

OPTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS | FINAL REPORT

# Park Land Dedication

Lakewood, Colorado

FALL, 2024



# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT PURPOSE

The City of Lakewood’s Park Land Dedication Ordinance was written in 1983, at a time when there was raw land available for development and expansion of park land to serve residents.

*Forty years later, Lakewood is experiencing infill development as a first-ring suburb, with renewed development interest in the northern and eastern parts of the city where land prices and existing infrastructure encourage the redevelopment of under-utilized land.*

The current ordinance is incompatible with infill development as zoning encourages high density residential development, while park land dedication can nullify the density and render sites undevelopable. The City of Lakewood needs a means of requiring park land acquisitions areas where parks are needed and accepting cash-in-lieu of dedications, or alternatives to city park dedications, in neighborhoods that are already well-served by parks.

For residents of Lakewood, this should result in more parkland in neighborhoods that lack parks within walking distance, improvements to existing parks with use of the fees-in-lieu of land dedication, and improved outdoor spaces within private developments that serve the needs of development residents and neighbors.

*Addenbrooke Park, Lakewood*





# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT

The City of Lakewood Park Land Dedication Ordinance was first adopted in 1983 and was most recently amended in 2018. The ordinance is written to ensure that new development within the City of Lakewood provide land for Neighborhood Parks, and Community Parks at a rate of 5.5 acres per one-thousand residents<sup>1</sup>. Cash-in-lieu of land dedication may accepted for developments less than 14.99-acres in size, at the discretion of the city.

Since the adoption of the ordinance in 1983, Lakewood has become substantially built-out, with minimal opportunity for greenfield development of residences and park lands. In 2013, the City of Lakewood adopted a new zoning code, which designates mixed use zoning along arterial roads, near the RTD W-Line Light Rail Stations, and along the Colfax Avenue corridor. This change reflects zoning best-practices that call a mix of land uses in areas where transit and active transportation are most accessible.

1. Regional Parks needs were determined to be satisfied, and are no longer required at the initial 5.5 acres per one-thousand residents.

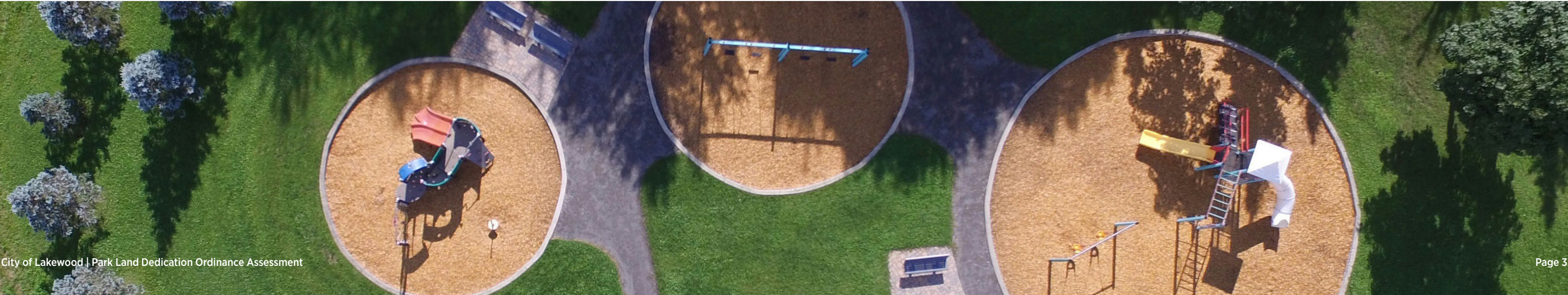
Since the adoption of the 2013 code, development patterns have shifted toward infill development, which is especially focused in the northern and eastern parts of the City of Lakewood. Infill development is characterized by the redevelopment of under-utilized properties, which are usually smaller in size than the greenfield developments typically associated with suburban areas. These properties are often so small that when Park Land Dedications are applied, dedication of such land on site would nullify the potential for the development altogether.

Additionally, the City of Lakewood Community Resources Department prefers that parks be a minimum of 3-acres in size to provide the economies of scale needed for efficient park maintenance. This determination, along with the lack of large development properties, has created a condition in which the city has been unable to accept any park land dedications since the 2018 amendment, and has accepted cash-in-lieu of dedication for all recent developments. Those funds have been used by the Community Resources department for improvements to and acquisitions of park land within the city.

*While the existing system is providing cash for park improvements and land acquisitions, the ordinance can be improved to better address the City of Lakewood’s needs as an infill community.*

*Norris Design conducted this assessment with the goal of identifying areas where additional parkland is needed most, and offering creative solutions to provide park amenities in infill contexts.*

Brickhouse at Lamar Station, urban infill in Lakewood





# RESEARCH

## PEER COMMUNITIES

Norris Design identified cities similar to Lakewood, Colorado in order to gather information related to parks and open space planning, with a focus on parks impact fees.

For this effort, research was limited to urban or suburban municipalities, located within major metropolitan areas, with populations ranging from 100,000 to 250,000 residents. Preference was given to:

- Cities with limited number of, or unbalanced distribution of parkland and open space areas;
- Cities surrounded by incorporated municipalities (limited ability to expand or annex additional land);
- Cities which are experiencing infill development.
- Cities in the western United States; and
- Cities with arid or semi-arid climate conditions.

The following peer communities were identified:

- **SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA**
- **GREELEY, COLORADO**
- **AURORA, COLORADO**
- **WESTMINSTER, COLORADO**
- **FORT COLLINS, COLORADO**

*Park-land dedication related materials from each of these municipalities can be found in Appendix A.*



*Island Grove Regional Park, Greeley Colorado*



*Sugar Beet Park in peer community, Fort Collins, Colorado*



*Central Park, Santa Clara, California*



*Westminster Station Park & Nature Playground, Westminster, Colorado*



# RESEARCH

## PARK LAND DEDICATION

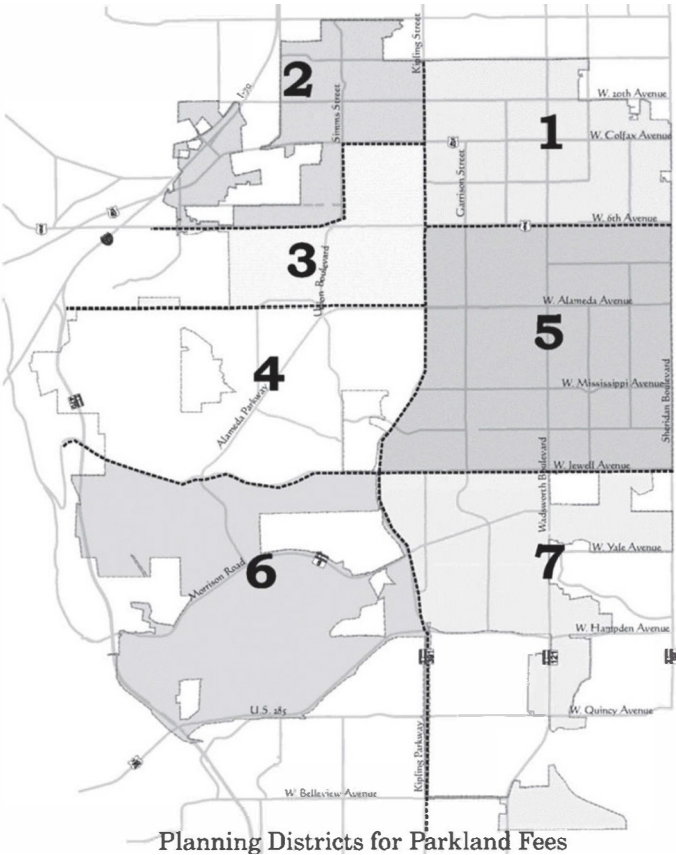
The City of Lakewood’s Park Land Dedication Ordinance requires a "Level of Service" of 2.5 acres of neighborhood parks and 3.0 acres of community park land per 1,000 persons.

The City of Lakewood currently provides 5.97 acres of neighborhood and community parks per 1,000 persons city-wide. Based on adopted Park Service Units, Level of Service standards and a current population of 155,961, the City currently exceeds required neighborhood and community park land by 73.2 acres, not counting regional parks including Bear Creek Lake Park and William F. Hayden Park.. This surplus is enough to accommodate 13,000 more residents while still meeting Level of Service Goals.

The Imagine Tomorrow! Arts, Parks and Recreation for All plan, prioritizes equitable access to parks; so while Lakewood may have surplus acreage of parks based on Level of Service, they are not located evenly across city neighborhoods. The goal of this report is to provide recommendations that will result in more equitable parks access in under-served areas.

Park Type + (Required Acres per 1,000 pop.)	Req. Acres for 155,961 pop.	Total Existing Acres	Existing Acres / 1,000 pop.	Acres Exceeding Level of Service
Neighborhood Parks (2.5)	389.90	441.00	2.83	51.10
Community Parks (3.0)	467.88	490.00	3.14	22.12
Subtotal	857.79	931.00	5.97	73.21
Regional Parks (5.0*)	779.81*	5,881.60	37.71	5,023.81
Open Space (0.0)	N/A	546.70	3.51	546.70
Grand Total	1,637.59*	7,359.30	47.19	5,721.71

*\*Per the 1983 Ordinance, Regional Parks needs are met given that the service goal of 5.5 acres per thousand population has been exceeded. Additional information on Park Land Dedication can be found in Appendix D.*



Planning Districts for Parkland Fees

## PARK DISTRICTS

The City of Lakewood is divided into seven Park Districts (or Benefits Districts). Funds acquired from cash-in-lieu of land dedication must be spent in the same Park District as the development location. The districts are intended to ensure geographic connection between where fees are generated and used.

*Additional information on Benefits Districts can be found in Appendix D.*

## PARK SERVICE UNITS

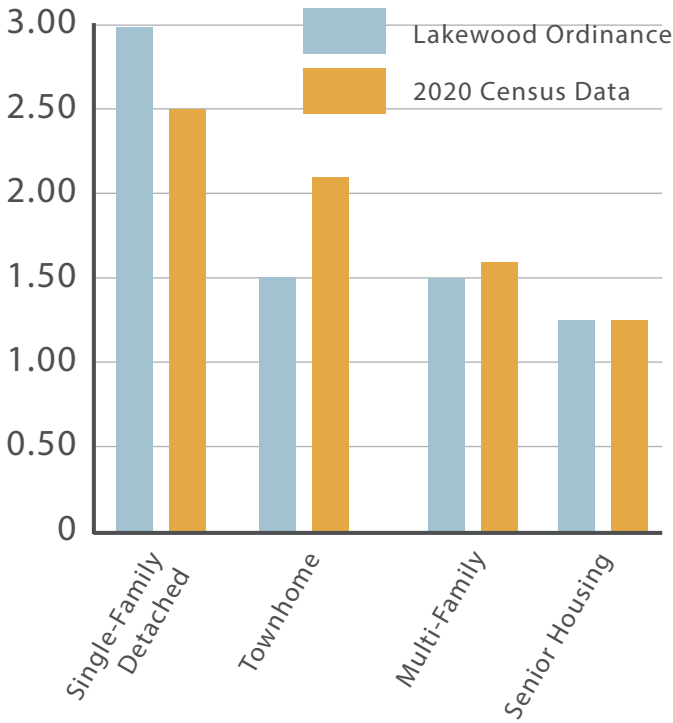
A service unit is a common measure of the demand for land and facilities applicable to different types of development. The City of Lakewood uses residential population as the service unit to determine park demand.

The City’s current park dedication and fee-in-lieu requirements distinguish between three housing types: single-family detached, multi-family (including townhome, also known as single-family attached), and senior housing.

Review of 2020 Census data demonstrated a shift in persons per-unit as compared with assumptions in the ordinance. There are fewer people in single-family detached homes, but more people in townhomes and multi-family units. Data also shows significant difference in persons per townhome unit, as compared with multifamily units, which are considered part of the same housing type in the existing ordinance.

*Additional information on Park Service Units can be found in Appendix D.*

CURRENT & UPDATED PERSONS/UNIT



## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Park land dedication requirements, including fees in-lieu of dedication, or park impact fees enable local governments to require new developments to pay a proportionate share of the costs required to accommodate park demand created by adding new residents to a city. In contrast to “negotiated” developer exactions, these requirements, or fees, are assessed on new development using a standard formula based on objective characteristics, such as the number and type of dwelling units constructed. The Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) address the use of Impact Fees; CRS requirements pertinent to this research are as follows:

Development Impact Fees must

- Be based on a schedule of fees that are legislatively adopted;
- Be applied to development generally, (not on a case-by-case basis);
- Cover only the cost of improvements needed to serve new development; (new development cannot be charged fees to remedy existing deficiencies in city facilities.)

*Additional information on Legal Framework can be found in Appendix D.*



# OUTREACH: DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS

As the development community is a major stakeholder in the creation of park land, they should be included in the discussion regarding changes to the Park Land Dedication ordinance. In November 2023, City staff and the consultant team met with local development stakeholders to better understand their concerns and discuss potential solutions that would benefit the City, the development community, and ultimately residents and users of Lakewood's parks.

This discussion helped to deconstruct the sometimes adversarial relationships between public and private stakeholders and foster an environment of collaboration. Bringing the Lakewood Advisory Commission, Planning Commission members, and local developers together allowed for a deeper understanding of the existing hardships and prompted conversations about opportunities to improve the development process to the benefit of housing, affordability, and increased parks and open spaces.



## MAJOR POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

- Benefits of and issues with incremental fee increases
- The importance of clarity on fees/alternative park provision opportunities early in the process
- Efficacy of fees for non-residential uses/use conversion projects
- Opportunities to encourage affordable housing development
- Incentivizing park development in certain parts of the City
- Construction and ownership of dedicated parks

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Developer and city-staff enthusiasm regarding opportunities for privately developed parks, with public access easements. Such spaces can be credited toward required park land dedication, while providing on-site amenities for residents and accessible amenities for neighbors.
- Developers would appreciate a menu of options for ways to provide required park land dedication in a more transparent matter.
- Need to create mechanisms for cross-departmental collaboration between Community Resources and Public Works, to utilize public land for multiple needs.





# RESIDENT STAKEHOLDERS

The City of Lakewood also recognized the value of engaging with people who live and recreate in Lakewood. City staff and the consultant team engaged with residents from an under-served neighborhood to identify concerns with the existing park infrastructure and gain feedback on impacts of high-density residential development.

Engaging with Lakewood residents provided staff with useful insights about what kinds of parks and open spaces are valued by those residents. Discussion illuminated concerns about proximity to parks for residents of newly constructed multi-family housing and underscored the benefit of proximate open space—even when small in scale. Engaging with residents provided the team with important feedback from stakeholders who are committed to securing better parks and recreation infrastructure for themselves and their neighbors.



## MAJOR POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

- Benefits of small parks
- Residents' preferences for parkland dedication rather than fee-in-lieu
- Desire to require land dedication for major development sites
- Identifying key areas of park and open space need within Lakewood

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Meeting participants would like to see public park-like amenities in new multifamily developments
- Some residents want to create mechanisms to allow for more parks that are smaller in size.
- Meeting participants want to ensure that there's a means of requiring land in large developments at key locations throughout the city.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- The project team recommends a community engagement page on [LakewoodTogether.org](https://LakewoodTogether.org), the city's community feedback forum, to educate and inform residents on the park land dedication assessment process and gain feedback on recommendations prior to Council hearings.



# RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL

Initial options and recommendations were shared with Lakewood Staff in January of 2024, and refined for a City Council Study Session that took place on April 15, 2024; the staff memo is included in Appendix B.

The project team recommended **keeping park land dedication** as a tool to pursue the adopted Imagine Tomorrow! Plan goals in areas where park land is needed. The city should **accept fees in-lieu of land where dedication isn't needed** or logical. This **flexibility is essential**, given that new development can only provide park land to meet the needs of new residents .

The project team advised that the city **update the land value assessment and persons per-unit**, enabling the city to assess fees **to cover the cost of land acquisition and improvements in a changing market, and to more accurately predict parks demand** created by new residential development.

Finally, the project team recommended creating a means of **Alternative Park** provision, in which the **city and developers can share the responsibility of meeting park-needs of new residents**. This will provide small pockets of amenities throughout denser urban areas of Lakewood, without burdening Parks staff with maintenance of many small sites.

## RETAIN PARKLAND DEDICATION

Parkland Dedication should be retained, to allow for continued land dedication where it is feasible and needed. Building upon Imagine Tomorrow! Equity Mapping and the Strategic Acquisition Plan, Community Resources should identify areas of the city needing park expansion and/or the development of new parks and trails, then require land dedication with development in these locations. In higher-intensity zoning areas where parks and trails access are satisfied, we recommend that City of Lakewood staff give developments the option for Alternative Park provision, as detailed in the Park Typologies section of this report.

## UPDATE PARK IMPROVEMENT FEE IN-LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION

If the City determines that parkland dedication is not suitable in the development area, the development will instead be assessed a Park Improvement Fee in-Lieu of land dedication. The determination will be made by the Director of Community Resources, using the Imagine Tomorrow! Equity Mapping tool, as well as the maps included in this report.

- The fair market value of land to satisfy the park land dedication requirements is approximately \$432,727 per acre on June 1, 2024. This is nearly double the previous fee in-lieu, established in 2018, and is anticipated to incentivize land dedication or provision of privately-built parks from development community. When factored into fee per-unit, this will rank Lakewood in the middle of Colorado cities that assess a flat cost-per parkland acre.
- This fee will be evaluated annually, to reflect market fluctuations using appraisals. If substantial appraisal data is not available, Assessor’s data, American Housing Data, and other local property valuation tools will be employed.
- In instances where the Director elects to require a Park Improvement Fee in-Lieu of land dedication, the Director may waive all or a portion of the fee for housing that is deed-restricted for households earning no more than (80%) of the area median income (AMI).

Colorado Comparative Park Fees per Unit		
	Single Family	Multifamily
Colorado Springs	\$1,696	\$1,117
Erie	\$2,451	\$1,490
Brighton	\$3,942	\$3,942
Lakewood	\$6,045	\$3,998
Boulder	\$6,390	\$3,882
Greeley	\$6,213	\$2,925
Castle Rock	\$6,531	\$4,420
Commerce City	\$7,502	\$5,698
Fort Collins	\$7,930	\$7,188



Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Amphitheater at  
Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park in Lakewood, Colorado





Belmar Plaza in Lakewood, Colorado

### UPDATE THE PROJECTED POPULATION PER UNIT

Update the projected population per-unit requirements as listed below to align with current Census and American Household Survey data. Note, the existing ordinance combines single-family attached and multifamily units into the same housing type, for calculation of persons per unit. Research indicates that there are 0.5 more persons per unit in townhomes than multi-family units; with this in mind, the project team recommends that housing types be expanded to make single-family attached homes (or townhomes) a distinct housing type.

Housing Type	Persons /Unit	Acres/Unit	\$ In Lieu/Unit
Single-Family Detached	2.55	0.0140	\$6,045
Townhome	2.08	0.0114	\$4,950
Multi-Family	1.68	0.0092	\$3,998
Senior Housing	1.20	0.0066	\$2,856

### ALLOW ALTERNATIVE PARK TYPES

In developments where the Director of Community Resources determines that park land dedication is not needed or feasible, the Director may request the developer pay the increased Improvement Fee in Lieu or install a small, publicly accessible park that meets city standards and is maintained by the HOA, owner, or management firm\*. This presents an opportunity to serve the residents of smaller developments and infill areas with compact parks less than 3-acres in size. There has been success with this model in other communities and requirements for these smaller, compact parks will be clearly defined through the site plan process. Specific examples would include plazas, play spaces, dog parks, gardens, trail segments, and drainage area park improvements beyond the zoning requirements for storm water and open space. The City is also investigating increased Enhanced Development Menu points to further incentivize alternative park types. Example of alternative park typologies are included in this report.

*\*A maintenance agreement would be recorded with the property owner and must provide a public access easement.*



Aviation Park in Lakewood, Colorado





# PARK ANALYSIS MAPS

The Imagine Tomorrow! Parks and Open Space Equity Analysis provided the foundation for mapping performed in this study. Through analysis of spatial data, Norris Design confirmed that the City of Lakewood has an excess of park acreage, but there are some areas of the city where parks are not dispersed enough to meet the service goals of the Imagine Tomorrow! Parks Service Area Standards.

PARK TYPE	SERVICE AREA
Regional Park	City-wide
Community Park	1.5 miles
Neighborhood Park	1/2 mile
Mini Park	1/4 - 1/2 mile

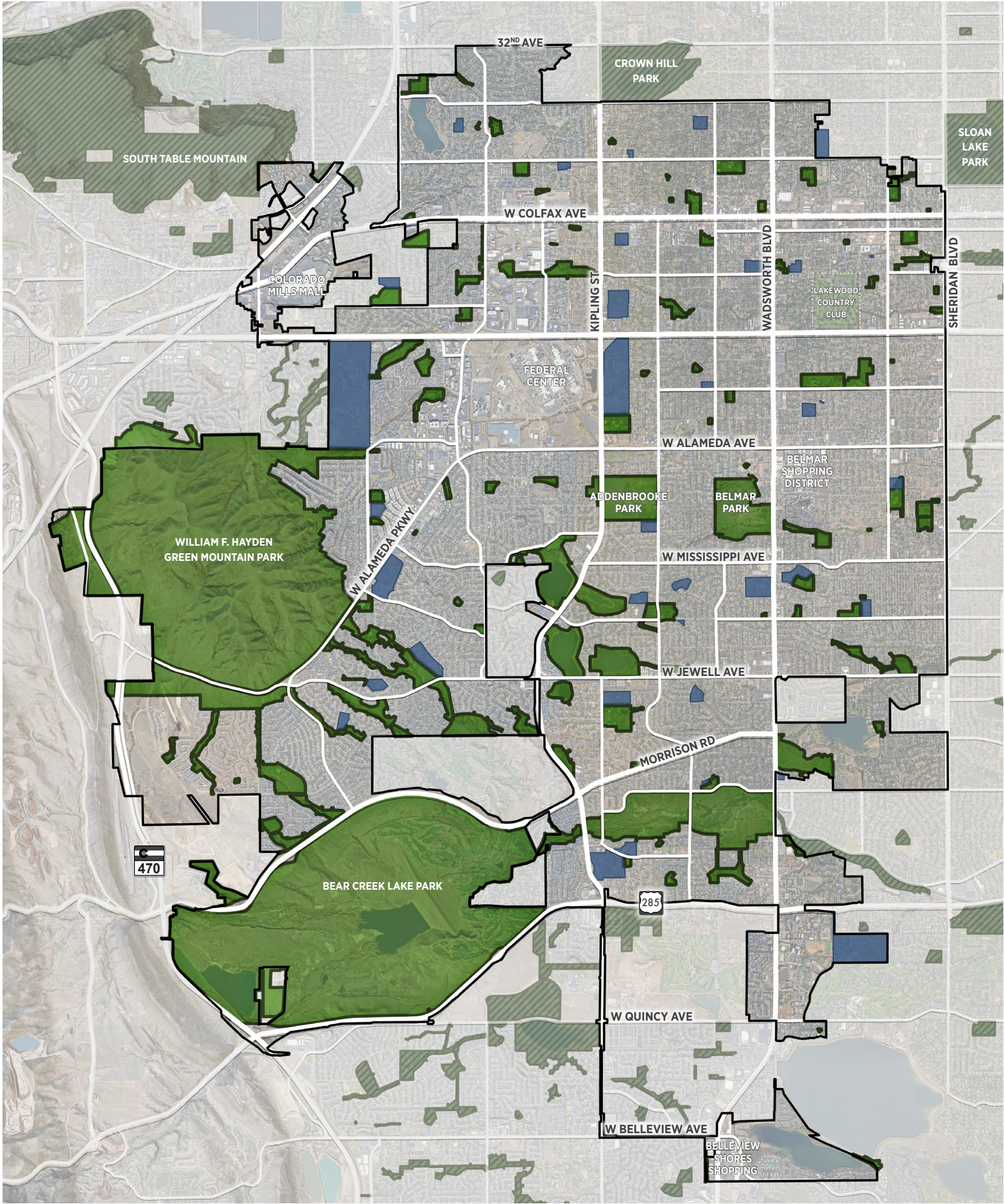
The following maps are intended to inform the Community Resources decision-making process for park land dedication or fee assessment, set expectations with the development community about park land needs, and provide transparency to Lakewood residents about where public parks, fee in-lieu, or alternative park typologies are needed.



# CITY OF LAKEWOOD PARKS & TRAILS

The base for our mapping identifies all City of Lakewood parks and trails, as well as parks and trails within close proximity of city boundaries. The inclusion of parks and trails outside of city boundaries was a decision aimed at providing city staff with the ability to consider parks in adjacent communities as part of park network that serves Lakewood residents.

- LAKEWOOD PARK/GREENBELT/NATURAL OPEN SPACE
- NON-LAKEWOOD PARK INCLUDED IN SERVICE ANALYSIS
- CITY BOUNDARY
- SCHOOL PROPERTY

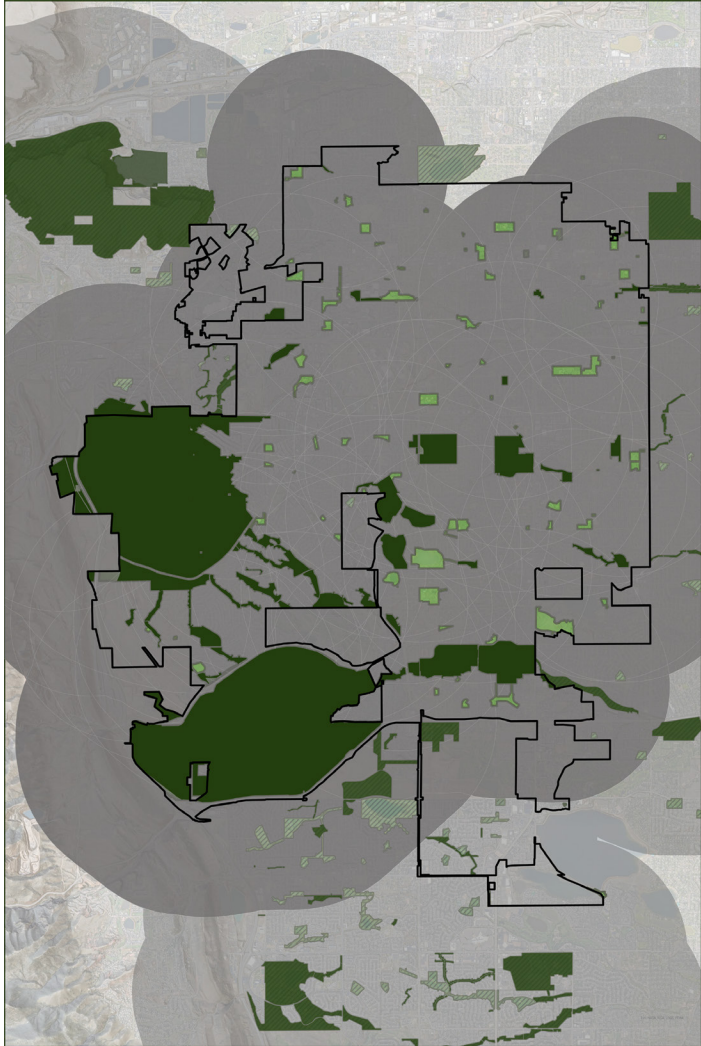




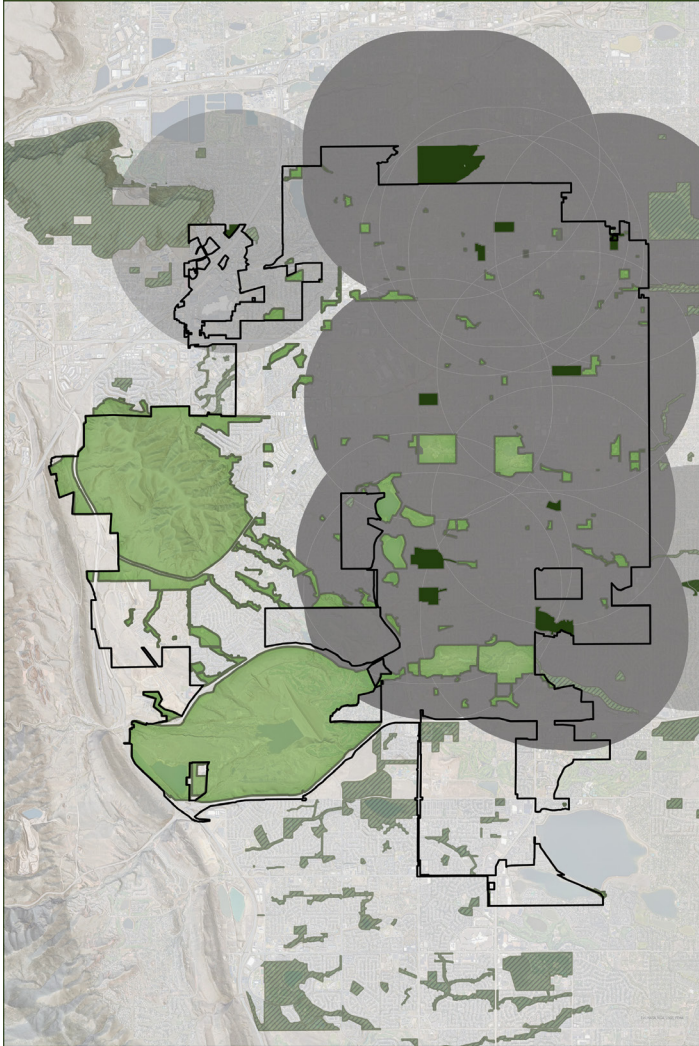
# PARK ACCESS ANALYSIS

Building on the base map service areas were added, as defined in Appendix H of the Imagine Tomorrow! plan. Quarter-mile, half-mile, and one and one-half mile service areas were added around all parks and greenbelts that are both inside, and immediately-outside of the city boundaries.

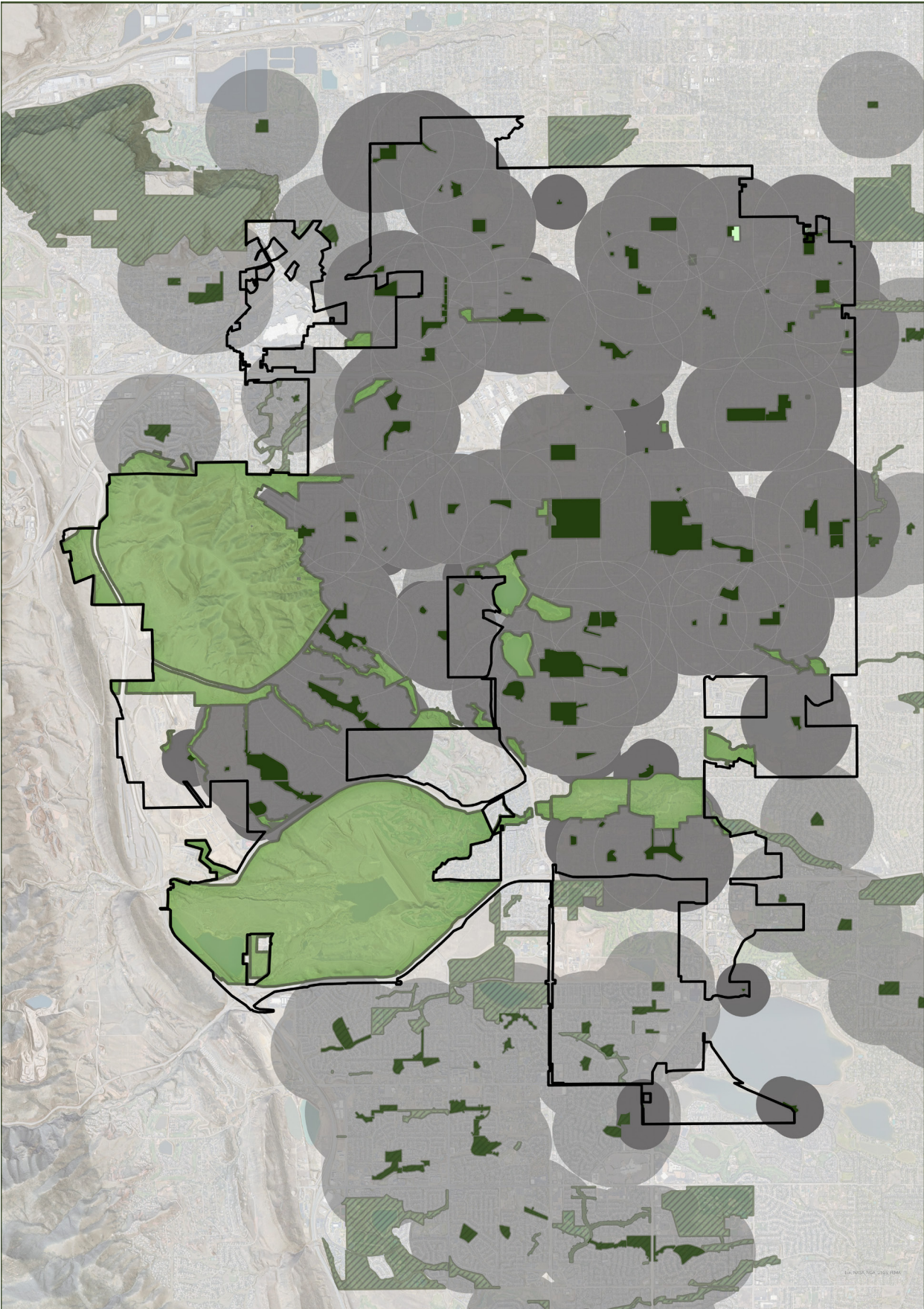
REGIONAL PARKS & GREENBELTS  
1½ MILE SERVICE AREAS



COMMUNITY PARKS  
1½ MILE SERVICE AREAS



MINI & NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS  
¼—½ MILE SERVICE AREAS



SUBJECT PARKS WITHIN CITY BOUNDARY

OTHER PARKS WITHIN CITY BOUNDARY

SUBJECT PARK SERVICE AREA WITHIN CITY BOUNDARY

SUBJECT PARKS OUTSIDE CITY BOUNDARY

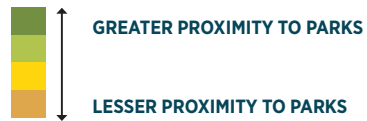
OTHER PARKS OUTSIDE CITY BOUNDARY

SUBJECT PARK SERVICE AREA OUTSIDE CITY BOUNDARY

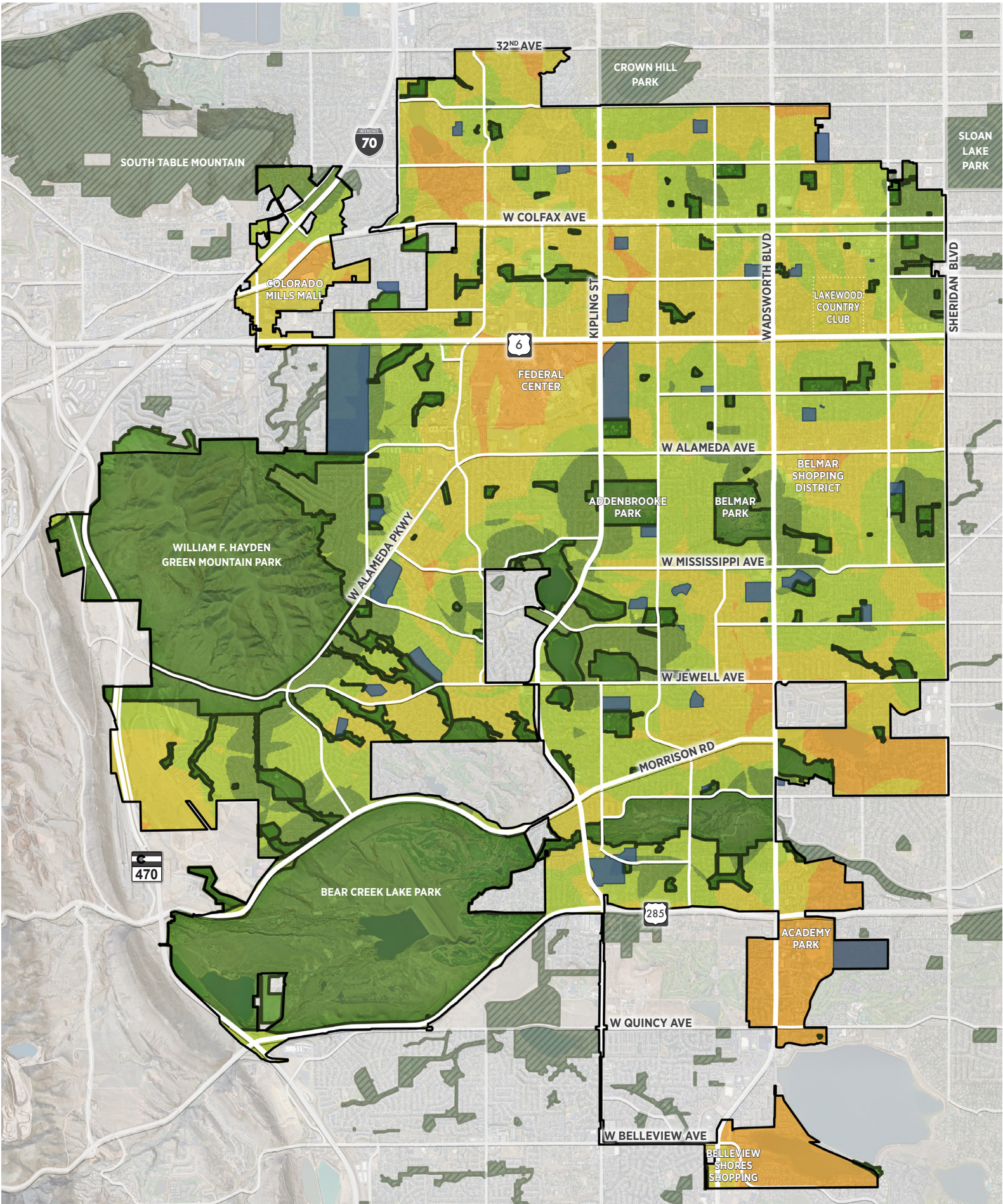


# PARK SERVICE AREA CONCENTRATION AND GAPS

In the map, areas with dark green shading are those within the determined service area of all three types of parks (neighborhood, community, and regional). Light green, yellow, and orange indicate areas in which one, two, or all three park-types service-areas do not cover the area, respectively. Some areas with limited park service are non-residential and may be considered lower priority areas for future land acquisition, these places have been labeled on the map. Conversely, residential areas with low park service should be prioritized to increase equitable access to parks in Lakewood.



- LAKEWOOD PARK/GREENBELT/NATURAL OPEN SPACE
- NON-LAKEWOOD PARK INCLUDED IN SERVICE ANALYSIS
- CITY BOUNDARY
- SCHOOL PROPERTY

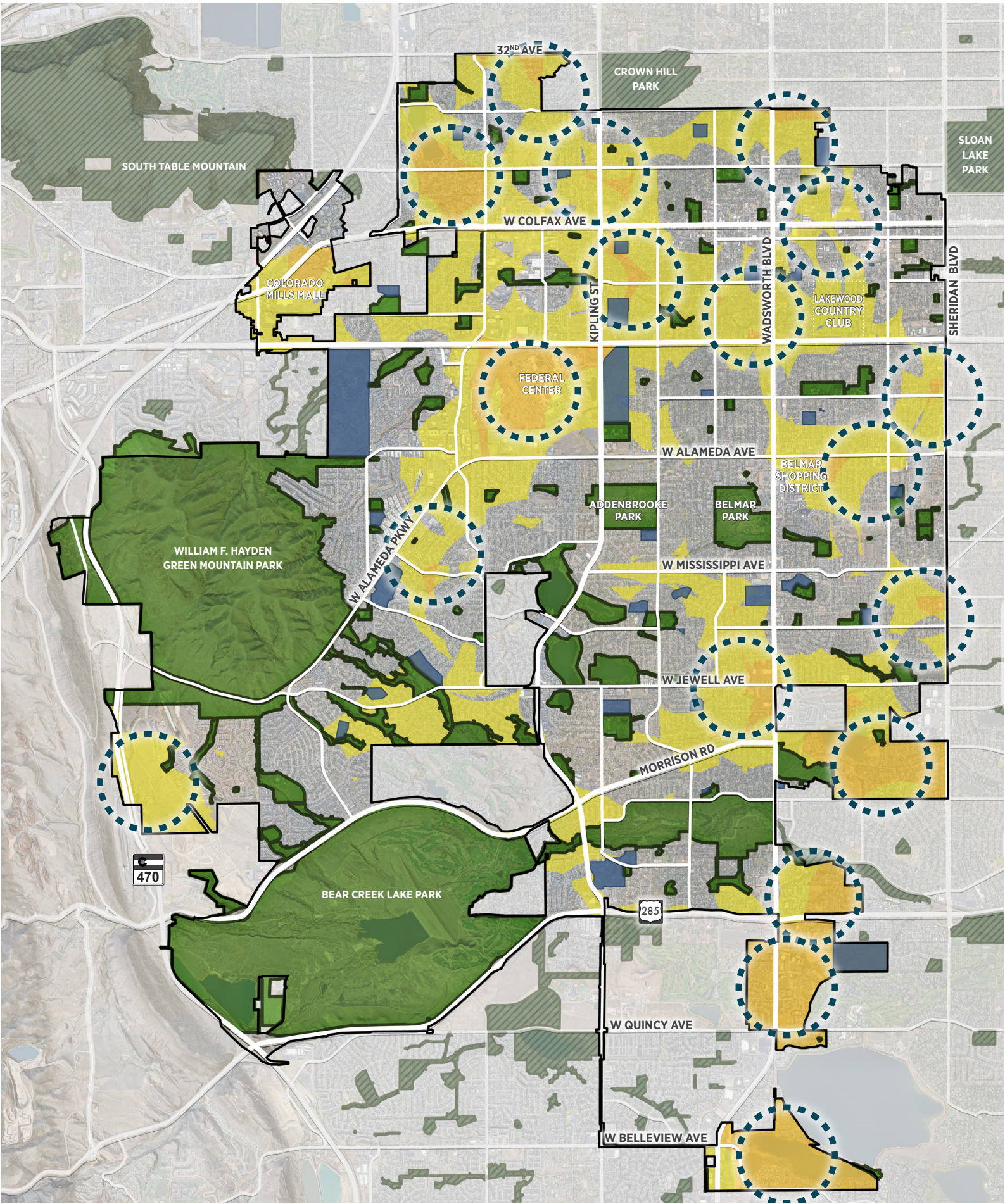




# NEW PARKS TARGET AREAS BASED ON GAPS

This map uses shading with yellow and orange, indicating lesser proximity to parks to identify general areas in which new parks are needed to meet the Imagine Tomorrow! goal to have a neighborhood park within a half-mile walk of every resident and a Community Park within a one and a half mile walk of every resident.

- ↑ GREATER PROXIMITY TO PARKS
- ↓ LESSER PROXIMITY TO PARKS
- LAKEWOOD PARK/GREENBELT/NATURAL OPEN SPACE
- NON-LAKEWOOD PARK INCLUDED IN SERVICE ANALYSIS
- CITY BOUNDARY
- SCHOOL PROPERTY



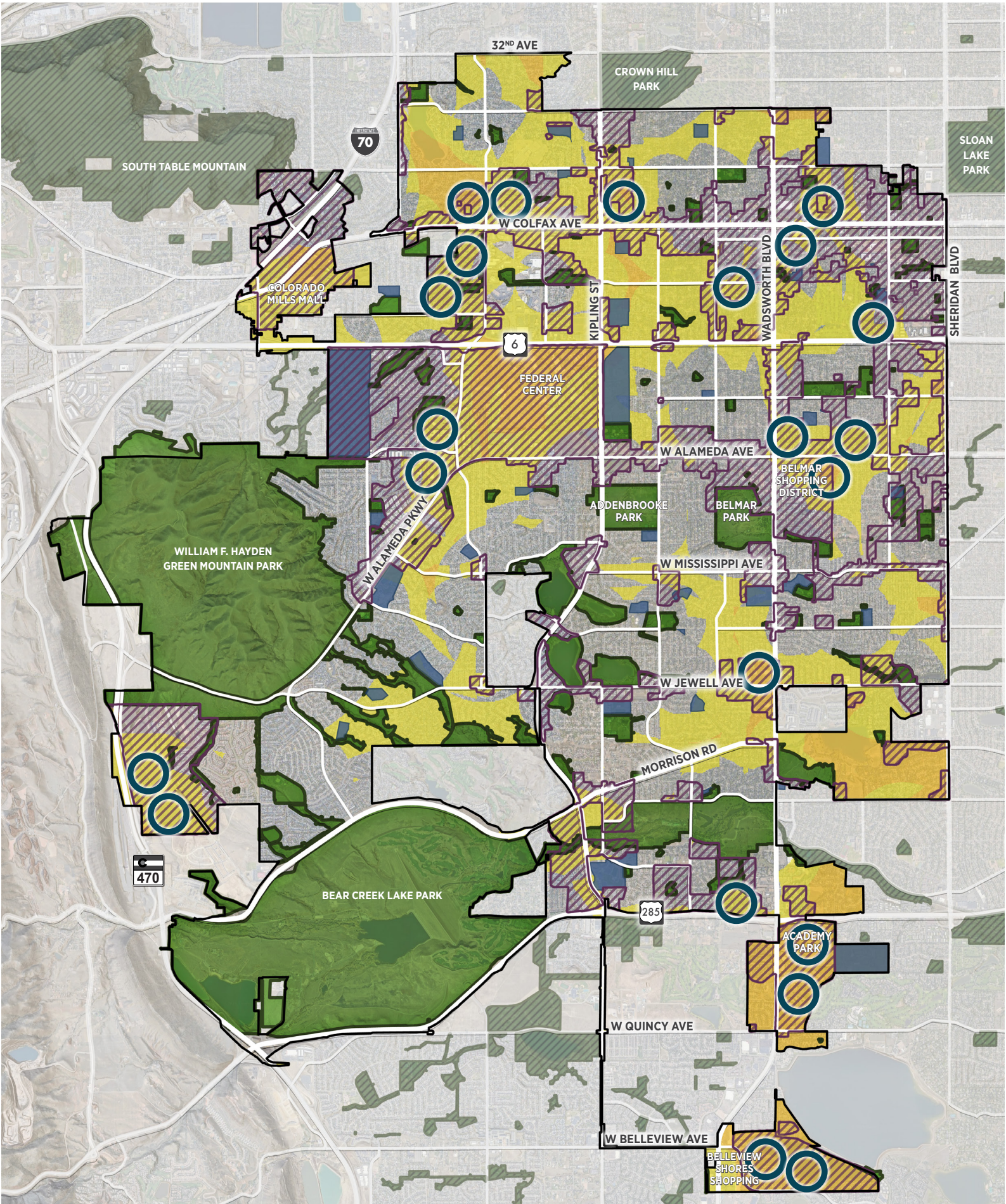


# PARK SERVICE AREA CONCENTRATION WITH INFILL ZONING AREAS

In this map, the City of Lakewood Zoning Map was referenced, identifying all land with zoning that permits higher density housing, underlaid with proximity to parks.

Zoning district identified are those that permit duplexes, townhomes, and/or multifamily buildings, which makes them more likely to redevelop. This includes all Mixed-Use zone districts, R-MF (Multifamily Residential), and R2 (Two-Family and Small Lot Residential).

In higher-intensity zoning areas where parks and trails access are satisfied, we recommend that City of Lakewood give developments the option for Alternative Park provision, as detailed in the Park Typologies section of this report.







## ALTERNATIVE PARK TYPES

In developments where a Park Improvement Fee in Lieu of land dedication is assessed, developers will have the option to pay the current fee, or install publicly accessible parks that meet city standards and are maintained by the development, HOA, owner, or management firm. This presents an opportunity to serve the residents of smaller developments and infill areas. A maintenance agreement would be recorded with the property owner and must provide a public access easement.

There has been success with this model in Lakewood and other communities and requirements for these smaller, compact parks will be clearly defined through the site plan process. Specific examples would include plazas, play spaces, dog parks, gardens, trail segments, and drainage area park improvements beyond zoning requirements for storm water and open space.



# ALTERNATIVE PARK TYPOLOGY: COMMUNITY GARDEN

Community gardens provide multiple benefits in an urban context. They serve as vibrant green spaces in the city, providing residents a respite from city life. Community gardens foster a sense of community by bringing people together to collaborate on gardening projects, strengthening social connections, building community and encouraging the exchange of different cultural practices. Community gardens promote environmental sustainability by utilizing local resources, enhancing urban biodiversity, and reducing the urban heat island effect. Community gardens offer access to fresh, locally grown produce, which can improve nutritional health and provide educational opportunities for healthy eating and sustainable practices. Community gardens beautify the urban environment but also contribute to mental well-being, offering a tranquil retreat and a tangible connection to nature for city dwellers.

Suggested amenities include raised beds, compost bins, a storage shed, community gathering space, planting areas, shade trees, and a decorative fence.





# ALTERNATIVE PARK TYPOLOGY: NATURE PLAYGROUND

A nature play area in an urban environment offers a range of significant benefits that enhance both individual well-being and the community as a whole. Nature play areas integrate natural elements including plants and natural play structures. Nature play areas promote physical health, encourage children to engage in active play, support physical development and help combat sedentary lifestyles common in urban settings.

These environments foster cognitive and emotional growth by providing diverse sensory experiences and stimulating imaginative play, which can lead to improved problem-solving skills and creativity. Nature play areas provide a retreat from urban life, providing a calming influence that can reduce stress and improve mental well-being for both children and adults. They act as valuable social hubs, where families and neighbors can connect and interact, thereby strengthening community.

Suggested amenities include a zip line, climbing tower with slide, log scramble, swing set, spinner, plentiful seating areas and shade trees.





# ALTERNATIVE PARK TYPOLOGY: DOG PARK

Dog parks offer a designated, safe space for dogs to exercise and socialize, which is crucial for their physical health and mental stimulation. Regular playtime in a dog park helps prevent obesity, reduces behavioral issues, and allows dogs to burn off excess energy in a compact urban environment.

For pet owners, the dog park serves as a valuable social hub, fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for networking and forming friendships with fellow dog enthusiasts. Dog parks provide a space where dogs can roam off-leash, which might be difficult to accommodate within a compact multi-family development. A dog park can also reduce pet-related conflicts, as it provides a dedicated location for dogs to interact and play.

To mitigate sound, natural barriers including trees or berms along the dog park perimeter can absorb and deflect noise, creating a buffer between the dog park and adjacent residences. Vegetative buffers adjacent to drainage ways protect water quality, prevent erosion, and ensure both pet and environmental safety. Access to adjacent walks and green-ways is facilitated by integrating well-maintained pathways within the park that connect to existing trails, allowing for extended exercise and exploration.

Suggested amenities include shade structures or shade sails, seating areas, decorative fencing, water fountains, shade trees and planting areas.



*Planting Buffer*

*Decorative Fence*

*Water Fountains*

*Vegetative Buffer*





# ALTERNATIVE PARK TYPOLOGY: PLAZA

Plazas and courtyards are highly pedestrian oriented spaces that are primarily paved and provide a compact park environment within higher density areas. They are centers of activity throughout the year and should be designed for year-round use. Plazas are typically located adjacent to a street, providing visibility and access from the adjacent street or walk. Courtyards may be enclosed on 3 sides by buildings, with one side visible from a street or walk, conveniently accessible for public use.

Suggested amenities include a large shade shelter with outdoor grills, varied and plentiful seating options, including seat walls and edge seating, a space for games such as corn-hole, a fire pit seating area, planting areas and shade trees.



Planting Area

Game Space



Shade Shelter

Outdoor Grill

Fire Pit  
Seating Area



# CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

A City Council Study Session was held on April 15, 2024 to review recommendations and discuss the project in more detail. At the hearing, the Community Resources department proposed an increase in the cost-per acre for fee in lieu of land dedication, from \$254,545 to \$432,727 to reflect the fair market value of park land within the City of Lakewood. Council members were supportive of increasing the fee in-lieu of Park Land Dedication immediately, with the intention to make more changes to the ordinance in the future. The fee was formally increased on June 1, 2024.

## MAJOR POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

- Council members asked if the city can legally require the development of a private pocket park instead of accepting the fee-in-lieu and if active transportation connections such as pedestrian and bicycle trails were eligible for fee in-lieu use.
  - Lakewood can encourage pocket park development through the Enhanced Development Menu and incentivize it as an economical alternative to payment of the increased fee in-lieu of land dedication.
  - Park trail development can utilize fees in-lieu of Park Land Dedication.
- City Council members appreciated the idea of compact parks and pocket parks within developments.
- Council members were concerned about the impacts of added fees on housing affordability; however, the city retains the ability to waive the fee for affordable units, with Council approval.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- City Council members resoundingly agreed that it was necessary to update the Park Land Dedication Ordinance.
- Council members wanted to ensure the City has a mechanism to acquire land or fees, as well as a way to balance parkland acquisition with strategic density to create walkable neighborhoods, and support local businesses and sales tax.
- Council Members want to update the fee in-lieu of Park Land dedication regularly, to keep up with market rates.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The project team will create a community engagement page on LakewoodTogether.org, the city's community feedback forum, to educate and inform residents on the park land dedication assessment process and gain feedback on recommendations prior to future Council hearings.

## NEXT STEPS

- Lakewood City Council will have a second study session in 2025 to discuss the recommendations and feedback

*Lakewood Civic Center in Lakewood, Colorado*





# APPENDIX

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# APPENDIX A

## PEER COMMUNITIES RESEARCH

### GOAL

Identify cities similar to Lakewood, Colorado in order to gather information related to parks and open space planning, with a focus on parks impact fees.

### CONSTRAINTS

Identify cities between 100,000 and 250,000 in population, which are urban or suburban in character, located within major metropolitan areas.

### PREFERENCES

Preference given to cities with limited number of, or unbalanced distribution of parkland and open space areas. Preference given to cities surrounded by incorporated municipalities (limited ability to expand or annex additional land) and cities which are predominantly focused on in-fill development. Preference given to cities in the west, and cities with arid or semi-arid climate conditions.

City	Population	Median Household Income	Metropolitan Area	Metropolitan Area Population
Lakewood, Colorado	156,605	\$71,233	Denver	2,970,000
Westminster, Colorado	114,561	\$76,378	Denver	2,970,000
Centennial, Colorado	106,966	\$109,767	Denver	2,970,000
West Jordan, Utah	116,541	\$84,722	Salt Lake City	1,258,000
Glendale, Arizona	249,630	\$56,991	Phoenix	4,948,000
Tempe, Arizona	184,118	\$61,290	Phoenix	4,948,000
Garland, Texas	242,035	\$63,192	Dallas-Fort Worth	7,760,000
Mesquite, Texas	147,691	\$60,715	Dallas-Fort Worth	7,760,000
Grand Prairie, Texas	197,347	\$69,171	Dallas-Fort Worth	7,760,000
Pasadena, California	135,732	\$85,129	Los Angeles	12,870,000
Torrance, California	143,600	\$94,781	Los Angeles	12,870,000
Pomona, California	148,338	\$62,407	Los Angeles	12,870,000
Palmdale, California	165,761	\$65,444	Los Angeles	12,870,000
Lancaster, California	170,150	\$58,413	Los Angeles	12,870,000
Glendale, California	192,366	\$70,596	Los Angeles	12,870,000
Santa Clara, California	127,151	\$136,870	San Jose	2,000,000
Naperville, Illinois	149,104	\$127,648	Chicago	9,459,000
Elizabeth, New Jersey	135,407	\$50,647	New York-Newark	23,600,000
Alexandria, Virginia	154,706	\$102,000	Washington D.C.	5,490,000
Hollywood, Florida	152,131	\$54,317	Miami	6,140,000

### NOTES

Research proved that large suburban municipalities in northeastern and Midwestern American metropolitan areas often included greater proportions of parkland and open space or did not meet the population range for this exercise. Four suburban municipalities located east of the Mississippi were included as a part of this exercise to add regional variety. Of these four municipalities, only Hollywood, Florida yielded promising findings, with a complex park impact fee schedule.

Initial research finds promising precedents throughout the state of California with a significant number of municipalities with similarities in development patterns and demographics, respectively. Development fees are regulated to a degree by SB330 in California from 2020 until 2025, which aims to stabilize development fees and guarantee access to housing for Californians. With a large overall population, a serious attention to protection and development of parks and open space, and the need for a diverse array of housing solutions, further research into California municipalities will likely yield a variety of solutions to the question of parks and development impact fees. Initial research has shown a variety of approaches to impact fees in spite of



# APPENDIX A

## PEER COMMUNITIES RESEARCH, CONTINUED

state regulation. Arizona state statutes govern development impact fees as well, and an Infrastructure Improvement Plan must be updated every five years by municipalities to comply with state statutes. These IIP documents can provide information for our work. Texas precedents included indicated that parks impact fees were not common if present at all; only water and wastewater impact fees were identified. Further research identified that park impact fees are illegal per Chapter 395 of Texas State Law, which limits the use of impact fees to 1) water, 2) wastewater, 3) storm water, and 4) roadway construction associated with development.

Benchmarking began with a review of twenty American cities that have comparable populations, proximity to metropolitan centers, and median household incomes. The majority of cities were west of the Mississippi, given significant differences in development patterns in older population centers in the east. After review of parks-related policy and comparison with Lakewood's challenges, policies from Santa Clara, California and Westminster, Aurora, Fort Collins, and Greeley, Colorado were identified as examples of successful implementation of recommended policies.

### WESTMINSTER, COLORADO

- 11-6-8. 4. (B) Public Land Dedication

If the City determines a (park) land dedication... would not serve the public interest, the City may require payment of a fee in lieu of the dedication, or may require dedication of a smaller amount of land than would otherwise be required and payment of a fee in lieu of the portion not dedicated. The amount of the fee shall be the fair market value of the land that would otherwise be required to be dedicated under this section. "Fair market value" shall be determined by the City as of the date that dedication would otherwise be required. The City may require an appraisal to be performed. The appraiser must be licensed by the State of Colorado. Cost for the appraisal shall be the responsibility of the developer.

- 11-6-8. 4.B. (C) Park Development Fees

1. City Policy. It is the policy of the City that all developers of any new residential development projects shall be required to provide, at the developer's expense, sufficient park improvements and recreational facilities to serve the projected population of the development.
2. Park Development Fee. Every... corporation applying for and obtaining any building permit for the original construction of any dwelling unit shall be required to pay... a park development fee, based upon the number of dwelling units to be constructed, as follows:

Single-family detached \$1,547.00/ unit

Single-family attached or mobile home \$1,256.00/ unit

Multi-family, congregate care ,or independent living senior housing \$1,031.00/ unit

Assisted living senior housing\$358.00/ bed

The above fees shall be automatically adjusted annually by April 15, in accordance with the consumer price index (CPI) as established for the Denver metropolitan area... Such fees shall be used only for the development of park and recreation facilities and services.

3. Credits.
  - a. Any... corporation required to pay a park development fee hereunder may receive credit against such fee for public park improvement work done by said developer at the developer's expense simultaneously with the construction of the dwelling units in accordance with City standards and policies.
  - b. The amount of such credit shall be determined by the City for various public park improvements, such as, but not limited to, land leveling or earth work incorporated into the park improvements; installation of automatic irrigation systems; finished grading, soil preparation and seeding or sod; plant materials; and park equipment. To qualify for such credit, all park development plans must indicate the following, including, but not limited to: a detailed cost estimate, site location and size, site design, grading, all improvements, including site amenities and landscaping, and shall be subject to the review and approval of the department... the City. Improvements



# APPENDIX A

## PEER COMMUNITIES RESEARCH, CONTINUED

must be designed and installed according to acceptable City standards and specifications. Improvements... that would be otherwise required with the development of the subdivision, or are adjacent to the public park or off-site, are generally not subject to credit toward the park development fee.

- c. The required park development fee and any credits thereto, and the timing of completion of park improvements, shall be specified on the relevant official development plan for the project. Completion of park improvements should occur in an early phase of an overall development.
- d. The City Council may authorize park development fee credits for any improvements not listed above that council finds will benefit an existing or proposed park or recreation site or facility, including off-site improvements. Such credit shall not exceed 94 percent of the total park development fees owed by the

### SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

- 17.35.040 Formula for calculation of fee in lieu of land dedication.
  - a. When a fee is required to be paid in lieu of parkland dedication, the maximum amount of such fee shall be determined by the fair market value of the amount of land that would otherwise be required to be dedicated...
  - b. Fair Market Value.
    1. The City shall determine the fair market value of the property by using the average per acre land value for property in the City of Santa Clara, based upon a survey of land values and sale records in the City. The City Council shall set a minimum of three such average values, one for each of the three existing Zip Codes in the City (95050, 95051, 95054). The City Council may, at its discretion, set average values for additional subregions of the City. The City Council shall review the fair market values not less than annually and set the values in a Council resolution.
    2. If the developer objects to this determination of fair market value, the developer may elect to have the value established by appraisal. If the developer chooses this option, the developer shall deposit with the City an amount sufficient to cover the cost of an appraisal, which the City shall conduct. The appraisal shall be completed prior to approval of the tentative or parcel map or, for developments not involving a subdivision, prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- 17.35.050 Criteria for requiring both dedication and fee.

In subdivisions of over fifty (50) parcels of land, in condominium developments of more than fifty (50) dwelling units, and in residential developments not involving a subdivision, a combination of land dedication and fee payment may be required. In any such case, the sum of the in-lieu fees and the fair market value of the land to be dedicated shall equal the amount that would otherwise be required if the developer paid only an in-lieu fee pursuant to this chapter.

  - (a) When only a portion of the land to be developed is identified in the parks, open space, and recreation goals and policies of the General Plan as the site for a local park, the portion identified in the General Plan shall be dedicated for local park purposes and a fee computed ... shall be paid for any additional land that would have been required to be dedicated...
  - (b) When a major part of the local park or recreational site has already been dedicated and only a small portion of land is needed from the subdivision to complete the site, the remaining portion shall be dedicated and a fee computed... shall be paid in an amount equal to the value of the land which would otherwise have been required to be dedicated... the fees to be used for the improvement of the existing park and recreational facility or for the improvement of other local parks and recreational facilities in the area serving the subdivision.



# APPENDIX A

## PEER COMMUNITIES RESEARCH, CONTINUED

### AURORA, COLORADO

- Aurora PROS Manual 2.4: Developer Obligations

- A. LAND DEDICATION – If a developer must dedicate land for park and/or open space purposes, the obligation is typically met in one of two ways:
  - (1) Option 1 – Dedicate land on-site within the development property.
  - (2) Option 2 – At the discretion of the City Manager, make a cash payment to PROS in lieu of dedicating land on-site.
- B. PARK DEVELOPMENT – When a developer must dedicate land for park purposes, the obligation is usually also paired with a requirement to improve the park land by constructing designated park facilities. This obligation is typically satisfied in one of two ways:
  - (1) Option 1 – Construct each respective type of park with the specified programmatic elements (i.e., facilities) on-site within the development property.
  - (2) Option 2 – Instead of constructing park facilities on-site, pay fees to the city to cover the cost for PROS to improve the park land either on-site or to build facilities elsewhere in the city to serve the future development's residents.

- Aurora PROS Manual 2.5: Partnership Scenarios

City policy allows developers to decide whether they want to assume responsibility for developing dedicated on-site park land and whether they also want to retain ownership of the parks, thereby taking on responsibilities for the long-term operation and maintenance of the land and facilities as well. With these choices, typical scenarios which describe the conventional ways developers meet their combined obligations for land dedication and park development are described below.

It should be noted that there can be hybrid versions of the scenarios. Unique circumstances of projects may warrant approval of special variations on a case-by-case basis.

- A. SCENARIOS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS:

- (1) Neighborhood Park Scenario #1 – Develop, own and maintain the park land by a non-city entity, such as a metropolitan district or homeowner's association.
- (2) Neighborhood Park Scenario #2 – Develop and dedicate the park land to the city.
- (3) Neighborhood Park Scenario #3 – Dedicate undeveloped park land to the city
- (4) Neighborhood Park Scenario #4 – Pay cash-in-lieu of on-site park land dedication and pay park development fees.

- B. SCENARIOS FOR COMMUNITY PARKS:

The partnership scenario choices for community parks are fewer because most developments are too small to warrant the provision of a full-sized community park on-site. It takes a projected population of approximately 36,400 persons to trigger a 40-acre community park land dedication requirement. For this reason, only very large developments are typically able to satisfy this portion of their park land dedication obligation on-site. Projects that have lower population impacts must adhere to the third scenario by paying cash-in-lieu of land dedication.

Developers may not retain ownership and maintenance responsibility of community parks. Instead, these parks must be dedicated to the city so that the land and facilities can be managed and programmed according to PROS' needs and schedules.

- (1) Community Park Scenario #1 – Develop and dedicate the park land to the city.
- (2) Community Park Scenario #2 – Dedicate undeveloped park land to the city and pay park development fees.
- (3) Community Park Scenario #3 – Pay cash-in-lieu of on-site park land dedication and pay park development fees.



# APPENDIX A

## PEER COMMUNITIES RESEARCH, CONTINUED

- Aurora PROS Manual 3.1 Land Dedication Requirements
  - E. QUALIFYING INFILL & TRANSIT STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT  
Development characterized as infill development and development within transit station areas may take advantage of special land dedication criteria.
  - F. INFILL & TRANSIT STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA  
Special dedication and development criteria applicable to infill development and development within transit station areas include the following:
    - (1) Land provided in conformance with small urban park (SUP) criteria shall be credited toward satisfying, in whole or in part, neighborhood park land dedication requirements.

## GREELEY, COLORADO

- Greeley Municipal Code Sec. 24-504. Neighborhood features and common areas.
  - b. Required Features and Common Areas. Neighborhood features and commons areas shall be required for all residential projects based on the number of dwelling units specified in table 24-5-10. It may include the types of spaces identified in table 24-5-11 provided they are designed and located according to the criteria in section 24-504.
  - c. Neighborhood Feature and Common Area Design. Neighborhood features and common areas may include the types of spaces identified in table 24-5-11.
- 1. Design Criteria. All neighborhood features and common space shall include enhanced landscape design to ensure a distinctive identity and amenity for the neighborhood.
  - a. Natural areas (open lands and trails) include large areas of vegetation, native or natural landscape, and undisturbed or restored topography and natural features. These areas shall be located to preserve valuable ecological resources such as riparian corridors, plant or animal habitat, or prominent landscape features.
  - b. Recreation areas (parks, trails, and recreation centers) include playgrounds, sport courts, and larger landscape areas designed for un-programmed outdoor recreation. These areas shall be located at highly-visible, central locations and important intersections of the street networks and/or trail systems.
  - c. Formal areas (greens, plazas, squares and courtyards) include hardscape, public art, seating areas, ornamental landscape, water features or other enhancements to serve as focal points and gathering places. These areas shall be located to serve as focal points for compact development patterns or higher density development serving the immediate surrounding area.
- 2. Designated Out Lots. All neighborhood features and common space shall be designated on a plat as out lots under common ownership and reserved for the limited and specified purpose of serving surrounding development with amenities. Except, multi-family projects may include the neighborhood features or common space within the required 30 percent lot open space in private ownership.
- 3. Coordination with Other Public Space. All neighborhood features and common areas shall be coordinated, to the greatest extent practical, with the larger system of parks and civic spaces required in section 24-302.

## FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

- City of Fort Collins ReCreate Parks & Recreation Master Plan  
See document linked here: <https://www.fcgov.com/parksandrecplan/>



# APPENDIX B

## PARK LAND DEDICATION OPTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Initial options & recommendations regarding park land dedication and development have been provided. A review of the Imagine Tomorrow plan, feedback from stakeholders and research from similar communities provides a framework for an implementation strategy. A more holistic approach to advancing the park system can be achieved through a combination of policy recommendations and funding mechanisms.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Eliminate park districts

Eliminate the requirement for funding to be spent within the district where funding was collected. This enables park funding to be spent where it is needed most, instead of in the district where the funding was collected.

2. Create Park Build-Out Plan

- A. Create new Access Standards. Utilize Imagine Tomorrow, Ch. 2: Needs, and Appendix B: Benchmark Analysis to inform new access standards. Identify desired park amenities and desired maximum travel time (walking or driving) to them.
- B. Create city-wide park maps identifying:
  - o Existing parks and amenities.
  - o Where primary park amenity deficiencies exist, based on defined access standards for recommended park amenities.
  - o Approximate location of new parks, according to population and access standards.
- C. Create Park Build-Out Plan
  - o Identify approximate locations for new parks based on new access standards.
  - o Adopt the map as a guiding policy document to establish legal standing for purchases of land at park-values, rather than developable prices.
  - o Identify areas in which inter-departmental collaboration and funding may be leveraged for active transportation corridors, large-scale water quality projects, and parks development and improvement.

*(Reference: Fort Collins)*

3. Adopt additional park typologies

Additional Park typologies shall meet needs according to identified access standards, such as:

- A. Schoolside Parks – Leveraging existing facilities to better serve communities outside of school hours.
- B. Urban Parks – Located in higher density areas, 1 – 3-acre Urban Parks should have a mix of planted and paved areas, providing residents access to seating areas, dog parks, playgrounds, or basketball courts.
- C. Plazas – Located in higher density areas, paved plazas may be under 1 acre, and provide outdoor event spaces, water play, and seating.
- D. Pocket or Mini Parks – Located within walking distance of residential areas, 0.5-2.5-acre Pocket Parks provide open play areas (typically turf), landscaping, seating, and playgrounds, shelters, play courts, or gardens.
- E. Trail Corridors / Enhanced Streetscapes – Located along existing or desired trail corridors, Trail Corridors/ Enhanced Streetscapes meeting minimum width, paving, and amenity requirements serve to connect existing and future residents with safe spaces for active transportation and recreation.
- F. Water Quality Facilities – Located in areas with demand for storm water/ water quality facilities, such areas may be credited toward neighborhood park requirements, provided that recreation and water quality elements are designed in an integrated manner that does not hinder the function of the facilities.

*(Reference: Fort Collins, Aurora, Greeley)*

4. Provide alternative means of satisfying park dedications and improvements.

- A. Allow applicants to privately develop and maintain public parks that are needed as identified in the Build-Out Plan according to City of Lakewood Standards. Upon completion, the park may be dedicated to the City of Lakewood.



# APPENDIX B

## PARK LAND DEDICATION OPTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

- B. Adopt a point-based menu, with minimum point requirements based on number of units, to then inform public on-site improvements that are eligible for land credit and cash-in-lieu credit toward PLD requirements.  
(Reference: Greeley, Aurora, Westminster, Santa Clara)

### FUNDING OPTIONS

Three funding options have been provided; these options provide a range from minimal to significant change from current department practices.

1. Update Dedication/Fee-in-Lieu Requirements

Update level of service (LOS) and cost per acre

- Necessary to accurately reflect impact by housing type

Options:

- A. Base residential requirements on unit size; and/or
- B. Extend requirements to nonresidential by land use and building sq. ft.

Pros: Both A & B could support affordable housing:

A by reducing fees for smaller, more affordable units; and  
B by spreading some costs to nonresidential.

Cons: Both may only be feasible for fee-in-lieu (unit size and nonresidential sq. ft. may not be known at subdivision stage).

2. Add Park Development Impact Fee

- Ensure fees do not exceed existing LOS and actual cost
- Collect at building permit when detailed information about the use is available
- Retains fee-in-lieu funds for acquiring parks/open space land
- Provides additional funding for park improvements

Options:

- A. Assess fees only on residential uses by housing type

Pros: Most common, demand/benefit nexus is intuitive, local data available

Cons: Does not address potential differential impact by unit size

- B. Assess fees only on residential uses by unit size

Pros: Somewhat less common approach, intuitive demand/benefit nexus

Cons: Must rely on national data to large extent,  
May need to vary both by housing type and unit size  
Differences by unit size may not be that significant

- C. Assess fees on nonresidential by land use and building sq. ft.

Pros: Spreads some costs to nonresidential, easing impact on housing costs

Cons: Less intuitive nexus for connecting non-residential uses and park demand.

3. Adopt Park Impact Fees for both Land and Improvements, replacing Park Land Dedications

Options: See A – C in Funding Option 2, above.

Pros: Simple system.

More flexible expenditure of funds to purchase land more aligned with local priorities than would get through dedication.

More predictable for the development community.

Cons: Like mixed dedication/impact fee, could result in higher fees (but can adopt fees at any percentage less than maximum allowable).

Lose opportunity to require dedication (but not getting much now).



# APPENDIX C

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION, APRIL 15, 2024 | STAFF MEMO

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

Staff will be presenting the progress of a study of Parkland Dedications in Lakewood and share an outline of the preliminary recommendations of the Parkland Dedication Assessment for City Council consideration.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chapter 16.14- Park and Open Space Dedication of the Lakewood Municipal Code (“LMC”) defines and codifies that residential land uses shall dedicate to the city park sites and open space areas in accordance with the provisions of this title. The last comprehensive update of this Chapter was in 2018 with the original ordinance established in 1983. Per 14.16.100, a review of this Chapter is to be completed by the City Council every five years

### CURRENT DEDICATION ORDINANCE

The City’s current Ordinance requires:

- 5.5 acres per new 1,000 residents.
- The Director of Community Resources may require payment of a fee in lieu of the dedication, or may require dedication of a smaller amount of land than would otherwise be required and payment of a fee in lieu of the portion not dedicated.
- The Director may also accept improvements of equal or greater value of the fee that would have been collected.
- Fees accepted remain within one of seven planning districts within the City and are used for park improvements in the corresponding district in which the development occurs.
- All residential development greater than 14.99 acres to dedicate land.

A few of the recognized limitations of the Ordinance include:

- Land dedication requirement has negated the feasibility of many residential infill development proposals.
  - Parkland dedications since 1983 are provided as an attachment .
- Lack of flexibility in park types that will be accepted for dedication limits the City’s ability to accept land.
  - Due to staff resource limitations, parcels of less than three acres can create maintenance challenges and are not desired for park land dedications.
- Lack of a simplified method by which land values can be regularly updated.
- Lack of flexibility in the use of funds for improvements.
  - *Current system limits where funds can be used, preventing equitable distribution of park funds to under served areas.*

Originally, an in-depth analysis of the City’s Park and Open Space Dedication Ordinance was included in the scope of the Imagine Tomorrow! Master Plan that was adopted in April 2023. It became clear during the Imagine Tomorrow! planning effort that a study focused on park and open space dedication and impact fees was necessary to appropriately examine and make recommendations for improvements to the City’s requirements. As an infill community, the City of Lakewood faces an unusual challenge, with virtually no room to expand typical suburban neighborhood development. This is contrary to other comparable metro area communities that are suburban in nature, with room to expand and build new parks.

It is imperative to understand that dedication requirements, such as the City’s current Park and Open Space Dedication Ordinance, are enacted to ensure that new residents coming into a community will be served by an appropriate amount of parkland. In a suburban community, with growth opportunities, the City’s current Ordinance would work adequately. However, with very limited expansion potential within the City, and the need for housing development, it’s critical to carefully assess the impacts of the current Ordinance and to identify areas for improvement.



# APPENDIX C

## STUDY SESSION STAFF MEMO, CONTINUED

Over the course of the last five years, in most development cases, a fee in lieu has been accepted as opposed to receiving additional dedicated parkland. These fees have been used to make necessary improvements to existing parks in the areas where corresponding development has occurred. Attached to this memorandum, you will find a list of parkland fees that have been collected over the last five years and how those funds have been used in the City's seven planning districts. It's also important to recognize that City staff regularly identify areas within the City where park and open space is lacking. Two recent studies, the Strategic Acquisition Plan in 2019 and the Imagine Tomorrow! Master Plan process in 2023, both identified areas in the north and east part of the City that lack an appropriate amount of parkland from an equity and accessibility lens. As more residential development has occurred in the northern parts of the city, the opportunities to add parkland to the degree desired has not been possible due to the lack of land availability. There are also smaller pockets of under served areas in other parts of the city.

The City issued a Request for Proposals in June of 2023 and ultimately hired Norris Design and Duncan and Associates to complete a detailed assessment of both the existing Park and Open Space Dedication Ordinance, and a study of impact fees in the City. This assessment's emphasis was to re-imagine park and open space dedications in an infill community and study other communities across the nation. The consultant considered opportunities to maximize parks and open space, especially in those areas recognized as under served, while also carefully weighing and minimizing impacts on affordable housing development. Most importantly, the scope of the project included developing a transparent means of identifying the City's park and open space needs and creating a process that's easy to understand, implement, and update.

The assessment has occurred over the last six months and began with two stakeholder meetings. The first meeting took place on November 5, 2023, with members of the development community, a member of the Lakewood Advisory Commission, and City staff representing Community Resources, Engineering and Planning. The second stakeholder meeting was a listening session held on November 16, 2023 with engaged neighborhood residents and a member of the Imagine Tomorrow! Master Plan Advisory Committee.

The consultant considered four important questions:

- Should the City update the existing park and open space dedication requirements?
- Should the City expand dedication requirements to non-residential development? *For example, what is the impact of new office workers on park and open space use?*
- Should the City develop a park impact fee and allow for a credit towards the fee when park and open space is dedicated? *A park impact fee is typically a one-time payment imposed by a local government on a property developer. The fee is meant to offset the financial impact a new development places on park infrastructure.*
- How can the city provide additional park and recreation opportunities in areas of the city that have very limited land availability, including small parcels, and areas where residents are under served?

## PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Retain Parkland Dedication in Lakewood:

Retain Parkland Dedication to allow for continued land dedication where it is feasible. Building upon Imagine Tomorrow! Equity mapping and the Strategic Acquisition Plan, identify zones of the city desired for park expansion and/or the development of new parks and trails, and require land dedication with development in these locations.



# APPENDIX C

## STUDY SESSION STAFF MEMO, CONTINUED

### 2. Update Park Improvement Fee in Lieu of Land Dedication:

If staff determines that parkland dedication is not suitable, the development will instead be assessed a Park Improvement Fee in Lieu of land dedication. The determination will be made by staff applying the equity mapping tools and zones of need that will also be publicly available to residents and the development community.

- a. The project team has determined the fair market value of land to satisfy the parkland dedication requirements is approximately \$432,727 per acre in 2024. 3. This fee is nearly double the existing fee in lieu, making land dedication or alternative park provisions more attractive to the development community. This fee will be updated annually, to reflect market fluctuations using recent appraisals. If substantial appraisal data is not available, Assessor's data, American Housing Data, and other local property valuation tools will be employed.

	Existing	Updated
Cost per Acre	\$254,545.00	\$432,727.00
x 5.5 Acres per 1,000 people	\$1,399,997.50	\$2,379,998.50

Housing Type	People per Unit	Acres per Unit	Fee in Lieu per Unit
Single-Family	2.53	0.0139	\$5,855
Multi-Family	1.71	0.0094	\$4,070
Senior Housing	1.26	0.0069	\$2,951

- b. The existing affordable housing provision will remain. In those instances where the Director elects to require a Park Improvement Fee in Lieu of land dedication, the Director may waive all or a portion of the fee for individual housing units set aside for households earning no more than (80%) of the area median income (AMI) through recorded deed restriction for a minimum period of twenty (20) years. The one modification to the existing provision is the Director would no longer obtain Council approval to waive the fee. The goal of this recommendation is to encourage and expedite new affordable housing units in Lakewood.

### 3. Update the Projected Population per Unit:

Update the projected population per unit requirements as listed below to align with current Census and American Household Survey data. Note, the increase in population per unit for single family attached and multi-family development, common in Lakewood.

### 4. Provide Alternative Park Types:

In developments where a Park Improvement Fee in Lieu of land dedication is assessed, developers will have the option to pay the significantly higher fee, or install publicly accessible parks that meet city standards and are maintained by the development, HOA, owner, or management firm. This presents an opportunity to serve the residents of smaller developments and infill areas. A maintenance agreement would be recorded with the property owner and must provide a public access easement. There has been success with this model in other communities and requirements for these smaller, compact parks will be clearly defined through the site plan process. Specific examples would include plazas, play spaces, dog parks, gardens, trail segments, and drainage area park improvements beyond the zoning requirements for storm water and open space.



# APPENDIX C

## STUDY SESSION STAFF MEMO, CONTINUED

### DISMISSED CONSIDERATIONS

#### **Impact Fees:**

Following the information gathering process, the project team determined the City would like to retain parkland dedication and add an impact fee. Upon further study, it was determined that should the city have both parkland dedication and impact fees, it would be legally and logistically difficult to exact land and charge an impact fee. The team explored offering a credit of land dedication towards impact fees, but that is not an option with legal precedent; given that impact fees are common in cities where land dedication is not a priority. While impact fees could support Lakewood's funding gap for necessary park improvements, the team did not want to overburden development with fees, discouraging much-needed housing development.

#### **Non-residential Parkland Dedication:**

Non-residential parkland dedication was also studied. An example of non-residential dedication would be requiring land dedication for commercial development such as an office building or restaurant. Exactions are legally problematic; it is tricky to clearly define a rational nexus to the impact of the commercial development. For example, would the land dedication requirement be assessed on the number of employees, number of customers, proximity to a park, etc.? It is difficult to prove the park need resulting from commercial development.

As a result, the project team is recommending a simplified approach to Parkland Dedication including a revised Park Improvement Fee in Lieu of Land Dedication, with the important addition of alternative park provision options.

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:** Budgetary impacts include more parkland to maintain, although there would also be an increase in available funds to make improvements. Parkland Dedication and Improvement Fees in Lieu are dependent upon future development in the city.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Department of Community Resources is seeking Council direction on the recommendations provided.

**ALTERNATIVES:** City Council could choose not to approve the recommended updates to Ordinance O-2024-XX, provide alternatives, and/or delay the set hearings in June.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH:** Notification has been made through the City Council agenda process. In addition, the project page, [LakewoodTogether.org/Park Dedication](https://LakewoodTogether.org/ParkDedication), will be released to the public following this study session to provide education and seek community input on the recommendations presented.



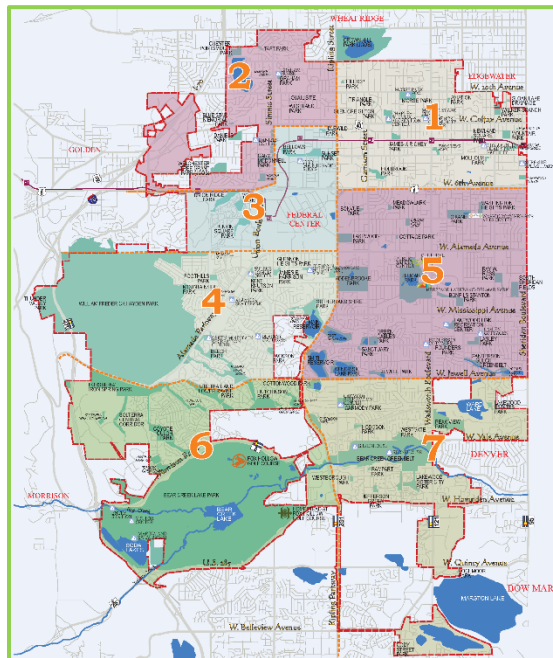
# APPENDIX D

## PARK LAND DEDICATION, FEE-IN-LIEU, & IMPACT FEE EVALUATION

DUNCAN | ASSOCIATES



# Park Land Dedication, Fee-in-Lieu, and Impact Fee Evaluation



**Lakewood, Colorado**

**duncan** | associates

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**prepared by**  
**Duncan Associates**

Clancy Mullen, Project Manager  
17409 Rush Pea Circle, Austin, TX 78738  
(512) 423-0480  
clancy@duncanassociates.com



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates the City of Lakewood's park land dedication requirements, fee in lieu of dedication, and a potential park impact fee. It includes the calculation of updated persons per unit by housing type, as well as by the size of the dwelling unit. It is comprised of separate chapters on the legal framework, park benefit districts, service units (persons per unit), dedication standard, fee in lieu of dedication, and park impact fee. At the end of the report are appendices with detailed calculations on existing housing units and persons per unit, as well as relevant state statutes and the City's current park land dedication ordinance. In an attempt to make the calculations easier to follow, numbers in a table that are inputs into another table are highlighted in red.

### Background

The City originally adopted its Park and Open Space Dedication ordinance in 1983, and it was most recently amended in 2018. The original ordinance established the current standard of 5.5 acres per 1,000 population. It was applicable to all residential units, regardless of housing type, and the dedication requirement was calculated at 2.5 persons per unit (the city-wide average at the time). It allowed fees in lieu of dedication (if approved by staff) based on the value of the property to be subdivided, up to a maximum of \$700 per unit. By 1990, land values made the cap lower than property values, and it became unnecessary to determine fees-in-lieu based on the value of the property.

Amendments to the ordinance in 2018 specified persons per unit by housing type and removed the cap on fees-in-lieu. At the same time, staff instituted a policy of calculating fees-in-lieu based on a city-wide average cost per acre of \$254,545. The average cost per acre was updated to \$432,727 in 2024, which increased the fee-in-lieu per person by 70% (see Table 7).

### Evaluation Findings

Some key findings from this evaluation are summarized below.

Updated persons per unit are lower for single-family detached and higher for multi-family than the density factors in the current ordinance (see Table 2 and preceding definitions of housing types).

The current city-wide park dedication standard is so far below the existing level of service that the City would not need to acquire any additional park land in order to continue to meet it over the next 75 years at the current rate of growth (see Table 5).

No new subdivisions have been required to dedicate park land since at least 2018 because recent subdivisions have been too small for dedication to be practical.

Fees-in-lieu have been spent exclusively on park improvements rather than land acquisition since at least 2018. As a practical matter, the City's fees-in-lieu function much like park impact fees. Compared to park impact fees assessed by eight other Colorado cities, Lakewood's current fees-in-lieu are about average (see Table 19).



The City has acquired some additional park land in recent years, but has used general funds rather than fees-in-lieu. This may be due to several factors, including the restriction on spending fees-in-lieu within the district in which they were collected, and the lack of available vacant land and high land prices in areas where most growth is occurring.

Park benefit districts do not appear to be necessary to establish the nexus between the need created by new development and the benefit received from the developer's contribution. The proximity to a new park or park improvement is not the main determinant of the nexus. The general benefit to the development is to be able to enjoy the community-wide level of service without it being degraded by future new developments (see Benefit Districts chapter).

Potential fees by unit size should take into account differences by housing type (see Table 13).

A park improvement impact fee would increase revenue by 28% compared to updated fees-in-lieu (see Table 14).

### Summary of Options

Options evaluated in this report include the following.

Assessment basis. The dedication requirements must continue to be based on housing type, because information on unit size is generally not available at time of subdivision.

Dedication requirements by housing type could break out townhomes from other multi-family for greater accuracy.

Fees-in-lieu or park impact fees could be assessed at the building permit stage based on the size of the dwelling unit, or based on a combination of housing type and unit size for greater accuracy.

Impact fees. The current dedication requirements and fees-in-lieu already function much like impact fees, and differ mainly by not including improvement costs.

A park impact fee designed to cover only improvement costs would raise more revenue to fund park improvements.

A park impact fee designed to cover both land and improvement costs would be more internally consistent than spending fees in lieu of land dedication on improvements. Credit against the park impact fee would be provided in the rare occasion when it would be practical to require land dedication.

Benefit districts. The current seven park districts could be consolidated or redrawn to reduce the number of districts, or they could be eliminated entirely. Fewer park districts would increase flexibility in spending fee revenue, allowing the City to make improvements in anticipation of future needs and promoting city-wide equity in the distribution of park land and amenities.



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## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Park land dedication requirements, including fees in lieu of dedication or park impact fees are ways for local governments to require new developments to pay a proportionate share of the capital costs required to accommodate the impacts they impose on the community. In contrast to “negotiated” developer exactions, these requirements or fees are assessed on new development using a standard formula based on objective characteristics, such as the number and type of dwelling units constructed. Dedications are required when land is subdivided, while fees are typically paid at building permit.

Legal authority for such requirements generally derives from local governments’ broad “police power” to regulate land development in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community. The courts have developed guidelines for constitutionally-valid developer exactions, based on “reasonable relationship” or “rational nexus” standards. These standards essentially require that dedications or fees must be proportional to the need for additional infrastructure created by the new development, and the fees must be spent to provide that same type of infrastructure to benefit the new development.

### State Statutes

Prior to 2001, the authority of local governments in Colorado to impose impact fees and other legislative development exactions was not entirely clear. This uncertainty was removed with the passage of SB 15 by the Legislature and its signature by the governor on November 16, 2001. Among other things, this bill created a new Section 104.5: Impact Fees, in Article 20 of Title 29, Colorado Revised Statutes. The current text of the statute is provided in Appendix D. Key provisions include the following.

Section 29-20-104.5(1) requires that an impact fees or similar development charge is based on a schedule of fees that is legislatively adopted, applies to development generally, as opposed to an individual development project, and only covers the cost of capital improvements needed to serve new development:

*Pursuant to the authority granted in section 29-20-104 (1) (g) and as a condition of issuance of a development permit, a local government may impose an impact fee or other similar development charge to fund expenditures by such local government ... on capital facilities needed to serve new development. No impact fee or other similar development charge shall be imposed except pursuant to a schedule that is:*

- (a) legislatively adopted;*
- (b) generally applicable to a broad class of property; and*
- (c) intended to defray the project impacts on capital facilities caused by proposed development.*

Section 29-20-104.5(2) requires the preparation of a report that quantifies the cost attributable to new development and ensures that new development is not charged for the cost to remedy existing deficiencies:



*A local government shall quantify the reasonable impacts of proposed development on existing capital facilities and establish the impact fee or development charge at a level no greater than necessary to defray such impacts directly related to proposed development. No impact fee or other similar development charge shall be imposed to remedy any deficiency in capital facilities that exists without regard to the proposed development.*

Section 29-20-104.5(3) provides that credit against impact fees must be given for required developer contributions of land or improvements for the same facilities for which the impact fees are charged:

*Any schedule of impact fees or other similar development charges adopted by a local government pursuant to this section shall include provisions to ensure that no individual landowner is required to provide any site specific dedication or improvement to meet the same need for capital facilities for which the impact fee or other similar development charge is imposed.*

Impact fees may be imposed for a broad range of facilities. Section 29-20-104.5(4) provides that impact fees can be imposed to “defray the projected impacts on capital facilities caused by proposed development.” It defines “capital facility” to mean any improvement or facility that:

- (a) is directly related to any service that a local government is authorized to provide;*
- (b) has an estimated useful life of five years or longer; and*
- (c) is required by the charter or general policy of a local government pursuant to a resolution or ordinance.*

Section 29-20-104.5(5) requires that impact fees collected must be earmarked and spent for the same types of improvements for which they were collected, and also authorizes waivers for affordable housing:

*Any impact fee or other similar development charge shall be collected and accounted for in accordance with part 8 of Article 1 of this title. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a local government may waive an impact fee or other similar development charge on the development of low- or moderate-income housing or affordable employee housing as defined by the local government.*

Section 29-1-803(1) requires separate accounting for each type of fee, and requires that interest earned on each account be retained in that account:

*All moneys from land development charges collected, including any such moneys collected but not expended prior to January 1, 1991, shall be deposited or, if collected for another local government, transmitted for deposit, in an interest-bearing account which clearly identifies the category, account, or fund of capital expenditure for which such charge was imposed. Each such category, account, or fund shall be accounted for separately. The determination as to whether the accounting requirement shall be by category, account, or fund and by aggregate or individual land development shall be within the discretion of the local government. Any interest or other income earned on moneys deposited in said interest-bearing account shall be credited to the account. At least once annually, the local government shall publish on its official website, if any, in a clear, concise, and user-friendly format information detailing the allocation by dollar amount of each land development charge collected to an account or among accounts, the average annual interest rate on each account, and the total amount disbursed from each account, during the local government’s most recent fiscal year.*



## Constitutional Requirements

While State law provides a broad grant of authority, impact fees must also comply with constitutional standards that have been developed by the courts to ensure that local governments do not abuse their power to regulate the development of land. The courts have gradually developed guidelines for constitutionally-valid developer exactions or impact fees or similar charges, based on a “reasonable relationship” or “rational nexus” that must exist between the regulatory fee or exaction and the activity that is being regulated. The standards set by court cases generally conform with certain principles.

A fundamental principle is that the fee or exaction should not assess new development for a higher level of service than is provided to existing development. This principle is reflected in the Colorado impact fee statute’s prohibition against using impact fee funds to remedy existing deficiencies (Section 29-20-104.5(2)).

Another guiding principle is that the fee or exaction should be proportional to the impact of a development on the type of public facility for which the fee or exaction is assessed. The fees do not have to recover the full cost, but if the fees are reduced by a percentage from the full cost, the percentage reduction should apply evenly to all types of developments. This principle is echoed in the requirements in the Colorado act that impact fees be “intended to defray the projected impacts on capital facilities caused by proposed development” and “be generally applicable to a broad class of property.”

In addition, the land dedicated or fees collected should be used or spent to expand the capacity of the system of facilities that they were designed to improve so that new developments can enjoy the same level of service as existing development. Land dedicated for parks should be used for that purpose, and fees collected should not be spent for other purposes, nor for the maintenance, repair, renovation, or replacement of existing park facilities. The Colorado act requires impact fees or similar payments to be accounted for in separate funds and spent for such purposes. An additional method of ensuring benefit would be to require that the fees be refunded if they have not been used within a reasonable period of time.

New development should not have to pay twice for the same level of service. The fees should be reduced by a credit that accounts for the contribution of new development toward remedying existing deficiencies. A similar situation arises when the capital facilities providing the existing level of service has not been fully paid for. Outstanding debt on existing facilities that are counted in the existing level of service will be retired, in part, by revenues generated from new development. To avoid requiring new development to pay more than its proportional share, fees in lieu of dedication or improvement fees should be reduced to account for future tax payments that will retire outstanding debt on existing facilities.

Finally, new development should receive reimbursement or credit against the fees for developer contributions or monetary payments related to the dedication requirements or capital improvements for which land dedication requirements or improvement fees are based. Credit is not required for discretionary local funding or grant funding that may be used to help pay for growth-related, capacity-expanding improvements. While new development may contribute toward such funding, so does existing development, and both existing and new development benefit from the higher level of service that the additional funding makes possible.



## BENEFIT DISTRICTS

This chapter discusses service areas and benefit districts. A service area is a geographic area where a set of facilities provides service, and is the spatial level at which park land dedication requirements and park improvement fees are calculated. A benefit district is a subarea of a service area in which the fees in lieu of dedication or park impact fees collected are earmarked to be spent.

### Service Areas

The City's current park land dedication standard of 5.5 acres per 1,000 population applies city-wide. Most jurisdictions in Colorado and nationally also use a jurisdiction-wide service area unless they contain geographically-isolated or unique subareas. This is true both for park land dedication requirements and park impact fees.

### Benefit Districts

The purpose of dividing a service area into multiple benefit districts is generally to provide a stronger connection between where the fees are generated and where the land is purchased or improvements are made. However, the connection, or nexus, between the need created by new development and the benefit provided by the expenditure of the fees should really be met at the service area level. Close proximity to an improvement funded by the fee that is paid is not required to establish the nexus. Parks and recreation facilities are open to all, comprising a set of amenities shared by the entire community. New development creates the need to expand the set of improvements in order to prevent a reduction in the level of service. The primary benefit new development receives in return is that the shared level of service it enjoys is able to be maintained over time. A benefit district structure is really a supplemental, rather than an essential, mechanism for establishing the nexus. The City could reasonably consider reducing the number of benefit districts, or eliminating them entirely.

The City is currently divided into seven benefit districts for the expenditure of fees paid in lieu of land dedication. These are illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page. Fee-in-lieu revenues and expenditures over the last four years, broken down by benefit district, are summarized in Table 1. Growth has been occurring primarily in Districts 1-3, which straddle the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) west rail line and its seven park-and-ride stations within the city.

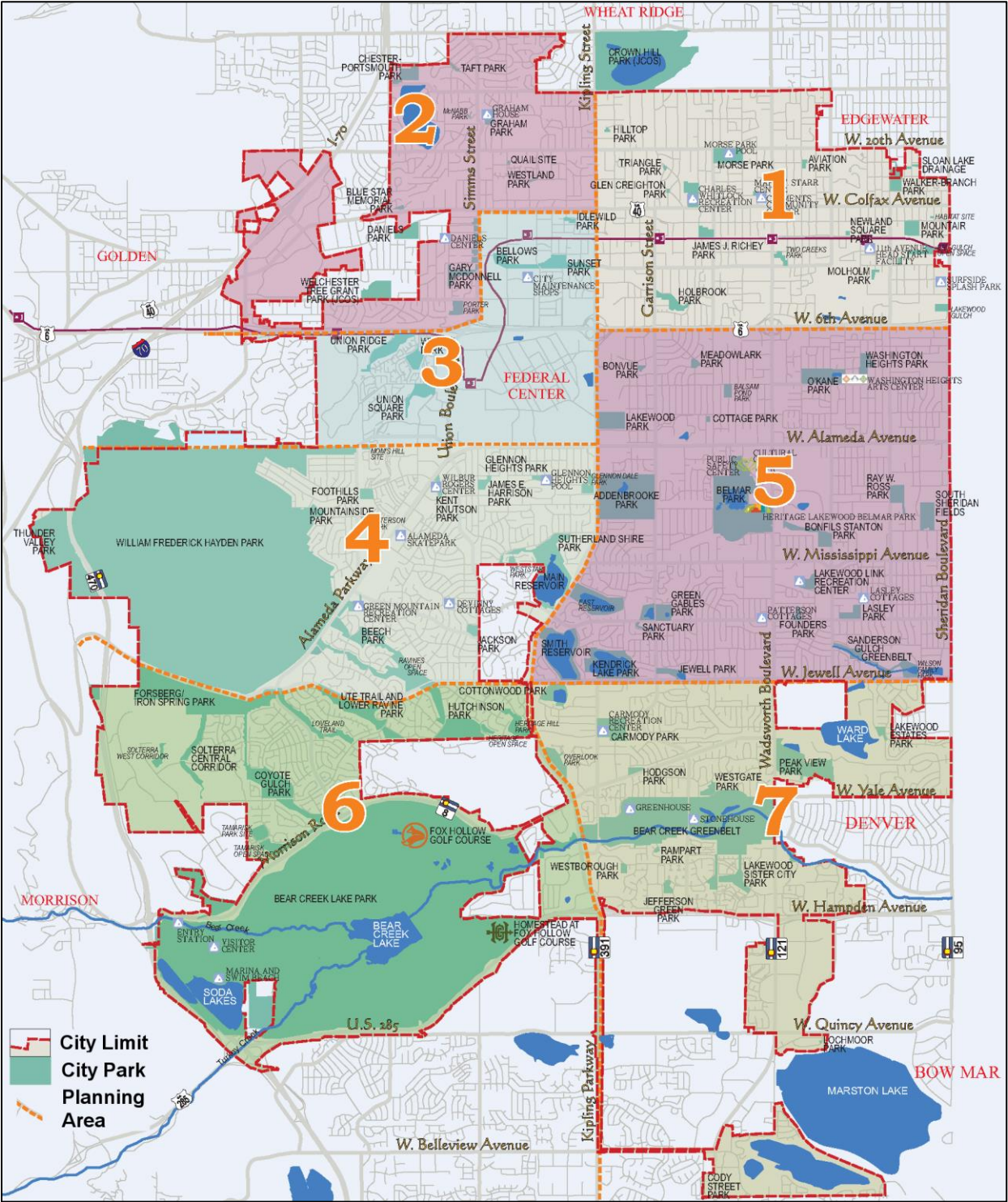
**Table 1. Fee-in-Lieu Revenues and Expenditures, 2019-2022**

Park District	2019 Begin. Balance	2019 -2022 Calendar Years		2022 End Balance
		Expenditures	Revenues	
District 1	\$571,690	\$2,611,462	\$2,587,300	\$547,527
District 2	\$226,800	\$277,411	\$924,600	\$873,989
District 3	\$204,400	\$83,135	\$1,251,200	\$1,372,465
District 4	\$0	\$30,800	\$30,800	\$0
District 5	\$0	\$489,300	\$489,300	\$0
District 6	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
District 7	\$0	\$173,155	\$173,155	\$0
Total	\$1,002,890	\$3,665,263	\$5,456,355	\$2,793,981

Source: City of Lakewood Community Resources, September 5, 2023.



Figure 1. Park Benefit Districts





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## PARK SERVICE UNITS

A service unit is a common measure of the demand for land and facilities applicable to different types of development. The most commonly-used service unit for park land dedication and impact fee analysis is population. This is the service unit for the City's current park land dedication requirements. The population living in the city largely determines the demand for park land and facilities.

Definitions of Terms. First, some definitions are in order. In park dedication requirement and impact fee analysis, population is generally defined as people living in dwelling units. This excludes people occupying rooms in institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, dormitories, boarding houses, and correctional facilities. Such persons are referred to by the Census Bureau as group quarters population, and they are included in counts of total population. The city has very few group quarter residents, who account for less than 2% of Lakewood's total population. The term household population is used to refer to persons residing in dwelling units. A household is one or more persons living together in an occupied dwelling unit. Household population is the service unit used in this analysis, though it is often referred to herein as population, persons, or residents for brevity.

The average number of people residing in different types of housing units can be expressed in two ways – “persons per unit” or “average household size.” Persons per unit is the ratio of residents to total units, while average household size is the ratio of residents to occupied units. Average household size is often used by tourist-oriented communities where parks need to be designed to serve peak season population. Lakewood does not fit this characterization, since it has 95% year-round occupancy. Persons per unit is primarily used in this analysis, as it accounts for the fact that some dwelling units are unoccupied at all times. However, this study also includes data on average household size in order to estimate persons per unit for senior housing. When referring to both measures, it uses the term “occupancies.”

Chapter Overview. The key issue addressed in this chapter is the average number of persons per unit that can be expected to reside in a dwelling unit. The City's current park dedication and fees-in-lieu requirements distinguish between three housing types. This study analyzes the distinction by housing type, and also explores the possibility of replacing the distinction by housing type with one based strictly on unit size, or alternatively a combination of housing type and unit size. Persons by housing type exclusively is addressed first.

### Persons per Unit by Housing Type

The City's current park dedication and fee-in-lieu requirements distinguish between three housing types: single-family detached, multi-family (including townhome, also known as single-family attached), and senior housing. While these categories are not unreasonable, it seems worthwhile to consider whether townhomes should be a separate category or would be more appropriately included with single-family detached. The analysis shows that townhomes fall between single-family detached and multi-family, with persons per unit lower than single-family detached and higher than multi-family. This analysis recommends splitting townhomes out separately from multi-family.



Definitions for the housing types used in this study are provided below.

**Single-Family Detached** means a building containing only one dwelling unit, excluding a mobile home.

**Townhome** means two or more attached units separated by a shared wall extending from the ground through the roof. This category also includes duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, and is sometimes referred to as single-family attached.

**Multi-Family** means a building containing five or more dwelling units, excluding townhomes. It includes apartments, residential condominiums, and timeshares.

**Senior Multi-Family Housing** means a multi-family building that is deed-restricted for occupancy by persons aged 55 or older. It is also referred to as senior housing.

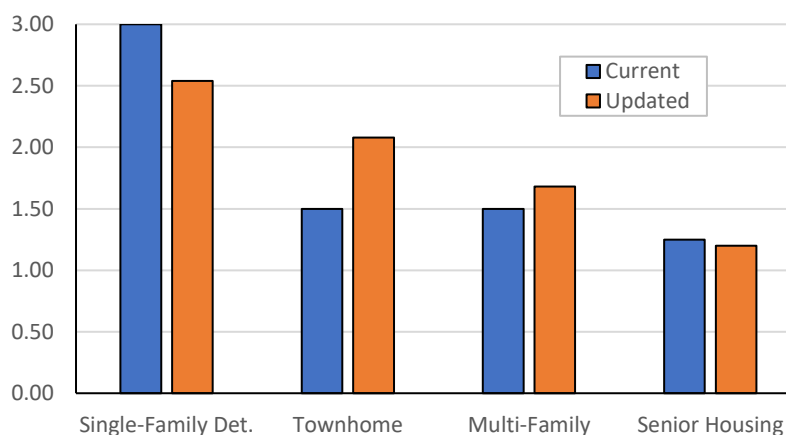
The calculations of updated persons per unit are described in Appendix A. The updated persons per unit by housing type are compared to the occupancies set out in Lakewood's ordinance in Table 2, and are illustrated in Figure 2. It is not clear whether the ordinance occupancies are persons per unit or average household size, so this may not be an apples-to-apples comparison. The consultant recommends amending the ordinance based on the most recent data to put the dedication requirements on a sounder legal basis.

**Table 2. Current and Updated Persons per Unit**

	Current	Updated	Change
Single-Family Detached	3.00	2.54	-15.3%
Townhome	1.50	2.08	38.7%
Multi-Family	1.50	1.68	12.0%
Senior Housing	1.25	1.20	-4.0%

Source: Current persons per unit from section 14.16.040 of Lakewood Code of Ordinances; updated persons per unit from Table 26 in Appendix A.

**Figure 2. Current and Updated Persons per Unit**





## Persons per Unit by Unit Size

Data on persons per unit by dwelling unit size is not available at the local level from census data. It is only available at the national level from the American Housing Survey. Unit size is expressed in square feet of heated living area, and is available in nine categories, ranging from less than 500 square feet to 4,000 square feet or more. The national data is adjusted to estimate Lakewood occupancy by housing type.

This section also considers the possibility of determining persons per unit strictly by the size of the unit, irrespective of housing type. After all, the differences between averages for all units by housing type is determined by the distribution of units by size, and might disappear when viewed by unit size. The calculations of persons per unit by unit size for Lakewood are described in Appendix B. They are summarized in Table 3. Note that senior housing is not actually a separate housing type, but rather a subset of multi-family units that are age-restricted.

**Table 3. Persons per Unit by Housing Type and Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Single- Family Det.	Town- Home	Multi- Family	Senior Housing
Less than 750 sq. ft.	1.90	1.65	1.37	1.06
750-999 sq. ft.	1.90	1.97	1.71	1.22
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	2.28	2.20	1.98	1.36
1,500-1,999 sq. ft.	2.51	2.29	1.98	1.36
2,000-2,499 sq. ft.	2.69	2.29	1.98	1.36
2,500-2,999 sq. ft.	2.81	2.29	1.98	1.36
3,000 sq. ft. or more	2.99	2.29	1.98	1.36
Average	2.54	2.08	1.68	1.20

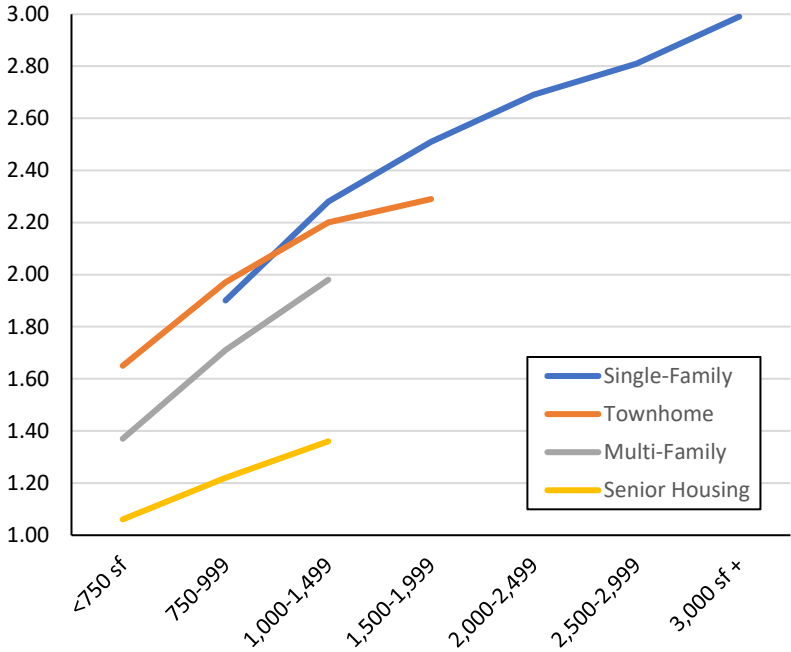
Source: Table 28 (single-family detached); Table 30 (townhome); Table 32 (multi-family); and Table 34 (senior housing) in Appendix B.

Clearly, the differences in persons per unit by housing type do not disappear when controlling for unit size. Most notably, persons per unit for single-family detached units above 1,000 square feet increase steadily as unit size increases, while townhome and multi-family units show no significant or consistent increase in persons per unit for units larger than 1,500 or 1,000 square feet, respectively. This suggests that an alternative approach that considers the size of the unit should be differentiated by housing type for greater accuracy.

The persons per unit by housing type and unit size are illustrated in Figure 3 on the following page.



Figure 3. Persons per Unit by Housing Type and Size





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## PARK LAND DEDICATION

The City's current dedication requirement consists of two components: the park land standard (acres per 1,000 population) and density factors (persons per unit by housing type).

### Park Land Standard

The City originally adopted its Park and Open Space Dedication ordinance in 1983, and it was most recently amended in 2018. It is codified as Chapter 14.16 of Title 14 - Buildings and Construction. The ordinance adopts the following park land standards: 2.5 acres of neighborhood parks, 3 acres of community parks, and 5 acres of regional parks. However, the ordinance states that the City has determined that there is already sufficient regional park land to serve new development, and adopts the operating standard for the purpose of the dedication requirement of 5.5 acres of neighborhood or community park land per 1,000 persons expected to be generated by the development.

The City classifies its parks into one of the following types: neighborhood, community, open space, and regional. The ordinance is titled "Park and Open Space Dedication," but the status of open space is somewhat unclear. It allows dedication of open space to meet the dedication requirements, with some exceptions, including private open space required by the zoning code, land used to fulfill storm drainage requirements, and rights-of-way or easements. However, open space is not specifically called out in the standards themselves.

While dedication requirements themselves do not appear to be specifically addressed in state statutes, fees in lieu of dedication are included in statutes relating to impact fees and other similar development charges, which set out requirements for legislatively-adopted standards that apply to a "broad class of property" and are "intended to defray the projected impacts on capital facilities caused by proposed development."

As noted in the Legal Framework section of this report, a fundamental principle of development exaction case law is that the fee or exaction should not assess new development for a higher level of service than is provided to existing development. This principle is reflected in the Colorado impact fee statute's prohibition against using impact fee funds to remedy existing deficiencies. Consequently, it is important to establish that the dedication standards do not exceed the existing level of service.

The existing level of service is calculated as the ratio of the existing acres of neighborhood and community park land and open space owned by the City to the total population of the city. The question related to population involves the distinction between total population and household population (which excludes residents not residing in dwelling units, such as nursing homes, dormitories, or homeless encampments). Estimates of total population are more readily available, but tend to under-estimate the level of service compared to household population, which is more directly related to the dwelling units that are subject to the dedication requirements.



Estimated existing park land levels of service by park type are compared to the current park land standard in Table 4. The table shows existing City-owned park land by park type, a recent total population estimate, standards for acres per 1,000 residents from the ordinance, and the existing level of service.

**Table 4. Existing Park Land Level of Service**

Park Type	Total Acres	Population (thousands)	Acres/1,000 Population	
			Ordinance	Existing
Neighborhood	441.00	155.961	2.50	2.83
Community	490.00	155.961	3.00	3.14
Subtotal, N'hood/Community	931.00	155.961	5.50	5.97
Open Space	546.70	155.961	none	3.51
Total, N'hood/Comm. & O/S	1,477.70	155.961	5.50	9.47
Regional Parks	5,881.60			
Grand Total	7,359.30			

Source: 2023 acres from Table 35 in Appendix C; population is estimate for July 1, 2023 from the U.S. Census Bureau; ordinance standard from section 14.16.040, Lakewood Code of Ordinances.

If the level of service were based on neighborhood and community parks only, existing park acreage could accommodate roughly 13,000 more residents before exceeding the current ordinance standard. For context, the number of new units permitted in the last four years would be expected to generate about 1,500 new residents per year. At this rate of population growth, the current amount of excess park land capacity would disappear in less than ten years. However, when open space is included, the existing level of service results in existing excess capacity capable of serving growth over the long term. Existing park acres, including open space, could accommodate about 113,000 new residents, or over 70 years of growth at current rates. Based on the current ordinance level of service, the City already owns enough land to accommodate growth over the long term, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Existing Park Land Capacity**

	N'hood/Comm. Parks Only	N'hood/Comm. Parks & O/S
Existing Acres	931.00	1,477.70
– Acres Needed for Current Population	-857.79	-857.79
Excess Park Acres	73.21	619.91
÷ Acres per Person Required by Ordinance	0.0055	0.0055
Population that Could be Accommodated	13,312	112,712
÷ Annual Population Growth, 2019-2023	1,492	1,492
Years of Growth Accommodated	8.9	75.5

Source: Existing acres from Table 4; acres needed is estimated population times ordinance level of service from Table 4; annual population growth is building permits by housing type from FY 2020 through FY 2023 from Table 21 times updated persons per unit by housing type from Table 2.



## Density Factors

What the park dedication ordinance refers to as “density factors” are the average number of persons residing in different types of housing units. Persons per unit (household population divided by total units) is more appropriate for Lakewood’s dedication requirements than average household size (household population divided by occupied units), as discussed in the preceding Service Unit chapter. The dedication requirements by housing type based on the updated persons per unit calculated in this report are shown in Table 6. The updated dedication requirements are in acres per unit, but are also shown in acres per hundred units to omit the leading zeroes.

**Table 6. Updated Dedication per Unit by Housing Type**

Housing Type	Persons/ Unit	Acres/ Person	Acres/ Unit	Acres/ 100 Units
Single-Family Detached	2.54	0.0055	0.01397	1.397
Townhome	2.08	0.0055	0.01144	1.144
Multi-Family	1.68	0.0055	0.00924	0.924
Senior Housing	1.20	0.0055	0.00660	0.660

Source: Updated persons per unit from Table 2; acres per person is current ordinance standard per 1,000 population from Table 4 divided by 1,000.



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## FEE IN LIEU OF DEDICATION

According to the City's Park and Open Space Dedication ordinance, fees-in-lieu may be allowed by the Community Resources Director ("the Director") as an alternative method of compliance with the dedication requirements. The ordinance provides that "the Director shall set the amount of the fee equal to the amount of the fair market value of the land that would otherwise be dedicated" in section 14.16.070.B. It also provides that the fees "shall be designated for the acquisition and/or development of park and open space land in the same planning district."

### Fee-in-Lieu Determination

The original Parks and Open Space Dedication ordinance, adopted in 1983, capped the fee in lieu of dedication at \$700 per residential unit. The dedication requirement for all units was based on 5.5 persons per unit. No density factor was specified in the ordinance, and the dedication and fee-in-lieu per unit were based on 2.5 persons per unit (a city wide average). By 1990, land values made the cap lower than property values for all new residential units, and it became unnecessary to determine fees in lieu based on the value of the property. The cap was dropped as part of the amendments to the ordinance in 2018, the density factors (persons per unit) by housing type were adopted at 3.00 for single-family detached, 2.50 for multi-family, and 1.25 for senior housing, and the Director instituted the policy of calculating the fees-in-lieu based on a city-wide residential average land value of \$254,545 per acre. The fees are paid at the time of building permit application.

While the current ordinance gives the Director much discretion related to the administration of fees-in-lieu, it does not explicitly provide discretion relating to determining the amount of the fee by means other than on "the fair market value of the land that would otherwise be dedicated." Given this fact, it would appear that the city would need to consider independent appraisals offered by the developer or building permit applicant. To date, no developer or building permit applicant has requested to have their fees-in-lieu based on the value of their property, rather than on the city-wide average cost. This may change in the future following the recent increase in the average cost per acre to \$432,727.

To put the fees on a sounder legal basis, the consultant recommends amending the ordinance to update the density factors. The comparison between current and updated density factors can be found in Table 2 in the Service Unit chapter. While amending the ordinance for this purpose, the consultant also recommends that other amendments should be made to the fee-in-lieu provisions. These amendments could clarify a number of potential issues, including:

1. the Director's ability to establish a default land value based on a city-wide average cost,
2. the developer's (and/or building permit applicant's) right to provide an independent appraisal, and
3. the procedure for evaluation and determination of the fair market value of the land for the property (e.g., the appraisal should reflect developed land value with appropriate road access, drainage, and utilities; the independent appraiser would need to be approved by the city; the city could hire its own appraiser if it disagreed with the one paid for by the developer, etc.).

Another alternative to a potential scenario of dueling appraisals would be to offer the developer or building permit applicant another option, such as 115% of the most recent tax appraiser land value.



## Cost per Acre

The recent increase in the cost per acre raised the fee-in-lieu per person by 70%, as shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7. Change in Fee-in-Lieu per Person, 2018-2024**

	2018	2024	Change
Acres per Person	0.0055	0.0055	0%
x Cost per Acre	\$254,545	\$432,727	70%
Fee-in-Lieu per Person	\$1,400	<b>\$2,380</b>	70%

Source: City of Lakewood, 2024.

It has been suggested that the city-wide average land cost should be updated annually. However, due to the limited amount of undeveloped land, the analysis used in the 2024 update includes only 20 properties and goes back to 2017, as summarized in Table 8. The cost per acre varies wildly, ranging from \$30,000 to \$1.8 million. The average cost per acre of the 8 properties in the most recent two years is 22% lower than the average of all the properties. This suggests that annual updates could result in fluctuations up and down rather than regular annual increases. A recalculation every four or five years might be more appropriate.

**Table 8. Average Park Land Cost per Acre, 2024**

Year	Property	Address	Price	Sq. Feet	Acres	\$/sq. ft.	Cost/Acre
<b>Acquisitions</b>							
2018	Taylor -Peak View	2350 S Wadsworth	\$6,435,729	2,383,603	54.72	\$2.70	\$117,612
2019	Toteve - Walker-Branch	730 Harlan St	\$937,500	36,590	0.84	\$25.62	\$1,116,071
2021	Armstrong - BCGB	9555 W Cornell Pl	\$1,765,000	301,435	6.92	\$5.86	\$255,058
2021	Car Wash -Two Creeks	1080 Wadsworth	\$1,100,000	26,572	0.61	\$41.40	\$1,803,279
2021	Porter	731 Tabor St	\$1,989,747	338,461	7.77	\$5.88	\$256,081
2022	O'Donnell- BCGB	2951 S Wadsworth	\$1,657,000	131,987	3.03	\$12.55	\$546,865
2022	Roths -BCGB	2965 S Kipling	\$850,000	134,600	3.09	\$6.31	\$275,081
2022	CDOT/County - Soda Lakes	14601 W Hampden	\$1,100,000	1,607,364	36.9	\$0.68	\$29,810
2023	Medina -BCGB	2911 S Wadsworth	\$850,000	65,776	1.51	\$12.92	\$562,914
2023	YMCA-Quail Park	11050 W. 20th Ave.	\$5,540,000	395,481	9.08	\$14.01	\$610,199
Total/Average			\$22,224,976	5,421,870	124.47	\$12.79	\$557,297
<b>Appraisals</b>							
2017	Loveland House	1435 Harlan St	\$385,000	17,520	\$0.40	\$21.97	\$957,226
2017	Colfax Car lot	6000 W Colfax	\$630,000	26,139	\$0.60	\$24.10	\$1,049,879
2019	Lakewood CC Entry	1010 Pierce St	\$158,000	79,149	\$1.82	\$2.00	\$86,957
2020	Iron Spring Eastern	2041 S McIntyre	\$718,805	252,212	\$5.79	\$2.85	\$124,146
2020	Iron Spring Central	2040 S Frontage Rd	\$1,659,832	582,397	\$13.37	\$2.85	\$124,146
2020	Iron Spring West	2040 S Rooney Rd	\$192,100	274,428	\$6.30	\$0.70	\$30,492
2020	Rooney-General Shale	1540 S C-470	\$5,680,000	987,070	\$22.66	\$5.75	\$250,662
2022	Xcel 3rd Ave	5805 & 5810 W 3rd Ave	\$390,000	98,010	\$2.25	\$3.98	\$173,333
2022	Molholm Parcel	894 Kendall	\$510,000	42,689	\$0.98	\$11.95	\$520,408
2023	Soda Lakes Lodge	14959 W. Hampden	\$840,000	100,175	\$2.30	\$8.39	\$365,265
Total/Average			\$11,163,737	2,459,789	\$56.47	\$8.45	\$368,251
Average Both						\$10.62	\$462,774
Recommended							<b>\$432,727</b>
Difference							-6.5%

Source: City of Lakewood, 2024.



## Fees-in-Lieu by Housing Type

Updated fees-in-lieu by housing type are calculated in Table 9 by multiplying persons per unit by the fee-in-lieu per person.

**Table 9. Updated Fees-in-Lieu by Housing Type**

Housing Type	Persons per Unit	Fee-in-Lieu per Person	Fee-in-Lieu per Unit
Single-Family Detached	2.54	\$2,380	\$6,045
Townhome	2.08	\$2,380	\$4,950
Multi-Family	1.68	\$2,380	\$3,998
Senior Housing	1.20	\$2,380	\$2,856

Source: Persons per unit from Table 2; fee-in-lieu per person from Table 7.

## Fees-in-Lieu by Unit Size

An alternative evaluated in this report is to assess fees in-lieu by the size of the dwelling unit. As discussed in the previous Service Unit chapter, assessing by unit size for each housing type is more accurate than assessing by unit size regardless of housing type. To further explore this issue, fees-in-lieu are calculated for all housing units, irrespective of housing type.

Fee-in-Lieu for all Residential Units by Size. While the county property tax appraiser must have size data for all existing residential dwelling units, the City of Lakewood was not able to gain access to it. Without local data, it is necessary to rely on national data to estimate average unit sizes for each of the housing unit types used in this evaluation. The national data is summarized in Table 10.

**Table 10. National Average Square Feet per Unit by Housing Type**

Housing Type	Square Feet	Units	Sq. Ft./Unit
Single-Family Detached	165,189,642,958	82,644,157	1,999
Townhome	20,547,744,824	15,785,186	1,302
Multi-Family	21,656,237,568	23,387,526	926
Mobile Home	8,878,979,981	7,141,725	1,243

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey, 2021.

Multiplying the national average square feet per unit by existing housing units by housing type yields an estimate of about 110 million total square feet of existing residential square feet, as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11. Lakewood Estimated Total Residential Square Feet**

Housing Type	National Sq. Ft./Unit	Lakewood Units	Lakewood Square Feet
Single-Family Detached	1,999	34,012	67,989,988
Townhome	1,302	12,902	16,798,404
Multi-Family	926	26,764	24,783,464
Mobile Home	1,243	542	673,706
Total			110,245,562

Source: National sq. ft. per unit from Table 9, Lakewood units from Table 21.



Multiplying the fee-in-lieu per person based on the adopted level of service by the current population, and dividing the result by existing residential square feet yields the average fee-in-lieu of \$3.37 per square foot of heated living area, as shown in Table 11.

**Table 12. Lakewood Average Fee-in-Lieu per Square Foot**

Fee-in-Lieu per Person	\$2,380
x Existing Population	155,961
Total Fee-in-Lieu for Existing Population	\$371,187,180
÷ Existing Residential Square Feet	110,245,562
Average Fee-in-Lieu per Square Foot	<b>\$3.37</b>

Source: Fee-in-lieu per person from Table 7; existing population from Table 4; existing residential square feet from Table 11

Fees-in-Lieu by Housing Type and Unit Size. The other option is to determine fees-in-lieu by the combination of housing type and unit size. This option is presented in Table 13. The final column shows the alternative fee per square foot, based on the midpoints of the size categories (500 square feet assumed for less than 750 square feet and 3,500 for 3,000 square feet or more). It clearly shows that a fee-in-lieu per square foot would significantly over-charge larger units and under-charge smaller units. This is due to the fact that the number of persons per unit does not increase proportionally with the increase in unit size.

**Table 13. Fees-in-Lieu per Unit by Housing Type and Size**

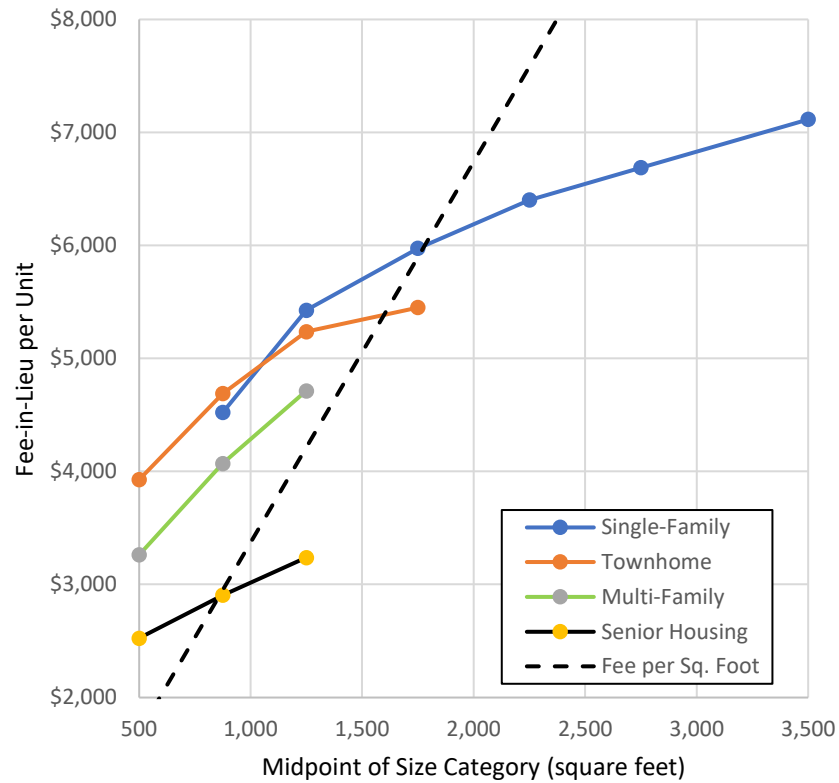
Unit Size (heated area)	Single- Family Det.	Town- Home	Multi- Family	Senior Housing	Fee per Sq. Foot
Less than 750 sq. ft.	\$4,522	\$3,927	\$3,261	\$2,523	\$1,685
750-999 sq. ft.	\$4,522	\$4,689	\$4,070	\$2,904	\$2,780
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	\$5,426	\$5,236	\$4,712	\$3,237	\$4,213
1,500-1,999 sq. ft.	\$5,974	\$5,450	\$4,712	\$3,237	\$5,898
2,000-2,499 sq. ft.	\$6,402	\$5,450	\$4,712	\$3,237	\$7,583
2,500-2,999 sq. ft.	\$6,688	\$5,450	\$4,712	\$3,237	\$9,268
3,000 sq. ft. or more	\$7,116	\$5,450	\$4,712	\$3,237	\$11,795
Average	\$6,045	\$4,950	\$3,998	\$2,856	

Source: Fee by housing type and unit size is product of persons per unit by housing type and unit size from Table 3 in Service Unit chapter times 2024 fee-in-lieu per person from Table 7; average (flat rate) fees from Table 9; the fee per square foot alternatives is the fee per square foot from Table 12 times the midpoint of the size category.

Fees-in-lieu per unit by housing type and unit size are illustrated in Figure 4 on the following page. The alternative fee per square foot is shown as a dashed line. Unlike the earlier chart on persons per unit by size, which showed the data by category, this chart plots the data by the midpoint of the categories to make it more true to scale.



**Figure 4. Fee-in-Lieu by Housing Type and Unit Size**





# PARK IMPACT FEE

This chapter describes two potential park impact fee alternatives. The alternatives evaluated are to adopt (a) a park improvement fee to be charged in addition to the fee in lieu of land dedication, or (b) a park impact fee that is designed to address both land and improvement costs. Potential impact fees are calculated by housing type and by the combination of housing type and unit size.

The fees paid in lieu of land dedication are based on land value and are nominally designed to maintain the adopted level of service for park land, but may be spent on either land acquisition or park improvements. The City has not required developers to dedicate land in recent years, because it has been impractical due to the small size of the land to be subdivided. All developers have instead been required to pay fees-in-lieu at time of building permit since at least 2018. The City has spent fees-in-lieu exclusively on park improvements since at least 2018. It has been using general funds to acquire new parks and open space land, perhaps because of the restriction on fees-in-lieu to be spent in the parks district in which they were collected. As a practical matter, the current fees-in-lieu function much like park impact fees.

As described in the Legal Framework chapter, the cost per person should be reduced by a credit if there are existing deficiencies or outstanding debt related to existing facilities. However, the cost per person does not exceed the existing level of service, and the City does not have any debt related to park improvements. Consequently, no credits are warranted, and the cost per person does not need to be reduced.

## Park Improvement Impact Fee

An additional park improvement fee would raise more revenue for park improvements. The replacement value of existing park improvements is conservatively estimated based on the City’s insured values to be slightly more than \$100 million. Dividing existing improvement value by the current population of the city yields an existing level of service of \$660 per person, as shown in Table 14. This would generate 28% more revenue than the current fees-in-lieu.

**Table 14. Park Improvement Cost per Person**

Total Park Improvement Value	\$102,882,637
÷ Population	155,961
Park Improvement Cost per Person	<b>\$660</b>
Fee-in-Lieu Cost per Person	\$2,380
Improvement Cost per Person	\$660
Total Park Cost per Person	\$3,040
Increase from Land Cost per Person	28%

Source: Total improvement value from Table 35; population is estimate for July 1, 2023 from U.S. Census Bureau; current fee-in-lieu person from Table 7.



The potential park improvement fees by housing type are presented in Table 15.

**Table 15. Park Improvement Fee by Housing Type**

Housing Type	Persons per Unit	Cost per Person	Fee per Unit
Single-Family Detached	2.54	\$660	\$1,676
Townhome	2.08	\$660	\$1,373
Multi-Family	1.68	\$660	\$1,109
Senior Housing	1.20	\$660	\$792

Source: Persons per unit from Table 2; cost per person from Table 14.

An alternative evaluated in this report is to assess dedication requirement and fees in-lieu by the size of the dwelling unit. As discussed in the previous Service Unit chapter, assessing by unit size for each housing type is more accurate than assessing by unit size regardless of housing type. This option is presented in Table 16.

**Table 16. Park Improvement Fee by Housing Type and Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Single-Family Det.	Town-Home	Multi-Family	Senior Housing
Less than 750 sq. ft.	\$1,254	\$1,089	\$904	\$700
750-999 sq. ft.	\$1,254	\$1,300	\$1,129	\$805
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	\$1,505	\$1,452	\$1,307	\$898
1,500-1,999 sq. ft.	\$1,657	\$1,511	\$1,307	\$898
2,000-2,499 sq. ft.	\$1,775	\$1,511	\$1,307	\$898
2,500-2,999 sq. ft.	\$1,855	\$1,511	\$1,307	\$898
3,000 sq. ft. or more	\$1,973	\$1,511	\$1,307	\$898
Average	\$1,676	\$1,373	\$1,109	\$792

Source: Fee by housing type and unit size is product of persons per unit by housing type and unit size from Table 3 in Service Unit chapter times cost per person from Table 14.

## Park Impact Fee

A final alternative is to adopt a park impact fee that covers both land and improvement costs. The City could keep the dedication requirement, and provide a developer credit for the value of any required land dedication. A park impact fee could be calculated simply as the sum of the land cost (updated fee-in-lieu) and the improvement fee, as shown in Table 17.

**Table 17. Park Impact Fee by Housing Type**

Housing Type	Land Cost per Unit	Impr. Cost per Unit	Total Fee per Unit
Single-Family Detached	\$6,045	\$1,676	\$7,721
Townhome	\$4,950	\$1,373	\$6,323
Multi-Family	\$3,998	\$1,109	\$5,107
Senior Housing	\$2,856	\$792	\$3,648

Source: Land cost/unit from Table 9; improvement cost/unit from Table 15.



An option evaluated in this report is to assess park impact fees by the size of the dwelling unit. As discussed in the previous Service Unit chapter, assessing by unit size for each housing type is more accurate than assessing by unit size regardless of housing type. This option is presented in Table 18.

**Table 18. Park Impact Fee by Housing Type and Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Single- Family Det.	Town- Home	Multi- Family	Senior Housing
Less than 750 sq. ft.	\$5,776	\$5,016	\$4,165	\$3,223
750-999 sq. ft.	\$5,776	\$5,989	\$5,199	\$3,709
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	\$6,931	\$6,688	\$6,019	\$4,135
1,500-1,999 sq. ft.	\$7,631	\$6,961	\$6,019	\$4,135
2,000-2,499 sq. ft.	\$8,177	\$6,961	\$6,019	\$4,135
2,500-2,999 sq. ft.	\$8,543	\$6,961	\$6,019	\$4,135
3,000 sq. ft. or more	\$9,089	\$6,961	\$6,019	\$4,135
Average	\$7,721	\$6,323	\$5,107	\$3,648

Source: Park impact fee is sum of fee-in-lieu from Table 13 and improvement fee from Table 16; average fee from Table 17.

## Comparative Park Impact Fees

As noted above, the City's current fees-in-lieu function much like park impact fees. It is reasonable to compare them to those currently charged by other Colorado cities. Table 19 compares Lakewood's fee-in-lieu and potential park impact fees to park impact fees currently charged by a representative sample of eight other municipalities. Lakewood's park fees are close to the average of these comparison Colorado cities.

**Table 19. Comparative Park Fees per Unit**

City	Single-Family	Multi-Family
Boulder	\$6,390	\$3,882
Brighton	\$3,942	\$3,942
Castle Rock	\$6,531	\$4,420
Colorado Springs	\$1,696	\$1,117
Commerce City	\$7,502	\$5,698
Erie	\$2,451	\$1,490
Fort Collins	\$7,930	\$7,188
Greeley	\$6,213	\$2,925
Average	\$5,332	\$3,833
Lakewood (updated fee-in-lieu)	\$6,045	\$3,998
Lakewood (current fee-in-lieu)	\$7,140	\$3,570
Lakewood (potential impact fee)	\$7,721	\$5,107

Source: Duncan Associates and Norris Design internet search, August 29, 2024 (if vary by unit size, assumed 2,000 sq. ft. for single-family detached and 800 sq. ft. for multi-family; Colorado Springs multi-family assumes 20-49 units per structure); Lakewood updated fee-in-lieu from Table 9; current fee-in-lieu is persons per unit from Table 2 times fee per person from Table 7; potential park impact fee from Table 17.



## APPENDIX A: RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY BY HOUSING TYPE

The number of existing dwelling units and number of residents per unit are important factors in an analysis of park land dedication requirements and park improvement fees, because they are needed to determine existing levels of service and the demand attributable to different types of development.

### Existing Housing Units

The most reliable estimates of total housing units and household population are from the 2020 census, which is based on an enumeration of all housing units and residents in the City of Lakewood. The 2020 census 100% counts, however, do not include any breakdown by housing type. That information is only available from sample data, which is available from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS data is based on annual one-percent samples taken over five years. The 2017-2021 5% sample data closely approximates the 2020 count totals, as shown in Table 20, and is used in this study as the most reliable recent data by housing type.

**Table 20. 2020 Population and Housing Data**

	2020 Census	2017-21 Sample	Diff- erence
Total Population	155,984	n/a	n/a
– Group Quarters Population	-2,590	n/a	n/a
Household Population	153,394	152,200	-0.78%
Occupied Units	67,292	66,953	-0.50%
÷ Total Housing Units	70,596	70,865	0.38%
Occupancy Rate	95.3%	94.5%	-0.88%
Persons per Unit	2.17	2.15	-0.92%
Average Household Size	2.28	2.27	-0.44%

Source: 2020 U.S. Census 100%-count redistricting data for City of Lakewood; persons per unit is household population divided by total units; average household size is household population divided by occupied units; U.S. Census Bureau 5% sample ACS data for 2017-2021; difference is variation of sample data from 2020 counts.

Census data by housing type is available for Lakewood in the form of published tables based on 5% samples. Combining total units, which closely approximates the total 2020 100% counts for all housing types, with the number of new units issued building permits during the last four fiscal years, results in the following estimates of existing 2024 housing units presented in Table 21.

**Table 21. Existing Housing Units by Type, 2024**

Housing Type	2020 Units	FY 2020-23 New Units	Est. 2024 Units
Single-Family Detached	33,839	173	34,012
Townhome	12,448	454	12,902
Multi-Family	24,036	2,728	26,764
Mobile Home	542	0	542
Total	70,865	3,355	74,220

Source: Total units from U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2017-2021 5% sample tabular data; new units permitted in 2020-2023 fiscal years (9/1/2019-8/31/2023) from City of Lakewood, August 31, 2023.



## Residential Occupancies

The average number of people residing in different types of housing units can be expressed in two ways – persons per unit or average household size. Persons per unit is the ratio of residents to total units, while average household size is the ratio of residents to occupied units. Average household size is most appropriate for tourist-oriented jurisdictions where parks need to be designed to serve peak season population. Lakewood does not fit this characterization, since it has 95% year-round occupancy. Persons per unit is primarily used in this analysis. However, the study also includes data on average household size in order to estimate persons per unit for senior housing.

The 5% sample data that contains information on residential occupancies by housing type is available from the Census Bureau in two formats: tables and microdata. Microdata are large data sets that contain data for each individual unit in the sample, as well as a weighting factor designed to most closely represent the geographic area. The microdata permits a custom analysis of information that is not limited to what is provided in published tables.

The geographic areas for the tabular and microdata differ. Tabular data is available for cities and counties, while microdata is available only for areas of a county with at least 100,000 residents. The two geographies seldom overlap for cities, because city boundaries often change over time due to annexations, while microdata areas are redrawn only for each decennial census. In Lakewood’s case, the city is roughly evenly split between two such areas, which are referred to as Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs).

The tabular data available for the City of Lakewood is presented in Table 22 for three housing types – single-family detached, single-family attached (townhomes), and multi-family. Mobile homes are excluded from this analysis because the city is not likely to get any new mobile homes in the future. Unfortunately, two large categories, single-family detached and townhome, are combined in the household population data that is available locally.

**Table 22. Current Residential Occupancies, Lakewood**

Housing Type	Total Units	Occup. Units	Occup. Rate	Household Population	Average HH Size	Persons/ Unit
Single-Family Detached	33,839	32,949	97.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Single-Family Attached	12,448	11,759	94.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Single-Family Det./Att.	46,287	44,708	96.6%	111,890	2.50	2.42
Multi-Family	24,036	22,245	92.5%	40,310	1.81	1.68
Total	70,323	66,953	95.2%	152,200	2.27	2.16

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, tabular 2017-2021 weighted 5% sample data for City of Lakewood.

Getting around the limitations of the Lakewood-specific tabular data requires some reliance on microdata for a larger area. The portion of the county called east-central Jefferson County that is straddled by Lakewood consists of two Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) adjacent to the City and County of Denver. Lakewood accounts for just under 60% of the housing units and household population in this larger region.



The regional data by housing type is presented in Table 23. In addition to single-family detached, townhome, and multi-family housing, it also includes “senior housing,” which was added as a housing type in revisions to the park land dedication ordinance in 2018. Senior housing is not defined in the ordinance, but has been applied to multi-family developments that are age-restricted. Such units are approximated by multi-family units with at least one resident 60 years or older and no residents under 18 years old. This operational definition can only be identified for occupied units, so only average household size can be determined directly. Persons per unit for senior housing is calculated by multiplying its average household size by the occupancy rate for all multi-family units.

**Table 23. Current Residential Occupancies, East Central Jefferson County**

Housing Type	Total Units	Occup. Units	Occup. Rate	Household Population	Average HH Size	Persons/ Unit
Single-Family Detached	65,585	63,363	96.6%	162,157	2.56	2.47
Single-Family Attached	20,092	19,155	95.3%	41,478	2.17	2.06
Single-Family Det./Att.	85,677	82,518	96.3%	203,635	2.47	2.38
Multi-Family	32,953	30,690	93.1%	56,021	1.83	1.70
Total	118,630	113,208	95.4%	259,656	2.29	2.19
Senior Housing*	n/a	8,751	n/a	11,480	1.31	n/a

\* approximated as multi-family units with at least one resident aged 60 or more and none less than 18 year old  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 weighted 5% sample microdata for 2010 PUMAs 818 and 819; persons per unit is ratio of household population to total units; average household size is the ratio of household population to occupied units.

Table 24 adjusts the regional data to estimate Lakewood household population for single-family detached and attached (townhome) units. Two adjustments are required. The first is to adjust the regional household population to account for the difference between the distributions of detached and attached occupied units (Lakewood has a slightly lower percentage of detached units and a slightly higher percentage of attached units). The second adjusts for difference in total household population. These adjustments yield the estimates of household population for single-family detached and attached units shown below.

**Table 24. Estimated Household Population for Single-Family Units, Lakewood**

Housing Type	Occupied Units		% of Occ. Units		Distrib. Adjust. Factor	Unadj. Reg Household Population	Adj. Reg. Household Population	HH Pop. Adjust. Factor	Lakewood Household Population
	Local	Reg.	Local	Reg.					
Single-Family Det.	32,949	63,363	73.70%	76.79%	0.960	162,157	155,634	0.5522	85,939
Single-Family Att.	11,759	19,155	26.30%	23.21%	1.133	41,478	46,997	0.5522	25,951
Total	44,708	82,518	100.00%	100.00%		203,635	202,631	0.5522	111,890

Source: Lakewood local data for occupied units by housing type and total household population from Table 22; regional data for occupied units by housing type and unadjusted regional household population from Table 23; housing distribution adjustment factor is ratio of Lakewood to regional percentage of occupied units; adjusted regional household population is unadjusted times distribution adjustment factor; household population adjustment factor is ratio of Lakewood total household population to adjusted regional household population; Lakewood estimated household population by housing types is adjusted household population times household population adjustment factor.



The calculation of estimated residential occupancies for senior multi-family housing in Lakewood is presented in Table 25.

**Table 25. Residential Occupancies for Senior Multi-Family Housing**

Lakewood Multi-Family Average Household Size	1.81
÷ Regional Multi-Family Average Household Size	1.83
Adjustment Factor	0.990
x Regional Senior Multi-Family Average Household Size	1.31
Estimated Lakewood Senior Multi-Family Average HH Size	1.30
x Lakewood Multi-Family Occupancy Rate	92.5%
Estimated Lakewood Senior Multi-Family Persons per Unit	1.20

Source: Lakewood multi-family average household size and occupancy rate from Table 22; regional data from Table 23; adjustment factor is ratio of Lakewood to regional.

Lakewood's residential occupancies for all housing types are summarized in Table 26.

**Table 26. Summary of Residential Occupancies by Housing Type, Lakewood**

Housing Type	Total Units	Occup. Units	Occup. Rate	Household Population	Average HH Size	Persons/Unit
Single-Family Detached	33,839	32,949	97.4%	85,939	2.61	2.54
Townhome	12,448	11,759	94.5%	25,951	2.21	2.08
Multi-Family	24,036	22,245	92.5%	40,310	1.81	1.68
Total	70,323	66,953	95.2%	152,200	2.27	2.16
Senior Multi-Family Housing	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.30	1.20

Source: Total and occupied units and household population for multi-family from Table 22; household population for single-family detached and attached from Table 24; senior multi-family occupancies from Table 25.



## APPENDIX B: RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY BY UNIT SIZE

The most recent national data on residential occupancy for different housing types by unit size is available from the 2021 American Housing Survey. Unit size is expressed in square feet of heated living area, and is available in nine categories, ranging from less than 500 square feet to 4,000 square feet or more. The smallest and largest size categories have been combined because the sample sizes are too small to be reliable and/or the persons per unit cease to display any consistent pattern. Mobile homes have been excluded from this analysis because the City is unlikely to be getting any new mobile homes. National residential occupancies are determined by housing type. The national data is adjusted to estimate local occupancies by unit size for Lakewood.

### Single-Family Detached

National data on single-family detached occupancies by unit size is summarized in Table 27.

**Table 27. National Occupancies for Single-Family Detached Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Total Units	Occup. Units	Household Population	Occup. Rate	Average HH Size	Persons/ Unit
Less 1,000 sq. ft.	6,680,549	5,557,041	12,457,180	83.2%	2.24	1.86
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	19,606,967	17,803,351	43,831,213	90.8%	2.46	2.24
1,500-1,999 sq. ft.	20,970,034	19,644,846	51,566,879	93.7%	2.62	2.46
2,000-2,499 sq. ft.	14,990,777	14,140,384	39,539,411	94.3%	2.80	2.64
2,500-2,999 sq. ft.	8,341,777	7,967,642	22,916,822	95.5%	2.88	2.75
3,000 sq. ft. or more	12,054,053	11,344,971	35,299,378	94.1%	3.11	2.93
Total	82,644,157	76,458,235	205,610,883	92.5%	2.69	2.49

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey, 2021.

For single-family detached units, the average number of persons per unit in Lakewood (2.54) is higher than for the nation as a whole (2.49). On the other hand, the local average household size (2.61) is lower than the national average (2.69). Adjusting for these differences yields the localized persons per unit and average household sizes by unit size presented in Table 28.

**Table 28. Localized Occupancies of Single-Family Detached Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	National Data		Adjust. Factors		Lakewood Est.	
	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit
Less than 1,000 sq. ft.	2.24	1.86	0.97	1.02	2.17	1.90
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	2.46	2.24	0.97	1.02	2.39	2.28
1,500-1,999 sq. ft.	2.62	2.46	0.97	1.02	2.54	2.51
2,000-2,499 sq. ft.	2.80	2.64	0.97	1.02	2.72	2.69
2,500-2,999 sq. ft.	2.88	2.75	0.97	1.02	2.79	2.81
3,000 sq. ft. or more	3.11	2.93	0.97	1.02	3.02	2.99
Total	2.69	2.49	0.97	1.02	2.61	2.54

Source: National data from Table 27; local data for all single-family units from Table 26; adjustment factors are ratios of local to national data for all single-family units; localized data by unit size is product of national data and adjustment factors.



## Townhome

National data on townhome occupancies by unit size is summarized in Table 29.

**Table 29. National Occupancies for Townhome Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Total Units	Occup. Units	Household Population	Occup. Rate	Average HH Size	Persons/ Unit
Less than 750 sq. ft.	2,519,687	2,195,096	4,019,827	87.1%	1.83	1.60
750-999 sq. ft.	3,482,230	3,077,506	6,650,530	88.4%	2.16	1.91
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	5,250,729	4,727,188	11,220,589	90.0%	2.37	2.14
1,500 sq. ft. or more	4,532,540	4,106,554	10,053,380	90.6%	2.45	2.22
Total	15,785,186	14,106,344	31,944,325	89.4%	2.26	2.02

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey, 2021.

Adjusting for the differences between national and local occupancies for townhomes yields localized occupancies by unit size presented in Table 30.

**Table 30. Localized Occupancies of Townhome Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	National Data		Adjust. Factors		Lakewood Est.	
	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit
Less than 750 sq. ft.	1.83	1.60	0.978	1.030	1.79	1.65
750-999 sq. ft.	2.16	1.91	0.978	1.030	2.11	1.97
1,000-1,499 sq. ft.	2.37	2.14	0.978	1.030	2.32	2.20
1,500 sq. ft. or more	2.45	2.22	0.978	1.030	2.40	2.29
Total	2.26	2.02	0.978	1.030	2.21	2.08

Source: National data from Table 29; local data for all townhome units from Table 26; adjustment factors are ratios of local to national data for all townhome units; localized data by unit size is product of national data and adjustment factors.

## Multi-Family

National data on multi-family occupancies by unit size is summarized in Table 31.

**Table 31. National Occupancies for Multi-Family Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Total Units	Occup. Units	Household Population	Occup. Rate	Average HH Size	Persons/ Unit
Less than 750 sq. ft.	8,019,544	6,809,673	10,610,222	84.9%	1.56	1.32
750-999 sq. ft.	7,563,377	6,691,710	12,471,464	88.5%	1.86	1.65
1,000 sq. ft. or more	7,804,604	6,665,346	14,887,629	85.4%	2.23	1.91
Total	23,387,526	20,166,729	37,969,316	86.2%	1.88	1.62

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey, 2021.

Adjusting for the differences between national and local occupancies for multi-family units yields localized occupancies by unit size presented in Table 32.



**Table 32. Localized Occupancies of Multi-Family Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	National Data		Adjust. Factors		Lakewood Est.	
	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit
Less than 750 sq. ft.	1.56	1.32	0.963	1.037	1.50	1.37
750-999 sq. ft.	1.86	1.65	0.963	1.037	1.79	1.71
1,000 sq. ft. or more	2.23	1.91	0.963	1.037	2.15	1.98
Total	1.88	1.62	0.963	1.037	1.81	1.68

Source: National data from Table 31; local data for all multi-family units from Table 26; adjustment factors are ratios of local to national data for all multi-family units; localized data by unit size is product of national data and adjustment factors.

### Senior Multi-Family Housing

Senior housing units are approximated by multi-family units with at least one resident 60 years old or older and no residents under 18 years old. This operational definition can only be identified for occupied units. Total units with these age characteristics restrictions are estimated by dividing occupied units by occupancy rates for all multi-family units. National data on senior housing occupancies by unit size is summarized in Table 33.

**Table 33. National Occupancies for Senior Multi-Family Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	Total Units	Occup. Units	Household Population	Occup. Rate	Average HH Size	Persons/ Unit
Less than 750 sq. ft.	na	897,574	1,135,852	84.9%	1.27	1.08
750-999 sq. ft.	na	748,530	1,053,611	88.5%	1.41	1.25
1,000 sq. ft. or more	na	839,454	1,347,965	85.4%	1.61	1.38
Total	na	2,485,558	3,537,428	86.2%	1.42	1.22

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey, 2021; occupancy rates are those for all multi-family units from Table 31; persons per unit is average household size times occupancy rate.

Adjusting for the differences between national and local occupancies for senior housing yields the localized occupancies for Lakewood by unit size presented in Table 34.

**Table 34. Localized Occupancies of Senior Multi-Family Units by Size**

Unit Size (heated area)	National Data		Adjust. Factors		Lakewood Est.	
	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit	Avg. HH Size	Pop./ Unit
Less than 750 sq. ft.	1.27	1.08	0.915	0.980	1.16	1.06
750-999 sq. ft.	1.41	1.25	0.915	0.980	1.29	1.22
1,000 sq. ft. or more	1.61	1.38	0.915	0.980	1.47	1.35
Total	1.42	1.22	0.915	0.980	1.30	1.20

Source: National data from Table 33; Lakewood data for all unit sizes from Table 26; adjustment factors are ratios of local to national data for all unit sizes; localized data by unit size is product of national data and adjustment factors.



## APPENDIX C: EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

**Table 35. Existing Park and Open Space Inventory**

Park and Open Space Site	Park Type	Dev'd Acres	Undev'd Acres	Total Acres	Improvement Cost
Addenbrooke Park (Jackson Park)	Comm	72.0	39.4	111.4	\$2,082,712
Anderson Pond	O/S	0.2	4.5	4.7	\$0
Aviation Club	Nhood	3.1	0.0	3.1	\$30,086,840
Balsam Pond Park	Nhood	0.0	4.1	4.1	\$0
Bear Creek Lake Park/Soda Lake	R	1,031.0	1,626.8	2,657.8	\$0
Bear Creek Greenbelt	R	378.8	13.8	392.6	\$0
Beech Park	Nhood	14.2	3.8	18.0	\$130,214
Bellows Park	Nhood	10.8	0.0	10.8	\$85,725
Belmar Park	R	126.7	5.8	132.5	\$0
Blue Star Memorial Park	R	1.0	0.0	1.0	\$0
Bonfils-Stanton Park	Nhood	5.0	10.9	15.9	\$50,000
Bonvue Park	Nhood	1.3	0.0	1.3	\$20,000
Carmody Park	Comm	34.0	0.0	34.0	\$12,868,051
Charles Whitlock Center	Comm	9.8	2.0	11.8	\$8,274,707
Chester Portsmouth Park	Nhood	12.8	0.0	12.8	\$424,300
City Commons-Cultural Addition	Comm	0.5	0.0	0.5	\$0
Clements Community Center (senior facility)	Comm	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$4,509,050
Cottage (Meadowlark Cottages)	Comm	0.7	0.0	0.7	\$0
Cottonwood Park	Nhood	16.0	0.0	16.0	\$16,244
Coyote Gulch Park	Comm	9.0	35.4	44.4	\$628,059
Crown Hill Park	R	168.5	62.0	230.5	\$0
Daniel's Center	Comm	0.6	0.0	0.6	\$0
Daniel's Park	Nhood	12.8	0.0	12.8	\$954,835
Devinney Cottages	Comm	1.4	0.0	1.4	\$860,678
Dry Gulch Trail (Benton & Xcel)	O/S	0.0	6.9	6.9	\$0
East Reservoir	O/S	0.0	43.9	43.9	\$0
Foothills Park	Nhood	6.0	0.0	6.0	\$145,576
Forsberg Park	Comm	0.0	20.2	20.2	\$144,820
Founders Park	Nhood	3.0	0.0	3.0	\$123,950
Gary R. McDonnell Park	Nhood	15.8	0.0	15.8	\$309,778
Glen Creighton Park	Nhood	0.3	0.0	0.3	\$0
Glennon Dale Park	Nhood	0.0	8.0	8.0	\$0
Glennon Heights Park	Nhood	6.0	0.0	6.0	\$3,135,354
Graham Park	Nhood	5.5	0.0	5.5	\$330,341
Green Gables Park	Nhood	12.6	0.0	12.6	\$90,894
Green Mountain Center	Comm	6.4	1.7	8.1	\$8,140,296
Habitat Park	Nhood	0.2	0.0	0.2	\$0
Heritage File # 8	O/S	1.9	0.0	1.9	\$0
Heritage Hill Park	O/S	0.0	15.7	15.7	\$0
Hilltop Park	Nhood	0.7	0.0	0.7	\$94,000
Hodgson Park	Nhood	3.4	0.0	3.4	\$96,186
Holbrook Park	Nhood	10.1	0.0	10.1	\$55,240
Hutchinson Park	Nhood	0.3	54.0	54.3	\$35,000
Idlewild Park	Nhood	1.2	0.0	1.2	\$84,448

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Table 35. Existing Park and Open Space Inventory (continued)

Park and Open Space Site	Park Type	Dev'd Acres	Undev'd Acres	Total Acres	Improvement Cost
Iron Spring East (Hutchinson Filing 54)	Comm	0.0	13.3	13.3	\$0
Iron Spring Park	Comm	30.8	68.1	98.9	\$0
Jackson Park	Nhood	4.0	0.0	4.0	\$176,225
James E. Harrison Park (S Simms St Park)	Nhood	4.0	0.0	4.0	\$190,500
James J. Richey Park	Nhood	5.3	0.0	5.3	\$61,350
Jefferson Green Park	Nhood	5.2	0.0	5.2	\$60,000
Jewell Park	Nhood	7.7	0.0	7.7	\$52,500
Kendrick Lake Park	O/S	58.8	0.0	58.8	\$565,320
Kent Knutson Park	Nhood	3.5	0.0	3.5	\$1,676,350
Lakewood Estates Park	Nhood	3.5	0.0	3.5	\$201,500
Lakewood Gulch (Westland Dist.)	O/S	0.0	2.3	2.3	\$0
Lakewood Link Recreation Center	Comm	9.5	0.0	9.5	\$8,451,450
Lakewood Park	Comm	21.4	0.0	21.4	\$2,243,746
Lakewood Skate Park	Nhood	0.2	0.0	0.2	\$50,000
Lakewood-Sister City Park	Nhood	20.3	0.0	20.3	\$451,240
Lasley Cottages	Comm	0.4	0.0	0.4	\$649,000
Lasley Park	Nhood	9.2	0.0	9.2	\$396,930
Lochmoor Park	Nhood	0.3	0.0	0.3	\$11,050
Loveland Trail	O/S	0.0	23.0	23.0	\$0
Lower Coyote Gulch (Hutch #58)	O/S	0.0	13.9	13.9	\$0
Main Reservoir	O/S	5.0	67.3	72.3	\$42,145
McNabb Park	Nhood	0.3	0.0	0.3	\$0
Meadowlark Park	Nhood	2.1	0.0	2.1	\$82,168
Molholm Park	Nhood	2.4	0.0	2.4	\$126,305
Mom's Hill	Nhood	0.0	1.0	1.0	\$0
Morse Park	Comm	20.1	0.0	20.1	\$2,550,320
Mountainside Park	Nhood	0.5	6.0	6.5	\$25,000
Mountair Park	Nhood	9.7	0.0	9.7	\$626,880
Newland Park	Nhood	0.5	0.0	0.5	\$115,000
O'Kane Park	Comm	28.5	0.3	28.8	\$724,100
Overlook at BC Parksite	Nhood	0.0	12.3	12.3	\$0
Patterson Cottages	Comm	0.8	0.0	0.8	\$1,150,020
Peak View (Taylor)	O/S	5.0	52.8	57.8	\$0
Peterson Park	Nhood	0.0	2.3	2.3	\$0
Porter Park	Nhood	0.0	7.8	7.8	\$296,000
Quail Site (YMCA)	Nhood	0.0	0.8	0.8	\$94,400
Rampart Park	Nhood	0.9	0.0	0.9	\$71,100
Ravine Open Space	O/S	0.0	56.7	56.7	\$189,875
Ray Ross Park	Comm	12.0	0.0	12.0	\$2,305,396
Sanctuary Park	O/S	8.8	1.5	10.3	\$15,000
Sanderson Gulch	O/S	3.7	0.0	3.7	\$0
Sloan's Lake Drainway	Nhood	2.0	0.0	2.0	\$0
Smith Reservoir	O/S	2.0	66.2	68.2	\$14,000
Solterra Central Corridor	O/S	19.2	0.0	19.2	\$0
Solterra West Corridor	O/S	0.0	5.1	5.1	\$0
South Cody Park	Nhood	1.5	0.0	1.5	\$0
South Sheridan Fields & Park	Comm	7.8	10.6	18.4	\$904,854
Sunset Park	Nhood	9.6	11.6	21.2	\$219,865
Surfside Pool	Nhood	1.1	0.0	1.1	\$898,047
Sutherland Shire Park	Nhood	6.0	0.0	6.0	\$100,050

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Table 35. Existing Park and Open Space Inventory (continued)

Park and Open Space Site	Park Type	Dev'd Acres	Undev'd Acres	Total Acres	Improvement Cost
Taft Park	Nhood	1.3	0.0	1.3	\$170,950
Tamarisk Tract D	O/S	0.0	7.9	7.9	\$0
Tamarisk Tract G	Nhood	0.0	10.1	10.1	\$0
Thunder Valley	R	73.5	0.0	73.5	\$0
Triangle Park	Nhood	0.3	0.0	0.3	\$0
Two Creeks Parksite	Nhood	0.0	3.8	3.8	\$362,570
Union Ridge Park	Nhood	21.4	0.0	21.4	\$0
Union Square Park	Nhood	13.9	0.0	13.9	\$142,500
Ute Trail and Lower Ravines	O/S	0.5	39.0	39.5	\$90,000
Walker-Branch Park*	Nhood	6.6	1.0	7.1	\$445,055
Washington Heights Park	Comm	8.4	11.1	19.5	\$1,769,760
Welchester Park	O/S	20.0	0.0	20.0	\$0
Westborough Park	Nhood	2.5	0.0	2.5	\$113,600
Westgate Park	Nhood	5.6	0.0	5.6	\$75,000
Westland Park	Nhood	1.0	0.0	1.0	\$103,000
Weststar	O/S	0.0	9.4	9.4	\$0
William Frederick Hayden Park	R	1,641.5	752.2	2,393.7	\$0
Wilson Drainageway	O/S	5.5	0.0	5.5	\$0
Wilson Property	Comm	0.0	13.8	13.8	\$0
Wright Street Site (Union Square)	Nhood	3.1	6.9	10.0	\$45,219
Subtotal Neighborhood Parks	Nhood	296.6	144.4	441.0	\$43,709,278
Subtotal, Community Parks	Comm	274.1	215.9	490.0	\$58,257,019
Subtotal, Open Space	O/S	130.6	416.1	546.7	\$916,340
Total, N'hood and Community Parks & Open Space		701.3	776.4	1,477.7	\$102,882,637
Regional Parks	R	3,421.0	2,460.6	5,881.6	\$0
Grand Total		4,122.3	3,237.0	7,359.3	\$102,882,637

\* co-owned with City of Edgewater, half of land area shown

Source: Park name, type and acres from City of Lakewood, 2023; improvement costs are insured values in 2023.



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## APPENDIX D: COLORADO STATUTES

This appendix replicates current Colorado statutes relevant to park fees in lieu of dedication and park impact fees.

**Title 29. Government - Local**  
**Article 1. Budget and Services**  
**Part 8. Land Development Charges**

### **29-1-801. Legislative declaration.**

The general assembly hereby finds and determines that statewide standards governing accountability for land development charges imposed by local governments to finance capital facilities and services are necessary and desirable to ensure reasonable certainty, stability, and fairness in the use to which moneys generated by such charges are put and to promote public confidence in local government finance. The general assembly therefore declares that this part 8 is a matter of statewide concern.

### **29-1-802. Definitions.**

As used in this part 8, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) “Capital expenditure” means any expenditure for an improvement, facility, or piece of equipment necessitated by land development which is directly related to a local government service, has an estimated useful life of five years or longer, and is required by charter or general policy of a local government pursuant to resolution or ordinance.
- (2) “Land development” means any of the following:
  - (a) The subdivision of land;
  - (b) Construction, reconstruction, redevelopment, or conversion of use of land or any structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement which results in an increase in the number of service units required; or
  - (c) An extension of use or a new use of land which results in an increase in the number of service units required.
- (3) “Land development charge” means any fee, charge, or assessment relating to a capital expenditure which is imposed on land development as a condition of approval of such land development, as a prerequisite to obtaining a permit or service. Nothing in this section shall be construed to include sales and use taxes, building or plan review fees, building permit fees, consulting or other professional review charges, or any other regulatory or administrative fee, charge, or assessment.
- (4) “Local government” means a county, city and county, municipality, service authority, school district, local improvement district, law enforcement district, water, sanitation, fire protection, metropolitan, irrigation, drainage, or other special district, any other kind of municipal, quasi-municipal, or public corporation, or any agency or instrumentality thereof organized pursuant to law.
- (5) “Service unit” means a standard unit of measure of consumption, use, generation, or discharge of the services provided by a local government.



**29-1-803. Deposit of land development charge.**

(1) All moneys from land development charges collected, including any such moneys collected but not expended prior to January 1, 1991, shall be deposited or, if collected for another local government, transmitted for deposit, in an interest-bearing account which clearly identifies the category, account, or fund of capital expenditure for which such charge was imposed. Each such category, account, or fund shall be accounted for separately. The determination as to whether the accounting requirement shall be by category, account, or fund and by aggregate or individual land development shall be within the discretion of the local government. Any interest or other income earned on moneys deposited in said interest-bearing account shall be credited to the account. At least once annually, the local government shall publish on its official website, if any, in a clear, concise, and user-friendly format information detailing the allocation by dollar amount of each land development charge collected to an account or among accounts, the average annual interest rate on each account, and the total amount disbursed from each account, during the local government's most recent fiscal year.

(2) (Deleted by amendment, L. 2011, (HB 11-1113), ch. 23, p. 58, § 1, effective December 31, 2011.)

**29-1-804. Exceptions - state-mandated charges.**

This part 8 shall not apply to rates, fees, charges, or other requirements which a local government is expressly required to collect by state statute and which are not imposed to fund programs, services, or facilities of the local government.

**Title 29. Government - Local**

**Article 20. Local Government Regulation of Land Use**

**Part 1. Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act**

**29-20-101. Short title.** This article shall be known and may be cited as the "Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act of 1974".

**29-20-102. Legislative declaration.**

(1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that in order to provide for planned and orderly development within Colorado and a balancing of basic human needs of a changing population with legitimate environmental concerns, the policy of this state is to clarify and provide broad authority to local governments to plan for and regulate the use of land within their respective jurisdictions. Nothing in this article shall serve to diminish the planning functions of the state or the duties of the division of planning.

(2) The general assembly further finds and declares that local governments will be better able to properly plan for growth and serve new residents if they are authorized to impose impact fees as a condition of approval of development permits. However, impact fees and other development charges can affect growth and development patterns outside a local government's jurisdiction, and uniform impact fee authority among local governments will encourage proper growth management.



**29-20-103. Definitions.** As used in this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) “Development permit” means any preliminary or final approval of an application for rezoning, planned unit development, conditional or special use permit, subdivision, development or site plan, or similar application for new construction; except that, solely for purposes of part 3 of this article:

(a) Each application included in the definition of development permit constitutes a stage in the development permit approval process; and

(b) “Development permit” is limited to an application regarding a specific project that includes new water use in an amount more than that used by fifty single-family equivalents, or fewer as determined by the local government.

(1.3) “Fire and emergency services provider” means a fire protection district organized under article 1 of title 32, C.R.S., or a fire authority established pursuant to section 29-1-203.5.

(1.5) “Local government” means a county, home rule or statutory city, town, territorial charter city, or city and county.

(2) “Power authority” means an authority created pursuant to section 29-1-204.

**29-20-104. Powers of local governments - definition.**

Except as expressly provided in section 29-20-104.2 or 29-20-104.5, the power and authority granted by this section does not limit any power or authority presently exercised or previously granted. Except as provided in section 29-20-104.2, each local government within its respective jurisdiction has the authority to plan for and regulate the use of land by:

...

(e.5) Regulating development or redevelopment in order to promote the construction of new affordable housing units. The provisions of section 38-12-301 shall not apply to any land use regulation adopted pursuant to this section that restricts rents on newly constructed or redeveloped housing units as long as the regulation provides a choice of options to the property owner or land developer and creates one or more alternatives to the construction of new affordable housing units on the building site. Nothing in this subsection (1)(e.5) is construed to authorize a local government to adopt or enforce any ordinance or regulation that would have the effect of controlling rent on any existing private residential housing unit in violation of section 38-12-301.

(e.7) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a local government shall not exercise the authority granted by subsection (1)(e.5) of this section unless the local government demonstrates, at the time it enacts a land use regulation for the purpose of exercising such authority, it has taken one or more of the following actions to increase the overall number and density of housing units within its jurisdictional boundaries or to promote or create incentives to the construction of affordable housing units:

(I) Adopt changes to its zoning and land use policies that are intended to increase the overall density and availability of housing, including but not limited to:

(A) Changing its zoning regulations to increase the number of housing units allowed on a particular site;

(B) Promoting mixed-use zoning that permits housing units to be incorporated in a wider range of developments;



- (C) Permitting more than one dwelling unit per lot in traditional single-family lots;
  - (D) Increasing the permitted household size in single family homes;
  - (E) Promoting denser housing development near transit stations and places of employment;
  - (F) Granting reduced parking requirements to residential or mixed-use developments that include housing near transit stations or affordable housing developments;
  - (G) Granting density bonuses to development projects that incorporate affordable housing units; or
  - (H) Adopting policies to promote the diversity of the housing stock within the local community including a mix of both for-sale and rental housing opportunities;
  - (II) Materially reduce or eliminate utility charges, regulatory fees, or taxes imposed by the local government applicable to affordable housing units;
  - (III) Grant affordable housing developments material regulatory relief from any type of zoning or other land development regulations that would ordinarily restrict the density of new development or redevelopment;
  - (IV) Adopt policies to materially make surplus property owned by the local government available for the development of housing; or
  - (V) Adopt any other regulatory measure that is expressly designed and intended to increase the supply of housing within the local government's jurisdictional boundaries.
- (e.9) The department of local affairs shall offer guidance to assist local governments in connection with the implementation of this section.

...

#### **29-20-104.5. Impact fees - definition.**

(1) Pursuant to the authority granted in section 29-20-104 (1)(g) and as a condition of issuance of a development permit, a local government may impose an impact fee or other similar development charge to fund expenditures by such local government or a fire and emergency services provider that provides fire protection, rescue, and emergency services in the new development on capital facilities needed to serve new development. No impact fee or other similar development charge shall be imposed except pursuant to a schedule that is:

- (a) Legislatively adopted;
- (b) Generally applicable to a broad class of property; and
- (c) Intended to defray the projected impacts on capital facilities caused by proposed development.

(2)

- (a) A local government shall quantify the reasonable impacts of proposed development on existing capital facilities and establish the impact fee or development charge at a level no greater than necessary to defray such impacts directly related to proposed development. No impact fee or other similar development charge shall be imposed to remedy any deficiency in capital facilities that exists without regard to the proposed development.
- (b) A local government shall confer with any fire and emergency services provider that provides fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services in a new development, together with the owner or developer of the development, to assess and determine whether



there should be an impact fee or other similar development charge imposed to defray the impacts to the fire and emergency services provider.

(c) If a local government, in its sole discretion, elects to impose an impact fee or other similar development charge to fund the expenditures by a fire and emergency services provider for a capital facility, then the local government and fire and emergency services provider shall enter into an intergovernmental agreement defining the impact fee or other similar development charge and the details of collection and remittance.

(d) A local government that imposes an impact fee or other similar development charge to fund the expenditures by a fire and emergency services provider for a capital facility shall pay the impact fees or other similar development charges collected to the fire protection and emergency service provider.

(3) Any schedule of impact fees or other similar development charges adopted by a local government pursuant to this section shall include provisions to ensure that no individual landowner is required to provide any site specific dedication or improvement to meet the same need for capital facilities for which the impact fee or other similar development charge is imposed. A local government shall not impose an impact fee or other similar development charge on an individual landowner to fund expenditures for a capital facility used to provide fire, rescue, and emergency services if the landowner is already required to pay an impact fee or other similar development charge for another capital facility used to provide a similar fire, rescue, and emergency service or if the landowner has voluntarily contributed money for such a capital facility.

(4) As used in this section, the term “capital facility” means any improvement or facility that:

(a) Is directly related to any service that a local government or a fire and emergency services provider is authorized to provide;

(b) Has an estimated useful life of five years or longer; and

(c) Is required by the charter or general policy of a local government or fire and emergency services provider pursuant to a resolution or ordinance.

(5) Any impact fee or other similar development charge shall be collected and accounted for in accordance with part 8 of article 1 of this title. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a local government may waive an impact fee or other similar development charge on the development of low- or moderate- income housing or affordable employee housing as defined by the local government.

(6) No impact fee or other similar development charge shall be imposed on any development permit for which the applicant submitted a complete application before the adoption of a schedule of impact fees or other similar development charges by the local government pursuant to this section. No impact fee or other similar development charge imposed on any development activity shall be collected before the issuance of the development permit for such development activity. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a local government from deferring collection of an impact fee or other similar development charge until the issuance of a building permit or certificate of occupancy.

(7) Any person or entity that owns or has an interest in land that is or becomes subject to a schedule of fees or charges enacted pursuant to this section shall, by filing an application for a development permit, have standing to file an action for declaratory judgment to determine whether such schedule complies with the provisions of this section. An applicant for a development permit who believes that a local government has improperly applied a schedule of fees or charges adopted pursuant to this section to the development application may pay the fee or charge imposed and proceed with



development without prejudice to the applicant's right to challenge the fee or charge imposed under rule 106 of the Colorado rules of civil procedure. If the court determines that a local government has either imposed a fee or charge on a development that is not subject to the legislatively enacted schedule or improperly calculated the fee or charge due, it may enter judgment in favor of the applicant for the amount of any fee or charge wrongly collected with interest thereon from the date collected.

(8)

(a) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that the matters addressed in this section are matters of statewide concern.

(b) This section shall not prohibit any local government from imposing impact fees or other similar development charges pursuant to a schedule that was legislatively adopted before October 1, 2001, so long as the local government complies with subsections (3), (5), (6), and (7) of this section. Any amendment of such schedule adopted after October 1, 2001, shall comply with all of the requirements of this section.

(9) If any provision of this section is held invalid, such invalidity shall invalidate this section in its entirety, and to this end the provisions of this section are declared to be nonseverable.



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## APPENDIX E: LAKEWOOD ORDINANCE

City of Lakewood Code of Ordinances  
Title 14 - Buildings and Construction  
**Chapter 14.16 : Park and Open Space Dedication**

### **14.16.010 Scope and application.**

Each development containing residential land uses shall dedicate to the city park sites and open space areas in accordance with the provisions of this title. Except as provided in this section, at the discretion of the Community Resources Director (Director), fees in lieu of dedications shall be levied as set forth herein. The Director shall use current, adopted city planning documents as a guide for determining park and recreation needs in proximity to the proposed development area. The park and open space requirements in this Chapter 16 shall be reasonably related to the needs of the residents of the proposed development. All developments containing residential uses greater than 14.99 acres in size shall dedicate land in accordance with this Chapter 16 unless the City Council approves a fee in lieu alternative.

(Ord. O-2019-24 § 4, 2019; Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-89-3 § 5 (part), 1989; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

### **14.16.020 Park standards.**

For purposes of this title, the city's park standards shall be a minimum of 10.5 acres of park area per 1,000 anticipated population within the proposed development. This standard of 10.5 acres per 1,000 population is composed of the following elements:

- A. Five acres per 1,000 population for regional parks;
- B. Three acres per 1,000 population for community parks;
- C. 2.5 acres per 1,000 population for neighborhood parks.

(Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

### **14.16.030 Regional parks provided.**

The City Council determines, as of the time of adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter, that the regional park needs of the residents of the City of Lakewood are satisfied by Bear Creek Lake Park, William Frederick Hayden Park, the Bear Creek Greenbelt, Jefferson County Parks, and State of Colorado parks to the west and south of the City of Lakewood. Therefore, a residential development shall not be obligated to dedicate land for regional park purposes in the City of Lakewood. Consequently, that the operating standard for dedication of parkland shall be 5.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 population for community parks and neighborhood parks.

(Ord. O-2019-24 § 4, 2019; Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-2004-30 § 1, 2004; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

**14.16.040 Calculation of land dedication requirements for park and open space.**

A. Parkland Standard. All residential developers shall provide a minimum of 5.5 acres of park area per 1,000 anticipated population or cash in lieu thereof, except for developments of 14.99 acres or greater where no fee-in-lieu option shall be applicable.

B. Density Factor. To provide an estimated and equitable population standard among different housing types, a density factor (representing average number of persons within the unit type) shall be applied to the calculation as follows:

1. Single-family detached = 3.00
2. Single-family or multi-family attached = 1.50
3. Senior housing = 1.25

C. Example calculation.

Proposed development size: 10 acres

Proposed density: 10 units/acre, multi-family attached

Park and open space acreage required:

$10 \text{ development acres} \times 10 \text{ units/acre} \times 1.5 \text{ density factor} \times 5.5 \text{ acres parkland}/1000 \text{ people}$   
= .825 acres of parkland required.

D. Dwelling Unit Changes. If an area is replatted prior to construction of the development, and the number of anticipated dwelling units increases or decreases by more than ten percent, the developer shall be required to adjust either the amount of parkland dedicated consistent with the aforementioned provisions and formula or the amount of cash in lieu thereof to provide for the change in units.

E. At the discretion of the Director, all or a portion of the park dedication required may remain in private ownership, provided the privately owned park land is open to public use. The land area that may remain in private ownership shall:

1. Not exceed an average slope of 4:1;
2. Be privately maintained; and
3. Be noted on development plans as a fulfillment of parkland dedication requirements.

(Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-89-3 § 5 (part), 1989; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

**14.16.050 Criteria for land eligible for park and open space use.**

The following criteria will normally apply in determining what type and nature of land will meet the requirement for dedication:

A. Land that is accessible from two separate locations by standard maintenance vehicles or from one location with a minimum 50-foot frontage;

B. Land or water bodies contiguous to other acceptable parkland or existing parkland;



- C. Usable land within the 100-year floodway fringe that would not be inundated in a five-year storm; and
- D. Special areas of natural, historical or cultural significance.

The Director will develop criteria to further define usable land.

(Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-89-3 § 5 (part), 1989; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

#### **14.16.060 Criteria for land not eligible for park and open space use.**

The following criteria will normally apply in determining what type and nature of land will not meet the requirement for dedication:

- A. Land required by city's zoning code for private open space;
- B. Land used to fulfill requirements of the city's storm drainage ordinances, such as detention ponds, retention ponds or drainageways;
- C. Rights-of-way and easements for irrigation ditches, laterals and aqueducts, power lines, pipelines or other public or private utilities without the written permission of the right-of-way owner; and
- D. Hazardous geological land area, mineral extraction areas and hazardous wildfire areas.

(Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

#### **14.16.070 Procedure/fee determination.**

- A. All land dedications, and/or fee requirements in lieu of land dedications, for subdivisions and other residential development shall be met at the time of platting or, if platting is not required, at time of site plan approval. The Director may delay the collection of fees to the time of building permit issuance. The amount of the fee to be paid shall be the fee in effect at the time payment is made.
- B. If the Director determines that a land dedication in accordance with this chapter would not serve the public interest, the Director may require payment of a fee in lieu of the dedication, or may require dedication of a smaller amount of land than would otherwise be required and payment of a fee in lieu of the portion not dedicated. The Director may also accept improvements of equal or greater value of the fee that would have been collected. The Director shall set the amount of the fee equal to the amount of the fair market value of the land that would otherwise be dedicated.
- C. Fees shall be payable to the City of Lakewood and shall be designated for the acquisition and/or development of park and open space land in the same planning district as shown in Section 14.16.090.

D. In those instances where the Director elects to require a fee-in-lieu of land dedication, the Director may, subject to City Council approval, waive all or a portion of the fee requirements for individual housing units set aside for households earning no more than 80 percent of the area median income (AMI) through recorded deed restriction for a minimum period of 20 years.

(Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-2004-30 § 2, 2004; Ord. O-89-3 § 5 (part), 1989; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).

#### **14.16.080 Site development standards—General.**

A. Land that has been platted as public park and open space, or otherwise dedicated to the city, shall not be used in the development process of adjoining lands, except as stated in subsections (B), (C) and (D) of this section, or as reflected in an approved subdivision grading plan.

B. The developer shall be responsible for the installation of public improvements adjacent to the park site including, but not limited to, curb and gutters, streets, storm drainage facilities, and bridges made necessary by the development. Such public improvements will normally be limited to 210 linear feet per acre of parkland. This does not include park development or tap fees unless such improvements are part of an Improvement Agreement.

C. All slopes shall be stabilized in accordance with acceptable engineering standards to prevent public endangerment, and for ease of maintenance. The maximum slope shall normally not exceed 4:1 or other slope treatment will be required.

D. Sites shall be made easily accessible to city maintenance equipment.

(Ord. O-2018-4 § 1, 2018; Ord. O-83-137 § 1 (part), 1983).





# APPENDIX E

## IMAGINE TOMORROW! ARTS, PARKS, & RECREATION FOR ALL

CITY OF LAKEWOOD, MAY 2023



MAY 2023

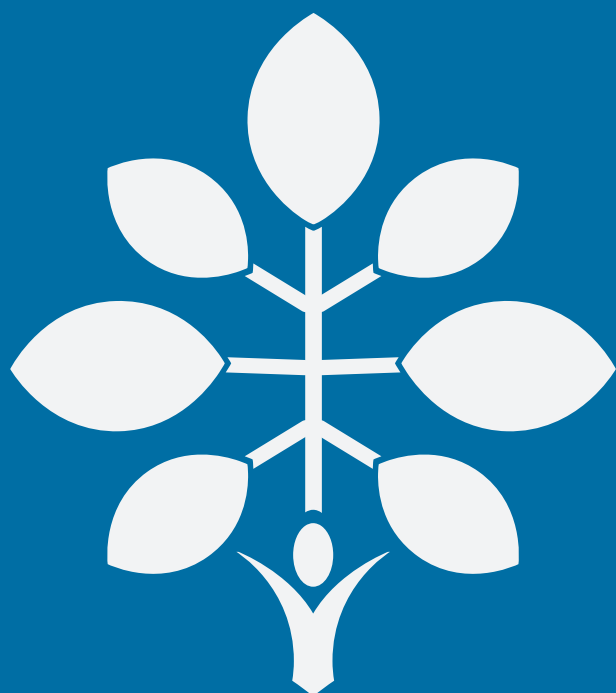
# IMAGINE TOMORROW

*Arts, Parks & Recreation for All*



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CITY OF LAKEWOOD, COLORADO  
COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
**ARTS, PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**







PREPARED FOR



**Lakewood**  
Community Resources

PREPARED BY



LOGAN SIMPSON

WITH SUPPORT FROM



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## LAKEWOOD CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

---

Adam Paul, Mayor	Sophia Mayott-Guerrero, Ward 2	Rich Olver, Ward 4
Charley Able, Ward 1	Anita Springsteen, Ward 3	Wendi Strom, Ward 5
Jeslin Shahrezaei, Ward 1	Rebekah Stewart Ward 3	Mary Janssen, Ward 5
Sharon Vincent, Ward 2	Barb Franks, Ward 4	

## IMAGINE TOMORROW! ADVISORY COMMITTEE

---

Angie Kinnaird Linn	Joan Fessenden	Marianne Nagel
Bruce Golob	Judy Norton	Mary Ruther
Cameron Lara	Juliet Dawkins	Nancy York
Donald Tallman	Katie Owens	Reg Cox
Ellen O'Connor	Kiera Zink	Sofia Farilla
Freya Ryder Prince	Lauren Anderson	Tom Quinn
Jannett Matusiak	Liz Black	Trish Merkel

## CITY OF LAKEWOOD STAFF

---

Kathleen Hodgson, City Manager

### Community Resources

Kit Newland; Director

Amber Thill, AICP; Public Engagement and Operations Manager

Allysen Santilli; Marketing and Promotions Supervisor

Brad Bishop; Projects and Maintenance Manager

Brent Berninger, CPRP; Recreation and Golf Manager

Deb Hernandez; Administrative Supervisor

Jim Haselgren; Parks Manager

Marlana Bense; Planning and Construction Technician

Matthew Enrietta, Business and Data Coordinator

Michelle Nierling; Heritage, Culture and the Arts Manager

Ross Williams, CPRP, ASLA; Facilities Planner

### Information Technology

Jennifer Haller, GIS Coordinator

James Crawford, Right of Way Technician

## CONSULTANT TEAM

---

### Logan Simpson

Jana McKenzie, FASLA, LEED-AP; Principal

Kristina Kachur, AICP; Senior Planner and Project Manager

Taylor Broyhill, AICP; Associate Planner and Project Manager

Matthew Little, GIS Technician

### PROS Consulting

Michael Svetz, Principal

### ETC Institute

Ryan Murray; Assistant Director of Community Research



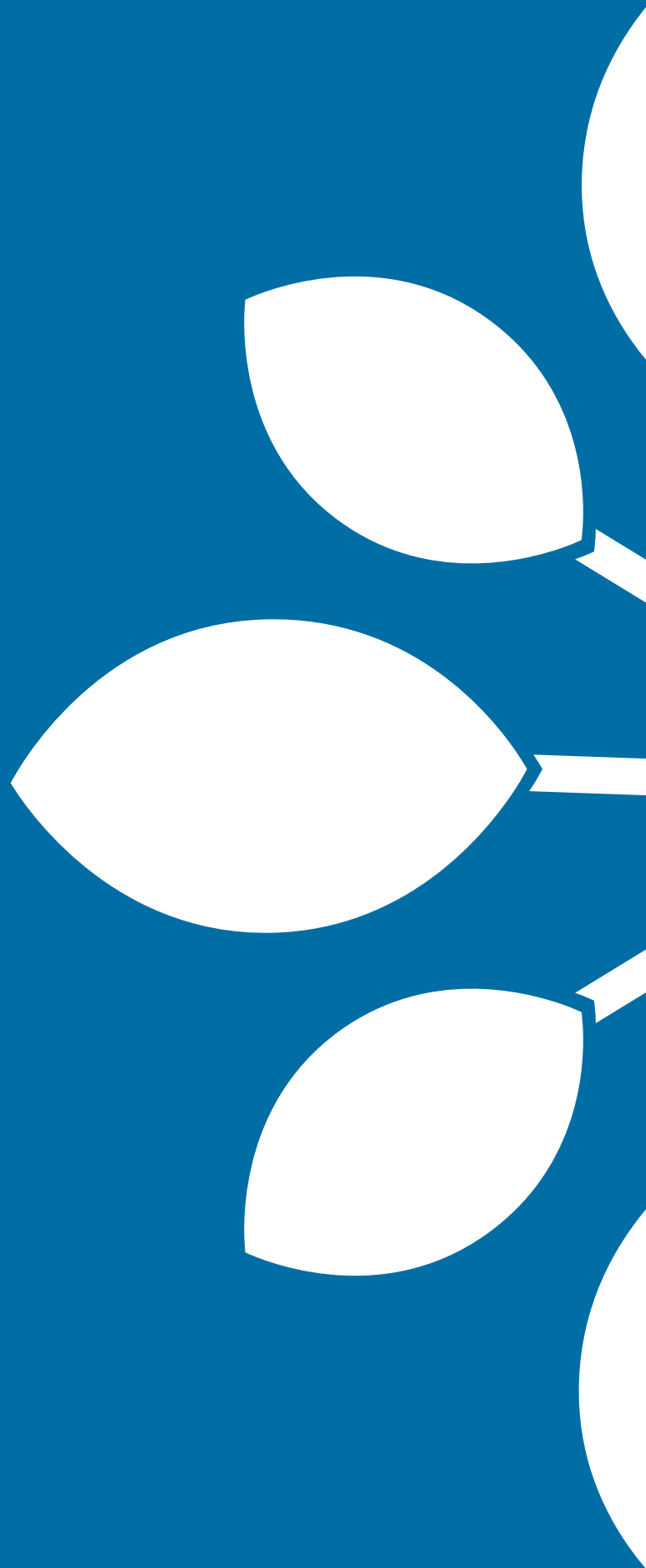
## SPECIAL THANKS

to the hundreds of Lakewood residents who contributed their ideas, feedback and support to ***Imagine Tomorrow!*** These community members and partners represent a variety of perspectives including arts and culture, health, heritage, business, faith, sports, urban agriculture, inclusivity, schools, student organizations, neighborhoods, open space, family services, governmental agencies and more.

Thank you to the Community Resources staff who continue to deliver exceptional services to the community and enhance quality of life for all Lakewood residents.

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# ACRONYMS

**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act

**BID:** Business Improvement District

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control

**CAPRA:** Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies

**CDOT:** Colorado Department of Transportation

**CPW:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife

**CR:** Community Resources

**ERF:** Equipment Replacement Fund

**ESRI:** Environmental Systems Research Institute

**FTE:** Full Time Equivalent

**GID:** General Improvement District

**GOCO:** Great Outdoors Colorado

**HCA:** Heritage, Culture and the Arts

**LOS:** Level of Service

**MPI:** Market Potential Index

**NRPA:** National Recreation and Parks Association

**PIR:** Priority Investment Rating

**SCFD:** Scientific and Cultural Facilities District

**SFIA:** Sports and Fitness Industry Association

**SHF:** History Colorado State Historical Fund

**SVI:** Social Vulnerability Index

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I am pleased with the City of Lakewood's commitment to providing high quality park, recreation, family and cultural services and facilities that inspire enjoyment, learning and wellness in the lives of those who live, work and play in Lakewood. Fulfilling the department's mission and delivering high-quality arts, parks, and recreation requires the steadfast dedication of hundreds of full-time, part-time and seasonal employees backed by an army of generous volunteers. There is a reason Lakewood is one of Colorado's most desirable places to live, work and play!

In 2022, the department launched a comprehensive master planning effort, Imagine Tomorrow! Arts, Parks and Recreation for All. Imagine Tomorrow! is intended as a guiding document to set the stage for providing wonderful parks, recreation and arts experiences for our residents over the next 10 years.

Thank you to the thousands of Lakewood residents who influenced the development of Imagine Tomorrow!. The plan positions the department for continued success with prioritized recommendations through the lens of public health and equity. This summary provides a snapshot of the key elements of the plan including core services, goals for the future, emphasis on equity and level of service.

## CORE SERVICES

Core Services are the services that are of greatest importance to the community as informed by current and future needs. Identifying Core Services assists staff, elected and appointed officials, and the public to focus on what is most important to residents. In Lakewood, these core services include providing:

- » Arts and cultural facilities and programs
- » Aquatics and water access
- » Community events
- » Environmental education and stewardship
- » Health and wellness opportunities
- » Park and facility planning and design
- » Parks, open space and trails
- » Preserving and interpreting Lakewood's history
- » Transportation for older adults and people with mobility challenges
- » Youth programs

## GOALS

The priorities resulting from robust community participation in Imagine Tomorrow! shaped the six goals of this 10-year plan as identified below. Detailed strategies and actions were developed for each goal and serve as the foundation for implementation of the plan. See Appendix I, Implementation Resources, for more information.

1. Serve the diverse needs of the community by balancing unique arts, parks and recreation programming, services and events with the demand for high-quality core services.
2. Respond to community needs and priorities by maximizing the efficiency of existing arts, parks and recreation facilities and resources through proactive asset maintenance and stewardship.
3. Inspire enjoyment, creativity, and wellness by offering a safe and rewarding experience in our parks, facilities and trails.
4. Connect the community to arts, parks and recreation facilities, programs and services, and empower residents to make the most of the opportunities available to them.
5. Responsibly conserve vibrant arts, parks and recreational resources through preservation, sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.
6. Enable physical, mental and social well-being by fostering a healthy community with equitable access to arts, parks, recreation, trails and open spaces.



## EMPHASIS ON EQUITY

It is imperative that we provide arts, parks and recreation opportunities to all residents of Lakewood. The Imagine Tomorrow! process included an Equity Analysis that evaluated three geospatial factors to identify geographic areas in need of park or open space investment on a scale of least to greatest need. The analysis revealed that the north-central and east portion of Lakewood, among other smaller areas, is in need of investment to expand equitable access whether through new amenities, increased access to existing amenities, trail improvements for connectivity, or land acquisition when available. Learn more about our plan emphasis on equity in Appendix E.



## LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of Service (LOS) guidelines are targets that define the quantity of a specific system asset based on population. The standards typically address acres of neighborhood and community parkland, miles of trail, acres of open space, square footage of recreation centers, and numbers of specific recreational elements, such as playgrounds. The existing LOS for various features of the arts, parks and recreation system are reported in comparison to peer communities in the Benchmark Analysis in Appendix B. Key findings were identified through the planning effort following an assessment of parks and facilities (see Appendix D for full assessment summary):

1. Parks and facilities are generally well-maintained
2. There are insufficient labor and funding resources
3. Usage demands outpace available supply
4. Lakewood has strong park connectivity

When considering LOS, we must also consider resources, in terms of both finances and personnel, to maintain what we have and provide for future needs. Chapter 3, Recommendations, summarizes staffing needs based on best practices for maintenance of Lakewood's existing facilities, parks, open space and trails. Recommendations include an additional 10 full-time equivalent staff members for parks and an additional 5 full-time equivalent staff members for facility maintenance in order to increase Lakewood's level of service and move the department from reactive to proactive when addressing maintenance and lifecycle replacement.

As discussions around the city's aging infrastructure continue, and determinations are made, additional personnel resources may be indicated.

The city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) guidelines prioritize the maintenance of current assets and the development of new facilities. Based on current economic conditions, revenue and expenditure projections, funding is not sufficient to maintain all existing system assets and build new arts, parks and recreation amenities unless comparable trade-offs occur. For example, deteriorating and costly to maintain facilities could be removed from the system to allow for building newer amenities that better serve identified community needs and are less costly to maintain. Learn more in Chapter 4, Implementation. Imagine Tomorrow! will serve as a guide for staff when making such decisions in the years to come.

Looking forward to the future,

**Kit Newland**

*Director of Community Resources*





# FOUNDATION

---

BACKGROUND  
PURPOSE  
PROCESS AND TIMELINE  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## BACKGROUND

***Imagine Tomorrow!: Arts, Parks and Recreation for All*** is the Lakewood Community Resources Department's guiding framework for the continued provision of high-quality arts, parks and recreation experiences for the next 10 years. The city is experiencing increased rates of infill development at higher densities, a diversifying population and a shift in demand for the types of opportunities that it provides. (see Appendix F: Planning Context). These factors contribute to a need to update the 2017 *Imagine Lakewood!* plan to reflect community preferences and priorities while identifying new opportunities to enhance user experiences and implement best management practices.

Since 2018, the Community Resources Department has achieved 85% of the goals and recommendations set in *Imagine Lakewood!* Notable accomplishments include:

- » Expanded the city's parkland portfolio by 117 acres
- » Created a plan to increase transportation for the city's aging population and secured grant funding to partially subsidize the cost of Lakewood Rides services
- » Renovated and modernized playgrounds at Carmody, Cottage, Idlewild, Addenbrooke, Morse, Quail St., Taft and Westland Parks

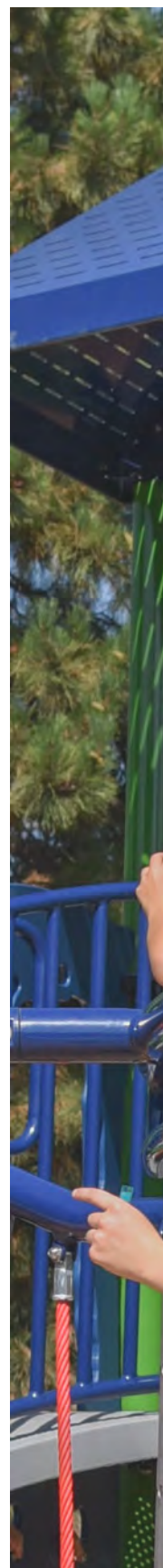
- » Conducted a Trail Connectivity Assessment and secured over \$2.5 million in grant funding for major safety improvements to the popular Bear Creek Regional Trail
- » Maximized the efficiency and effectiveness of the department's publications, while going digital with *Community Connection*
- » Enrollments remained steady with increases in some program areas
- » Removed financial barriers to participation for 4,340 individuals in the last five years through the Lakewood Possibilities Fund
- » Conducted a tree canopy assessment and secured funding to support canopy expansion as recommended in the Lakewood Sustainability Plan
- » Sixteen parks and facilities are now powered by 100% renewable energy
- » Shared the community's history with a 50th Anniversary commemorative book on Lakewood's history, and digital access to Lakewood's historic artifact collection
- » Rehabilitated the historic Caretaker's Cottage
- » Increased access to healthy food by expanding the city's community garden program with the addition of an urban farm and three gardens

## PURPOSE

Arts, parks and recreation facilities and programs play a critical role in how residents and visitors experience Lakewood. Parks provide a setting for life's special moments and a backdrop for social interaction. Recreation and arts classes bring participants from all walks of life together to enjoy a common activity. Cultural programs introduce the community to new art forms and historic stories they might not otherwise experience. Taken together, Lakewood's arts, parks and recreation have the opportunity to continue profoundly and positively impacting the physical, mental, social, economic and environmental health of the city's residents and neighborhoods.

***Imagine Tomorrow!*** seeks to position the Community Resources Department for continued success through systematic and prioritized recommendations through the lens of public health and equity.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
DEPARTMENT MISSION:  
WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING  
HIGH QUALITY PARK, RECREATION,  
FAMILY AND CULTURAL SERVICES  
AND FACILITIES THAT INSPIRE  
ENJOYMENT, LEARNING AND  
WELLNESS IN THE LIVES OF THOSE  
WHO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY IN  
LAKEWOOD





# PROCESS AND TIMELINE



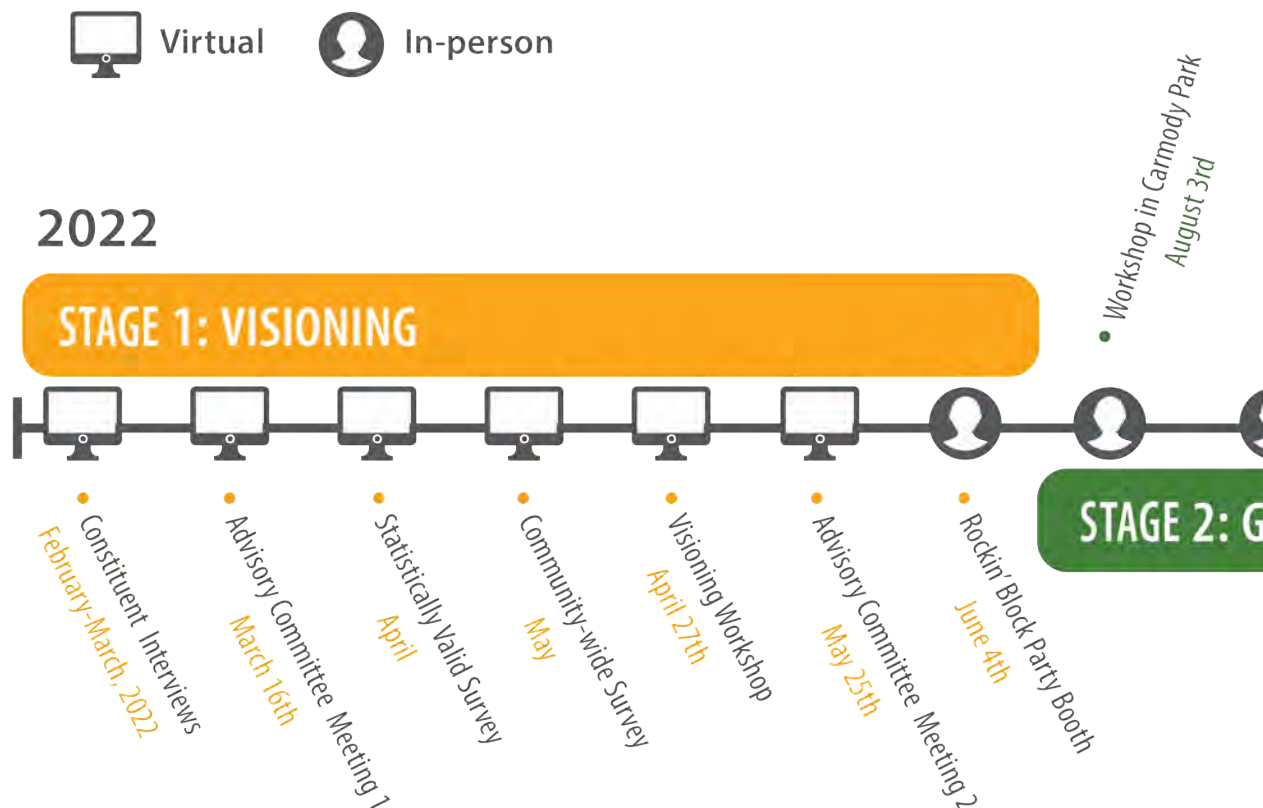
# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Purposeful and sincere outreach was critical to cultivating public trust, expanding support for the plan, addressing concerns early in the process, and building a sense of ownership for implementation. The development of *Imagine Tomorrow!* included numerous opportunities for residents, advocates and community leaders to engage and provide input. The goal of community outreach was to gain a thorough understanding of arts, parks and recreation desires and needs. This knowledge was critical to creating a plan that will effectively guide the department through 2033 and beyond.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Imagine Tomorrow!* was guided by an ad hoc project Advisory Committee, a 21-member committee that represented various organizations, areas of expertise and perspectives. The Advisory Committee informed the plan with local knowledge and insight, provided feedback on goals and recommendations, promoted public engagement through their professional and social networks, and shared opportunities for increased equity and unique partnerships. Workshops with the *Imagine Tomorrow!* Advisory Committee were facilitated by Community Resources staff and the consulting team.

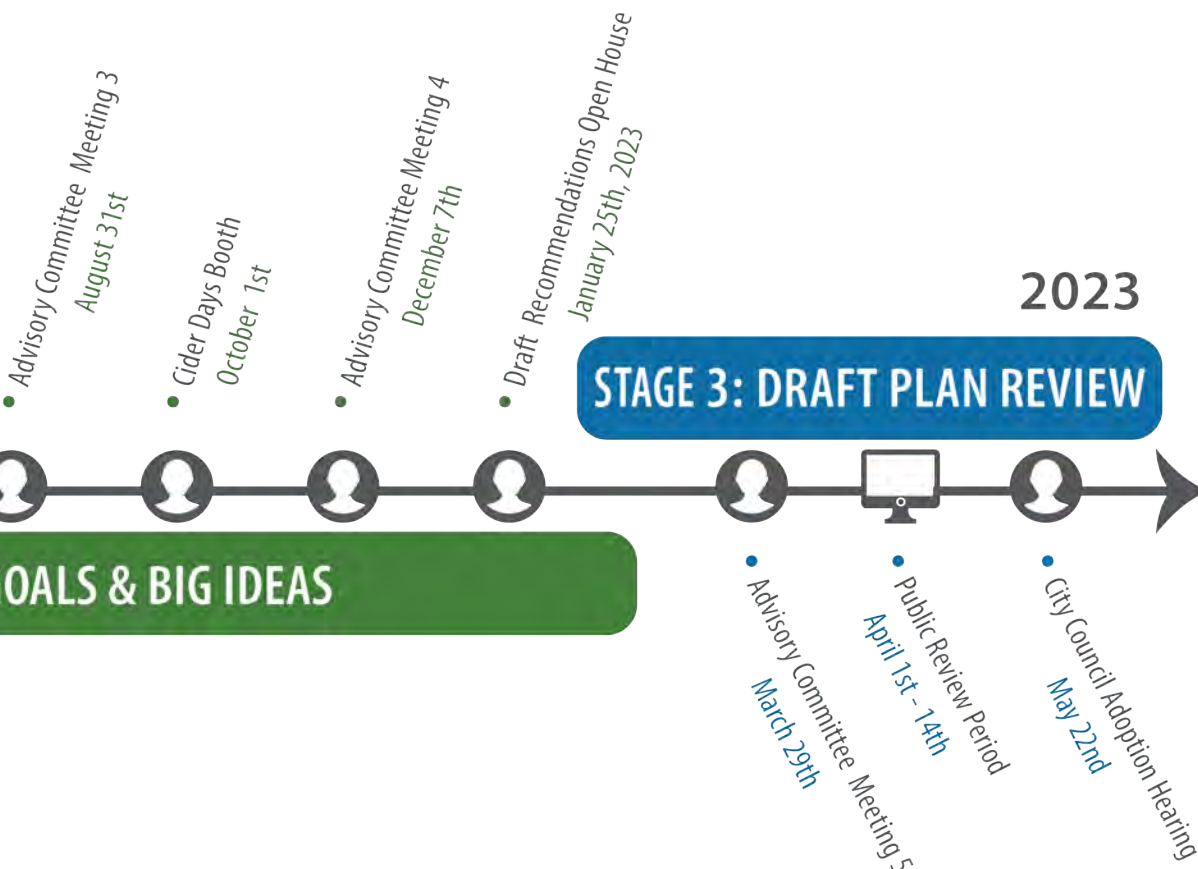
## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE & MILESTONES





## WE ASKED, LAKEWOOD RESPONDED! OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

02	POP-UP ENGAGEMENT BOOTHS
05	ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS
07	CONSTITUENT LISTENING SESSIONS
22	ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS
31	OPEN HOUSE ATTENDEES (PUBLIC MEETING #3)
50	VIRTUAL VISIONING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS (PUBLIC MEETING #1)
30	COMMENTS & "LIKES" IN DRAFT PLAN ONLINE REVIEW
92	IDEAS SUBMITTED VIA PROJECT WEBPAGE
100+	WORKSHOP IN THE PARK ATTENDEES (PUBLIC MEETING #2)
267	COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY RESPONDENTS
467	STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESPONDENTS
6,000+	VISITS TO PROJECT PAGE ON LAKEWOODTOGETHER.ORG
65,000	DIRECT-MAIL NOTICES TO LAKEWOOD HOUSEHOLDS

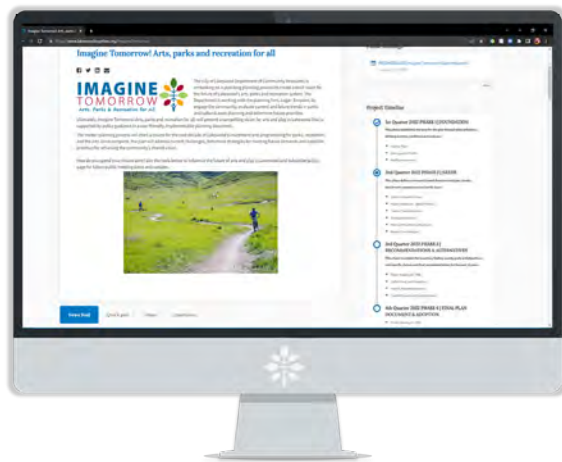


# ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Over the course of the planning process, the project team engaged the Lakewood community through a variety of methods including in-person and online engagement opportunities. The following summarizes key engagement strategies throughout the planning process. Detailed community engagement results can be found in Appendix A.

## PROJECT WEBPAGE

The *Imagine Tomorrow!* project homepage, hosted on the city's community engagement platform, [LakewoodTogether.org](https://LakewoodTogether.org), was established as an online hub of information and a forum for residents to ask questions of the project team, share big ideas and comment on plan materials. The site served as a key source for information on engagement opportunities and a venue for interaction through tools such as the newsfeed, quick polls and surveys. The page was regularly updated to share opportunities to participate in the planning effort, key findings, public outreach results and draft project deliverables.



## STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

As part of the initial community engagement efforts, the Logan Simpson planning team conducted one-on-one stakeholder listening sessions over a three-week period from February 14 to March 8, 2022. Stakeholders were invited to sign up for a 20 to 30-minute phone interview to share their vision for Lakewood's arts, parks and recreation offerings; insight into any challenges they experience; and opportunities and ideas that they would like the plan to consider.

Seven key stakeholders participated in the one-on-one listening sessions and represented a variety of organizations including: Lakewood Sustainable Neighborhoods, Colorado Mountain Bike Association, Runners' Roost, urban agriculture non-profit agencies and art class participants.

## STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

The planning team administered a statistically valid Community Needs Assessment Survey in the spring of 2022. The survey results were critical to informing the development of goals, strategies, actions and implementation priorities of the plan. Responses exceeded expectations, resulting in 467 completed surveys. The overall results for the sample of 467 households have a precision of at least  $\pm 4.5\%$  at a 95% level of confidence. This means that the Community Resources Department can trust the results to be representative of Lakewood households without results skewed in favor of any group. Major findings of the survey are summarized in the following chapter and included as Appendix A.

## COMMUNITY-WIDE OPEN-ENDED SURVEY

In addition to the statistically valid survey, the planning team administrated an identical survey online for completion by any individuals who were interested. This survey did not require respondents to live within Lakewood and was open to the general public. A total of 267 responses were collected. Top priorities for investment for both facilities and programs were largely consistent with the results of the statistically valid survey.



## PUBLIC EVENTS

### Virtual Visioning Workshop

Approximately 50 community members attended a Virtual Visioning Workshop on April 27, 2022 to learn more about the accomplishments of the previous master plan, how to engage in the ***Imagine Tomorrow!*** process and most importantly, contribute their big ideas and vision for the future of arts, parks and recreation in Lakewood. The workshop was conducted in English and Spanish through live interpretation.

### Workshop in the Park

On August 3, 2022, a drop-in style community workshop at Carmody Park, complete with ice cream and a pizza truck, provided attendees the opportunity to review draft plan goals and contribute their ideas for how the Community Resources Department can best achieve them. Bilingual presentation boards also invited participants to vote on their top priorities for arts, parks and recreation programs and facilities. Results of the Walkability Analysis were presented as well. The event drew over 100 adults, many accompanied by children. The event piqued the interest of many families recreating at Carmody Park who were introduced to the ***Imagine Tomorrow!*** plan for the first time.



### Draft Recommendations Open House

The planning team shared draft recommendations at a public open house on January 25, 2023, at the Clements Community Center. Attendees were invited to visit and provide feedback on several stations that presented major concepts and key recommendations including: the Parks and Open Space Access Equity Analysis; plan goals and strategies and project prioritization criteria. Attendees also participated in a budgeting activity in which they allocated “funding” for capital projects. Thirty-one community members attended.

## POP-UP ENGAGEMENT BOOTHS

The planning team and Community Resources staff had booths at two popular community-wide festivals to expand public exposure to the ***Imagine Tomorrow!*** plan and solicit feedback on key concepts and ideas.

### Rockin’ Block Party

Lakewood’s annual free Rockin’ Block Party, on June 4, 2022, was attended by hundreds of community members, many of whom stopped by the ***Imagine Tomorrow!*** booth to provide input on their communications preferences, support for dog-parks and top investment priorities for programs and facilities.

### Cider Days

Lakewood’s popular Cider Days festival, attended by thousands of residents and visitors over a single weekend, showcased an ***Imagine Tomorrow!*** booth on October 1, 2022, one of the busiest days of the event. Festival-goers visited the booth to indicate their preference for high priority plan strategies, review the Park and Open Space Equity Analysis results, identify preferred dog-park amenities and win prizes.



## KEY THEMES

The following major themes emerged consistently throughout the public engagement process:

- » Demand for trails and safe connectivity
- » Community preference for self-guided recreation
- » Prioritize maintenance, staff resources and upgrades of existing facilities when considering new amenities
- » Maximize efficiency and creative use of existing parks and facilities while also considering new facilities and amenities
- » Visitor safety and adequate staff resources are paramount
- » Desire for native landscapes, gardens and related educational experiences
- » Importance of technology upgrades to improve user experience
- » Increase communication tools, including upgrading the registration system, a mobile registration app, text alerts and new social media tools
- » Multigenerational programs and facilities that are inclusive of all ability levels
- » Equitable access to arts, parks and recreation for underserved neighborhoods and populations



## COMMUNITY COMMENTS

### CONSTITUENT INTERVIEWS

- “ [Community Resources] staff are the asset -- their ability to think outside the box.”
- “ Maintenance staff do a great job and are personable and approachable to park patrons when they are working.
- “ Arts and culture facilities and programs are top-notch and attract a regional audience.”
- “ [The] city is receptive to partnering with outside organizations, but it would be helpful to have one point-person to coordinate with.”

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- “ Funding in the future will be a challenge, how do we get ahead of it?”
- “ Prioritize investing in areas that have fewer miles of trails and parks/natural areas.”
- “ In other cities, parks and playgrounds are moving toward multi-sensory environments and artwork built into playgrounds.”
- “ Flip the leadership structure from the city to non-profits and other community partners?”

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

- “ More Hispanic events”
- “ Lack of police/security presence renders park unsafe to use at various times.”
- “ More parks like Carmody so the whole family of different ages and abilities can enjoy “
- “ Work with schools to get kids more involved in parks and programs—especially in underserved communities.”







# NEEDS

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STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS  
BENCHMARK ANALYSIS  
EQUITY ANALYSIS  
MARKET TRENDS

# STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS

The planning team administered a statistically valid survey to assess community needs to a random sample of households in the City of Lakewood. Responses exceeded expectations, resulting in 467 completed surveys. The overall results have a precision of at least  $\pm 4.5\%$  at a 95% level of confidence. The purpose of the survey was to objectively assess usage, satisfaction and needs for a wide range of arts, parks and recreation facilities and programs. The results identify opportunities for the Community Resources Department to better and more equitably meet the

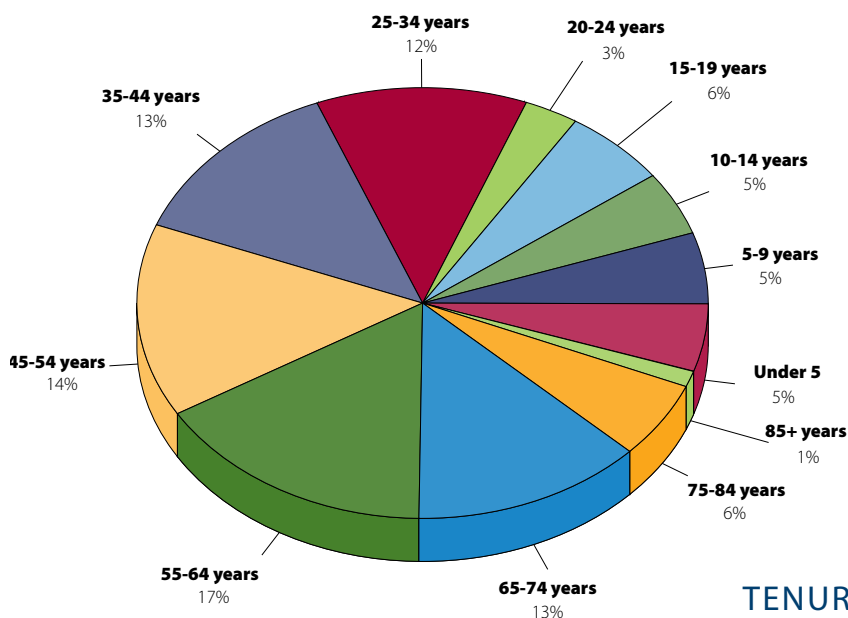
needs of the community. Key findings are summarized here. For detailed results, see Appendix A.

## WHO RESPONDED?

Demographic characteristics of survey respondents were closely representative of the city's overall population (see Appendix F: Planning Context). Fundamental demographic characteristics of survey respondents are reported below.

### HOUSEHOLD AGE COMPOSITION

by percentage of persons in household



### GENDER OF RESPONDENTS:

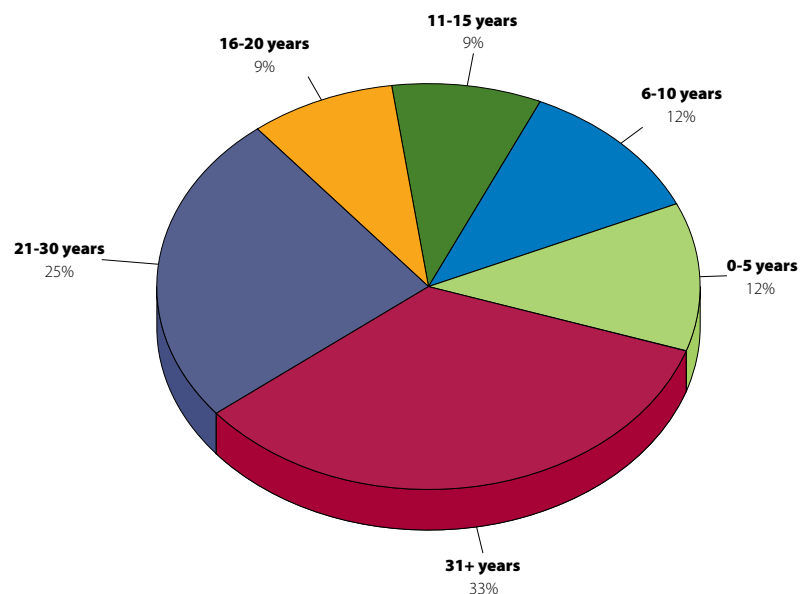
**51% FEMALE**

**49% MALE**

**.6% NON-BINARY OR TRANSGENDER**

**59% OF  
RESPONDENTS  
HAVE LIVED IN  
LAKEWOOD OVER  
20 YEARS**

### TENURE AS LAKEWOOD RESIDENT





## ARTS, PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS USE

**Frequency of Use.** Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated that during a typical year their household visits city arts, parks or recreation facilities.

Seventy percent of respondents indicated that during a typical year their household participates in city arts, parks, or recreation programs or events.

**Barriers to Use.** The top reason respondents did not utilize Lakewood facilities is because they use other city, state, private or HOA facilities (32%). The top reasons respondents did not utilize Lakewood programs are because they didn't know what was offered (54%), have busy schedules or are not interested (30%) or prefer individual activities instead (29%).

**Level of Satisfaction.** Sixty-seven percent of respondents are "very satisfied" (16%) or "satisfied" (51%) with Lakewood parks, facilities, programs and services.

Based on the PIR, the following eight facilities were rated as **high** priorities for investment:

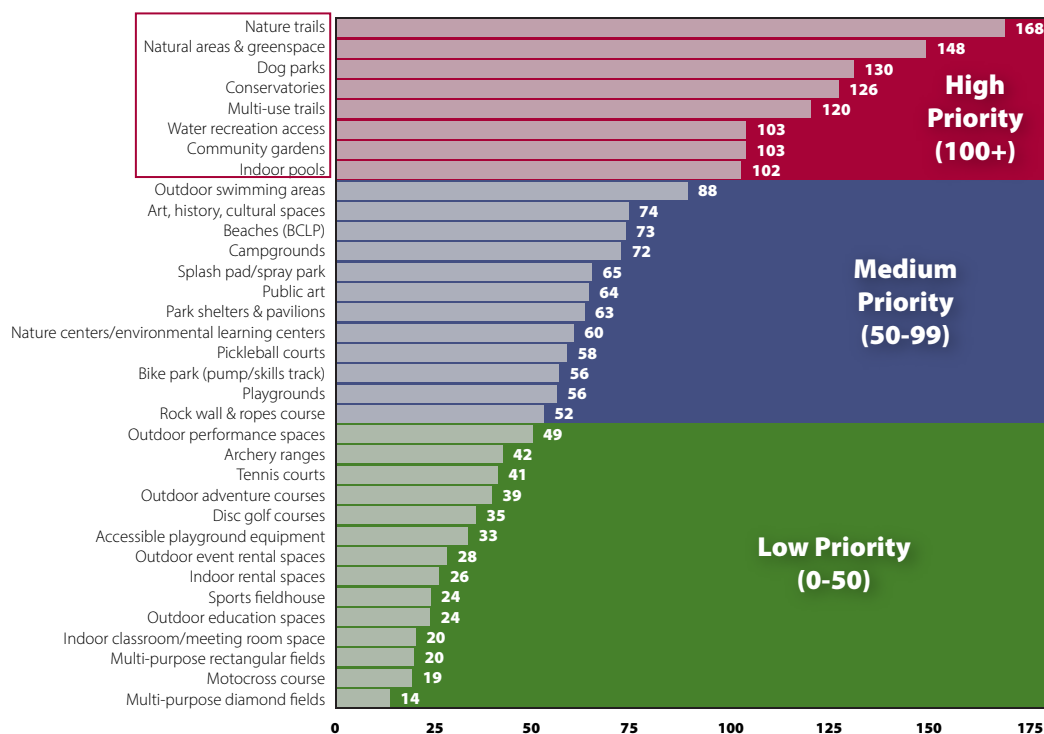
- » Nature trails (PIR=168)
- » Natural areas & greenspace (PIR=148)
- » Dog parks (PIR=130)
- » Conservatories (gardens, plant libraries)<sup>3</sup> (PIR=126)
- » Multi-use trails (PIR=120)
- » Water recreation access (PIR=103)
- » Community gardens (PIR=103)
- » Indoor pools (PIR=102)

These high priority facilities accommodate activities that are low cost for the user and are self-guided, versus those that are team-oriented, specialized or age-dependent. The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 34 recreation facilities assessed on the survey. While some facilities may not be used by as many residents as those listed as high or medium priority for investments, they may be needed in the community to meet demands for a specific user group. Note that *Conservatories* includes botanical gardens, pollinator gardens, plant libraries and similar uses.

## FACILITIES NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

**Priorities for Facility Investments.** The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) is an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on arts, parks and recreation investments. The PIR equally weighs two factors: (1) the importance that residents place on an amenity, and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the amenity.

### TOP PRIORITIES FOR FACILITIES AND AMENITIES INVESTMENT



## PROGRAM NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

**Priorities for Program Investments.** Based on the PIR, the following Lakewood programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

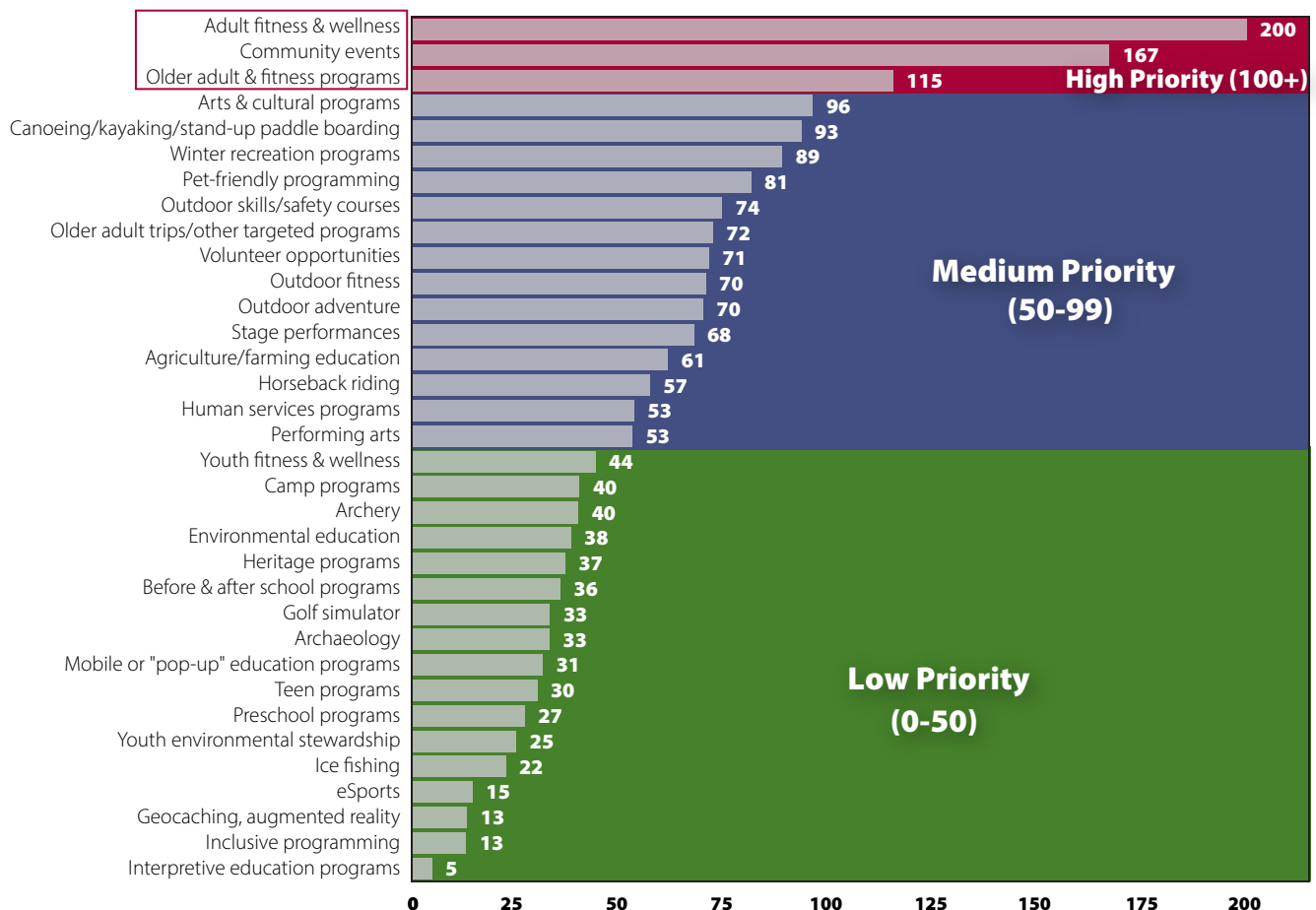
- » Adult fitness & wellness programs (PIR=200)
- » Community events (PIR=167)
- » Older adult & fitness programs (PIR=115)

The chart below shows the PIR for each of the 34 programs assessed. Like the facility priorities, some programs may be needed in the community to meet demands for a specific user group. Seventy percent of respondents indicated that during a typical year their household participates in city arts, parks or recreation programs or events.

### Heritage Culture and Arts Program Importance.

Respondents were asked to select the top three roles/services of highest importance in Lakewood heritage, culture and arts programs. Most important was supporting local artists and arts organizations (43%) followed by preserving and presenting local history at 40%. More than a quarter of respondents also selected providing opportunities to gather and celebrate (32%), exposure to local/regional artists and performers (31%), broadening exposure to arts/culture/history (30%) and contributing to the local economy. (26%)

## TOP PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAM INVESTMENT





## SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Respondents were asked to rate their level of support regarding 10 actions the City of Lakewood could take to improve its arts, parks and recreation system. The actions with the highest level of support (either very supportive or somewhat supportive) were improving existing parks infrastructure (88%), improving existing trail system (88%), improve/add restroom facilities (85%) and improve existing playgrounds (80%).

**88% OF RESPONDENTS  
ARE SUPPORTIVE OF  
IMPROVING EXISTING  
PARK INFRASTRUCTURE**

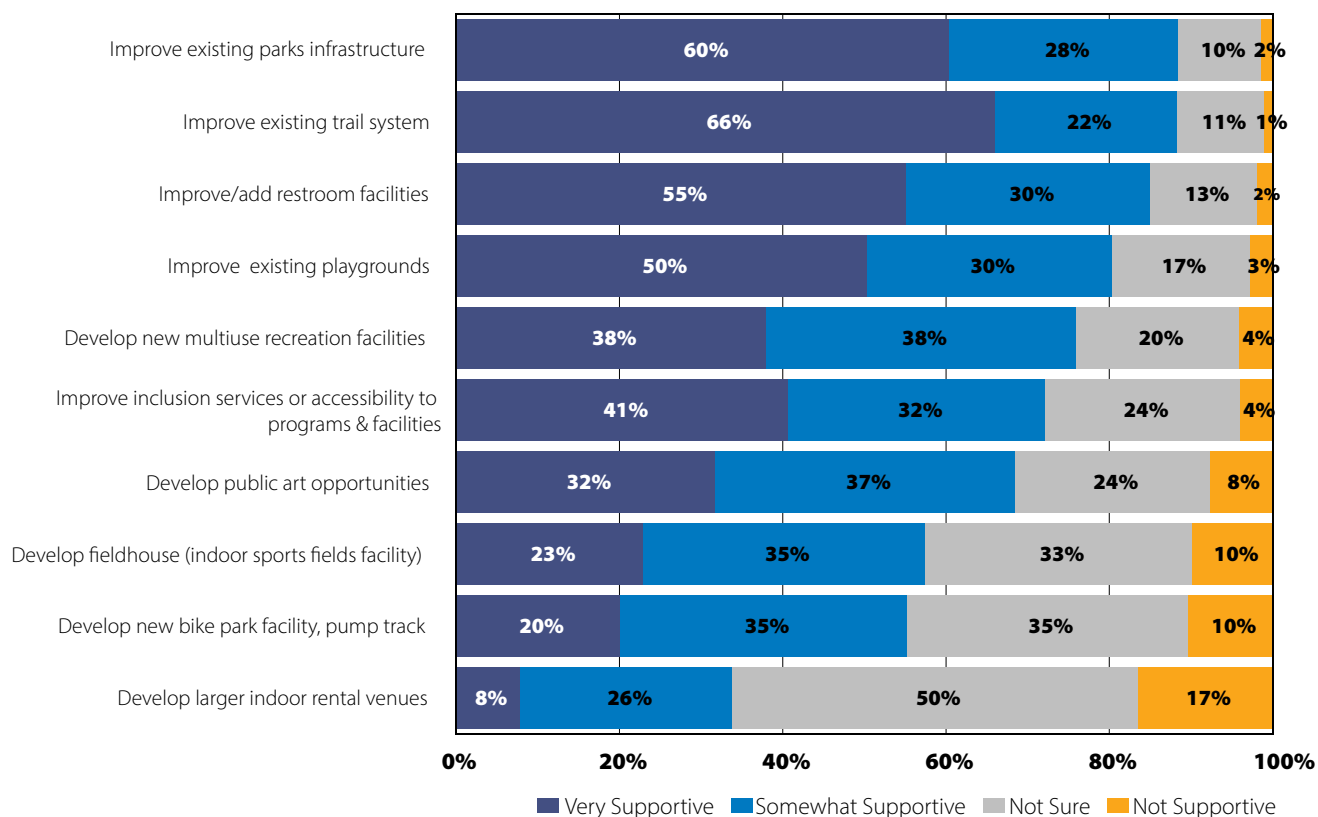
## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

**Interest in Event Concepts.** Respondents were asked to indicate which event concepts their household would be interested in or enjoy. The highest number of respondents indicated outdoor entertainment as an interest (80%). More than half of respondents were also interested in festivals (61%), holiday celebrations (59%) and food/drink events (54%).

**Household's Perception Change Due to COVID-19.** Respondents were asked to indicate how their use of arts, parks, trails, and recreation has changed due to COVID-19. The largest number of respondents felt their use increased (37%). Thirty-four percent (34%) felt it made no change. Twenty-nine percent (29%) felt their usage decreased.

## LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL CITY ACTIONS

by percentage of respondents



## BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES ANALYSIS

The planning team identified metrics to benchmark against communities on the Front Range of Colorado with similar park and recreation systems. The complexity in this analysis was ensuring direct comparison through a methodology of statistics and ratios to provide objective information that is relevant and accurate, as best as possible. The goal of benchmarking is to evaluate how Lakewood's Community Resources Department is positioned among peer agencies as it applies to the delivery of its parks system through data that offers a view of each system's park acreage, funding and indoor facility inventory. Arts and culture facilities and programs were not benchmarked as part of this analysis.

For a detailed summary and analysis report, see Appendix B.

Note that benchmark analysis is only one evaluation tool for Lakewood's performance based on the information provided. The attributes considered for selecting the communities in this benchmark study included:

- » Jurisdiction population size
- » Jurisdiction land area size
- » Parks and recreation services offered
- » Parks and recreation funding

## MARKET TRENDS

The Market Trends Analysis provides an understanding of national and local recreational trends. Through understanding local and national participation trends in recreation activities, the Department can gain general insight into the lifecycle stage of recreation programs and activities as either emerging, stable or declining; and thereby anticipate potential changes in need and demand for the programs and activities that it provides to the residents of Lakewood.

Trends data used for this analysis was obtained from Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). The SFIA's Topline Participation Report 2022 and NRPA data were used to evaluate national trends, and local trends relied on ESRI reporting.

A summary of trends and Lakewood's metrics are reported in Appendix C, including the full results and analysis.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE EQUITY ANALYSIS

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably despite their different meanings. Equality means all residents or neighborhoods receive an equal amount of investment. While that sounds fair, it assumes that all people start from the same baseline of investment and opportunity, which is often not the case. Equity means ensuring that everyone has the same access and receives the appropriate investment relative to their current conditions and needs. Some neighborhoods and segments of the population require greater investment in parks and open space because they have historically been underserved.

Public arts, parks, recreation and open space should be equally accessible and available to all people regardless of income level, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, language or age. Public arts, parks, recreation facilities and open spaces, should be provided equitably to all residents.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) documents many benefits to social equity and inclusive and accessible public parks and open space, including:

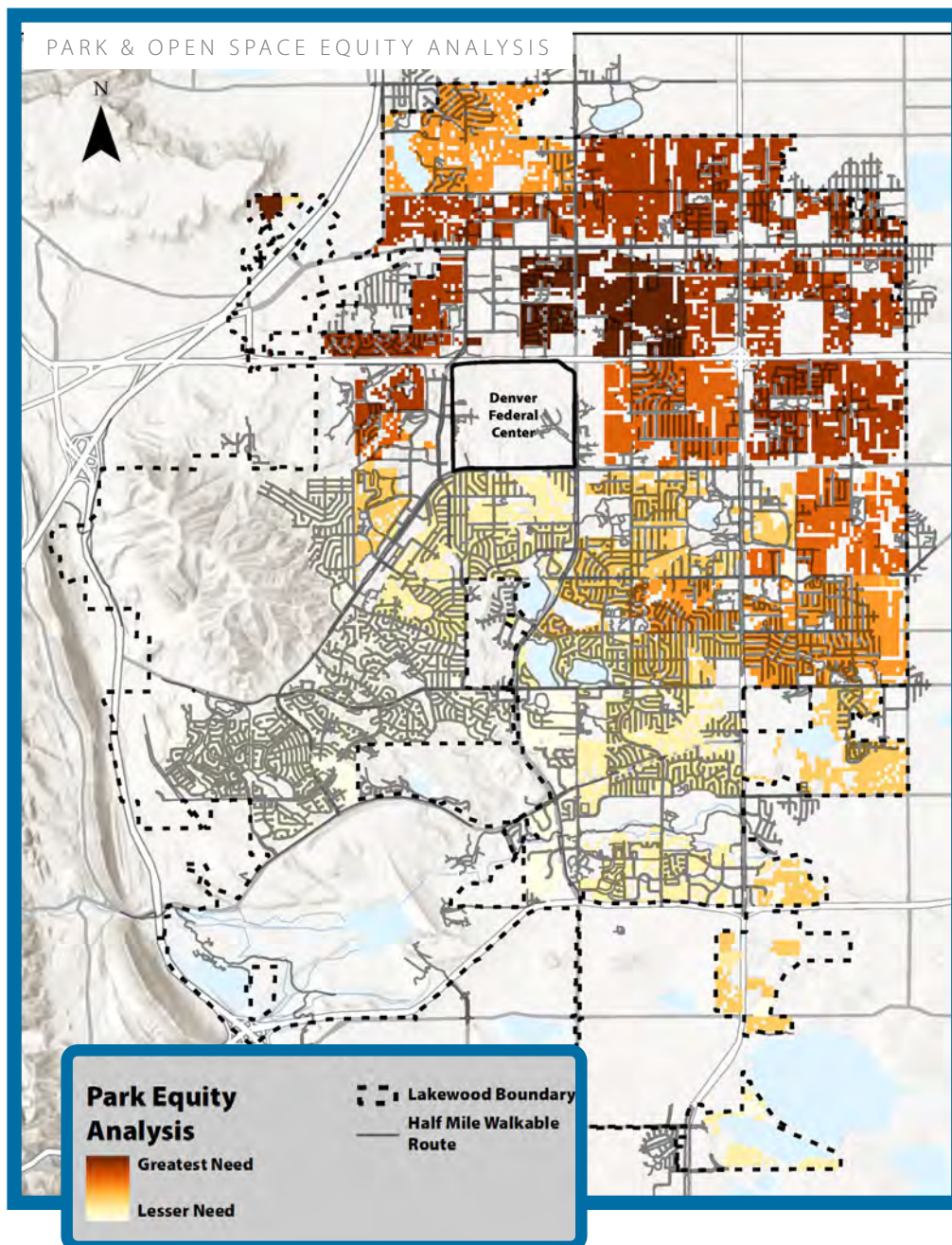
- » **Public enjoyment and engagement.** Where parks and open space are plentiful, residents enjoy the closest attachment and engagement within their communities. Studies indicate higher levels of local gross domestic product and economic well-being when access to parks and open space is plentiful.
- » **Quality recreation time with family and friends.** Parks and open space provide a space and a reason to enjoy quality time, relaxation and fun among family members and friends, thus strengthening the social and familial bonds that provide balance and satisfaction in life.



- » **Improvement of mental and physical health.** Arts, parks, open space and recreation can reduce the impacts of chronic diseases, especially in such vulnerable populations as children, older adults and the socially vulnerable.
- » **Measurable decreases in rates of crime and other detrimental activities.** Communities are safer because of a wholesome atmosphere created by well-managed arts, parks, open space and recreation services that provide healthy activities and programming for all people.

## ANALYZING EQUITABLE ACCESS IN LAKEWOOD

Since 2018, the City of Lakewood acquired 117 acres to expand access to parks. To continue to improve equity in investment decisions through the city, the Community Resources Department and the *Imagine Tomorrow!* planning team evaluated three factors through geospatial analysis that reveal the residential areas with the greatest need for increased access to parks or natural areas. See the online storymap, linked below, or Appendix E for the complete analysis and results.



VISIT THE [EQUITY ANALYSIS STORYMAP](#) TO INTERACT WITH DETAILED, ZOOMABLE ANALYSIS MAPS.





# 3

CHAPTER

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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CORE SERVICES  
CAPRA ACCREDITATION  
CLASSIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS  
GOALS AND STRATEGIES  
LEVEL OF SERVICE

## CORE SERVICES

The Community Resources Department provides hundreds of programs, services and events to residents each year. The Department works year-round to plan, implement and evaluate a wide variety of arts, parks and recreation programs, events and family services while operating and maintaining a diverse collection of facilities. The Lakewood community can choose from hundreds of city-provided offerings in sports, arts, summer camps, aquatics and therapeutic recreation among others. Additionally, the city partners with other local organizations to further expand offerings.

As the Department strives to continue providing outstanding programs, services and amenities, it is helpful to define the Department's Core Services.

Core Services are the services that are of greatest importance to the community as informed by current and future needs. Arts, parks and recreation agencies are often challenged by trying to provide all things to all people and are, at times, not viewed as the essential service providers that they are. Identifying Core Services assists staff, elected and appointed officials, and the public to focus on what is most important to the community.

.....

**CORE SERVICES ARE THE  
SERVICES THAT THE COMMUNITY  
EXPECTS THE DEPARTMENT TO  
DELIVER.**

.....





## COMMUNITY RESOURCES CORE SERVICES:

- » Arts and cultural facilities and programs
- » Aquatics/water access
- » Community events
- » Environmental education and stewardship
- » Health and wellness opportunities
- » Parks/open space/trails
- » Preserving and interpreting Lakewood's history
- » Transportation for older adults and people with mobility challenges
- » Youth programs

# GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following six goals help guide the Department's provision of facilities, services, and programs for arts, parks and recreation. Each goal is supported by strategies and specific actions that will allow the Department to meet or make substantial progress toward achieving the goal. The specific actions are identified in Appendix I: Implementation Resources.

## GOAL 1: Serve the diverse needs of the community by balancing unique arts, parks and recreation programming, services and events with the demand for high-quality core services.

### Strategies

- 1.1 Plan for future program development that responds to community needs and priorities.
- 1.2 Proactively consider the specialized needs of residents, such as those activities that can be enjoyed by older adults, teens and those with disabilities.
- 1.3 Continue to meet arts and cultural needs throughout the community.
- 1.4 Continue implementing the Lakewood Heritage Center (now, Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park) Master Plan 2017-2027. Begin plan update process in 2026.
- 1.5 Evaluate and continue best practices related to volunteerism and support community efforts to expand volunteer base and integrate volunteers in meaningful ways.
- 1.6 Seek the resources to achieve staffing levels necessary to deliver high quality programs, services, events and facilities that meet community needs.
- 2.3 Reinvest in existing park infrastructure and trail system to ensure the longest lifecycle possible.
- 2.4 Maximize usage of available programming space.
- 2.5 Identify and implement opportunities to add desired amenities to existing parks.
- 2.6 Identify and implement opportunities to add water amenities and access to existing facilities and parks while ensuring proper maintenance of existing aquatic facilities.
- 2.7 Expand opportunities for sanctioned off leash dog experiences.
- 2.8 Utilize a variety of funding strategies for large scale capital projects and land acquisition.
- 2.9 Provide adequate, functional space for high-demand arts and cultural programs.
- 2.10 Provide adequate, functional space for recreation programming and fitness classes that meet the needs and priorities of the community. (See Appendix G for a Recreation Center Analysis).

## GOAL 2. Respond to community needs and priorities by maximizing the efficiency of existing arts, parks and recreation facilities and resources through proactive asset maintenance and stewardship.

### Strategies

- 2.1 Thoughtfully consider new amenities that align with our core services.
- 2.2 Analyze ongoing maintenance investment and resources for maximum benefit to the community.

## GOAL 3. Inspire enjoyment, creativity, and wellness by offering a safe and rewarding experience in our parks, facilities and trails.

### Strategies

- 3.1 Consider opportunities to maximize the visitor experience at Bear Creek Lake Park.
- 3.2 Consider opportunities to maximize the user experience at William F. Hayden Park on Green Mountain.
- 3.3 Evaluate use of the City's trails and multi-use path system including connectivity, user conflicts, design, safety and activity levels.
- 3.4 Address the unique challenges associated with assisting people experiencing homelessness in City parks, open space and trails.



## **GOAL 4. Connect the community to arts, parks and recreation facilities, programs and services, and empower residents to make the most of the opportunities available to them.**

### **Strategies**

- 4.1 Track metrics and develop a Community Resources Department marketing plan to ensure the continued delivery of consistent and impactful messaging through standardized practices and new communications tools.
- 4.2 Maximize efficiency and effectiveness of department's family of publications.
- 4.3 Continue marketing to local and regional target market audiences and evaluate target markets on a regular basis to ensure focus on most relevant audiences.
- 4.4 Continue implementing consistent visual messaging at all parks, facilities and trails.

## **GOAL 5. Responsibly conserve vibrant arts, parks and recreational resources through preservation, sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.**

### **Strategies**

- 5.1 Coordinate Park operations and management to support the City of Lakewood Sustainability Plan.
- 5.2 Conserve arts and cultural resources that represent Lakewood's identity and uniqueness through preservation, education, advocacy and partnerships.
- 5.3 Continue as a leader in the metro area in low water landscapes in parks.
- 5.4 Continue implementation of Natural Areas Management Plan to include entire park system native areas.
- 5.5 Coordinate with the Lakewood Sustainability Division to advance the City's Energy, Water, and Built Environment Goals adopted as part of the 2015 Sustainability Plan during facility upgrades and new construction.

- 5.6 Expand the City's community garden program with local providers and support Comprehensive Plan and Sustainability Plan goals for increased access to local and healthy food.

## **GOAL 6. Enable physical, mental and social well-being by fostering a healthy community with equitable access to arts, parks, recreation, trails and open spaces.**

### **Strategies**

- 6.1 Establish best practices related to diversity and inclusivity to promote use of and participation in Community Resources facilities, activities and events.
- 6.2 Remove financial barriers to participation by educating residents on various financial assistance opportunities available for all Community Resources facilities and programs.
- 6.3 Provide arts, parks and recreation facilities that are inclusive and accessible to all abilities.
- 6.4 Strive for equitable geographic distribution of parks.
- 6.5 Strive for health equity by establishing facilities as community wellness hubs that reduce barriers to physical, mental and social health, especially in neighborhoods of greatest need.



## LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of Service (LOS) guidelines are targets that define the quantity of a specific park system asset based on population. The standards typically address acres of neighborhood and community parkland, miles of trail, acres of open space, square footage of recreation centers, and numbers of specific recreational elements, such as playgrounds. The existing LOS for various features of the parks system is reported in comparison to peer communities in the Benchmark Analysis (Appendix B).

LOS can and will change over time. The consultant team evaluated the existing LOS to determine guidelines for the future, using a combination of local, regional and national resources:

- » Demographic projections (including population, age and diversity segmentation).
- » Recreation activity participation rates reported by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2022 Study of Sports.
- » Ability for the city to acquire park land for developed parks, trails and open space.
- » Community and stakeholder input and needs prioritization.
- » The ability for the city to financially sustain a high-quality park, open space and trail system.
- » Current LOS compared to benchmark peer agencies

In addition to community input, these guidelines help to identify park and facility/amenity gaps and surpluses, and support investment decisions.

This plan recommends that the city increase its current level of service, as resources allow, for parks and recreation facilities and amenities, with the possibility of adding select amenities for existing residents based on a specific need, such as a dog park, access to a play area or trail connections in underserved areas. As the population increases, more resources will be required to maintain the existing LOS which will require additional funding and new sources of revenue. The recommendation to incrementally increase LOS, as feasible, is based on the following:

- » Two-thirds of residents are generally satisfied with the facilities and services that are offered.

- » The few remaining areas for new development can be required to provide facilities, parks, and other amenities to meet the needs of new residents to the same LOS as existing residents.
- » The city is substantially built out, making parkland acquisition difficult in existing developed areas.
- » Financial strain of current asset maintenance and lifecycle replacement

THE CITY SHOULD  
INCREMENTALLY INCREASE  
LEVEL OF SERVICE AS  
RESOURCES ALLOW.

## RESOURCE NEEDS

### Data Collection and System Review

In January 2022, the Consulting Team performed a cursory assessment of the sites and facilities within the Lakewood Community Resources Department system including, but not limited to parks, trails, structures and facilities (see Appendix D for full assessment summary). These assessments establish an accurate understanding and snapshot of the existing conditions of sites and facilities within the system, and support the foundation from which specific strategies and recommendations are framed within this plan.

There were four key findings identified through the site and facility assessments:

1. Parks and facilities are generally well-maintained
2. There are insufficient labor and budget resources
3. Usage demands outpace available supply
4. Lakewood excels at park connectivity

The first two findings are central to the maintenance efforts of the Department. Parks and facilities are currently maintained and repaired when needed, but insufficient labor and budget resources inhibit maintaining best practice standards and being proactive in addressing maintenance and lifecycle replacement.



The tables below summarize staffing needs for maintenance of Lakewood's existing facilities, parks, open spaces and trails. Recommendations include an additional 10 full-time equivalent staff members for parks and an additional five full-time equivalent staff members for facility maintenance in order to increase Lakewood's level of service and move the department from reactive to proactive when addressing maintenance and lifecycle replacement.

## PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAIL STAFFING

FUNCTION	CURRENT STAFFING LEVEL *	BEST PRACTICE STAFFING LEVEL	ADDITIONAL STAFFING NEEDED TO MEET BEST PRACTICE *
Developed Parks Maintenance	71	76	5
Open Space Maintenance	18	21	3
Paved Trail Maintenance	11	12	1
Ranger Service	6	7	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>10</b>

\*Including seasonal support staff

## BUILDING MAINTENANCE STAFFING

	Manager	Supervisor	Admin	Electrician	HVAC	Plumber	Generalist	Painter	Janitorial	0
<b>Total Current Staff</b>	1	2	1.25	4	3	1	5.75	2	8	28
<b>Benchmark</b>	1	2	2.86	3.9	3.93	2.53	7.17	1.9	7.9	33
<b>Difference</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1.61</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>-0.93</b>	<b>-1.53</b>	<b>-1.42</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>-5</b>

\* The "Total Current Staff" total of 28 is made up of 18 Building Maintenance staff members, 1.25 staff members from CR Admin and Purchasing, and 8.75 staff from private contractors

\*\* Benchmarking data is from IFMA's 2022 Operations and Maintenance Benchmarks Report

\*\*\* Maintenance Staffing benchmarking is based on 1,009,403 building square feet in all City Buildings

\*\*\*\* Janitorial Staffing benchmarking is based on 247,521 interior square feet at PSC, CCS, CCN, and LCCC



# CAPRA ACCREDITATION

The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accredits park and recreation agencies for excellence in operation and service. Park and recreation agencies across the U.S. turn to CAPRA accreditation as a respected means of defining and implementing features of an efficient and high-quality operation, while providing assurance to the public that the agency meets national standards of best practice. Agency accreditation is available to all entities administering park and recreation systems, including municipalities, townships, counties, special districts and regional authorities, councils of government, schools and military installations.

## Benefits for the Public

- » Demonstrates that the agency meets national standards of best practice
- » Recognizes the community as a great place to live.
- » Helps secure external financial support and reduce costs for the community
- » Holds an agency accountable to the public and ensures responsiveness to meet their needs
- » Ensures that all staff are providing quality customer service

## Benefits for the Community Resources Department

- » Provides positive public and political recognition
- » Proves to decision makers, stakeholders and the public that the agency is operating with the best practices of the profession
- » Increases credibility and can improve internal and external funding
- » Improves overall operations and increases efficiency
- » Enhances staff teamwork and pride by engaging all staff in the process
- » Creates an environment for regular review of operations, policies and procedures and promotes continual improvement

The Department can be accredited within the next five years and join the 10 accredited agencies in Colorado and the nearly 200 currently accredited agencies nationwide. Accreditation is based on an agency's compliance with the 154 standards for national accreditation. To achieve accreditation, an agency must comply with all 36 Fundamental Standards and 106 (90%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards upon initial accreditation and 112 (95%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards upon reaccreditation.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES OPERATES AS A BEST PRACTICE AGENCY AND CAN ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

A self-assessment utilizing the CAPRA standards was conducted of the administrative policies and procedures that govern the Department. The self-assessment provided a strong analysis of readiness for application for CAPRA accreditation and provides the Department with a road map for where to focus efforts moving forward. The results are a strong indicator that the Department operates as a best practice agency. The Department can achieve CAPRA accreditation by developing and implementing a Program Plan, a Maintenance Management Plan, a Fees and Charges policy, a General Security Plan and an Evaluation Plan. Additional details on elements of CAPRA Accreditation can be found in Appendix D.



## CLASSIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS

The Community Resources Department manages a variety of lands and facilities of varying sizes, uses, amenities, functions and programming. The Department does not currently have a classification system for these assets. A classification system is recommended for parks, trails, facilities and open space, to be used for inventory, planning and asset management. A classification system can also serve as the basis for calculating existing and targeting proposed levels of service and helps identify staff maintenance needs. The classification system sets mutual expectations between the Department and the community regarding the look, function and management of various types of facilities.

Appendix H provides a general description of the recommended classifications, service area, access provisions and appropriate amenities for each type of park or facility. The list of amenities is not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive. The amenities for any individual arts, park or recreation facility should be determined through site planning that involves the community it is meant to serve. All arts, parks and recreation facilities should be designed to serve multiple age segments and abilities.







# IMPLEMENTATION

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SYSTEM COST  
FUNDING STRATEGIES  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS  
PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA  
PLAN MAINTENANCE

# TOTAL SYSTEM COST

The financial sustainability of arts, parks and recreation can be understood by considering the total cost of system ownership, which includes the cost to construct, operate, maintain, and update arts, parks and recreation facilities. Maintenance of current assets and their periodic lifecycle replacement must be balanced with new features and updates to existing parks and facilities, as well as the development or increased access to new parks and facilities to meet the needs in underserved areas and new infill development. Maintaining the current system with limited funding impedes the Department's ability to maintain its existing assets and construct new facilities where they are most needed. Lakewood spends less on operations and capital improvements than most of the benchmarked communities, as described in Appendix B.

## OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Operations and maintenance costs include the routine tasks required to keep arts, parks and recreation facilities in operation and the maintenance of capital assets to keep them in good and safe condition. See Appendix F for a summary of the Department budget.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Capital improvements refers to lifecycle replacement, park and facility updates and new construction. The Community Resources Department has identified capital projects that are needed to continue basic services through 2033. Appendix I, Implementation Resources, identifies capital projects along with an estimated cost range, revealing a significant gap in funding resources.

These projects have not been approved for funding yet and their costs are more than what historic funding

levels would support. It is recommended the city pursue an overall funding analysis and strategy with consideration of arts, parks and recreation needs and the recommendations of this plan.

## Life Cycle Replacement

Lifecycle replacements encompass major repair, replacement or historic preservation of existing assets, safety and accessibility improvements and existing debt service obligations. Most lifecycle replacement improvements typically require one-time capital outlays and are not likely to increase annual operations and maintenance costs. In many cases, lifecycle replacement can reduce annual operations and maintenance costs. In 2022 the city retained Bureau Veritas to conduct a facility conditions assessment of city facility's current general physical condition and evaluate materials to support capital investment decisions. The report informs capital needs for lifecycle replacement projects listed in Appendix I. Appendix I identifies lifecycle replacement projects in three categories: HCA artifacts and structures, facilities and park amenities.

## Updates and New Amenities

Periodically, the City will invest in strategic updates or add new elements to existing parks and facilities in response to unmet needs in the community. Such improvements typically require a one-time capital expenditure and will increase operating and maintenance costs.

## New Construction

Capital projects to develop new parks or arts and recreation facilities may include land acquisition, site planning, new infrastructure and construction of new facilities. New parks and facilities significantly increase annual operations and maintenance costs.





# FUNDING STRATEGIES

Operations and maintenance are funded through the city's General Fund, Open Space Fund and participant fees that are collected. See Appendix F, Planning Context, for a summary of the Department budget. Capital improvements are typically funded through a combination of many sources, as described below.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ARE FUNDED THROUGH A COMBINATION OF SOURCES.

### CURRENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING SOURCES

#### **TABOR - Taxpayer's Bill of Rights**

The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights plays an important role in Lakewood's budget. In 2018 Lakewood voters approved lifting TABOR limits on all revenues for nine years from 2017 to 2025 for the acquisition and maintenance of parkland, police safety equipment and transportation improvements. TABOR funds are not a stable revenue source, unless limits are lifted once again by voters in the future with a portion of funding allocated to arts, parks and recreation.

#### **Open Space Fund**

The Open Space Fund was established in 1987 to account for intergovernmental funds received from Jefferson County related to its Open Space Sales Tax Resolution approved by voters in 1972 and which restricts the use to open space purposes. Open space purposes, as defined by the County, include planning, development, construction, acquisition and maintenance of park and recreation capital improvements.

#### **Conservation Trust Fund**

The Conservation Trust Fund receives its money from the City's share of State Lottery proceeds. Like the Open Space Fund, it must be used for park acquisition, open space acquisition, park and recreational development and maintenance of park and recreational capital improvements.

#### **Grants**

The grant market continues to grow every year, but it is not a stable or predictable source of revenue. The City of Lakewood historically pursues and has received funds from Community Development Block Grants, Jefferson County Open Space and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Department of Local Affairs, Great Outdoors Colorado and History Colorado State Historical Fund (SHF). Grant writers and researchers are essential to the Department's successful pursuit of grant funding. Matching dollars are required for most federal grants and many state grants.

#### **Capital Improvement Fund**

The Capital Improvement Fund is the largest revenue source for the Capital Improvement and Preservation Plan. The Capital Improvement Fund derives its funds from three sources: 1) one-half cent of the City's three percent sales and use tax, 2) Twenty-five percent of Lakewood's share of the State Highway Users Fund (gasoline tax) which is required to be spent on transportation, and 3) 100 percent of Lakewood's share of the FASTER Funding created by Colorado Senate Bill 09-108 that is to be used exclusively for construction and maintenance of transportation facilities. The remaining sales and use tax and State Highway Users Funds are credited to the General Fund. From time to time, at the discretion of the City Council, funds may be transferred to the Capital Improvement Fund for certain municipal projects.

#### **Equipment Replacement Fund (ERF)**

The ERF provides funding for the upgrade and replacement of fitness equipment at recreation centers. It is supported by the city's General Fund.

#### **Parkland Dedication Ordinance**

The City of Lakewood's Parkland Dedication Ordinance requires new residential development to dedicate land for parks and open space or pay a cash fee in lieu of land. The land dedication or fee-in-lieu is assessed at the time of subdivision or site plan approval. The ordinance currently requires dedication of land for an equivalent of 5.5 acres of neighborhood and community parkland for every 1,000 new residents generated by the development.

Collected fees are tracked according to the city's seven Park Planning Districts (see Appendix E). Fees must be spent in the district from which they are collected on new parkland acquisition. This funding source is often unpredictable due to market forces in the real estate and residential development industries. Additionally, land to develop new parks is increasingly limited and the city's true need is funding to invest in existing parks and facilities as well as parks to serve infill development to avoid park-deficiency in redeveloping areas.

Due to these challenges and limitations, this plan recommends that the Community Resources Department contract with a consultant to conduct a detailed audit and identify amendments to the city's Parkland Dedication Strategy and Ordinance so that it best serves the current and future needs of the city. This may include a Capital Expansion Fee, which is described in the following section.

## POTENTIAL NEW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Identifying new reliable and consistent funding sources is imperative for the success of Lakewood arts, parks and recreation. Below are possible strategies to consider through future studies.

### Capital Expansion Fees

This is the preferred method across Colorado for primarily suburban communities that have continued growth associated with new residential development. The fee covers the needs for new residents and should include land acquisition, design,

permitting, and construction costs, and can include a proportionate share of maintenance facility costs. The fees that are collected must be spent in the geographic area they are collected and tracked by area. For example, Neighborhood Park fees must be spent in the service radius established in the plan, which is typically a half-mile radius (or square mile section of a community). Community Park fees can be spent across an entire community because they are destination parks. Some communities have Capital Expansion Fees for libraries, recreation centers, open space, trails, cultural facilities and public art in addition to parks. Capital Expansion Fees cannot be used for lifecycle replacements to existing parks, open space, trails or recreational facilities. Capital Expansion Fees may not work well in all instances for cities that are substantially or completely developed because infill and redevelopment projects are unpredictable, and it may be hard to find ways to effectively use the fees in the vicinity of where they are collected. Capital Expansion Fees are best determined by partnering with a specialty consulting firm to conduct a detailed study that includes a defensible methodology.

### Special Option Sales Tax (Bond Referendum)

General obligation bonds are sold to investors and typically repaid with sales taxes that are dedicated specifically to their repayment. Issuing bonds allows a community to start planning, designing, and constructing projects prior to receiving all the sales tax revenues required to cover their costs. The sales tax that funds projects, as well as the ability to issue bonds for projects, must be approved via a ballot measure approved by Lakewood voters.

## CASE STUDY: DENVER BALLOT MEASURE 2A SALES TAX

Voters approved the 2018 Ballot Measure 2A: Parks & Open Space Sales Tax, a 0.25% sales tax dedicated to the improvement and expansion of Denver Parks, allowing implementation of the city's parks and recreation master plan to begin

DENVER'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACE  
SALES TAX HELPED FUND UPGRADES TO  
PACO SANCHEZ PARK.





### **Public Improvement & Retail Sales Fees**

Public Improvement Fees and Retail Sales Fees are collected by retailers within a specific geographic area. The fees are not sales taxes; therefore, sales tax is collected on the fees. These types of fees can be used to finance all or a portion of the cost for the public improvements in these areas, including parks and recreational amenities. The Belmar Downtown Lakewood Shopping District is an example in which this funding strategy was employed by the city in the past. It could be employed for future improvements related to similar developments.

### **Special Improvement Districts**

Special districts are taxing districts established to provide funds for public infrastructure improvements that benefit a specific group of affected properties. Some of the improvements can be related to parks, recreation, trails, open space and cultural facilities. Districts may be formed for newly developing areas, redevelopment areas or existing developed areas. The City of Lakewood has utilized Special Improvement Districts in the past for street improvements, but could be creative in establishing new districts, especially in underserved areas.

### ***Metropolitan Districts***

Metropolitan Districts (MD) can provide arts, parks and recreation-related facilities, services, and improvements that meet the needs of a specific development. Open space and park land may be required to be set-aside and developed in association with new development, as previously explained in the development review process. In some cases, if sufficient in size or significance, this land could be turned over to the community for public ownership and management. In other cases, these may be privately-owned, publicly accessible park spaces maintained by a MD.

### ***Business Improvement Districts***

Business Improvement Districts (BID) are formed by a majority of businesses in a defined area and are funded through property taxes. A BID may see benefits in providing opportunities for art and recreation for its visitors, which could serve nearby neighborhoods or new residents in mixed-use projects. For example, The West Colfax Business Improvement District (BID) promotes business expansion, investment and development and sponsors improvements to the right-of-way to recast West Colfax Avenue as Lakewood's sustainable Main Street.

### ***General Improvement District***

General Improvement District (GID) is a district financing tool used to help stakeholders collectively plan, fund, and implement public infrastructure improvements to their neighborhood and to pay for maintenance. The district is established by local stakeholders through a petition and vote. Registered voters (both commercial and residential) within the GID boundary sign the petition and then vote in a special election as required by Colorado law. The GID raises money through an assessment on residential and commercial property, and has the power to acquire, install, construct, and maintain public improvements that collectively benefit the area. The Department could collaborate with GIDs to provide support for public improvements that benefit the district, its residents and businesses. While not specifically associated with the impact of new residents, it could include projects to accommodate the needs associated with redeveloping areas.

### **Friends Groups**

These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will benefit the community as a whole and their special interest. Friends groups strengthen community support and value for specific parks or facilities, and leverage the work and scope of city services through stewardship, volunteer hours, fundraising and advocacy. For example, the City of Lakewood Friends of Paha fundraise and support camp fees for people of all abilities.

### **Private Management**

The city could contract with a private business to provide and operate desirable recreational activities on city-owned property, which would be financed, constructed and operated by the private sector, with the potential for compensation paid to the city. For example, the city has agreements with private operators such as Hitman Sports Management (tennis center) and Rocky Mountain Paddleboards. This partnership model could be employed in the future for other forms of service provision.

### **Intergovernmental Agreements**

This involves contractual relationships between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage, development and maintenance of sports fields, school amenities or park improvements.

# PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

To prioritize projects that best meet the needs of the community despite limited funding sources, the following criteria are proposed for project evaluation.

The criteria are grouped according to four overarching categories: *Financial Viability*, *Immediate Need*, *Benefit-driven* and *Opportunity-driven*. All projects should demonstrate financial viability prior to inception. Projects that address immediate public health and safety needs, code compliance, and Federal and State requirements should take precedence over other choices. It is also critical to address deferred maintenance needs to provide a high quality and safe arts, parks and recreation system. As funding and resources become available, or as resident needs evolve, prioritization may change in response to new opportunities, constraints or community preferences.

## FINANCIAL VIABILITY

All projects must demonstrate that funding is available for both capital and long-term operations and maintenance costs. The City should not take on a project that it cannot afford to maintain or that requires investment in facilities that are no longer viable to maintain in a fiscally responsible manner due to structure age.

ALL PROJECTS SHOULD  
DEMONSTRATE FINANCIAL  
VIABILITY PRIOR TO INCEPTION.

## IMMEDIATE NEED

### Health, Safety, Welfare And Regulatory Compliance

Does the project involve upgrades that will bring a site or facility into compliance with codes and regulations (such as ADA), and improve the health, safety and welfare of users.

### Protect Existing Investments

Does the project protect the City's current investment in facilities including lifecycle replacement and maintenance or enhancements to existing parks, trails and facilities.

## BENEFIT-DRIVEN

Projects that meet the parkland and amenity needs of the community, preserve important resources and sites, advance other community goals, complete a partially developed project, reduce long-term maintenance costs to the community, and/or serve as a potential catalyst for economic development.

### Satisfies Unmet Need

Does the project satisfy urgent arts, parks and recreation needs within the community? Does the project help to address a recreation facility/amenity shortage or unmet need?

### Community Significance

Does the project or site provide benefits to many people within the community? Does the project or site contribute to the broader city vision and community goals, such as economic development, increased tourism, environmental sustainability and non-motorized connectivity?

### Community Balance

Does the project contribute to the balance of needs across the community, such as geographic equity, and providing for unmet needs of segments of the population? The land or the project is located in a park or amenity-deficient area.

### Completing Current Projects

Does the project help to complete ongoing phases of current projects that have yet to be finished? Completion realizes full benefit of the project.

### Long-Term Maintenance Costs

Are the future ongoing maintenance costs funded and proportionate to the benefit that the community receives? Will the project be built in a way that minimizes long-term maintenance costs or generates revenue to offset maintenance costs?

### Economic Revitalization

Does the project have the potential to serve as a catalyst for future investment.



## OPPORTUNITY-DRIVEN

Projects that can leverage resources and offer partnership opportunities, are easy to implement, or can reduce costs by combining into a larger project.

### Partnerships for Funding

Does the project leverage available partnership or grant opportunities for funding (e.g., GOCO, CPW, CDOT, History Colorado State Historic Fund, SCFD, the School District, County, private, etc.)

### Ability to Leverage Resources

Are other projects occurring on or near the site that can be leveraged?

### Ease of Implementation

Does the project capitalize on opportunities that are easily implemented (e.g., low cost project with large gains, available property, etc.)?

### Economy of Scale

Does implementing several projects or portions of projects simultaneously save money or time (e.g., bulk purchase of materials, more efficient management, lower mobilization costs, etc.)?

## PLAN MAINTENANCE

The plan recommends that city staff review progress on plan implementation each year when developing the annual budget and capital improvement plan.

The plan recommends that city staff regularly monitor progress toward achieving the plan's goals and update the Action Plans (Appendix I) annually to track implementation. The plan recommends that city staff update *Imagine Tomorrow!* in response to unanticipated challenges, opportunities, changes in community needs, technological innovations and the emergence of new best-practices in arts, parks and recreation.

Plan amendments should occur after careful consideration as the result of evaluating the plan's effectiveness, updating it to reflect completed actions, adding recommendations to assist in accomplishing stated goals, or incorporating the result of a more detailed study or site plan. The plan recommends that resident voices always be included in the conversation. After all, *Imagine Tomorrow!* is the result of a thoughtful, collective process involving residents, partners and community leaders.



