visitors.

Strategy P-1.1(a): Using the following criteria, develop at least one **neighborhood park** within each neighborhood planning area to serve its residents and visitors with facilities such as playgrounds, non-lighted playfields, and picnic areas:

- A. Provide 2.5 acres of neighborhood park for each 1,000 residents.
- B. Size each neighborhood park in the range of 10 to 20 acres, depending on the physical attributes of the site, the facilities the City will provide, and the configuration of an adjacent school site's play area.
- C. Locate each neighborhood park to have a service radius of ½ mile, generally within the boundaries of arterial streets or railroad lines.
- D. Generally, locate neighborhood parks adjacent to elementary schools and on collector streets.
- E. Consider the acreage of an adjacent elementary school's developed play area in calculating the size needed for that neighborhood park to determine whether its size can be within the lower end of the acreage range.
- F. Do not require or build neighborhood parks in residential areas when the planned residential population is too low to support a neighborhood park.

Strategy P-1.1(b): Using the following criteria, develop **community parks** to serve residents and visitors of several neighborhood planning areas with improvements such as indoor recreation facilities, lighted athletic complexes, or other facilities that the City cannot functionally provide within neighborhood parks.

- A. Provide 4.5 acres of community park for each 1,000 residents.
- B. Size each community park in the range of 50 to 100 acres depending on the physical attributes of the site and the facilities the City will provide



- C. Locate each community park to have a service radius of 1 to 1½ miles.
- D. Locate community parks on or near arterials either in nonresidential neighborhoods or on the edge of residential neighborhoods with the intent of minimizing the impact of organized recreational activities on residences.

Strategy P-1.1(c): Using the following criteria, develop **district parks** to serve the residents and visitors of the City and surrounding area with facilities that primarily promote low-impact, passive outdoor recreation and that also take advantage of the natural and cultural features of the site:

- A. Size each district park so that it includes sufficient area in which to locate recreational facilities so they are compatible with and protect the natural and cultural environment.
- B. Locate each district park to encompass the specific natural feature that is its focus.
- C. Configure district parks to provide access from arterial or collector streets when feasible.

Policy P-1.2 Provide recreational facilities and programs to meet the needs of different segments of the population and to foster tourism.

Strategy P-1.2(a): Develop recreational facilities as appropriate to meet the needs of different segments of the population, such as youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Strategy P-1.2(b): Develop recreational facilities that will be attractive to both Longmont residents and visitors.

GOAL P-2: Develop a greenway system of linear public open space that encompasses utility corridors, rivers, lakes, ditches and creeks used for storm water drainage, provides for the multiple uses of storm drainage corridors, assists in their efficient maintenance, accommodates trail-oriented recreation, and connects residential areas to the bikeway network and with community activity areas.

POLICY P-2.1: Designate primary greenways that encompass utility corridors, rivers, lakes, ditches, and creeks that carry urban storm drainage when they can integrate with the bikeway system and can connect residential areas with community activity areas.



Strategy P-2.1(a): Evaluate the ditches and creeks that carry urban storm drainage to determine those that would meet the functions of the greenway system.

Strategy P- 2.1(b): Locate improvements within the greenways to minimize negative impacts on wildlife habitat, particularly its fragmentation, and on quality vegetation.

POLICY P-2.2: Develop secondary greenways, corridors that accommodate a bikeway, in residential neighborhoods to provide short links to primary greenways, bikeways, parks, and schools.

Strategy P-2.2(a): Locate secondary greenways during the subdivision review process in residential development when necessary to connect to primary greenways, bikeways, parks, and schools.

GOAL P-3:	Preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Longmont area to help maintain the City's separate identity, provide connections to useable open space areas, provide low impact, passive recreation, and enhance scenic entryway corridors to the City.
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POLICY P-3.1: Use open space to preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Longmont area.

Strategy P-3.1(a): Designate as open space the areas with natural features including, but not limited to, wildlife habitat, wetlands, rare plant communities, and high-quality lakes, ponds, and streams.

Strategy P-3.1(b): Conserve designated open space by using a range of appropriate techniques as described in the Longmont *Open Space and Trails Master Plan*.

Strategy P-3.1(c): Use planned unit development regulations and other appropriate regulatory techniques to preserve natural and cultural features and to provide open space within developments.

Strategy P-3.1(d): Acquire open space using the "Tiered Approach for Prioritizing Acquisitions," described in the Longmont *Open Space and Trails Master Plan* when the City wants the open space to be accessible to the public or when other preservation strategies would not be effective.

Strategy P-3.1(e): Cooperate with other entities and landowners to keep prime farmland within the Municipal Service Area and the Longmont Planning Area under agricultural production, where practical, until development occurs.



POLICY P-3.2: Establish and maintain urban-shaping open space buffers in strategic areas to maintain the community's separate identity.

Strategy P-3.2(a): Designate urban shaping open space buffers in strategic locations.

Strategy P-3.2(b): Establish urban-shaping open space buffers through a variety of appropriate methods.

Strategy P-3.2(c): Cooperate with other jurisdictions to preserve urban-shaping open space buffers where both Longmont and other communities will benefit.

Strategy P-3.2(d): Cooperate with other entities to develop programs to preserve prime farmland, when possible, in the St. Vrain Valley Planning Area to provide urban-shaping open space buffers.

POLICY P-3.3: Conserve high-quality natural resource-based recreational areas that are locally significant.

Strategy P-3.3(a): Designate and acquire open space areas with existing or potential recreational features as district parks.

POLICY P-3.4: Designate trails and other links to connect useable open space lands, stream corridors and scenic entryway corridors with other public areas to provide access to these areas.

Strategy P-3.4(a): Establish designated trails and other links through a variety of appropriate methods.

POLICY P-3.5: Establish, preserve, and enhance scenic entryways along major highways entering the City.

Strategy P-3.5(a): Designate scenic entryways.

Strategy P-3.5(b): Coordinate with other jurisdictions in implementing scenic entryways.

POLICY P-3.6: Implement the Longmont *Open Space and Trails Master Plan* and management program.

Strategy P-3.6(a): Cooperate with other agencies and landowners to acquire open space designated in the Longmont *Open Space and Trails Master Plan*.

Strategy P-3.6(b): Contact other open space and conservation organizations for assistance with acquiring open space.



Parks, Greenways, and Open Space Indicators

Policy Rationale: Parks, greenways, and open space accentuate the existing natural qualities of the community. Preserving and/or improving these areas provides residents and visitors with greater recreational opportunities to enjoy the City's natural setting.

Benchmark Standard: Parks: Meet level of service standards for parks as specified in the City's Quality of Life Benchmarks
Agricultural Preservation: Number of acres eligible for transfer of development rights per Boulder County/Longmont Intergovernmental Agreement
Open Space: Acquire open space according to the attributes established for the open space election

Indicators:

- A. Number of new acres of constructed neighborhood parks and community parks per year
- B. Acres of open space acquisitions within the St. Vrain Valley Planning Area boundaries by the City, County or other public agency
- C. Linear feet of primary and secondary greenways constructed by the City or private developers
- D. Number of acres eligible for transferred development rights transfers

Methods, Sources:

- A & B. City of Longmont Parks and Open Space Division
- C. City of Longmont Planning Division
- D. City of Longmont Planning Division and Boulder County Land Use Department