

II. INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING CONTEXT

A. Vision for the Project

In February 2012, the City of Lafayette Parks, Open Space, and Golf Department and the Recreation Department hired GreenPlay LLC, a national management consulting firm, to help conduct an objective, city-wide assessment of the needs and desires for the City’s Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) assets, lands, programs, and services.

At the start of the planning process, GreenPlay Team members met with the Lafayette Project Team to determine the Project Vision, Critical Success Factors, and Performance Measures for the Project.

Project Vision
<p>The City of Layette is poised to refresh its Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Trails, and the previously separate Open Space Master Plan, into one comprehensive Master Plan. In the last ten years, the City has matured substantially. Planning and policy documents from the early 2000s are geared for a city in high-growth mode. This new Master Plan can redirect parks and recreation planning and construction toward infill development, ongoing conservation of open space lands, and the appropriate redevelopment and maintenance of already developed park property and recreational facilities within the City. Additionally, the City would like strong community input that takes into account the economic potential, equity for the City’s diverse demographics, staff input, health and wellness opportunities, walkability, and alternative modes of transportation.</p>

Critical Success Factors	Performance Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate and include focus in MP for all areas of P, R, OS, and T 2. Ensure broad community engagement 3. Separate trails plans are integrated and include focus on multi-modal connectivity. 4. Final Plan meets GOCO guidelines. 5. Include available ecological data in master plan. 6. Ensure that plan includes identification of infrastructure and facility needs for both user facilities and staff in a CIP. 7. Plan should provide an implementable direction for the future for both Departments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final Plan will address all areas, including programming, facilities, operations, and maintenance for PROST. 2. Focus groups and outreach will be comprehensive to address demographics. 3. Integrated Trails section in MP. 4. Final outcomes will meet requirements. 5. The OS components will be included in the Composite Values Method (CVM) inventory. 6. Inventory and LOS will include all facilities, lands, including undeveloped parcels, with CIP priorities identified. 7. Plan will include integrated Action Plans for both Departments.

Key Ideas

Moving through the planning process, Key Ideas helped guide the planning focus:

- Highlighting the importance of PROST in healthy living, physical activity, and wellness
- Consideration of the impact of the PROST system in the City's overall economic viability
- Ensuring that this plan represents the view of the residents, in addition to real feasibility from an operational and implementation standpoint
- Continual inclusion of concepts of balance and organizational sustainability



This Master Plan is intended to inform the City of Lafayette's Comprehensive Plan, and to align with the City's overarching Vision and goals for the community.

City of Lafayette, Colorado Statement of Vision

Lafayette's panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains inspires our view into the future. We value our heritage, our unique neighborhoods, a vibrant economy and active lifestyles. We envision a future that mixes small town livability with balanced growth and superior city services.

B. Project Methodology

A project team comprised of key city parks, recreation, and open space management staff has guided this project. This team provided input throughout the planning process and participated in project team meetings throughout the course of the project. This collaborative effort has created a plan that incorporates local knowledge and institutional history that only community members and city employees can provide. The following methodologies were used to develop the plan:

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

A comprehensive “**Information Gathering**” process which included focus groups, public meetings, and staff interviews. A statistically-valid survey, mailed to 3,000 households in Lafayette, gathered feedback on citizen satisfaction levels, needs, and willingness to pay for parks, open space, and recreation services.

Demographics/Trends/Past Planning Analysis

This analysis explored local, state, and national trends with regard to City PROST service delivery. Existing City and regional plans were reviewed to determine commonalities and to provide guidance.

Findings Compilation and Visioning Workshops

A draft “**Findings Presentation**” was conducted, summarizing all information gathered to date. Visioning workshops were conducted to further identify suggestions and input on the recommendations and potential strategies coming from this project.

Key Issues, Goals, and Action Plan

Based on the findings and analysis, key issues were identified and compiled with Project Team and stakeholder participation and review. Recommended goals and strategies were then developed.

Overall Lafayette PROST Master Plan Project Schedule

- ❖ **Strategic Kick-Off Meeting – August 23, 2012**
- ❖ **Information Gathering – Community Engagement Meetings – September 2012**
- ❖ **Findings and Visioning Meetings – Dec 5, 2012**
- ❖ **Draft Plan Presentations – Feb 20, 2013**
- ❖ **City Council Workshop – April 2, 2013**
- ❖ **Final Adoption – May 7, 2013**

C. Review of Related Planning Efforts

Assessment of PROST needs provide a “snapshot in time” of community desires, willingness to pay, and support for programs and services. However, the Needs Assessment is not done in a vacuum, and all identified needs must be put into context with other planning efforts, along with the reality of practical solutions.

Focus on including parks, recreation, open space, trails, and related cultural and historic offerings, has long been included in City Council planning efforts. In 2006, City Council Goals included creating “Quality of Life Plan,” and recommended incorporating these elements into the City’s overall Comprehensive Plan. This PROST Master Plan supports a **Quality of Life Plan**, and investigates and supports the amenities that the public wants, along with those that assist with Public Health and Economic Development aspects to help the City be sustainable and thrive.

Relationship to the Lafayette Downtown Vision Plan

Created in 2011 and led by the Lafayette Urban Renewal Authority, the Downtown Vision Plan for Old Town Lafayette sought to identify key stakeholders, assets, and a vision to activate the downtown area and help it realize its maximum potential. The process explored the City’s market niche, an economic strategy, and policy recommendations to guide the City moving forward. This PROST Plan seeks to align and compliment prior community planning efforts. Many of the identified key areas in the Vision Plan are also relevant to this PROST Master Plan such as:

- *The cultural arts community is active and vibrant in Lafayette.* In most communities, cultural arts and historic preservation are often seen as part of the PROST responsibilities. In Lafayette, they are managed through partnerships between a variety of non-profit organizations working with the City’s Community Development Department. For this PROST plan, these types of programs and services were included for review of public opinion, but are not part of the overall operations of the PROST Divisions.
- *Public Road is a key issue.* In terms of trails and connectivity, access along Public Road, and safety related to using Public Road for non-motorized transportation are key issues.
- *Simpson Street was the first “Main Street” in Old Town Lafayette.* The Vision Plan suggests that Simpson should continue to be a cultural hub and considered for improvements. This PROST Plan also evaluates key areas for potential festival and community event space, and Simpson Street is a possibility for addressing those community needs.
- *...Play to the Street – a non-contrived, energy driven, pedestrian-friendly, horizontally-walkable mixed use environment.* Many of the ideas outlined in the Downtown Vision Plan align with the Key Issues and Recommendation as outlined in **Section VII**. Connectivity of the system, walkability, and the promotion of quality of life as key economic drivers are outlined.

Relationship to the Previous Lafayette Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plans

In the past, parks and recreation planning and open space planning documents have been completed separately. Trails have been included in both. The City has decided that it is in the community's overall best interests to use this planning process as a way to put all of these elements into context for prioritization and management purposes.

Several plans have been completed over the years, including the *1997 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan* which guided these departments and set initial standards to help guide the City's growth and planning.



In March of 2005, the City Council approved the *City of Lafayette Open Space and Trails Master Plan*. The plan provided a tool to help the City implement its open space and trails vision with strategic recommendations, and complemented the Comprehensive Plan while providing more specific guidance on future open space and trail needs and implementation strategies. In 2010, the Lafayette Open Space Advisory Committee (LOSAC) and City staff initiated a draft update to the Open Space and Trails Master Plan based on more recent citizen surveys and open space acquisition priorities. This plan was not completed or adopted, but included many hours of work and updates by staff and LOSAC. This Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan (PROST) is intended to update and replace the revised Open Space and Trails Master Plan. Some elements of the Open Space and Trails Master Plan that remain current and have not been updated (e.g., Objective and Strategy Recommendations and Open Space Management guidelines) are included in **Appendix B**.



Results of the 2012 National Citizens' Survey for Lafayette

In 2012, the City worked with National Research Center to review overall City services, including many of the quality of life services managed by PROST Divisions. Results from Lafayette were compared to over 100 other jurisdictions in their dataset.

Relevant key findings and the percentage that were rated either **good or excellent** from respondents:

- 87% for overall quality of life (which is above the national benchmarking average)
- 66% for ease of travel by bicycle (much above)
- 77% for ease of walking (much above)
- 75% for availability of trails (much above)
- 78% for overall quality of the natural environment (similar)
- 72% for preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands, and greenbelts (much above)
- 69% for overall recreation offerings (above)
- 80% for parks (much above)
- 86% for recreation classes or programs (much above)
- 86% for recreation centers or facilities (much above)

The City ranked very well in terms of PROST services as compared to other agencies in the NRC dataset. The statistically-valid survey included in the PROST Master Plan as described in **Section III.D** provides more detail regarding importance, usage, and need for specific offerings.

This Master Plan also takes into consideration integration with various other related Lafayette and regional planning efforts, most notably the Boulder County Public Health Improvement planning process, and planning efforts by nearby communities in Boulder, Longmont, Louisville, Erie, Broomfield, and Boulder County as a whole.

D. Celebrating Where We Are Now

Located in the southeast corner of Boulder County, Lafayette is a progressive city with roots that run deep into the once mined coal seams lying beneath the surface. Like most municipalities throughout the state, the lagging economy has challenged the city while it continually strives to meet the outdoor and indoor recreation needs an increasingly diverse, healthy, and active community desires. To meet these ongoing requests, Lafayette's Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Golf Department and Recreation Department continually solicit (extract) citizen input, and employ a skillfully dedicated workforce to develop amenities which provide citizens with desirable facilities and programs.

Relishing the accomplishments of the last 15 years!

RECENT RECOGNITIONS:

- 2012 & 2011 NRPA Gold Medal Award Class V Category finalist
- 2012 Great Outdoors Colorado Planning Grant
- 2011 Starburst Award from the Colorado Lottery for the Lafayette Skatepark
- 2010 Great Outdoors Colorado Grant

Over the past five years, a grassroots community effort saw citizens voting in favor of utilizing Thomas Open Space for agricultural purposes. The forging of an agricultural lease agreement between the City and a local, organic farming operation makes the public land a popular site where the growing of lush produce is laid out for all to see. Voters approved to extend the City's Open Space Tax in November 2012. The City's Open Space Superintendent, Jeff Moline, takes great delight serving as its liaison for this uniquely collaborative effort between farmers, residents, and government.



A 3,200 square foot, monitor-style barn opened in June 2012 and houses a farm stand which is open to the public and is home to numerous educational events throughout the year, including a youth farm camp. A processing area, public restrooms, and a large walk-in cooler also comprise the layout of the barn. The growing love for this project among residents within and surrounding the city is seen daily as families and individuals bike or walk to the open space property to purchase tote-loads of the tastiest organic produce in the County, along with other locally made products including beef, soaps, honey, and eggs.

When a 2005 update to the City's Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan revealed a need for park sites within Lafayette's Old Town district, the City quickly took note. Reacting to this deficiency, City Council approved a number of projects between 2007 and 2010 allowing the Parks Division to build three parks over four years. Simpson Mine Park, Festival Plaza, and Romero Park have their own flair and serve their surroundings well by providing outdoor recreation spaces in the close-knit, Old Town neighborhood. The diligent work of the parks crews and their contractors paid off as two awards landed upon Lafayette in 2009 – the American Society of Landscape Architects President's Award of Excellence in Design for Simpson Mine Park and the State of Colorado Governor's Award of Excellence for Best Public Space Project for Festival Plaza. Residents in the Old Town community celebrate the new parks by taking advantage of the many opportunities to draw together through city-sponsored programs and events, including Adopt-a-Park, Art Night Out, Picnic on the Plaza, and the Summer Concert Series.

Outside the center of town, established parks, such as Waneka Lake Park and the Great Bark Dog Park, provide pockets of enjoyment for people of various interests. Often called "the gem of Lafayette" by residents, Waneka Lake Park boasts a 1.2 mile fitness trail, two large picnic shelters, a seasonally operable renovated boathouse that provides paddle boat and canoe rentals, fishing areas, playground structures, memorial benches, and access to a wildlife preserve. This jewel of a park affords recreation opportunities for people of all ages and all types of users.



On the northeastern side of Lafayette, the Great Bark Dog Park serves East Boulder County's pups and their caretakers well. Like the farm at Thomas Open Space, this six-acre park came about after the City heard from its citizens. Today, the ever-popular park is rarely empty during operating hours as dogs of all sizes and demeanors and their owners benefit from the freedom from leash laws. Amenities here include numerous shaded benches, a 1/3 mile looping trail, logs, a small and timid dog area, public restrooms, and direct access to the city-wide trail system – all of which promote wellness for dogs and pet-lovers alike. All of these amenities along with the very popular skate park, and the 55 total miles of trails in Lafayette, are the pride and joy of many residents and attract users from neighboring communities on a daily basis.

RECENT RECOGNITIONS:

- 2012 & 2011 NRPA Gold Medal Award Class V Category finalist
- 2012 Great Outdoors Colorado Planning Grant recipient
- 2011 Starbust Award from the Colorado Lottery for the Lafayette Skatepark
- 2010 Great Outdoors Colorado Special Grant recipient for multi-jurisdictional trail project
- Parks Crew Supervisor, Dan Finn, celebrated 25 years of service in March 2012
- Director of Parks, OS & Golf, Monte Stevenson, was recognized for 20 years of service in May 2012
- Parks Superintendent, Bill Coleman, celebrated 35 years of service to Lafayette in October 2012
- Director of Recreation and Facility Management, Curt Cheesman, was recognized for 20 years of service in October 2010