

FALL 2022

Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan

Adams County, Colorado



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
PLANNING FOR A SHARED FUTURE





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Adams County and the Advancing Adams team would like to thank all of the participants of the focus groups, public meetings and workshops necessary for the success of this plan.

Board of County Commissioners

Eva J. Henry, District 1

Charles "Chaz" Tedesco, District 2

Emma Pinter, District 3

Steve O'Dorisio, District 4

Lynn Baca, District 5

Mary Hodge (commissioner when project started)

Adams County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts (POSCA) Department

J. Byron Fanning, Interim Deputy County Manager / Director POSCA Dept

Marc Pedrucci, Interim Director / Deputy Director

Jason Baines, Manager of Planning, Design and Construction

Zoe Ocampo, Cultural Arts Liason

Adams County

Jenni Grafton, Director, Community & Economic Development

Libby Tart, Senior Long Range Planner, Community & Economic Development

Chris Chovan, Senior Transportation and Mobility Planner, Public Works

Consultant Team

Design Workshop: Anna Laybourn, Ashley Hejtmanek, Mary Oliver, Sarah Horn, Chris Freda, Brenna Laffey, and Pio Ibrahim

Great Ecology: Joshua Eldridge, Justin Apfel, Cate Collinson

Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants: Carly Sieff, Krystian Boreyko

Spirit Environmental: Conor Merrigan

Cover Image: Barr Lake State Park

* All images throughout plan courtesy of Adams County or Design Workshop unless otherwise noted



LIST OF MAPS

MAP 1: POST PLAN PRIORITY AREAS COUNTY-WIDE	12
MAP 2: POST PLAN PRIORITY AREAS WESTERN COUNTY	13
MAP 3: MUNICIPALITIES & PLACES	20
MAP 4: ADAMS COUNTY POPULATION DENSITY	20
MAP 5: MOST PROMINENT ADAMS COUNTY MANAGED PARK & OPEN SPACE	22
MAP 6: PUBLIC ACCESS SERVICE AREAS	25
MAP 7: PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS - RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES	25
MAP 8: EXISTING RECREATION TRAILS COUNTY-WIDE	26
MAP 9: EXISTING RECREATION TRAILS WESTERN COUNTY	27
MAP 10: ADVANCING ADAMS FIVE STRATEGIC CORRIDORS	49
MAP 11: NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITY AREAS - WESTERN COUNTY	59
MAP 12: NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITY AREAS - ADAMS COUNTY	60
MAP 13: LAND COVER 2016	68
MAP 14: ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS	70
MAP 15: HIGH VALUE WILDLIFE AREAS	74
MAP 16: FARMLAND SOIL PRODUCTIVITY	84
MAP 17: AGRICULTURAL LANDS & PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE PRIORITY AREAS WESTERN COUNTY	89
MAP 18: PARK AND RECREATION PRIORITY AREAS - WESTERN COUNTY	101
MAP 19: PARK AND RECREATION PRIORITY AREAS - ADAMS COUNTY	102
MAP 20: TRAIL PRIORITY AREAS WESTERN COUNTY	123
MAP 21: TRAIL PRIORITY AREAS ADAMS COUNTY	126

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1 INTRODUCTION	15
WHAT IS ADVANCING ADAMS?	16
EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY	19
PLANNING PROCESS	28
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND TOOLS	38
2 FUTURE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & RECREATION	43
BIG IDEAS	44
PLAN FRAMEWORK	49
HOW THIS PLAN BECOMES A REALITY	52
3 NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT	55
PROTECTING & ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	56
GOALS & STRATEGIES	62
4 AGRICULTURAL LANDS, RURAL CHARACTER & PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	83
PRESERVING WHAT MAKES ADAMS COUNTY UNIQUE	84
AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION	86
GOALS & STRATEGIES	90
5 DIVERSE PARK & RECREATION ENHANCEMENT	97
PARKS & RECREATION ACCESSIBILITY	98
GOALS & STRATEGIES	104
6 PARTNERSHIPS	113
PARTNERSHIPS	114
GOALS & STRATEGIES	115
7 DYNAMIC TRAIL CONNECTIONS	119
TRAILS TO CONNECT COMMUNITIES	120
GOALS & STRATEGIES	128
8 IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING	143
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	144



**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**





Farmer's Highline Canal Trail in Northglenn

**ADAMS COUNTY
MISSION & VISION**

Mission
To responsibly serve the Adams County community with integrity and innovation.

Vision
Adams County is the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses.

INTRODUCTION

After nearly ten years, Adams County has embarked on an ambitious plan to update three pivotal long-range documents through the *Advancing Adams* effort including the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan (POST). This plan was completed in coordination with the *Advancing Adams* teams, County staff, community, and stakeholders, and is built upon previous planning efforts. *Advancing Adams* presents a unified vision for the future.

PURPOSE

The Adams County Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan (POST) is designed to help guide the County in future park, open space and trail management and development to better serve the community while sustaining and conserving natural environments. This plan reflects Adams County's mission and vision, as well as the purpose statement and goals of the Parks, Open Space

and Cultural Arts (POSCA) Department. It is an update to the 2012 Open Space, Parks and Trails Master Plan, and it has been developed concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

VALUES

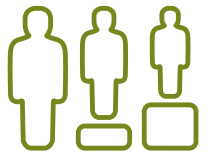
Three core value lenses—equity, sustainability and livability—have emerged within the work on *Advancing Adams*. These values are found in each long-range plan: the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan (TMP), and POST Plan. Each analysis step, recommendation, and policy has been evaluated for alignment with these values. These values contribute to *Advancing Adams*'s holistic and metrics-based approach.

THE PROCESS

The planning process for the POST Plan provided opportunities for public engagement and ongoing collaboration with the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan. The resulting plan provides a vision and guidance for the next decade and supportive action steps.

Five guiding themes emerged as a product of the assessment of the existing system and background research, along with stakeholder input in the first phase of the project. The themes organize what the County aspires to achieve, reflect the plan's values and are aligned with the purpose statement of the Parks, Open Space, & Cultural Arts Department – “To significantly enhance quality of life, enrich communities & INSPIRE” – and the County's Vision – “Adams County is the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses.” The themes serve as a framework for the goals and strategies represented throughout this plan document.

This master plan includes a separate Existing Conditions Report to inventory and assess the system.



**Value:
Equity**
Ensuring that the outdoors are accessible to all, for their health, social, economic, and recreational benefits.



**Value:
Sustainability**
The conservation and celebration of the qualities and characteristics that make Adams County special.



**Value:
Livability**
Includes access to public spaces and outdoor recreation close to where residents live, creating a variety of experiences for a diverse population.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The POST Plan is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 – Introduction: The Introduction describes *Advancing Adams* and the ‘three plans at once’ process.

Chapter 2 – POST Plan: Chapter 2 identifies the POST Plan framework, includes future parks, open space properties, and trails mapping, and discusses big ideas for the future.

Chapters 3 – 7 – These chapters discuss the POST Plan framework themes (Natural Resource, Wildlife Habitat Protection & Riparian Enhancement; Agricultural Lands, Rural Character, and Places of Cultural Significance; Diverse Park and Recreation Enhancement; Partnerships, Regional Coordination and Stewardship; Dynamic Trail Connections) and the key issues

surrounding them that need to be addressed. The chapters detail goals for these topics and implementable policies and programs to reach them.

Chapter 8 – Implementation and Monitoring: This chapter lays out strategies for the most efficient implementation of the plan and includes ways to track progress

ESTABLISHING A VISION

The primary goals of the POST Plan are to:

- Ensure the County’s parks, trails and open space lands meet the needs of a growing and diverse population;
- Enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors;
- Ensure that important natural resources and specialcounty characteristics are protected.

These goals are described through an overarching vision for the POST Plan.



POST MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT

We will cultivate an integrated system that ensures equitable access for all residents to parks, trails and open space properties; identifies areas for future growth; preserves and enhances important wildlife habitats and corridors, natural and scenic resources, and agricultural lands; expands trail connections; and broadens recreational opportunities.

POST FRAMEWORK

The POST Plan is organized around five themes. The plan’s strategies and recommended actions are based upon these themes, which are:

- **Natural Resource and Wildlife Habitat Protection & Riparian Enhancement;**
- **Agricultural Lands, Rural Character, and Places of Cultural Significance;**
- **Diverse Park and Recreation Enhancement;**
- **Partnerships, Regional Coordination and Stewardship; and**
- **Dynamic Trail Connections.**

NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

Areas of significant natural resources, such as intact wildlife habitat and riparian lands, are the highest priority for preservation as open space. These lands create a balance of systems and help maintain water quality, mitigate flooding, and provide erosion control. They also provide vital habitat linkages and travel corridors for wildlife and define special landscape features within the county that give people a stronger connection to nature. Goals for natural resource, wildlife habitat protection and riparian enhancement include: conservation of high value



A colorful entryway invites visitors to enjoy the playground at E.B. Rains Jr. Memorial Park

lands, promotion of consolidated efforts to protect waterways, environmental education and stewardship, support of key habitat connections, and implementation of restoration strategies and best management practices.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS, RURAL CHARACTER, AND PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Agricultural lands, rural character and places of cultural significance provide a distinctive and relatable identity and source of pride for many residents, and are significant economic assets. The development of these lands means the permanent loss of fertile agricultural soils of state-

wide importance. Once high-quality soils are converted to urban uses, they are permanently lost. The loss of farms also means a decrease in the economic diversity that agriculture provides, a reduction in local food security, and a decline in stormwater infiltration, as well as changes to the rural character and scenic views and other open space values. Goals for agricultural lands, rural character, and places of cultural significance include: agricultural land conservation, preservation and educational interpretation of rural heritage and historic resources, and strengthening agricultural economics by promoting diversified use of agricultural lands.

DIVERSE PARK AND RECREATION ENHANCEMENT

Adams County continues to see an increasing population with significant diversity in age groups, incomes, racial and ethnic makeup. Parks need to include amenities and designs that meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. Currently, approximately 32 percent of county residents are not located within a 10-minute walk from a community or regional park. When possible, it is important to ensure parks that serve the daily needs of residents are within a comfortable walking distance of homes with pathways that make them accessible. Goals for diverse park and recreation enhancement include: promotion of regional arts and culture through creative placemaking in parks, open space properties, and trails; recreation facilities for unincorporated areas; equitable distribution of access to parks and nature; and access to water-based recreation and resources.

PARTNERSHIPS, REGIONAL COORDINATION AND STEWARDSHIP

This POST Plan encourages partnerships between communities, neighborhoods, the private sector and Adams County for open space conservation, stewardship, provision of recreation opportunities, and outdoor/nature education. The Plan also encourages greenways and trails that link to adjacent counties. Goals for partnerships, regional coordination

and stewardship include: forming partnerships with local, state and federal governments as well as other local agencies to improve efficiencies, and forming mutually beneficial partnerships with landowners to conserve land and resources.

DYNAMIC TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Adams County is home to a robust trail network, with over 559 miles of trails connecting people to experiences in nature and other destinations. Trail-based adventures in environments such as the South Platte River and Clear Creek corridors offer a chance to encounter the ecology and wildlife of riparian and high plains landscapes. Trails also provide an increased quality of life, creating amenities that link communities and promote healthy lifestyles.

Enhancing trails provides an opportunity to increase connections, advancing equitable access to nature and recreation while creating sustainable transportation options between work, play and community settings. Improving connectivity, linkages and safety throughout the County's trail resources will create a dynamic system that is user-friendly and offers a variety of trail experiences. Goals for Dynamic Trail Connections include: linking trails throughout the county; improving the trail network for a variety of users, including hiking, walking, cycling and equestrian use; and improve the user experience of trails.

BIG IDEAS



- PROVIDING RECREATIONAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES THAT ADAPT TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY



- ENRICHING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ACCESS TO NATURE AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



- CONSERVING THE COUNTY'S RURAL CHARACTER WITH PROGRESSIVE APPROACHES TO SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE



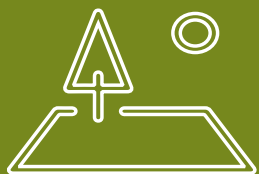
- PROTECTING AND CELEBRATING THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER AND CLEAR CREEK CORRIDORS



- CONNECTING PEOPLE THROUGH PLACEMAKING, ARTS, AND CULTURE



- RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS, SOCIAL, AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS THROUGH ADJUSTED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES AND POLICIES



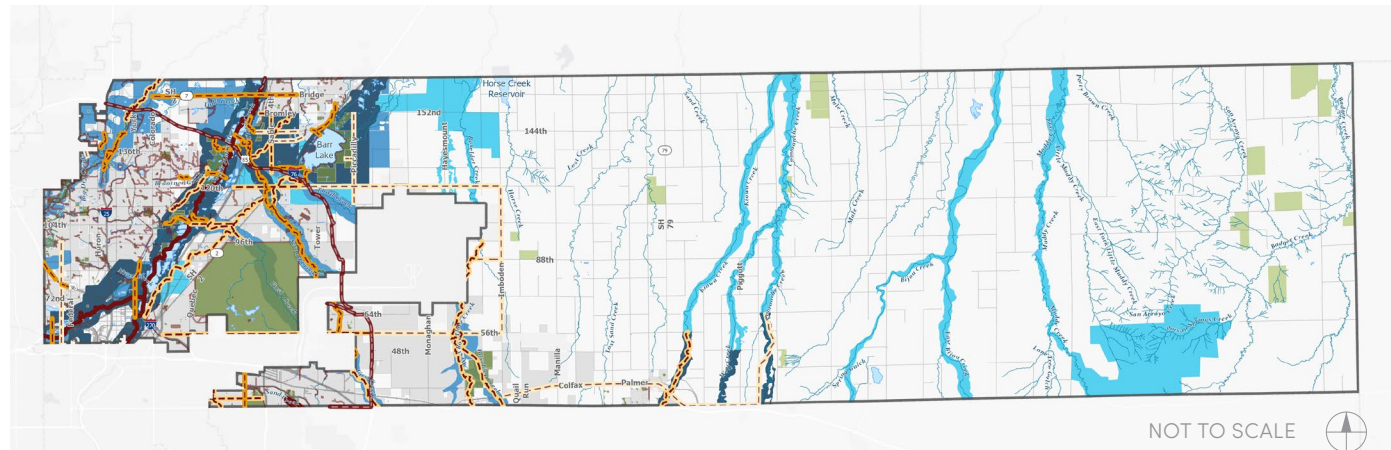
- MAKING THE MOST OUT OF REMNANT LANDS



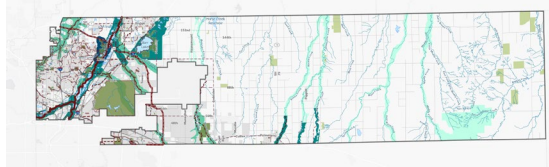
Agriculture in the Historic Splendid Valley

MAINTAINING THE PLAN

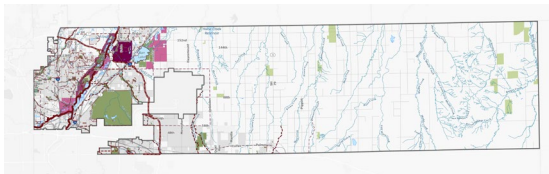
While this POST Plan gives general guidance regarding priorities, investments, and decisions that need to be made over the next ten years, there are still many variables that will require flexibility in approach over that timeframe. As needs and issues change in Adams County, *Advancing Adams* will need to be revisited to evolve with the community. While it is anticipated that high-level guiding goals will remain the same, having a flexible plan that can be updated over the course of the next ten years helps officials and the public ensure that the plan is adaptable and can continue to reflect the community's evolving vision.



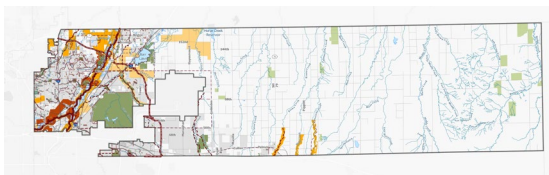
Natural Resources, Wildlife Habitat & Riparian Enhancement



Agriculture & Cultural Significance



Diverse Parks & Recreation



Dynamic Trails

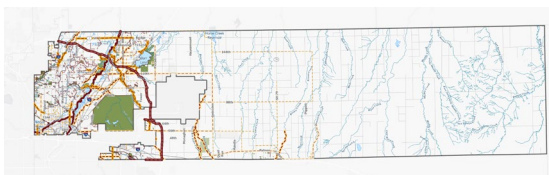
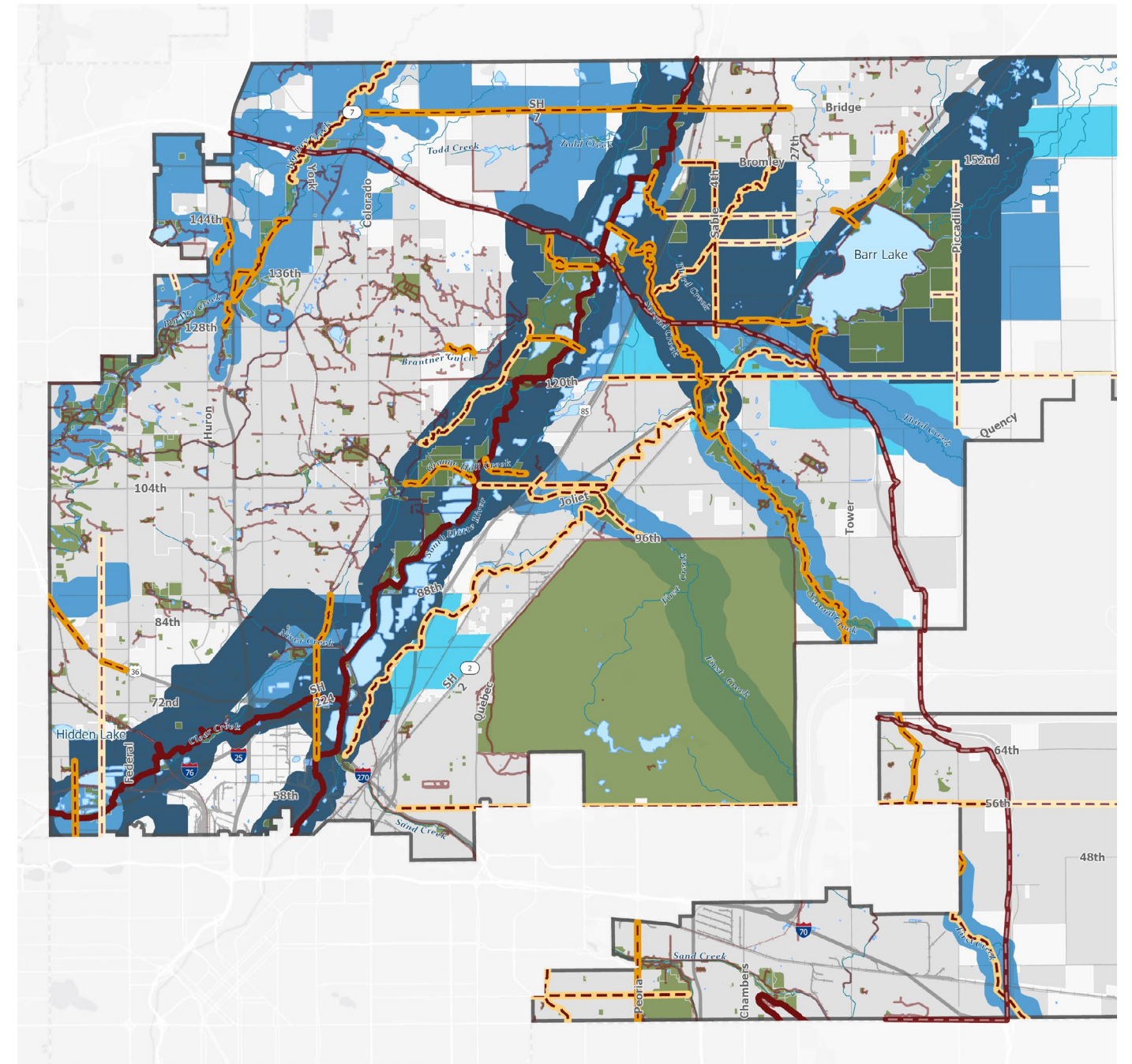


Figure 12: Priority Area Map Layers

POST PLAN PRIORITY AREAS

A combination of public and stakeholder input, along with analysis of existing conditions, helped identify priority areas for projects and investment for four of the five POST plan themes shown in Figure 12. Detailed maps and recommendations for each of these themes are covered in their corresponding chapters.

MAP 1 and MAP 2 layer the recommendations from all four themes into one map, highlighting all POST Plan location-based recommendations and places for potential improvements, projects, conservation, additions to the parks system, or partnership priority areas. All proposed trail alignments and general areas for conservation or parks will need to be studied further for feasibility, design, and focused investment.



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG



LEGEND

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| High Priority POST Plan Area | High Priority Proposed Regional Trails | Existing Regional Trails |
| Medium Priority POST Plan Area | High Priority Proposed Trails | Existing Trails |
| Low Priority POST Plan Area | Medium Priority Proposed Trails | Parks and Open Space |
| | Low Priority Proposed Trails | Conservation Easements |
| | | Incorporated Areas |

1

INTRODUCTION



What is Advancing Adams?

Existing Conditions Summary

Planning Process and Community
Engagement

Implementation Process and Tools

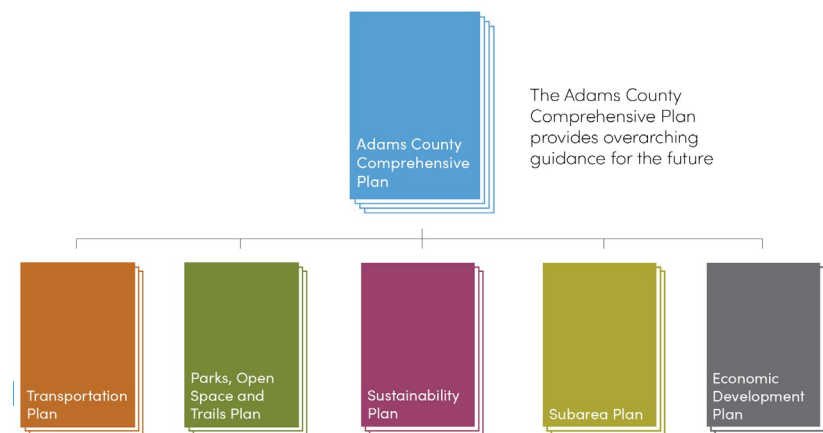
WHAT IS ADVANCING ADAMS?

THREE PLANS AT ONCE

Advancing Adams was the process used to prepare three plans simultaneously to guide the County in future decision making. The Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), and the Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan (POST Plan) will help guide decision making related to land use, transportation, and parks, open space, and trails. This integrated process of undertaking three plans at once allows for a coordinated future. Each plan takes a holistic view of the entire county for a vision that will direct planning for the next ten years and shapes the county beyond that. These three plans are created to support the goals of a safe, resilient, equitable and prosperous county by creating a legacy planning effort for future generations.



Three Plans at Once
This integrated process of undertaking three plans at once allows for a coordinated future. Each plan takes a holistic view of the entire county for a long vision that will direct planning for the next ten years and shapes the county beyond that.



Topical long range plans support the Comprehensive Plan and draw inspiration from the Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plan and coordinated planning efforts

INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE THREE PLANS

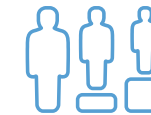
The Comprehensive Plan lays the foundation for two concurrent planning efforts, the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and the Parks, Open Space and Trails (POST) Plan. An important characteristic of these three plans is the way in which they work together. They holistically approach sustainability, preservation, growth management and accessibility. The TMP and the POST Plan, for instance, go hand-in-hand in addressing accessibility.

Together, these plans give attention to off-street trails used primarily for recreation and connector paths that access parks and open space properties, focusing on land use connections throughout the county.

The Comp Plan and POST Plan both address the role of land uses in rural preservation. The Comp Plan identifies current conditions and areas of stability and change. Through this analysis, future land use maps were developed to help Adams County achieve its vision. In the process of developing these maps, it was crucial to coordinate efforts to ensure that rural lands are preserved and adjacent land uses are compatible.

VALUES

The three values of Equity, Sustainability, and Livability have been integrated into each step of the planning process. Throughout the analysis of existing conditions, development of future scenarios, and creation of goals and policies for the community to implement, the lenses were, and continue to be, key considerations.



1. EQUITY:

The vibrance and strength of a community emerges from diversity and equity. Equity can be measured through distribution of and access to resources. In Parks, Open Space and Trails, equity means having the fair access to outdoor areas close to home for recreational, health, social, and economic prosperity benefits. Removing financial and physical barriers, along with providing opportunities where they are lacking are critical to make sure residents can experience the outdoors regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, income level or ability.



2. SUSTAINABILITY:

Sustainability is a part of Adams County's identity. Sustainability is recognized through the conservation and celebration of valuable county characteristics, including natural resources, wildlife habitat, and riparian environments.



3. LIVABILITY:

Adams County has numerous parks, open space properties, and trails that support a healthy and memorable experience for users. Livability includes access to public spaces and outdoor recreation close to where residents live, creating a variety of experiences for a diverse population. It also includes good trail connections and coordinated partnerships and efforts of regional entities to support outstanding parks, open space properties, and trail options in Adams County.

This document includes written recommendations supported by maps, definitions, and action items to steer leaders in making decisions that will influence the county for years to come.

DECISION TOOL

The Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan aids decision-makers in making financial decisions by outlining in detail near-term and future priorities for land acquisitions and capital improvements. The purpose of this master plan is to chart the Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department's (POSCA) course for the next 10 years. It defines opportunities for conservation, closing gaps in the county's outdoor recreation network, and setting priorities to ensure long-term sustainability of the department and its assets.



Young Adams County residents learn about conserving bird habitat

DID YOU KNOW?

YOUTHFUL ADAMS!

Adams County residents are younger than the surrounding areas with a large segment of young families with children.

VISIONING TOOL

The *Advancing Adams* plans are data driven, infused with long-term predictions. The vision and goals within this document are intended to provide a steady, predictable direction. This plan asks: where is Adams County now, where does the community want it to be, and how can it get there? Linking it to the Comp Plan and TMP helps paint a clearer picture of anticipated growth patterns, identifying areas where open space conservation will be most needed, where recreation should be provided, and where County services might need to be extended.



For More Info
See *Existing Conditions Report* for more information about initial Parks, Open Space, and Trails study findings and analysis.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

The Existing Conditions Report (ECR) provides a thorough overview and analysis of the current state of county demographics and the POSCA Department system. This report, best utilized as its own stand-alone document, synthesizes conditional information and multiple data points available in 2020, and therefore provides information that reflects a snapshot in time. The report reviews key demographics, recreation trends, environmental and sustainability considerations, provides an inventory and analysis of current park, open space properties and trail resources, and identifies challenges and opportunities. The ECR concluded Phase One of the planning process. It provided a foundational understanding of the county and served as an effective launch point into Phase Two – Visioning & Planning for the Future. The report was created to offer a better understanding of how the goals, visions, and policies were developed based on current and future circumstances within the county. Portions of information from the report are included in this plan to provide background and context.

LOCATION

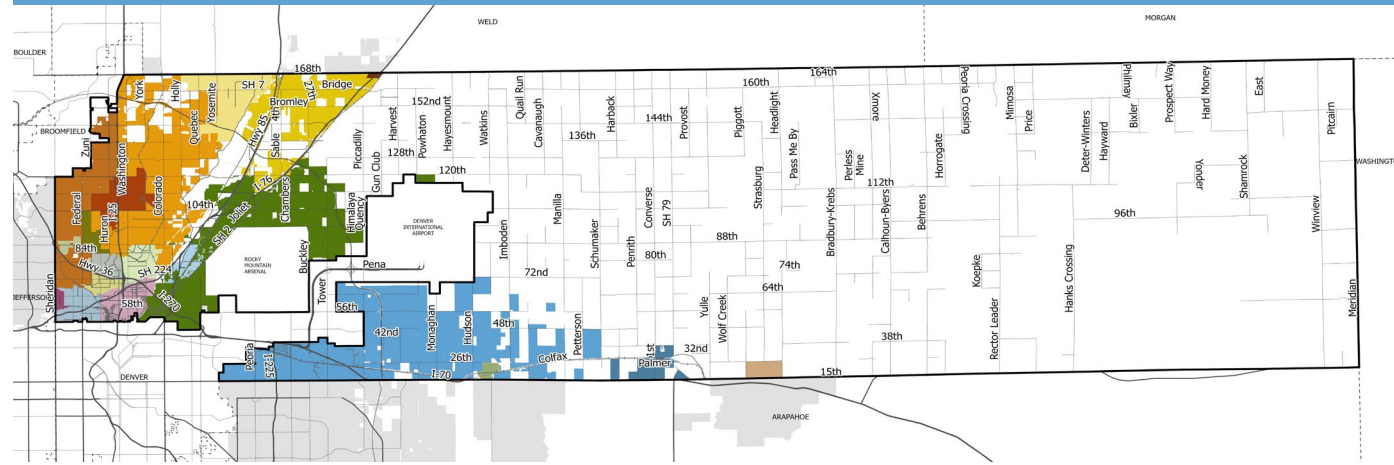
Adams County, Colorado, located in the Denver metro area, is a large and growing county, spread

over approximately 1,182 square miles. It is home to cities and portions of municipalities, towns, and unincorporated communities. These are highlighted in “MAP 3: municipalities & places” and include Arvada, Aurora, Bennett, Brighton, Commerce City, Federal Heights, Lochbuie, Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster. Neighboring counties are (clockwise from northwest corner): Broomfield City and County, Weld County, Morgan County, Washington County, Arapahoe County, City and County of Denver, and Jefferson County.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Adams County has been one of the fastest growing communities in Colorado and the Denver Metro area for the past two decades. It includes 10 large municipalities and over half a million residents (~519,572 according to the 2020 census). Due to proximity to Denver and other urban centers, population growth is expected to occur most significantly and rapidly in the westernmost portions of the county. These areas already hold the majority of the population as shown in MAP 4. Within the high-growth areas, population increase is projected to be concentrated along the Platte River Corridor, most notably the northern portion. The municipalities with the highest projected population growth rates are Brighton and Commerce City. These areas correspond with the POST plan’s Priority Areas, as described in Map 2. The plan seeks

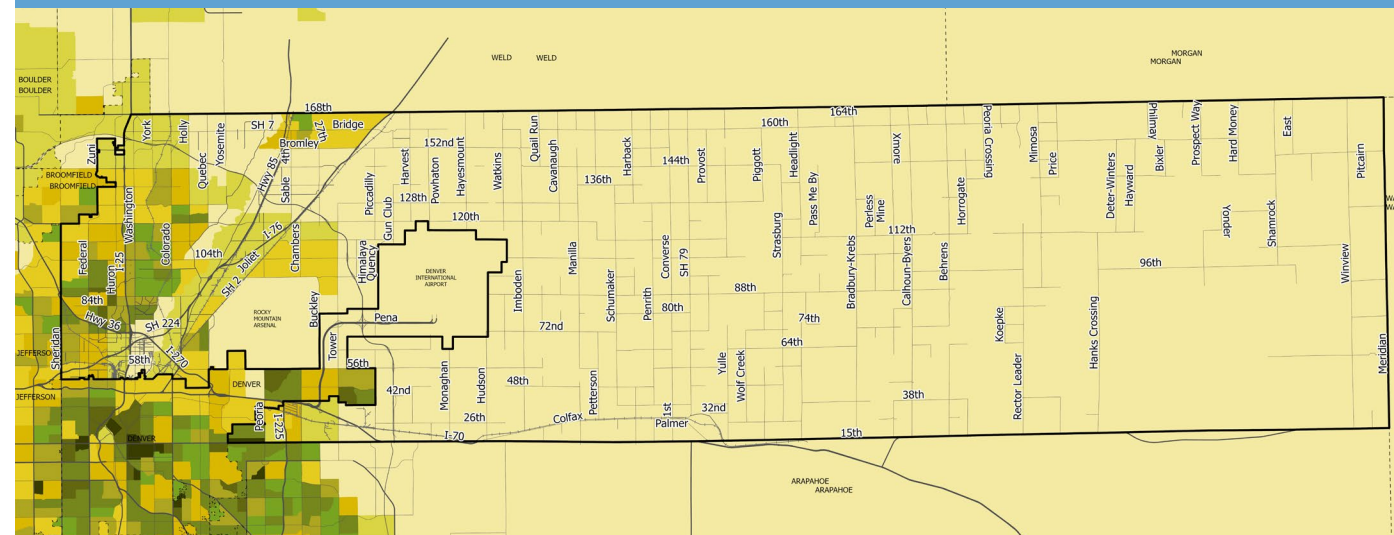
MAP 3: MUNICIPALITIES & PLACES



LEGEND

City Boundaries		Census Designated Places		NOT TO SCALE	
Arvada	Federal Heights	Berkley	Strasburg	Adams County Boundary	
Aurora	Lochbuie	Derby	Todd Creek	Railroads	Roads
Bennett	Northglenn	North Washington	Twin Lakes	Adjacent County Municipalities	
Brighton	Thornton	Shaw Heights	Watkins		
Commerce City	Westminster	Sherrelwood	Welby		

MAP 4: ADAMS COUNTY POPULATION DENSITY



Data Source: Adams County, ESRI - ACS 2020, DRCOG

LEGEND

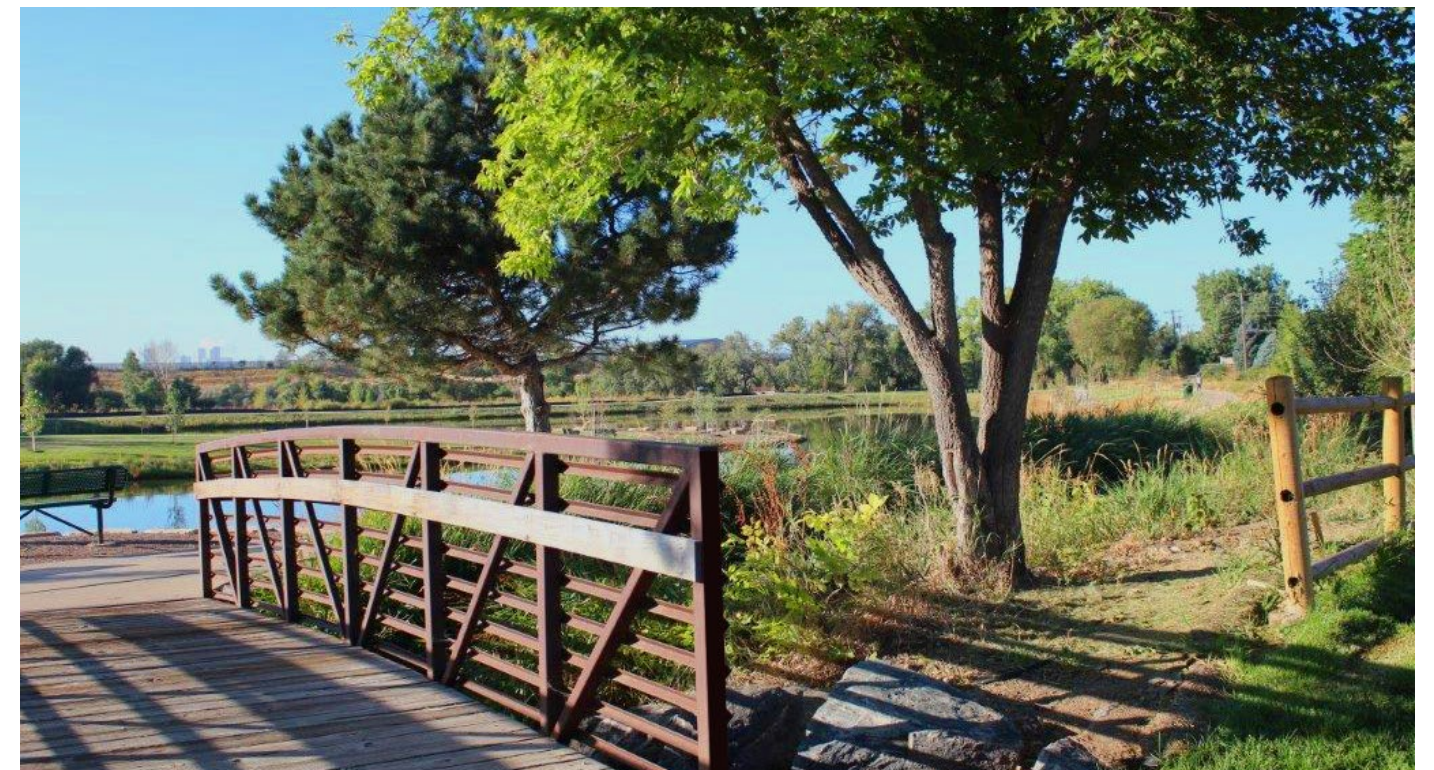
2020 Population Density			NOT TO SCALE		
≤640/sq. mi	3,651-4,850/sq. mi	7,251-11,000/sq. mi			
641-1,920/sq. mi	4,851-6,050/sq. mi	11,001-14,600/sq. mi			
1,921-3,650/sq. mi	6,051-7,250/sq. mi	14,601+/sq. mi			

to ensure open space and outdoor recreation provisions are met within the unincorporated county to address areas of growth and respond to access deficiencies.

There are over 175,000 households in Adams County. This number has grown by about 15.1 percent since 2010 (1.5 percent annually). The average household size has also grown slightly from 2.85 to 2.88 in the last ten years. This number is expected to increase again to 2.89 by 2025. Family households account for 70 percent of the total number of households and this percentage is expected to remain roughly the same over the next five years.

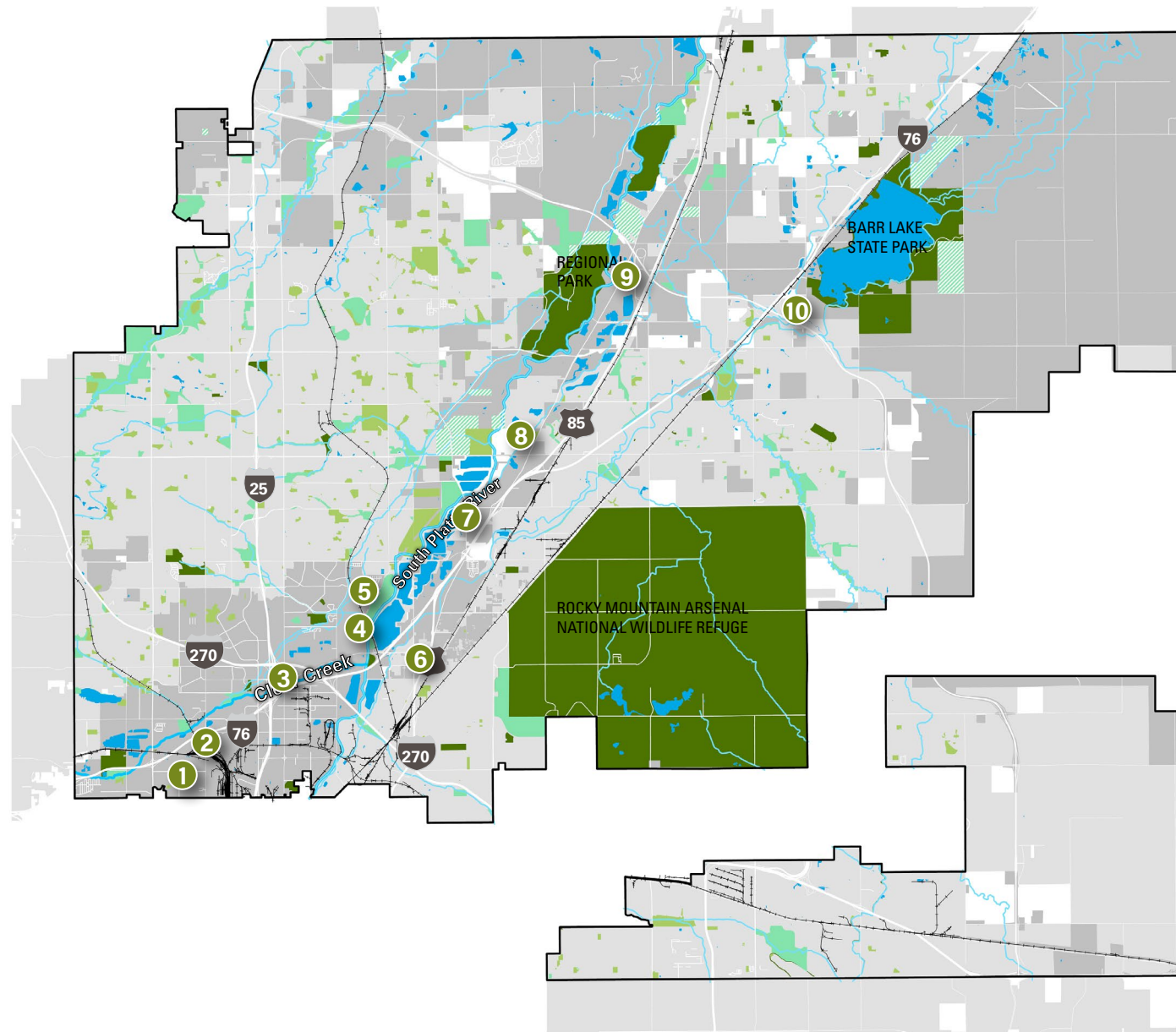
The median age is 34.1, which is up from 32.4 in 2010 and is expected to continue increasing slowly over the

next five years. Age distribution is skewed toward adults between the ages of 25 and 44, accounting for largest age segment at 29.6% of the population. Children under the age of 14 represent 23% of the population, which is a larger portion than the state average. This can be attributed to a larger number of young families. Not only does the County need to serve a growing population with its parks, open space properties, and trails, but the demographic projections reveal that it also increasingly needs to serve larger household sizes and families with young children.



Twin Lakes Park

MAP 5: PROMINENT PARKS AND OPEN SPACE WITHIN ADAMS COUNTY



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

LEGEND

Neighborhood Parks (Municipal Other)	Adams County Boundary	1 Lowell Ponds	7 Pelican Ponds Open Space
Community/Regional Park	Railroads	2 Gateway Plaza	8 Elaine T. Valente Open Space
Open Space W/ Public Access	Streams and Lakes	3 Twin Lakes Park	9 Riverdale Regional Park
Open Space Without Public Access	Municipal Boundaries	4 Rotella Park	10 Government Center Natural Park
	Unincorporated	5 City View Park	
		6 Engineer Lake	

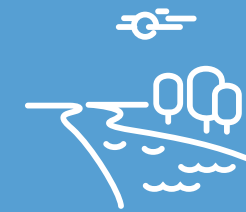
OVERVIEW OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES

There are 786 publicly accessible properties classified as parks, open space properties, and trailheads (dedicated access points to trails) in the county. This amounts to more than 27,000 acres of land. The County owns and manages 31 of these properties, including four community parks, one regional park, 15 open space properties and 11 trails and trailheads, totaling 2,166 acres. The most prominent of these are highlighted in MAP 5 on page 22. Another 755 parks, open space properties and trailheads are owned and managed by a combination of ten municipalities and special recreation districts in the county.

Adams County also manages thousands of acres of land and water for conservation purposes that do not provide public access.

Identifying the number of acres of each park and publicly accessible open space property type provided for every 1,000 residents is one way to track how well the County is serving its current population and anticipate population growth needs. With a population of 517,885, Adams County currently provides 4.18 acres of publicly accessible parks and open space properties per 1,000 residents, or .004 acres per capita. This includes County managed greenways, trails, and trailheads. With the population projected by the state demographer to increase by about 120,000 people

DID YOU KNOW?



772 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WITHIN ADAMS COUNTY ARE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

THAT'S **27,896** ACRES!

31 OF THESE PROPERTIES ARE IN UNINCORPORATED ADAMS COUNTY & OWNED AND MANAGED BY THE COUNTY

THAT'S **2,166** ACRES!

Table 4: Park Types in Adams County

TYPE	PROPERTIES	ACRES	%
Community Park	34	477	1.72%
Open Space	332	5,106	18.4%
Regional Park	13	18,573	66.92%
Trail/Trailhead	68	978	3.53%
Neighborhood Park	321	2,206	7.95%
School Facility	4	9	0.03%
<i>Total</i>	<i>772</i>	<i>27,754</i>	<i>100%</i>
Conservation Easements	65	14,132	

Source: Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG 2018, Classified by Design Workshop 2020



Publicly Accessible Property

The amount of publicly accessible property acquired and managed for parks and open space has increased by approximately **840 acres** since 1998.

by 2030 to approximately 637,551 persons, Adams County will have to increase the acreage of publicly accessible properties they manage by roughly 500 acres to maintain current provision levels.

Many communities have adopted a goal promoted by The Trust for Public Land to have all residences no more than a 10-minute walk to access a park or open space property. It ensures residents have convenient access to outdoor recreation space close to home. There are currently 54,837 residential addresses within Adams County that are not within a 1/4 mile (5-minute walk) of a neighborhood park or a 1/2 mile (10-minute walk) from a community or regional park. That equates to ~ 31.6 percent of all residential addresses outside of a comfortable walking distance from these parks, and 68.4 percent are well served with the location of parks. This represents overall good distribution of parks provision for a county with significant rural land patterns and dispersed development, however, some gaps exist in more densely developed unincorporated areas that should be addressed.



Park and Open Space Land for Everyone!

Adams County's ratio of park and open space land for every 100 residents is about 5 times the national average.

TRAILS OVERVIEW

Adams County contains 559 miles of existing trails, shown in MAP 8 and MAP 9. Of these, 40.7 miles are existing regional recreation trails located in the unincorporated areas that are managed by County staff. These include 17.5 miles along the

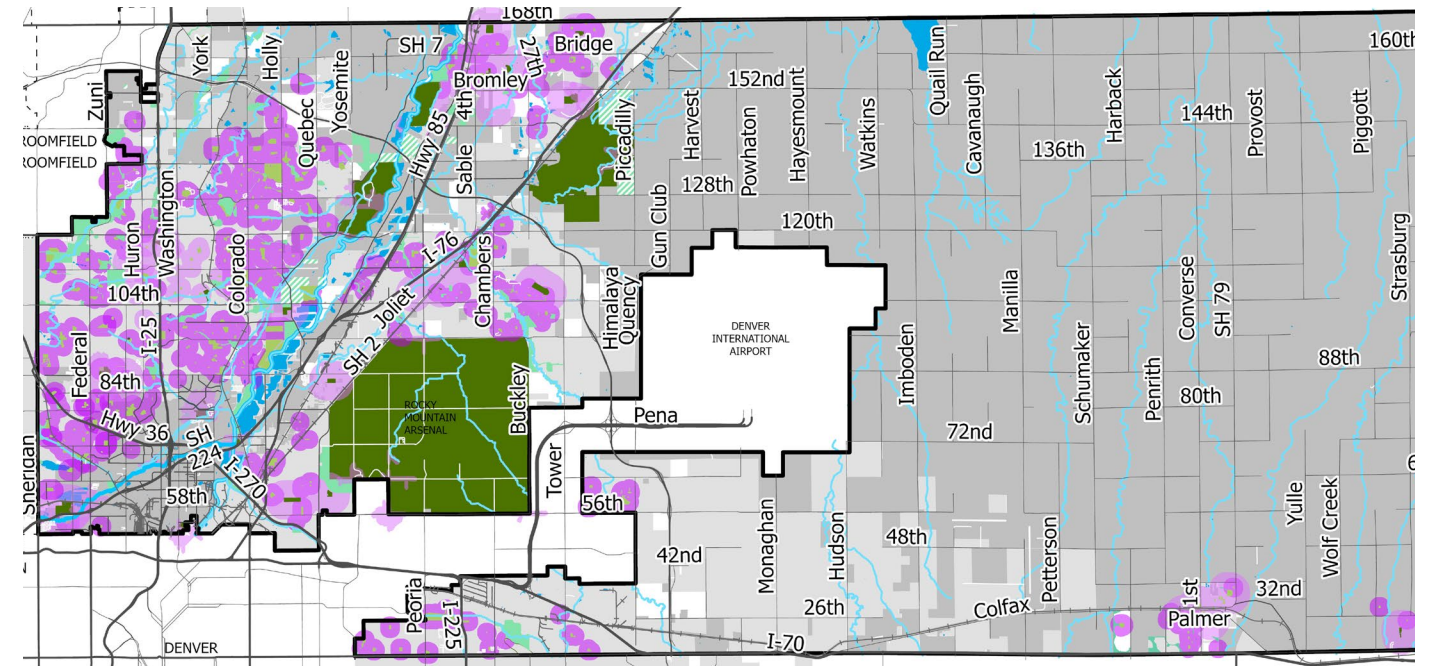
LEGEND

- Areas within 1/4 mile of a neighborhood park
- Areas within 1/2 mile of a community park or regional park within Adams county
- Neighborhood Parks (Municipal Other)
- Community/Regional Park
- Open Space W/ Public Access
- Open Space Without Public Access
- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Streams and Lakes
- Municipal Boundaries
- Unincorporated

LEGEND

- Residences within 1/4 mile of a park
- Residences farther than 1/4 mile of a park
- Neighborhood Parks (Municipal Other)
- Community/Regional Park
- Open Space W/ Public Access
- Open Space Without Public Access
- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Streams and Lakes
- Municipal Boundaries
- Unincorporated

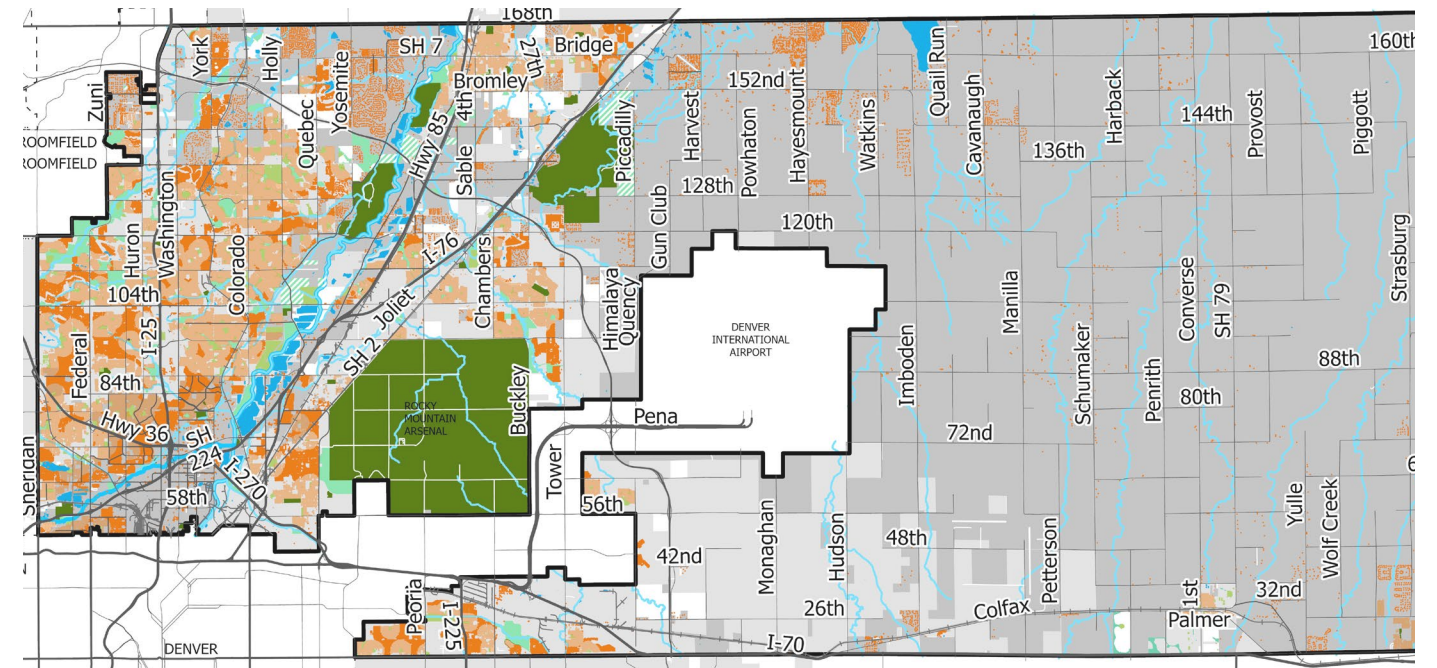
MAP 6: PUBLIC ACCESS SERVICE AREAS



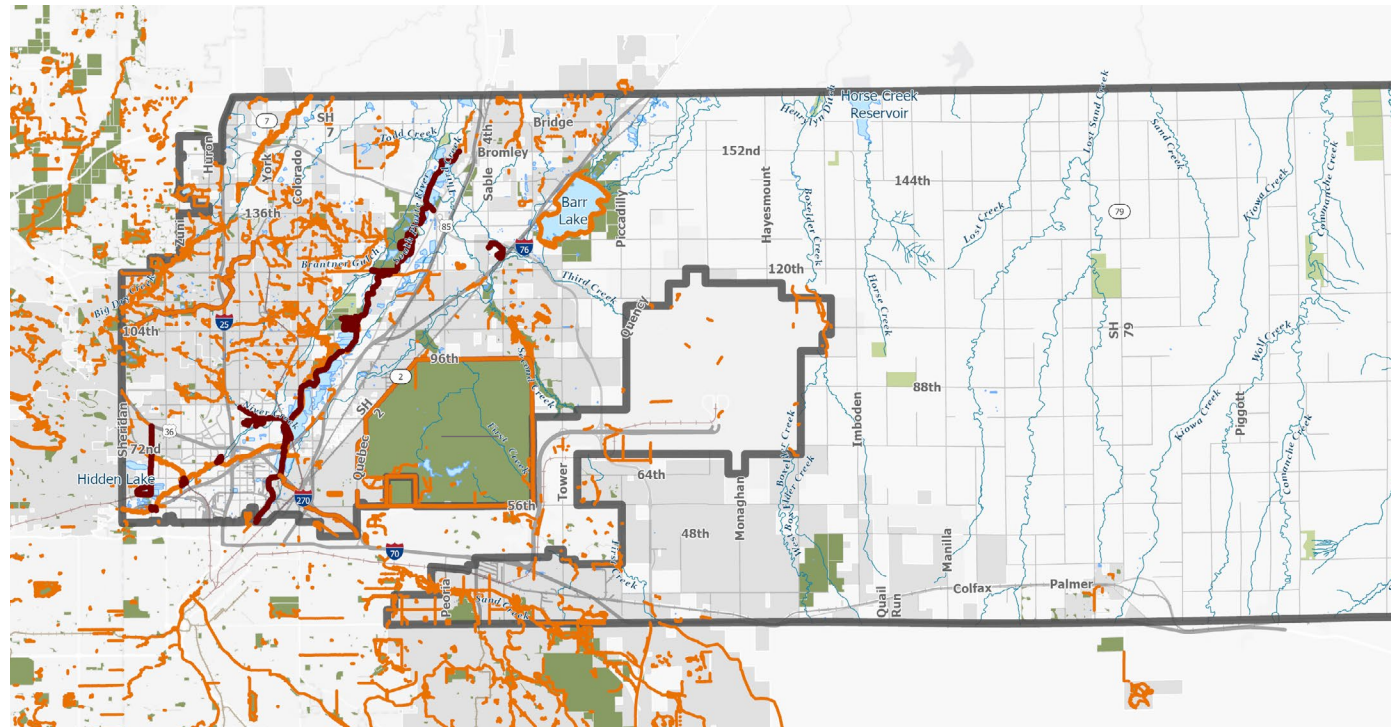
Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

NOT TO SCALE

MAP 7: PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS - RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES



MAP 8: EXISTING RECREATION TRAILS | COUNTY-WIDE



NOT TO SCALE

DID YOU KNOW?



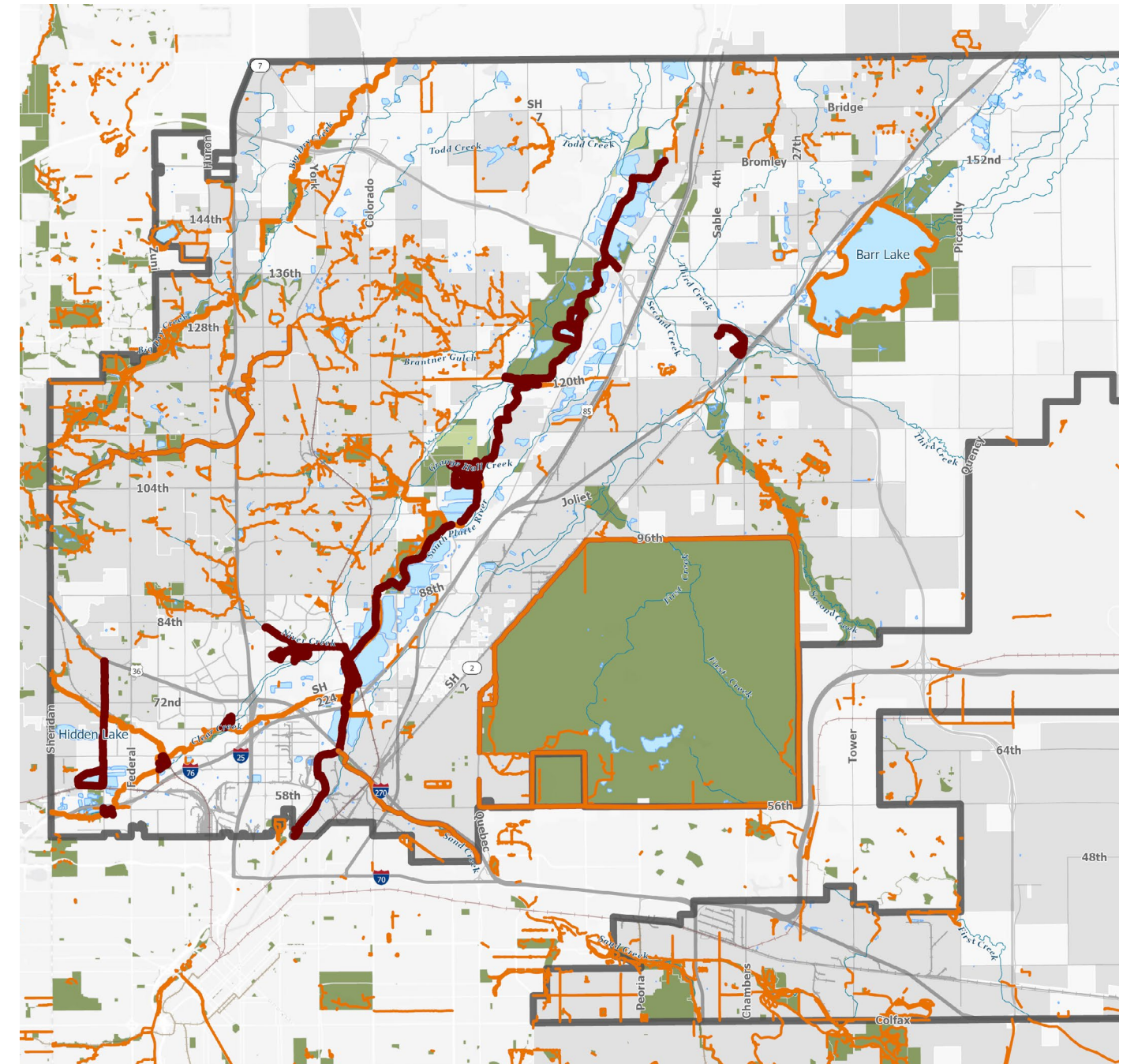
559 MILES OF EXISTING TRAILS IN THE COUNTY

40.7 MILES OF EXISTING REGIONAL RECREATION TRAILS IN UNINCORPORATED ADAMS COUNTY MANAGED BY COUNTY STAFF

South Platte River and 7.6 miles along Clear Creek. The South Platte River Trail (SPRT) stretches from Chatfield Reservoir in Littleton to Highway 7 in Brighton. It provides connections to the Clear Creek Trail, Sand Creek Trail, and many other local trails. The SPRT is one of the most popular trails in the county and is a regional asset. The most significant regional trail connectors managed by Adams County include the SPRT and the Clear Creek Trail. Other trail connectors in the county include the Little Dry Creek Trail, the Big Dry Creek Trail, the Sand Creek Trail, and the Niver Creek Trail.

While most of the trails are concentrated in the western portion of the county, a few municipal trails extend east beyond Strasburg as highlighted in MAP 8 on page 26.

MAP 9: EXISTING RECREATION TRAILS | WESTERN COUNTY



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

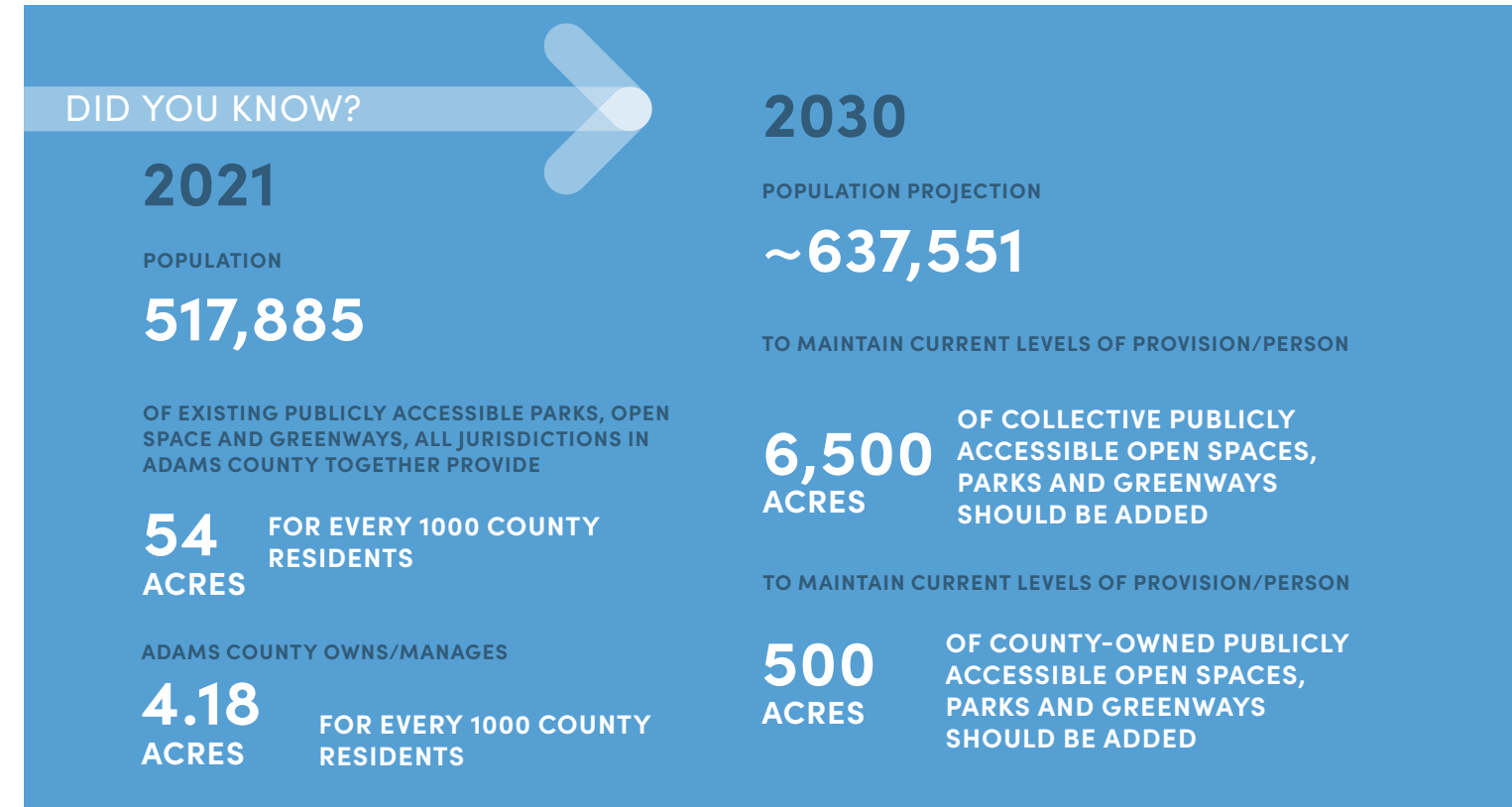


LEGEND

- Adams County Trails
- Regional Trails
- Municipal Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation Easements
- Incorporated Areas



Advancing Adams booth at the County Fair



For More Info
Complete summaries of major engagement events facilitated in Phase 2 can be found in the Public Engagement Appendix.

PLANNING PROCESS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This plan was developed as a tool to guide the Adams County community as it works to shape its own future. The community’s input has been essential to the planning process. In alignment with the overall explorations and planning work, engagement for *Advancing Adams* was divided into two consecutive phases: Phase 1, Grounding and Phase 2, Plan for the Future. The two phases were broadly divided between the first stages of planning work focused on assessing existing conditions and developing an understanding of the community’s goals, and the second

stages of work focused on providing recommendations for future land uses, growth scenarios, priorities for parks, open space properties, and trails, and investments in enhancing accessibility and equity throughout the county. During both engagement phases, community members were presented with information and questions relating to all three plans to ensure an integration of these conversations, preferences, and priorities as a vision for the future and proposed policies for achieving it are put forward.

At the outset of Phase 1, the planning team aimed to introduce the community to the *Advancing Adams* planning process. Through an education campaign and a multi-pronged communication and

outreach strategy, Adams County connected with residents and community stakeholders to explain the opportunity presented by the simultaneous development of the three plans. At project launch, a press release was distributed, introducing the planning process to communities across the county. A project website—www.advancingadams.org—was established on the County’s main site, as the central hub of information and communication about project updates, engagement opportunities, draft recommendations, online tools and resources, and points of contact within Adams County to enable deeper conversations about plan development.

Throughout both phases, the planning team utilized a variety of tools and media to keep community members informed and offer opportunities for direct engagement with the planning work.

Input from these activities helped guide the plan direction. Taking place in 2020 and 2021, engagement was directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and virtual engagement techniques were used to engage with community members. Activities like online surveys, virtual public workshops facilitated through Zoom, and live polling through online tools like Mentimeter ensured the team was hearing residents despite limitations on face-to-face engagement. In-person meetings and events, including

DID YOU KNOW?

520,070

ADAMS COUNTY'S
POPULATION
TODAY (2020)

708,646

ADAMS COUNTY'S
POPULATION IN
THE FUTURE (2040)

1.7%

POPULATION
GROWTH
IN ADAMS
COUNTY



1.4%

ANNUAL
POPULATION
GROWTH IN
COLORADO

Data from Colorado State Demographer's Office, 2020

Describe Adams County today in one word

When asked what one-word respondents use to describe Adams County today, the top two choices selected by Community Survey respondents were...



pop-up events at already scheduled community events were mostly held outside, during warmer months of the year, and were facilitated in accordance with local regulations and public health guidance.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A public engagement campaign is only as good as its reach across a community. In order to maximize exposure to the planning process for as many community members as possible, Adams County undertook a variety of outreach efforts over the course of the plan's development. In addition to a broad campaign that reached all corners of the county, the planning team and County staff implemented a targeted outreach

and engagement approach. The team identified and partnered with communities that have been historically underrepresented in planning efforts, such as non-native English-speaking communities, youth, and lower income groups.

One of the best ways to increase access to the planning process and provide opportunities for broad and diverse engagement is to embrace a "meet people where they are" methodology for an outreach campaign. To achieve this, the planning team and Adams County utilized a variety of media for getting the word out about *Advancing Adams* to the community. In addition to the project website, an introductory video was launched at the end of November 2020 describing the process. Press releases were provided to local media and flyers and posters were installed at strategic locations in English, Spanish, and Burmese at various stages of the engagement process and ahead of major opportunities to interact with the planning team. Local morning radio programs interviewed key project partners, social media posts were posted periodically, and email messages were sent to project partners, who in turn shared the information with their networks. Tactics used to interact with community members included technical stakeholder and community organization meetings, partner briefing presentations, surveys, youth-specific engagement, focus groups, and interviews.

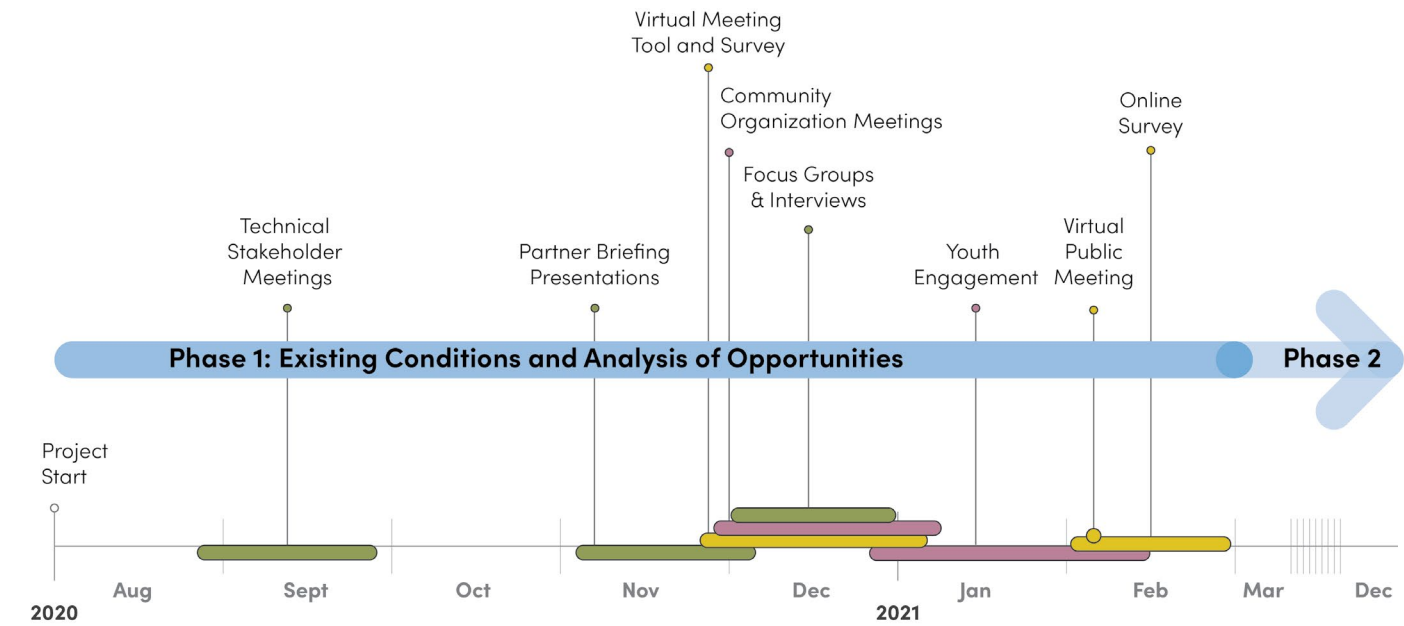


Figure 15: Advancing Adams Plans Schedule (Comprehensive, POST and Transportation Master Plans)

PHASE 1: GROUNDING

The first phase of engagement was designed and facilitated around two goals:

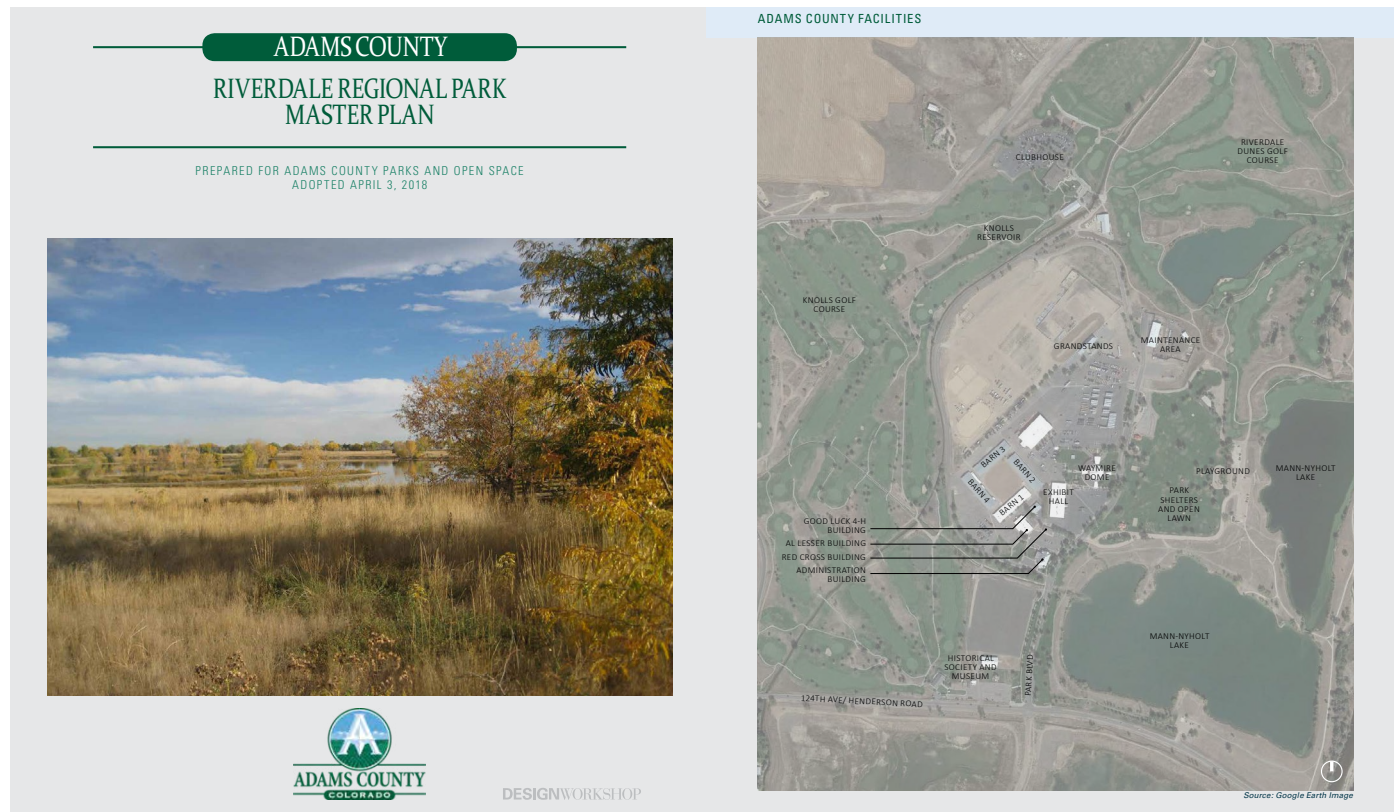
1. Inform the community of the *Advancing Adams* planning process.
2. Establish a deeper baseline understanding of existing conditions in the county and the community's priorities for the future.

In order to standardize project communication materials, the planning team developed a simple but visually engaging brand identity for the project. Through the use of consistent language, colors, typography, iconography, and other visual elements, the three *Advancing Adams* plans were united under the same branding umbrella and created memorable and easily recognizable material for repeated use over the

eighteen-month planning schedule.

Materials like advertisements for engagement events, online tools, comment collection cards, and a sixteen-page youth workbook were developed in alignment with the project brand to advertise the planning process and encourage broad and diverse participation.

Once initial project identity, messaging, and outreach communication were established, the planning team began the process of meeting the Adams County community through a series of virtual events and activities focused on the county today and residents' aspirations for its future. An initial virtual "visioning" workshop was hosted via webinar and was attended by community members from all over Adams County. The planning team introduced the *Advancing Adams* planning process, established key project goals, and launched an



Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan

interactive online StoryMap. Over the course of a few months, over one thousand community members interacted with the StoryMap tool (for an average of over ten minutes each) to understand more about Adams County and learn about the planning process. The informational StoryMap was accompanied by an online survey (provided in English and Spanish) asking community members to describe their impressions of Adams County’s parks, open space properties, and trails, and list their priorities for major planning themes. These were the first of two virtual workshops and two online surveys facilitated in Phase 1.

In addition to events and online activities that were broadly advertised

and accessible, the planning team facilitated more targeted engagement in Phase 1 to ensure voices were captured that would round out perspectives collected from public workshops and surveys. The team attended existing community group meetings to solicit input, developed “meeting-in-a-box” material to enable County staff to present the planning process and future engagement opportunities as a segment of other meetings, hosted focus group sessions with community organizations and overlapping jurisdictions within the county, and hosted listening sessions with community organizations, including groups representing non-native English-speaking community members.

Issues

To get a sense of what would require deeper exploration in the planning process, the team aimed to understand the issues that are affecting the community today. Throughout Phase 1, several issues rose to the top. Many people expressed an interest in a greater diversity of options for getting around Adams County, including a more robust and accessible trail network for walking, hiking, biking, and horse riding. A major concern that was identified is the loss of agricultural and rural land. Development pressures, increasing land prices and farming costs were identified as forces changing the landscape faster than may have been anticipated previously. Overall, residents wish to see growth take shape in a way that makes essential amenities, including parks, recreation fields and courts, various natural and designed open space properties, and trails more accessible to and from neighborhoods.

Opportunities

Looking through the three value lenses mentioned earlier in this chapter—sustainability, equity and livability—several opportunities were mentioned by residents throughout the county. People want choices and flexibility when it comes to living in both urbanized and rural areas. In terms of sustainability, building smarter and using new technologies to conserve resources is important to residents, as it is to many Colorado

communities. Finding ways to promote and support agritourism, farmers markets and revisiting development policies were mentioned as opportunities to keep both rural and urban lifestyles available. Addressing equity may look different in various areas of the county but ensuring everyone has access to similar types of public amenities and resources is important to all residents. To create equity meaningfully, residents would like to see affordable and diverse housing, access to local parks within a 10-minute walk, and access to social services and transportation options that work for everyone.

The third value —livability—is about placemaking and working to make sure people have a deep connection to the places they live, work and recreate. A majority of people who participated in the planning process feel community, housing and the natural environment should be emphasized as important elements of livability. When thinking about the outdoors, residents value natural resources, agriculture and wildlife protection, outdoor recreation and trail connections. In terms of community, focusing on key street corridors can help increase safety, mobility options and spur economic development, helping residents feel more invested



Community Issues: Community Survey

85% of community survey respondents feel that the loss of agricultural land is a significant issue.

93% think housing affordability is a significant issue.



Community Opportunities: Listening Session

Participants think there is an opportunity to use culture to start a dialogue by creating an ecosystem for the arts that runs through various communities in the county.

in their neighborhoods. Focusing on arts and culture can also help create more inclusive, equitable and vibrant communities. At the same time, preserving open space for wildlife habitat and protecting scenic views, agricultural lands, and historic resources is important to residents and adds to a richer sense of community.

PHASE 2: PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Phase 2 of *Advancing Adams* engagement was broken into three “engagement windows” focused on different stages of the planning process (1: Scenarios & Policies, 2: Projects & Programs, and 3: Overall Plan Framework and Draft Plan). Based on an understanding of the issues and opportunities identified by the community in Phase 1, Phase 2 was used to explore the tools and strategies available to accomplish planning goals and to give residents the opportunity to directly shape the recommendations of the plan. Having established a baseline understanding of the features, issues, and trends in Adams County, the planning team explored different scenarios for growth and their implications on priorities, investments, and programming for parks, open space properties, and trails. Growth scenarios and alternatives for future investments were presented to the community through a variety of online and in-person engagement events and activities. Community members were invited to explore the alternative visions for the future and share their

impressions, preferences, and ideas to inform the preferred direction and recommendations of the plan.

As the weather turned warm in the Spring of 2021, Adams County staff were able to meet with community members in person by setting up an *Advancing Adams* booth at scheduled community events such as Brighton Summerfest in June, the County’s annual Stars & Stripes Independence Day celebration in early July, and the County Fair at the beginning of August. At each of these events, the County set up posters, banners, and postcards to advertise opportunities to learn more and engage more deeply with the project planning work. County staff made themselves available to discuss the project, answer questions, and facilitate interactive mapping exercises designed to elicit feedback and new ideas from residents. Comment cards were also made available to community members who wished to provide more detail about their ideas and contributions to the project mapping. Some of these in-person events directly preceded or overlapped with the release of an online survey. Community members were encouraged to participate in the survey when they had more time to interact with the content and consider their priorities.

In addition to these in-person activities, Phase 2 included two online surveys giving community members the opportunity to review alternative growth scenarios, precedent imagery depicting the approximate character



Volunteers working together in Adams County to keep open space clean near the Anythink library

of proposed development types and densities, and preliminary recommendations for the county’s future park, open space, and trail enhancements. Community members were asked to share their thoughts on the appropriateness and desirability of these alternatives and proposed directions. Phase 2 also included a virtual public workshop in October 2021 where community members were presented with scenarios and preliminary recommendations, along with a summary of initial community feedback and insight collected from surveys and in-person engagement events. At this final workshop, community members were engaged in interactive polling through Mentimeter to submit ideas, respond

to questions and presented material, and confirm or suggest revisions to overall plan recommendations and priorities.

Policies & Growth

Policies provide direction for County staff when planning for the future. Policies that focus on promoting equity, inclusivity, affordability, sustainability, and resiliency are top of mind for many residents. There is clear direction from the community that policies need to be put in place to accommodate expected growth and provide more options and better quality of life for more residents. However, these priorities need to be balanced with other goals that were identified as high

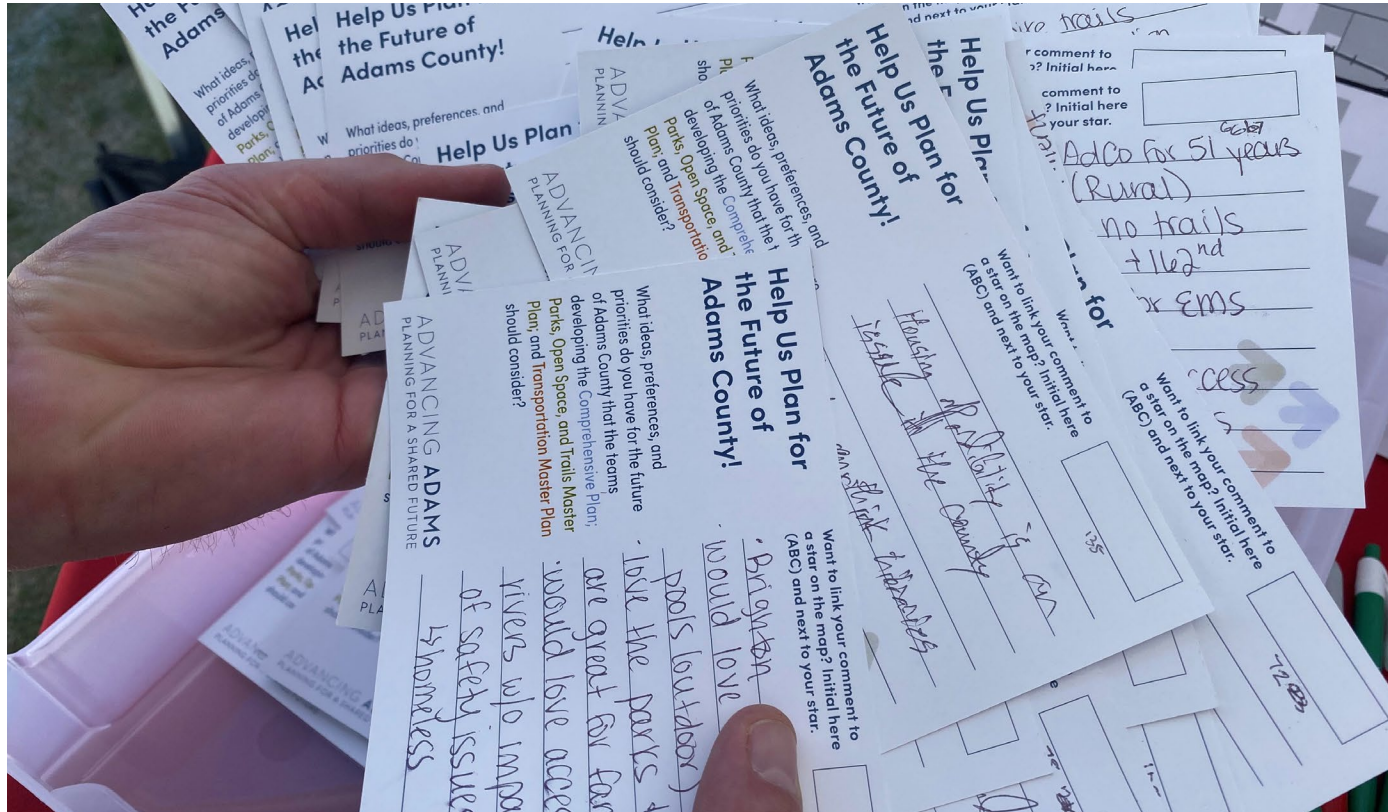
Describe Adams County in 2030 in One Word

When asked to describe Adams County in one word in 2030 the two most popular words were...



What do you think about growth?

A majority (60%) of Community Survey respondents who live in Unincorporated Adams County would prefer to live, shop and work in areas with “many focused centers” as opposed to “stay the course” or “larger areas of concentrated development” scenarios.



Public comment cards capturing residents' ideas for Adams County's future

priorities as well, such as conserving natural lands, assets, and features, protecting sensitive wildlife habitats, and preserving rural communities and lands. When asked in a survey to identify the most important actions for improving living, working, and visiting Adams County, respondents chose “a balanced ratio of parks to residents to help ensure equitable distribution” and “provide local park opportunities in unincorporated areas facing service gaps, embracing a goal of a park within a 10-minute walk of all non-rural residences” above nine other options focused on development, neighborhood services, transportation improvements, and other possible actions.

With respect to recreational resources, community members identified a need for expanded access to parks, open space properties, and recreation centers in unincorporated Adams County as the most important future land use effort, when asked to choose three proposed efforts out of a menu of ten options. The community's focus on recreation and open space as an important element of planning for growth was further emphasized in a survey question that asked about the biggest challenges facing the county as it continues to grow. Out of nine possible options, the most-selected response was “loss or deterioration of open spaces.” These insights, along with many others collected throughout the planning process,

What regional parks are a priority for transit accessibility?



Figure 16: In addition to small group conversations, representatives weighed in on their priorities. The two properties in light grey in the figure above are EB Rains Jr. Memorial Park and Willow Bay Open Sapce.

provide meaningful direction from the community on how best to usher in the future they want to see for themselves and future generations of residents.

Prioritization

Overall, residents feel equitable, diverse and sustainable economic development is critical. They reported that walkable communities should be the model for the future. This insight will help shape development decisions, along with strategic planning and investments for parks, open space properties, and trails. Successful community planning involves providing improved accessibility to parks and trail connections throughout neighborhoods. Along these same lines, environmental sustainability was also identified as a top priority of community members. Strategies such as increasing tree canopy, preserving ecologically sensitive areas, preserving agricultural lands,

reclaiming lands previously used for industrial uses, and using more renewable energy are all ideas that the community would like to see implemented in the near future.

Community members shared many great ideas to help plan for the future. While the planning work and conversations with residents yielded a great number of ideas and potential investments, master planning for parks, open spaces, and trails is most successful when it helps communities prioritize their ambitions and helps ground decisions in the realities of investment timing, political will, and budget limitations. This master plan weaves all these aspects together in an implementable action plan.



Prioritizing Equity is Key

Prioritizing equity is top of mind for many residents. Ensuring access to fresh affordable food and providing housing options that serve different price points and lifestyles are extremely important to providing equity to all Adams County residents.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND TOOLS

The role of the County is to support parks, trails and open space projects that have clear public value, protect public interests, and provide public access to desired, needed, and well-designed facilities. The POST Plan establishes the foundation for the County's decision processes related to open space lands acquisition and direction for recreation offerings. County boards and staff will also use this plan to guide the maintenance and expansion of offerings through their annual work plans and grant program.

Open Space Sales Tax and Grant Program

Adams County acts as the administrator of the Open Space Grant program, supported by the Open Space Sales Tax. The 0.25 percent sales tax fund is used to preserve land to protect water quality; preserve wildlife areas, wetlands, rivers, streams, and farmland, protect open space to limit sprawl; and to create, improve, and maintain parks, trails, and recreation facilities county-wide. The taxing entities contributing to the Open Space Sales Tax are City of Arvada, City of Aurora, Town of Bennett, City of Brighton, City of Commerce City, City of Federal Heights, City of Northglenn, City of Thornton, City of Westminster, and Adams County. These funds are distributed in three ways. Sixty-eight percent is awarded through a

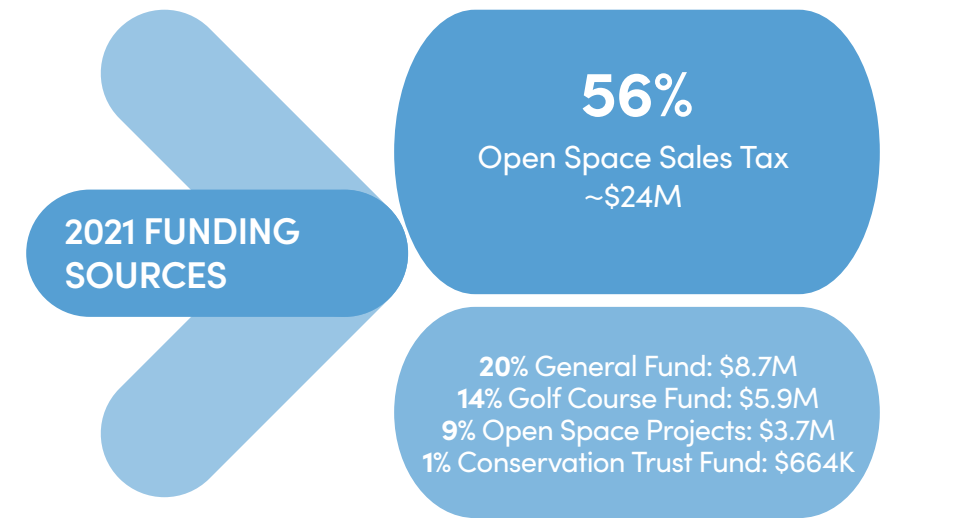
competitive grant program, 30 percent is distributed back to the jurisdiction where the tax was generated, and two percent is allocated to administration costs. A citizen Open Space Advisory Board, made up of representatives from across the county, reviews and recommends the funding of efforts for Board of County Commissioner approval. This master plan will help guide the prioritization of distribution of these funds.

Funding

Adams County and its municipal partners currently utilize partnerships, fees, grant awards, private donations and the open space tax to fund parks, open space and trail projects. The open space sales tax composes the majority (56%) of the funding sources for the Adams County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department and its projects.

The open space sales tax was approved in 1999 and the rate has only been increased once, in 2004, by ¼ of one percent. In 2020, voters in Adams County overwhelmingly (83%) supported reauthorizing the 0.25 percent sales tax for open space and making it permanent. Currently, the sales tax generates more than \$20 million annually which is dedicated to improvements to parks, recreational facilities, and open space projects county-wide.

After deducting 2% of sales taxes for administrative purposes, 30% of the remaining taxes collected are paid



From 2018 to 2021, the amount of funding the department receives from the Open Space Sales Tax Fund has increased from 46% (2018) to approximately 56% in 2021.

Revenues are generated by taxes, charges for services, intergovernmental exchanges, investment income, and other finance sources.

Adams County and municipal partners currently utilize partnerships, fees, grant awards, private donations and the open space tax to fund parks, open space and trail projects.

OPEN SPACE SALES TAX REVENUE

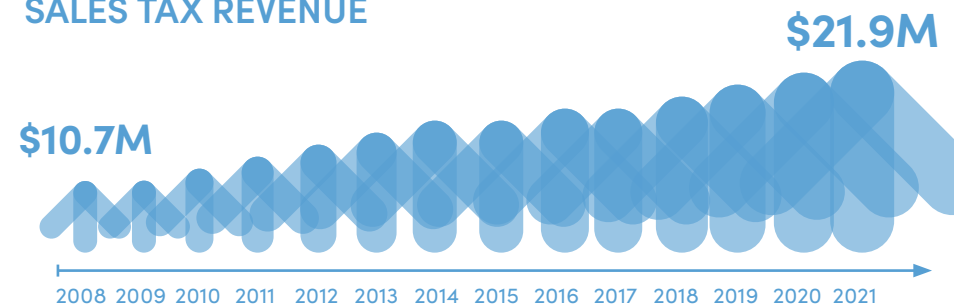


Figure 17: 2021 Funding Sources & Growth of Open Space Sales Tax Revenue over Time

out to the cities within the county and the County in proportion to the ratio at which taxes are collected. The other 68% of remaining funds are distributed as grants approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) as recommended by the Open Space Advisory Board.

In 2010, after the first 10 years of the Open Space and Sales Tax, \$77 million had been generated to fund projects, including the protection of 3,127 acres of land, development of 18 miles of trails, construction of 13 playgrounds, implementation of eight athletic field projects, funding of 13 environmental education programs

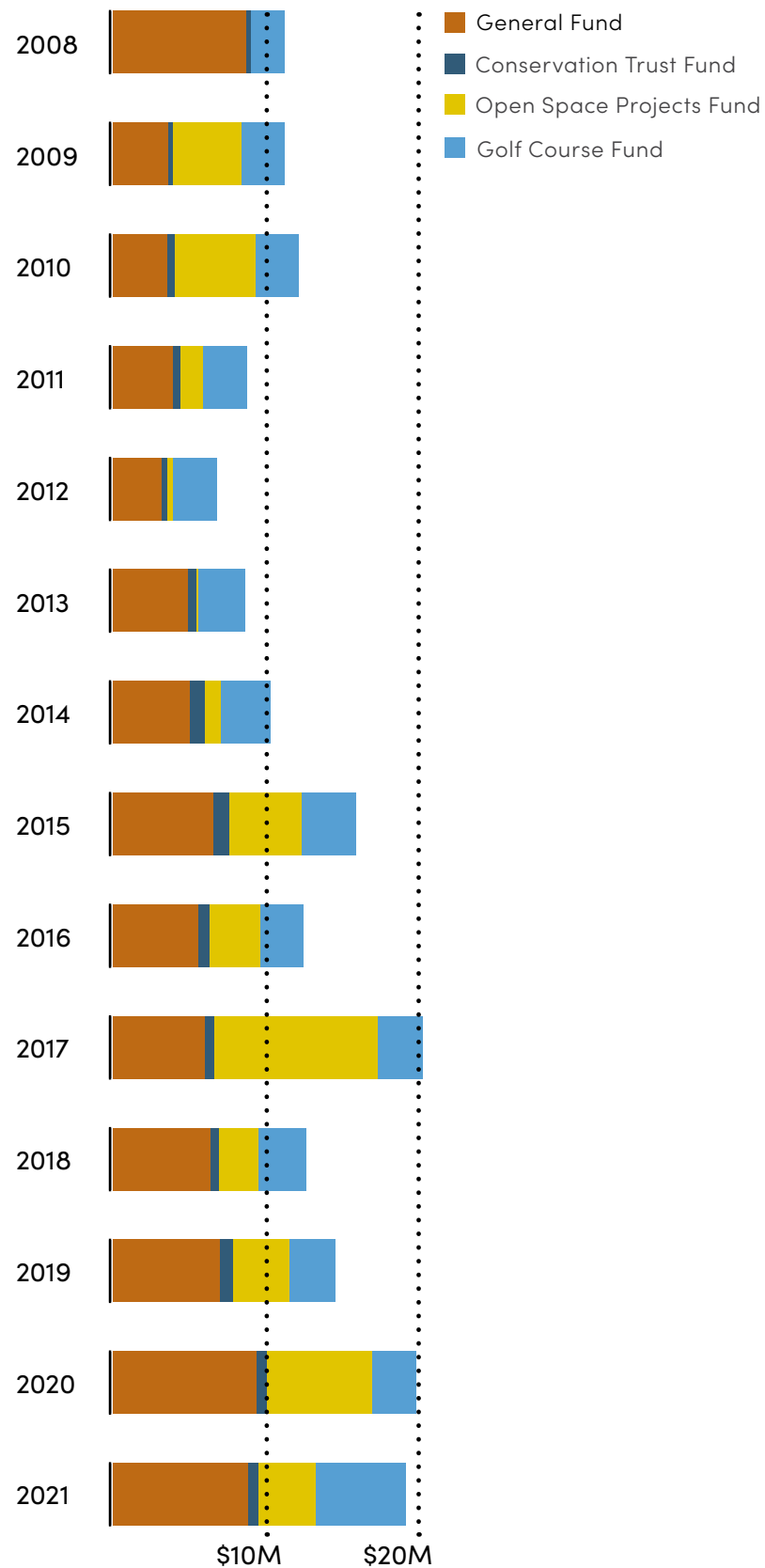
and improvements to a variety of existing parks.¹

From 2000 to 2020, the Open Space Sales Tax has contributed more than \$214 million into parks, recreation, trails, and open space projects throughout Adams County. The grant program has funded more than 538 projects since the program began, keeping pace with a high rate of population growth and visitors to parks.

The open space sales tax revenue has grown steadily since 2008, nearly

¹ Open Space Sales Tax Report to Residents (2010). Available: [2009 Open Space Annual Report.pdf \(adccogov.org\)](https://www.adccogov.org)

Total Expenditures by Fund Source



doubling from \$10.7 million in 2008 to an average of \$21.9 million since 2019. The POSCA department gets their share of funding from the portion of the Open Space Sales Tax Fund (the remainder of the 30% distribution that does *not* go directly back to jurisdictions), which is then put into a budgetary line item called the “Open Space Projects Fund.”

From 2018 to 2021, the amount of funding the department receives from the Open Space Sales Tax Fund has increased from 46% (2018) to approximately 56% in 2021. The general fund provides approximately 20% of the funds, while the Open Space Projects Fund supports approximately 10% of the expenditures each year. The Conservation Trust Fund has historically been 3% or less, and the Golf Course fund fluctuates between 10% and 14%.

Revenues are generated by taxes, charges for services, intergovernmental exchanges, investment income, and other finance sources.

Throughout the duration of the Open Space Sales Tax program, County-owned and managed lands has grown, too, by quite large percentages.

The County also monitors 39 conservation easements and 17,587 acres of open space are preserved. The amount of publicly accessible property acquired and managed for

parks and open space has increased by approximately 840 acres.

However, maintenance needs for this expanded system have increased and there are fewer funds for large improvement projects. This Master Plan describes many recommendations for improvements, open space acquisitions, and increased maintenance and programs to meet the growing population demands that will not be possible within the next ten years without increasing County tax allocations while strategically leveraging grants and other outside funding sources.



Growth of County Owned and Managed Lands

Since the Open Space Sales Tax program began, the amount of parks, open space and trails has grown tremendously.

In 1998, Adams County owned and managed 1,327 acres of parks/open space and 16.5 miles of trails.

As of 2021, Adams County now owns and manages:

2,166 acres parks/open space

39% increase since 1998

40.75 miles of trails

60% increase since 1998



Riding along the South Platte River Trail, the major regional trail for the Denver Metro area.



2

FUTURE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & RECREATION

- Big Ideas
- Plan Framework
- How this Plan becomes a reality



The Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department is committed to “significantly enhance quality of life, enrich communities and INSPIRE.”

Adams County Fair

BIG IDEAS

Several big ideas emerged through the plan creation.



DEDICATION TO PROVIDING RECREATIONAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES THAT ADAPT TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

The purpose statement of the Parks, Open Space and Cultural Arts Department is, “To significantly enhance quality of life, enrich communities & INSPIRE.” The department is tasked with planning, managing, and maintaining County parks and trail systems. This is inherently community serving, but the department has demonstrated a greater commitment to making sure its services are provided and dispersed equitably among the population, by removing barriers to access to services, such as physical barriers and affordability. With a growing and diversifying population, the department recognizes the necessity to evolve with the changing needs of the community.

Providing equitable access to nature, parks and recreation was a priority expressed throughout the public engagement process. Suggestions for accomplishing equitable access include expanding program and park offerings to unincorporated parts of the county, working closely with partner agencies, and addressing the quantity and quality of facilities geographically and according to population demographics. Residential areas that are without a park or that have parks that are underperforming for the communities’ needs are identified for additions and enhancements in this plan. In addition, the plan also identifies the need to activate what the County already has with both traditional and innovative recreational opportunities that support the idea of offering “Colorado Experiences” close to home by connecting people to lakes, rivers and nature, and the recreational offerings that these locations typically afford.



DEDICATION TO ENRICHING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ACCESS TO NATURE AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Equitable access to nature includes opportunities for education. The County is committed to supporting a mission of learning and the enrichment of the community through cultivating the values of stewardship and environmental and cultural education through the provision of a future Nature Center and building up its new park ranger service.



CONSERVING THE COUNTY’S RURAL CHARACTER WITH PROGRESSIVE APPROACHES TO SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE

Rural character, represented by agricultural lands and native prairie, are of high value to residents. Scenic resources are also highly valued as part of the rural character. These lands help shape the identity of place that many residents relate to and connect people to their food sources and livelihood. Many residents choose to live in Adams County because these lands provide the foundation for the rural lifestyle they enjoy. As development pressures continue to push up against undeveloped and agricultural lands, the importance of their conservation becomes paramount. This plan identifies lands at greatest risk of facing the highest development pressures over time and those that provide the greatest environmental benefits.

A survey conducted in Phase 1 - Grounding, indicated that 68% of respondents saw “Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Wildlife Habitat Protection and Riparian Enhancement” as the highest priority theme for the plan. Along with rural character, residents have continued to demonstrate overwhelming support for the enhancement and expansion of open space lands, parks and trails through

ballot initiatives that have established a dedicated sales tax for this purpose. In 2020, the 0.25 percent sales tax for parks, recreation and open space was made permanent. Proceeds from this tax, which have funded more than 538 projects with more than \$212 million over its first 20 years, will continue to help the County set aside natural resources for conservation and protection, address food production insecurities by focusing on the preservation of local agriculture, preservation of cultural and historical resources, and improvement of the quality of experiences in the outdoors.



PROTECTING AND CELEBRATING THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER AND CLEAR CREEK CORRIDORS

The South Platte River corridor is a tremendous resource, providing a diverse ecological system and critical wildlife habitat, scenic amenities, and recreational and mobility assets. Tying into that corridor is the Clear Creek corridor and trail system with equal potential benefits in the form of natural habitat and recreational opportunities.

As the county's primary recreational regional trail spine, the South Platte River Trail spans from the Denver City limits to Highway 7 in Brighton. There are many opportunities to better connect people locally throughout the county to the trail. To maintain and improve the corridor, the County will implement management and safety measures that promote a healthy ecological system, encourage greater public use, and offer opportunities for better experiences along the river. A separate vision and implementation plan for the South Platte River corridor titled, "Experience Your South Platte," is underway. The Adams County Coalition, a group of regional partners, is working with stakeholders and local communities to create a vision for the future of the corridor and identify key areas for short and long-term initiatives to realize the vision.



CONNECTING PEOPLE THROUGH PLACEMAKING, ARTS AND CULTURE

As Adams County has continued to grow, it has become more diverse. Nearly 40% of the population identifies as Hispanic, which is expected to increase in the next 20 years. This cultural diversity should be celebrated through placemaking and programming that is inclusive and representative of the entire population, while also recognizing and celebrating the historical resources and cultural heritage that help define the region's identity.

The promotion of public art and annual events that highlight history, culture and diversity can help connect people to the land and their communities and offer opportunities for social interactions that give people a greater understanding

of one another. These interactions help build a sense of community, support resilience and strengthen the region's defining characteristics.

According to *Artfully Adams*, Adams County Arts & Culture Master Plan (2017), a key indicator of successful placemaking over time includes providing opportunities for more participation in outdoor recreation activities and offering places to enjoy nature. This goal adds to the quality of life for residents by building a cultural and artistic "sense of place." Arts and cultural events linked with County parks and open space properties can enhance both the public's interactions with the parks, open space, and trail system by providing direct experiences with nature, while also promoting more opportunities to build a greater sense of community.



RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS, SOCIAL, AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS THROUGH ADJUSTED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Maintenance and capital improvements are important considerations for the 31 properties the County manages. Many of these sites contribute significantly to resilience to flooding and include vegetation that provides benefits including better air quality and urban cooling. Proactive management of these properties can provide even greater benefits. Restoration of wetlands, removal of invasive plants, and the planting of drought tolerant species are just some of the ways greater environmental support can be provided. Increased use puts stress on County-owned lands. These properties experience degradation of environmentally sensitive areas from both recreational users and encampments of people experiencing homelessness. These challenges require an approach that includes developing policies, providing education and resources to address them.



MAKING THE MOST OUT OF REMNANT LANDS

Adams County has a complex system of conserved lands, trails, regional recreation sites and wildlife areas realized through the efforts of public and private partners. Notably, these lands have transformed gravel pits, drainage corridors, reservoirs, and the former Rocky Mountain Arsenal into natural and recreational amenities of enduring value and great pride to residents.

The County has successfully transformed several sites into well-loved amenities, including Pelican Ponds Open Space, Elaine T. Valente Open Space, Riverdale Regional Park, Twin Lakes Park and Rotella Park. These projects, along with others, have brought great value to the county in the form of naturalized parks and open space lands. These areas not only offer opportunities for environmental reclamation of wetlands, riparian, and grassland habitats, but

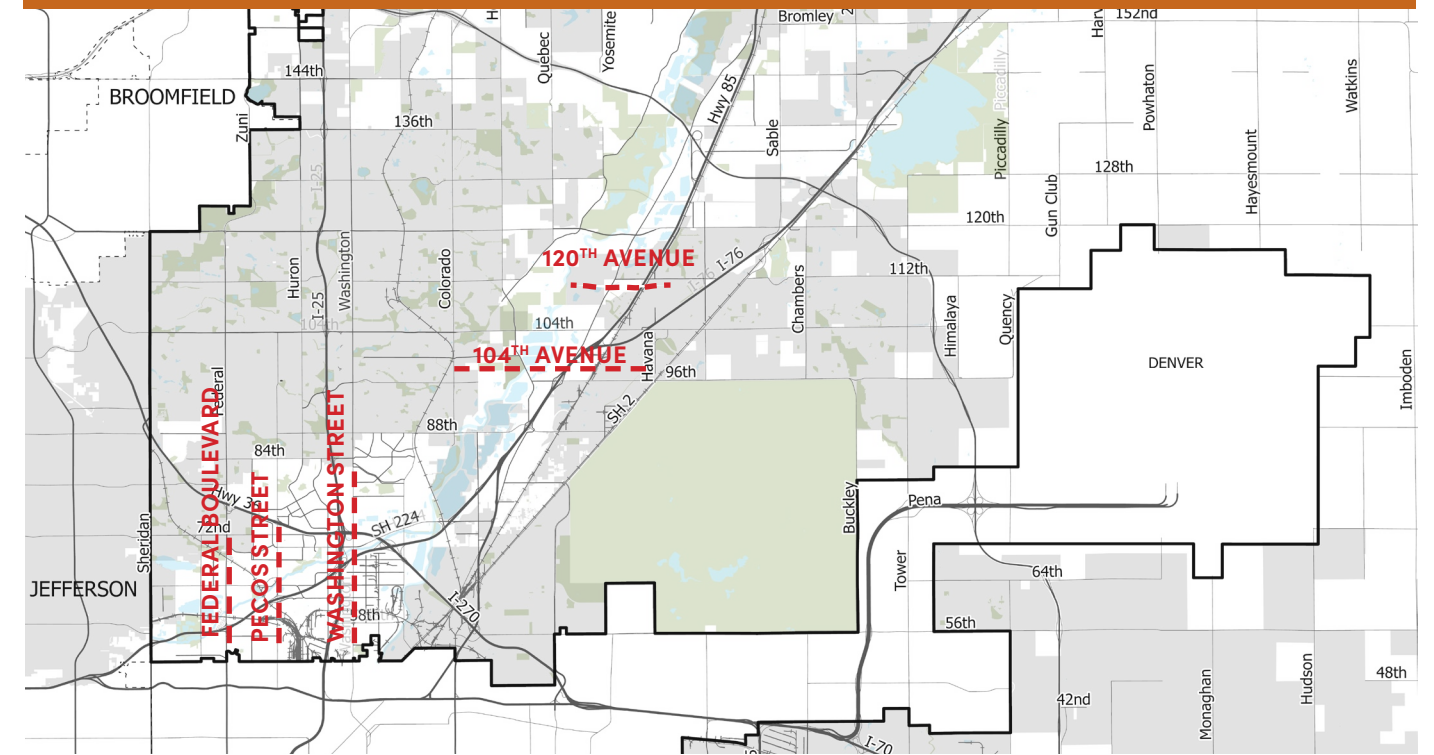
have also demonstrated their value for recreation. Based on these successes, this plan identifies the former industrial site at Lowell Ponds to be improved and highlights the potential for properties along Clear Creek to be part of a greenway providing opportunities for recreation and natural amenities. Willow Bay is another County-owned property that, while undeveloped and not currently accessible to the public, has been identified for restoration to one day provide public recreation opportunities.

Some of the county's unincorporated communities have not been able to keep pace with the provision of parks and accessible open space properties for their growing populations. The county has experienced a steady population growth mostly occurring in the urbanized southwest portion of the county, yet much of the western unincorporated area is developed with few large open space properties or park opportunities.

Creative solutions for park infill or acquisition opportunities may be sought in these urban environments, such as the conversion of vacant properties to gardens or parks, and the incorporation of public park space and recreation uses on school, library, and other public spaces. There are also opportunities to build and strengthen partnerships with existing recreation providers throughout the county.

The study of five strategic corridors, shown in MAP 10 (Federal Boulevard, Pecos Street, Washington Street, 104th Avenue and 120th Avenue) for in depth planning through the *Advancing Adams* planning process has identified opportunities for linear parks that provide recreational experiences along major trail corridors such as Clear Creek and the South Platte River Trail. In addition, the *Advancing Adams* plans identify areas for infill opportunities, including the development of parks, open space properties and trails, in areas that will transition between industrial and residential land uses in the future and in areas where higher density residential uses will be supported. What Adams County has done a tremendous job of in the past, and recognizes the opportunity to continue with in the future, is turning underutilized lands into public assets.

MAP 10: ADVANCING ADAMS FIVE STRATEGIC CORRIDORS



Data Source: Adams County, DRCOG, Design Workshop

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- - - Corridor Locations
- Parks and Open Space
- Lakes and Streams
- Municipal Area
- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Roads

PLAN FRAMEWORK

The vision for the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan is to build an integrated system that ensures equitable access for all residents to parks, trails, and open space properties; identifies areas for future growth; preserves and enhances important wildlife habitats and corridors, natural and scenic resources, and agricultural lands, rural character, and places of cultural significance; expands trail connections; and broadens recreational opportunities and regional partnerships.

The big ideas and organization of the master plan are based on these five themes:

- **Natural Resource, Wildlife Habitat Protection & Riparian Enhancement;**
- **Agricultural Lands, Rural Character, and Places of Cultural Significance;**
- **Diverse Park and Recreation Enhancement;**
- **Partnerships, Regional Coordination and Stewardship; and**
- **Trail Connections.**

Initial mapping analysis identified characteristics that contribute to high quality open spaces. This analysis, along with public and stakeholder input, identified priority areas for projects, investment and partnerships based on four of the five POST plan themes shown in Figure 19. Detailed maps and recommendations for these priority areas are discussed in Chapters 3 to 7. Larger maps of priority areas and recommendations can be found in the appendix.

The opportunities identified in this plan highlight the County’s commitment to Equity, Sustainability and Livability.

EQUITY

Equity is the just and fair inclusion of all people into a society. Equitable park offerings and access to nature can best be realized through the provision of diverse parks and recreation opportunities for residents in close proximity to where they live. One way to address this is to critically consider the service gaps indicated in this plan, recognizing that groups that have been traditionally underserved include racial and ethnic minorities and low-income populations. Locating future parks within a reasonable walking distance of as many residents as possible is key to ensuring equity over time.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability includes committing to improved internal operations and property maintenance methods (e.g., efficient irrigation, water-wise

landscapes, allowing natural germination processes to take place), as well as conservation and enhancement of natural resources. Restoration strategies include a focus on improving the ecological conditions and systems of parks and open spaces through increasing native plant diversity, increasing wildlife and pollinator habitat, reducing noxious and invasive species, restoring disturbed areas and focusing attention on river and stream restoration.

LIVABILITY

Parks, open space properties and trails are major contributors to the quality of life in Adams County. Providing these places in close proximity to where people live, work and go to school enhances livability. Ensuring easy access to these places also helps. This plan offers recommendations to further enhance livability. Celebrating the culture of Adams County through integration of placemaking strategies, cultural events and programs, and parks



Natural Resources, Wildlife Habitat & Riparian Enhancement



Agriculture & Cultural Significance



Diverse Parks & Recreation



Dynamic Trails

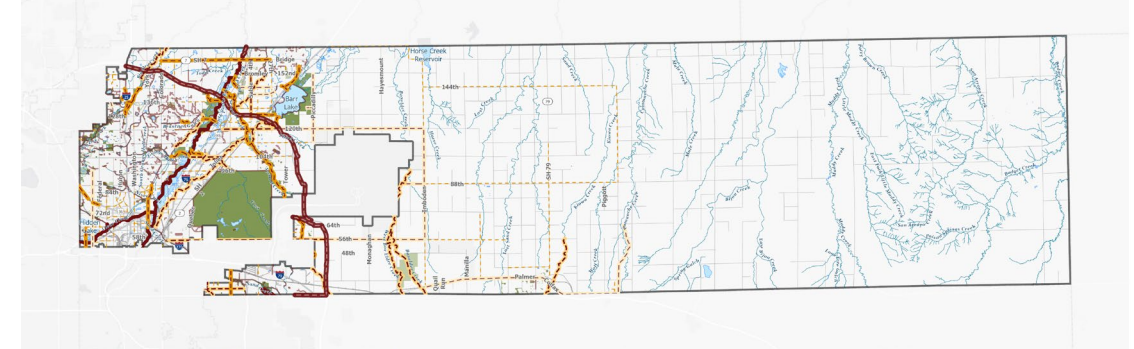
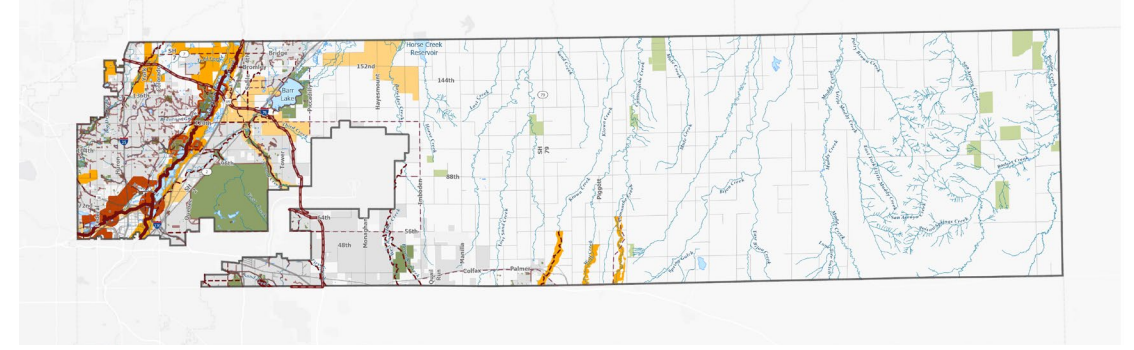
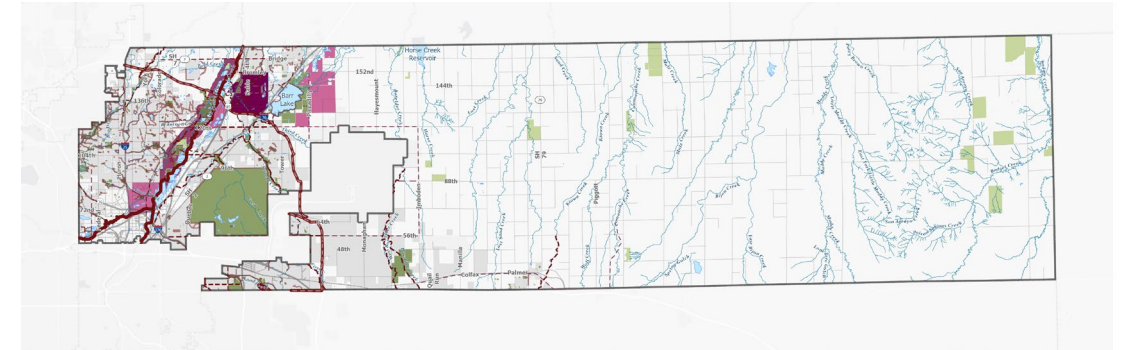
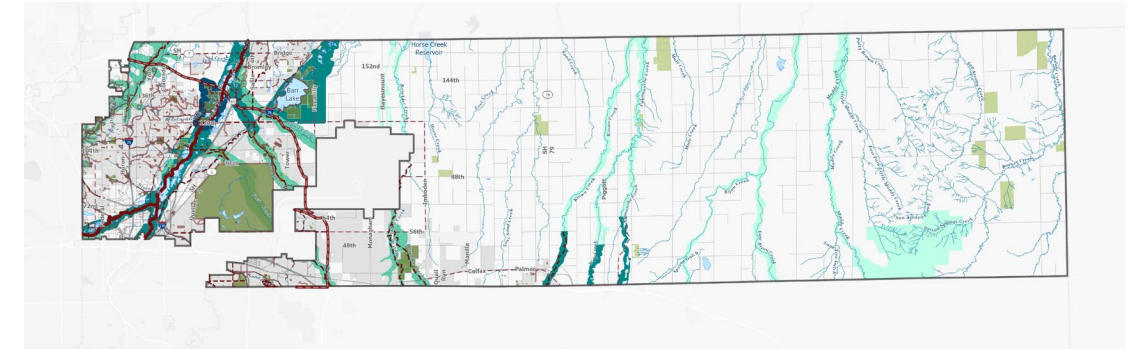


Figure 19: Advancing Adams Location-Based Priority Areas.

design best practices will help create outstanding spaces that enhance quality of life.

HOW THIS PLAN BECOMES A REALITY

Increases in, or adjustments to, the distribution of funding will be necessary for the County to continue to conserve and maintain open space at the same rate as in the past, and to increase investment in trails, parks, recreation and cultural services to keep pace with the needs of a growing population. A variety of funding mechanisms, summarized below, should be explored to determine the most appropriate and voter supported methods.

MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE OPEN SPACE SALES TAX GRANT PROGRAM

One possibility would be to make adjustments to the open space sales tax grant program in order to recalibrate the distribution of the funds to better align with and support the priorities of this plan. Currently, the greatest percentage of tax revenue is largely going back to municipalities and partners in the competitive grant program, and an additional 30% more going directly back to the jurisdictions where the tax was generated. In order to support the goals and objectives of the POST plan, more funds need to be allocated to support the priority areas of unincorporated areas of the county.

There are several options to explore to create more funds for County property maintenance and projects:

- Consider addressing the way in which the funding is distributed to direct a greater percentage of the collected taxes for County use by lessening the 68% commitment to competitive grants, retaining a larger portion of the distribution for County use.
- Consider addressing the way in which the collected tax receipts are distributed by lessening the commitment of direct shareback to the jurisdictions where the tax was generated, currently at 30%.
- Explore leveraging partnerships in funding joint projects that support the goals of this POST plan by addressing service gaps and making critical trail connections.
- Explore the possibility of increasing the open space sales tax to stabilize and provide the funding needed to support this plan and the needs of the growing population.
- Consider a new tax that specifically and only directs support to the County's (Unincorporated) parks, open space, recreation offerings and trails. A particular need of a new funding source would direct money to existing and deferred maintenance gaps, as well as supporting cultural projects.

Analysis shows that neighboring Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Boulder Counties have a greater level of funding from a variety of other sources relative to their parks and open space systems. This Master Plan recommends Adams County study these varied methods and rates that could address current and anticipated funding deficiencies.

EXPLORE BOND FUNDING FOR LARGE PROJECTS

Bonds are another tool available for funding major Parks, Open Space and Trail priority projects, such as implementation of the Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan and facility upgrades.

DEDICATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET

Dedicate a base level of money from the General Fund for deferred maintenance and planned Capital Improvement Projects each fiscal year. A commitment for a base level of care for existing County assets would reduce competition with other County priorities for funding and provide consistency in the standard of maintenance of properties.

LEVERAGE OTHER REVENUE SOURCES

Competitive match grant programs, partnership contributions, and fees are all sources of revenue the County has been successful in receiving. The implementation chapter provides more details of possible sources to pursue in support of the priorities in this Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan. Dedicating staff time to fostering partnerships with land trusts, municipal partners and other funding partners as well as efforts for grant application preparation is key to continued success.

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE

UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOTAL COST OF SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Asset management tools help to provide greater predictability of costs and anticipate future replacement needs as facilities age. In addition to current tracking, properties that require ecological maintenance and restoration work should be added to provide a full picture of the costs of maintaining the system.

PARK AND OPEN SPACE DEDICATION

The County should evaluate its land use code for new development and recalibrate park and open space contribution requirements. New methodology and rates are being revised throughout the region that provide a source of comparison. A study of land development/policy, standards and exactions should be conducted, and a code update completed that may change the cash in lieu and/or parkland dedication requirements to better match current needs and local opportunities.

SPECIAL RECREATION DISTRICT

Develop a Special Recreation District to provide coverage of the recreation demands of urbanized areas, while not impacting rural areas where coverage is not possible. Support location-based recreation through special districts. Explore the possibility to increase the size of existing recreation districts within the county.



3 NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

Barr Lake
Image Credit: Jim Hollis

Protecting & Enhancing the Natural Environment

Goals & Strategies

The top three priorities for parks and open space, according to Phase 2 Community survey respondents are:

#1 Environmental protection of lands with high quality wildlife habitat and diverse ecosystems.

(average score of 4.44 out of 5)

#2 Protecting land in floodplains and along rivers and streams to maintain high water quality.

(average score of 4.39 out of 5)

#3 Preserving ponds, wetlands, lakes and rivers for recreation

(average score of 4.22 out of 5)

PROTECTING & ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

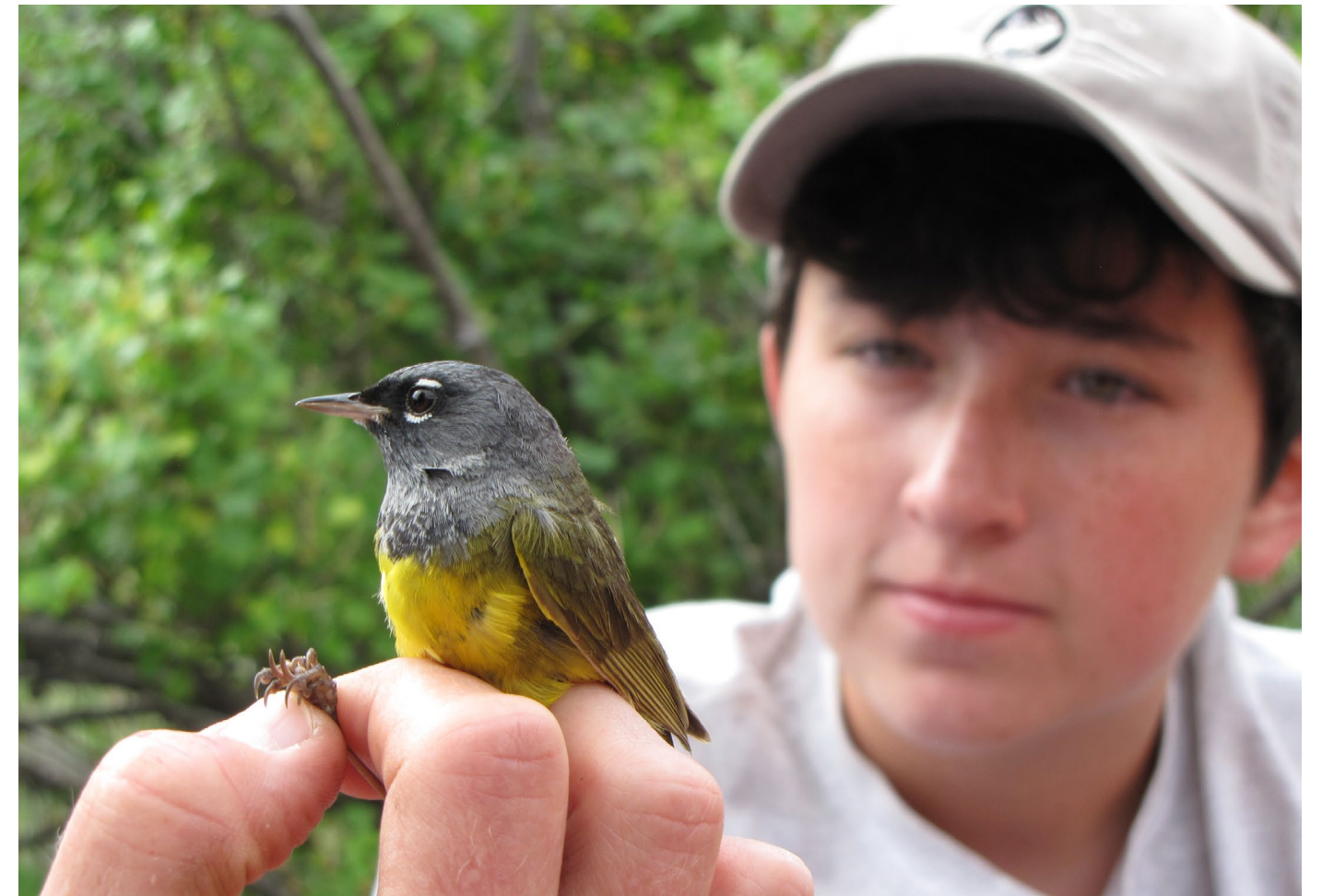
Areas of significant natural resources, such as intact wildlife habitat and riparian lands, are the highest priority for preservation as open space. These lands create a balance of systems and help maintain water quality, mitigate flooding, and provide erosion control. They also provide vital habitat linkages and travel corridors for wildlife and define special landscape features in the county that give people a stronger connection to nature.

A majority of Phase 2 Community Survey respondents noted that sensitive habitat areas should be avoided for future development

(57.7%) or future development should be regulated (26.86%). MAP 11 and MAP 12 identify high quality environments to direct conservation and restoration efforts as well as County parks and open spaces where restoration efforts would create significant improvements to environmental health. Locations for nature-based education are also an important component of the recommendations in this chapter.



A furry visitor enjoying Riverdale Regional Park.



Visiting wildlife in its natural environment in Adams County.

Image Credit: Tyler Edmonson

EXHIBIT NOTES

Based on the presence of the greatest number of valued natural resources as evaluated in the existing conditions report, Maps 12 and 13 highlight in blue and teal shades the generalized areas to focus natural resources conservation and enhancement for wildlife habitat and water/aquatic quality.

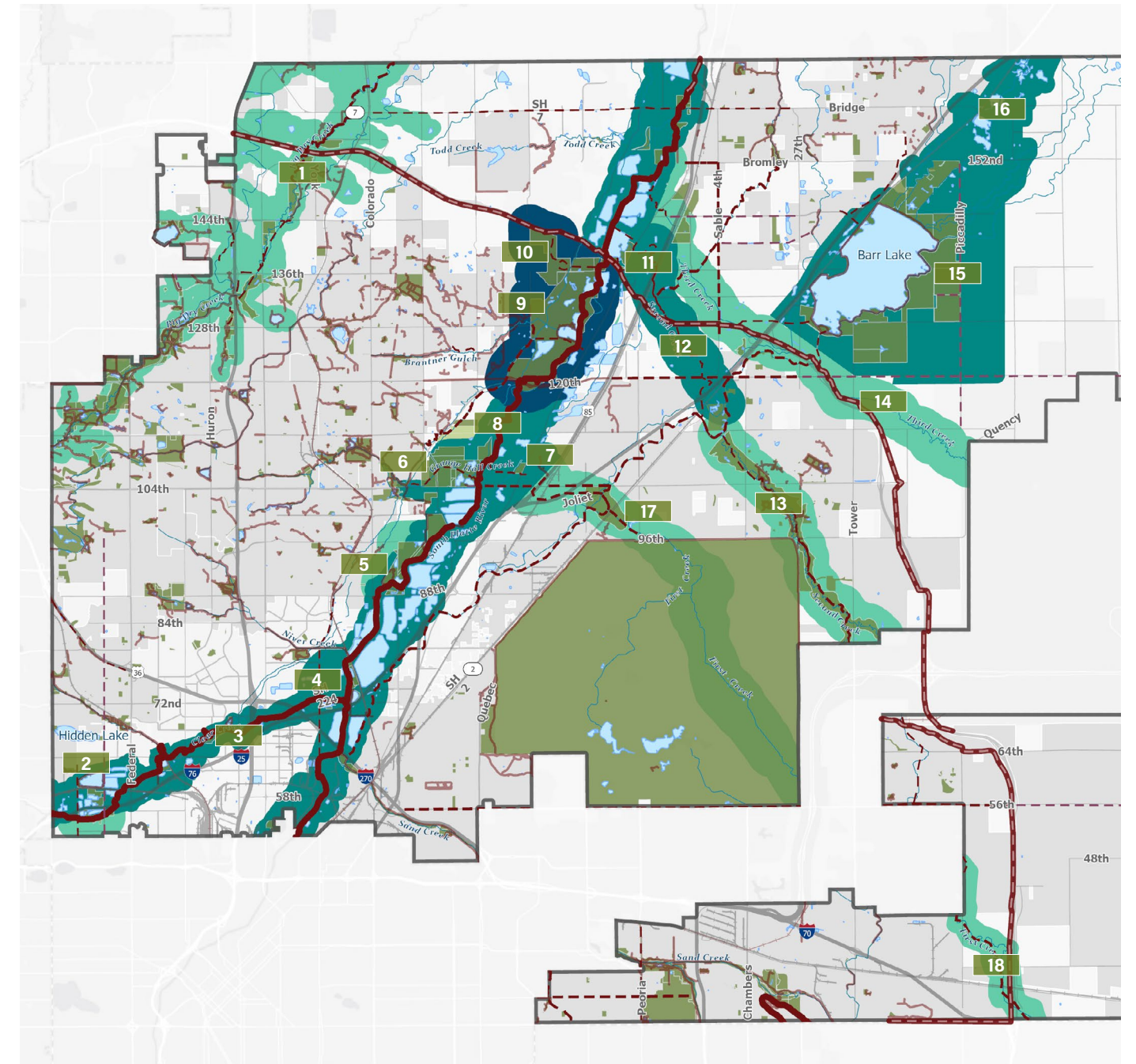


Natural Resources, Wildlife Habitat & Riparian Enhancement

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (NE)	NAME	PRIORITY
1	1.2.b	Big Dry Creek Restoration & Conservation	Medium
2		Lowell Ponds Natural Resource Management & Restoration	Medium
3	2.4	Clear Creek Restoration & Conservation	High
4	1.1.d 3.2 5.2	Clear Creek/South Platte River Confluence Restoration & Conservation, Natural Resource Management, Nature Center	High
5	5.2	Pelican Ponds Natural Resource Management & Restoration	Medium
6		Elaine T. Valente Open Space Natural Resource Management & Restoration	High
7	5.2	Hazeltine Mine Natural Resource Management & Restoration	Medium
8	2.4	South Platte River Restoration & Conservation	High
9	1.1.a 5.2	Riverdale Regional Park Conservation, Natural Resource Management & Restoration	Very High
10	3.2	The Bluffs Open Space Nature Center, Natural Resource Management & Restoration	High
11	1.1.c 5.2	Willow Bay Natural Resource Management & Restoration	High
12	1.2.a	Second Creek North Restoration & Conservation	High
13	1.2.a	Second Creek South Restoration & Conservation	Medium
14	1.1.b	Third Creek Restoration & Conservation	Medium
15	1.1.b	Barr Lake Conservation Restoration & Conservation	High
16	1.1.b	Beebe Draw & Mile High Wetlands Natural Resource Management and/or Conservation	Medium
17	1.2.g	First Creek North Restoration & Conservation	Medium
18	1.2.g	First Creek South Restoration & Conservation	Medium

*The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.

MAP 11: NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITY AREAS | WESTERN COUNTY



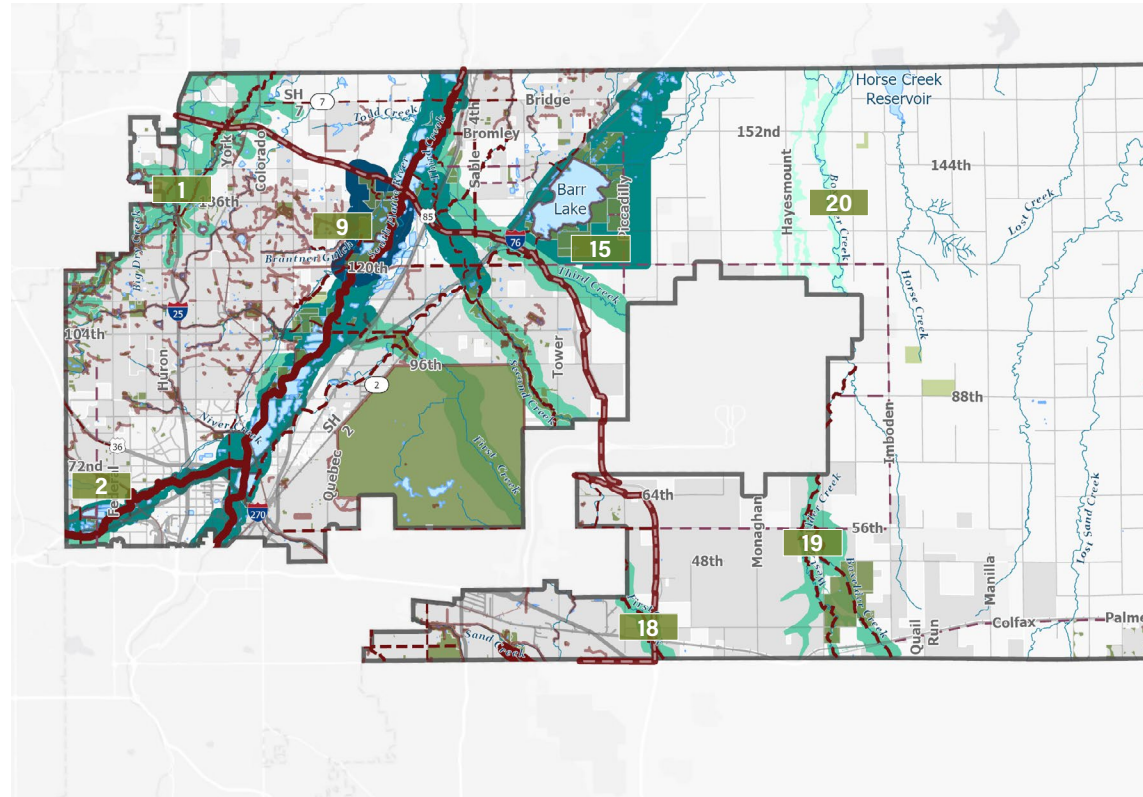
Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG



LEGEND

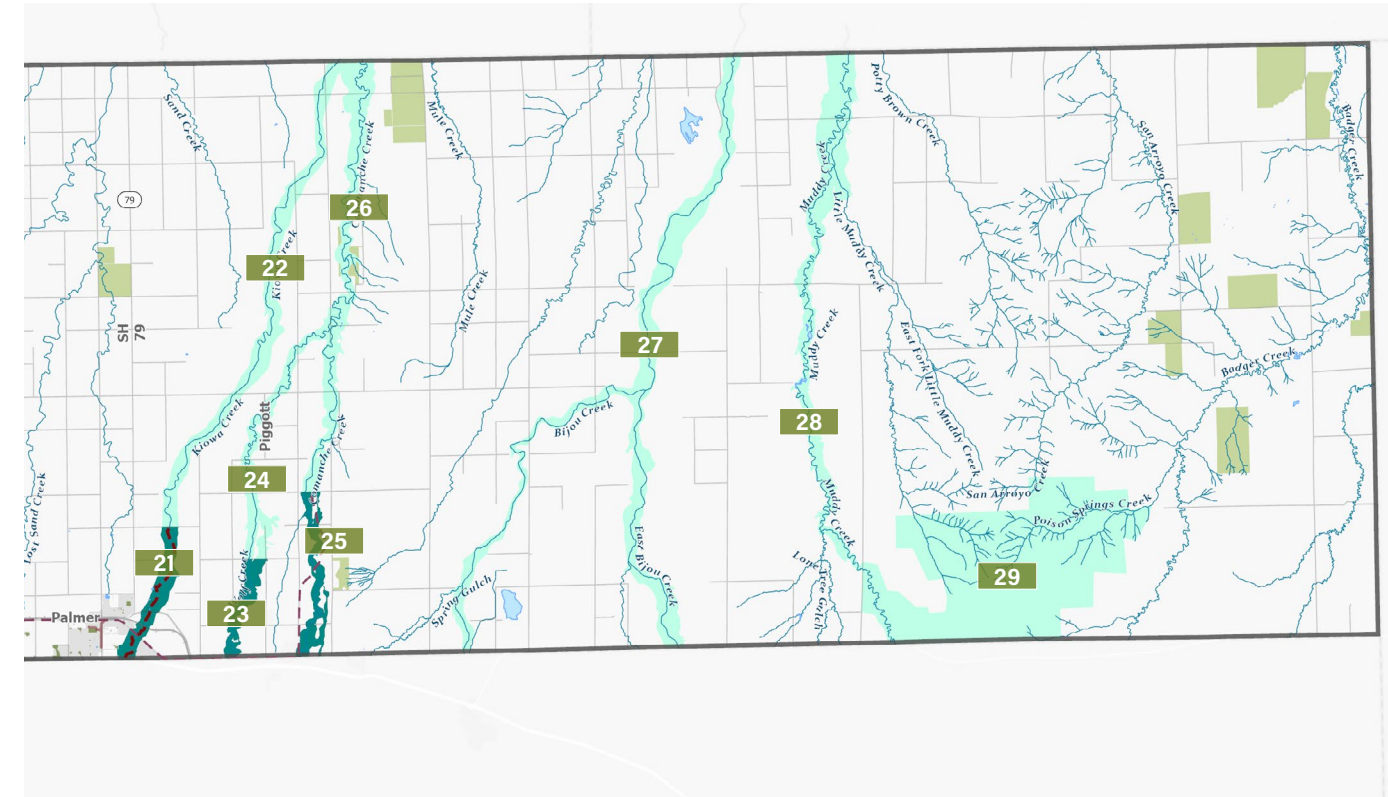
- Very High Priority Natural Resource Area
- High Priority Natural Resource Area
- Medium Priority Natural Resource Area
- Low Priority Natural Resource Area
- Conservation Flood Control Overlay Policy
- Existing Regional Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation Easements
- Incorporated Areas

*The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.



LEGEND

- Very High Priority Natural Resource Area
- High Priority Natural Resource Area
- Medium Priority Natural Resource Area
- Low Priority Natural Resource Area
- Conservation Flood Control Overlay Policy
- Existing Regional Trails
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation Easements
- Incorporated Areas



MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (NE)	NAME	PRIORITY
19	1.2.e	Box Elder Creek South Restoration & Conservation	Medium
20	1.2.e	Box Elder Creek North Restoration & Conservation	Low
21	1.2.c	Kiowa Creek South Restoration & Conservation	High
22	1.2.c	Kiowa Creek North Restoration & Conservation	Low
23	1.2.h	Wolf Creek South Restoration & Conservation	High
24	1.2.h	Wolf Creek North Restoration & Conservation	Low
25	1.2.d	Comanche Creek South Restoration & Conservation	High
26	1.2.d	Comanche Creek North Restoration & Conservation	Low
27	1.2.f	Bijou Creek Restoration & Conservation	Low
28	1.2.i	Muddy Creek Restoration & Conservation	Low
29	1.3.a	Native Prairie Conservation	Low



Native vegetation along the Big Dry Creek Trail

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Five main goals related to natural resource, wildlife habitat and riparian enhancement were identified through the planning process:

1. **Conserve high value lands:** Protect and enhance important ecological and scenic resources such as riparian areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat, floodplains, prairie grasslands and significant landforms.
2. **Promote consolidated efforts to protect waterways:** Improve water quality to assure a continuing quality of life in Adams County.
3. **Provide environmental education and stewardship:** Provide environmental education and interpretation to help residents, students and open space users learn to appreciate the wealth of natural, cultural and scenic resources found in Adams County.
4. **Implement restoration strategies and best management practices:** Employ best management strategies to restore and enhance the ecological conditions of park and open space properties throughout the county.
5. **Support key habitat connections:** Protect and enhance important and existing wildlife habitats and corridors and provide for species movement throughout the county.

The following strategies are intended to advance the County's focus on preserving high value environmental assets for future generations and promoting appreciation and enjoyment of these resources by connecting people to nature and to a resilient future.



GOAL NE 1.0: CONSERVE HIGH VALUE LANDS

Protect and enhance important ecological and scenic resources such as riparian areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat, floodplains, prairie grasslands and significant landforms

Strategy NE 1.1: Acquire lands that meet priority criteria including adjacency to existing open space properties and conservation easements, protection of important wildlife habitat and ecologies, and protection of waterways and floodplains

The following are some of these areas that are priorities for conservation.

1.1.a: Riverdale Regional Park

Riverdale Regional Park is the county's largest park at 1,151 acres of parkland. Open space acquisitions, including the Van Scoyk Parcels, Riverdale Bluffs, and Willow Bay have also increased the County's open space land holdings in close proximity to the park. Riverdale Regional Park is located along the South Platte River, downstream of other open space properties, including Elaine T. Valente Open Space and Pelican Ponds Open Space. These form the basis for a network of open space properties along the South Platte River Corridor.

By continuing to focus on land acquisitions surrounding the regional park, the park and its surrounding uses can continue to meet a variety of recreational demands while providing important habitat conservation along the riparian corridor of the South Platte River.

1.1.b: Barr Lake

Continue to expand a buffer around Barr Lake as parcels become available, particularly to the east where development pressures are greatest. Barr Lake State Park is a highly valued asset due to the many recreation opportunities it offers, nature education programming, and natural scenery. The park hosts an abundance of wildlife and rates high in wildlife habitat value as a wildlife sanctuary. Barr Lake is also highly threatened by encroaching development, increasing concerns about how future land use changes could impact the natural qualities that are so valued in the site today.



For More Info
See [Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan](#) for more information on continued improvements (Strategy NE 1.1a).

The Flood Control Overlay Zones surrounding the canals to the north of Barr Lake State Park are important areas for future open space preservation. Open Space protection is also appropriate to buffer Barr Lake from Interstate 76 and E-470. Third Creek and its floodplain are included in the proposed open space buffer area as well. Lands to conserve for the State Park were first identified in the 1996 Conservation Vision Plan document followed by a Management Plan in 1999. This Plan proposes that the lands identified within the previous plans and other surrounding significant lands should be a priority for acquisition as open space to permanently protect important resources and provide the opportunity to restore habitat.

- Within this buffer are also included Third Creek and Beebe Draw wetlands, which are sensitive components of the county's hydrologic and wildlife systems.

1.1.c: Willow Bay

Conserve lands adjacent to Willow Bay to promote ecological health and recreational opportunities and linkages.

1.1.d: Confluence

Acquire properties adjacent to the confluence of Clear Creek and the South Platte River to develop Confluence Regional Park to help promote connections to water-based recreation and experiences.

Strategy NE 1.2: Provide greenways for conservation and recreation purposes along riparian corridors

While greenways often include trails, in the context of this strategy, greenways are considered more for environmental conservation. Greenways are linear open spaces established along a natural corridor, such as a river, stream, ridgeline, railroad, canal, or other route. Chapter 7, Dynamic Trail Connections, delves further into those specific recreation opportunities that some of these corridors may possess.

1.2.a: Second Creek Greenway

Fill in the gaps to complete the greenway as an important flood control and wildlife habitat area.

A plan for Second Creek Greenway was developed in 2005 and progress has been made towards preserving the floodplain, acquiring trail easements and constructing portions of the multi-use trail. This greenway will be treated as a major stormwater conduit, recreational corridor and trail connection. The greenway takes the form of a linear park, with facilities to serve people recreating. Vegetation will be established for both flood management and natural scenery. Eventually the trail will span 17 miles through Brighton, Adams County, Commerce City, Aurora, and Denver- connecting to the South Platte



Willow Bay

Image Credit: JoAnn Clark

River Trail and the High Line Canal Trail. It is a high priority of the many jurisdictions involved to complete the development of the greenway.

1.2.b: Big Dry Creek Greenway

Fill in the gaps to complete the greenway as an important recreational, flood control, and wildlife habitat area.

Big Dry Creek is a major drainage through the City of Thornton and its floodplain has been designated as an open space network throughout the community. Many ecologically valuable habitat types, including wetlands, riparian forests, and mesic grasslands, occur within the Big Dry Creek drainage and attract a diverse wildlife population. Completing the gaps in parks and open space acquisition is a high priority for Thornton and the County as opportunities for conservation arise.

1.2.c: Kiowa Creek Greenway

Look for opportunities to conserve open space along the corridor to preserve wildlife habitat and/or create trail access through agreements with private landowners.

Kiowa Creek is located between Bennett and Strasburg. This cottonwood lined stream is one of the highest quality stream corridors in the rural area of the county. Kiowa Creek attracts wildlife such as mule deer and pronghorn as well



For More Info
See Chapter 7
—Dynamic Trail
Connections—for
more information on
specific recreation
opportunities that
some of the greenway
corridors in Adams
County offer (Strategy
NE 1.2).

as a large variety of birds including red-tailed hawks. This plan recommends finding opportunities to preserve open space along the creek corridor in collaboration with private landowners. Open space agreements could be formed through mechanisms such as fee purchase, conservation easements or trail easements. A future trail could connect to Arapahoe County's proposed Kiowa Creek trail corridor and Kiowa Creek North Open Space, which is envisioned to include a variety of public uses like hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding trails, a picnic area and trail connection to the Town of Bennett. The opportunities to expand these uses into Adams County gives this location the opportunity to serve both rural residents and a regional population.

1.2.d: Comanche Creek Greenway

Conserve open space along the riparian corridor to preserve important natural resources and wildlife habitat and/or create trail access over time through various methods, including agreements with private landowners.

The Strasburg Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002 and identifies potential future parks and open space land uses. Portions of the Comanche Creek floodplain are included in the plan. The *2012 Adams County Open Space, Parks and Trails (OSPT) Master Plan* included lands for conservation within the Comanche Creek floodplain according to the comprehensive plan and public feedback in the OSPT plan. The identified lands are not only important for stormwater management, but are also in close proximity to residents and the school. Sections of the Comanche Creek corridor near the central and northern county contain persistent emergent wetlands and should be considered as a lower priority for future conservation efforts.

1.2.e: Box Elder Creek Greenway

Protect, conserve, and acquire where possible, open space along the corridor to preserve wildlife habitat and restore the ecological qualities of the creek's floodplain through various methods, including agreements with private landowners.

.Adams County has a long-standing policy aimed at protecting Box Elder Creek and the corridor's floodplain which flows north along the eastern edge of Denver International Airport (DIA) from the community of Watkins in southern Adams County. The County has worked hard to preserve the rural land uses and prime agricultural areas surrounding the creek through policy and zoning mechanisms. Preserving this land as open space will act as a buffer between the urban and more rural areas, creating separation of development between DIA, Aurora and Watkins. Arapahoe County has also made conservation of Box Elder drainage a high priority.

1.2.f: Bijou Creek Greenway

Protect, conserve, and acquire where possible, open space along the corridor to preserve wildlife habitat, restore the ecological qualities of the creek's floodplain and explore the possibility of developing regional trails over time through agreements with private landowners.

The Bijou Creek Corridor is a significant wildlife corridor with high habitat value. The creek hosts an intact and functioning floodplain, resulting in significant sections of riparian cottonwood galleries, a limited feature in the plains ecosystem. Conservation efforts in this corridor would protect habitat and restore ecological qualities of the creek's floodplain. Conservation along this corridor would also create the possibility for connections with future conservation priorities and proposed trails in neighboring Arapahoe County.

1.2.g: First Creek Greenway

Protect, conserve, and acquire where possible, open space along the corridor to preserve wildlife habitat and restore the ecological qualities of the creek's floodplain through various methods, including agreements with private landowners.

The First Creek Greenway has moderate habitat value as a wildlife corridor that connects significant habitat at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal to the habitat corridor of Box Elder Creek.

1.2.h: Wolf Creek Greenway

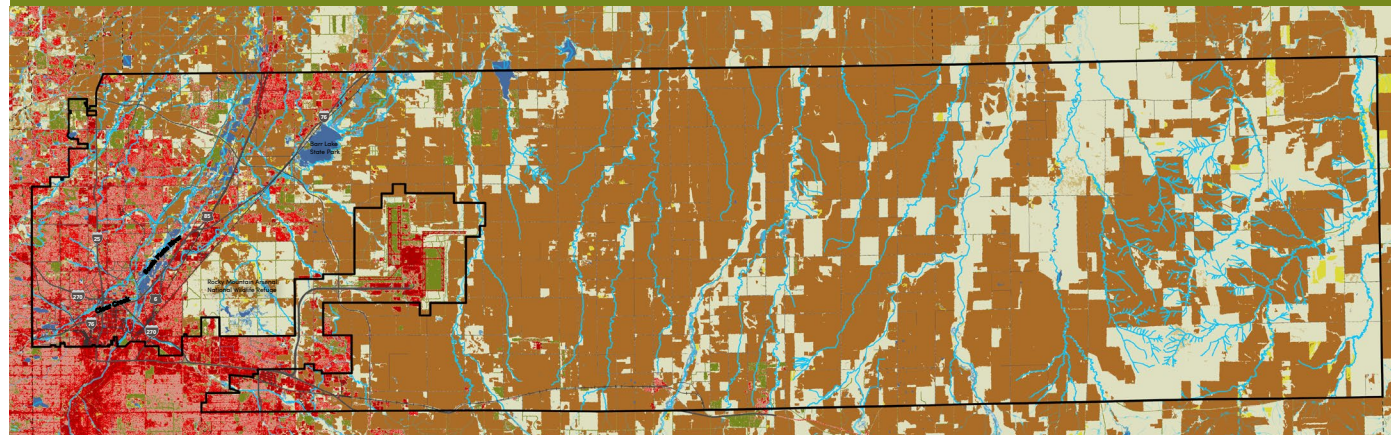
Protect, conserve, and acquire where possible, open space along the corridor to preserve wildlife habitat and restore the ecological qualities of the creek's floodplain through various methods, including agreements with private landowners.

The Strasburg Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002 and identifies potential future parks, open space and natural resource conservation land uses. Portions of the Wolf Creek floodplain are identified in the plan for open space and natural resource conservation. Wolf Creek flows by areas of future open space and residential development.

1.2.i: Muddy Creek Greenway

Protect, conserve, and acquire where possible, open space along the corridor to preserve wildlife habitat and restore the ecological qualities of the creek's floodplain through various methods, including agreements with private landowners.

MAP 13: LAND COVER 2016



Source: NLCD 2016, Classified by Design Workshop 2020

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- Developed Low Intensity
- Developed Medium Intensity
- Developed High Intensity
- Developed, Open Space
- Cultivated Crops
- Hay/Pasture
- Open Water
- Rivers/Creeks
- Wetlands
- Evergreen/Mixed/Deciduous Forest
- Shrub/Scrub
- Herbaceous Grassland

The Muddy Creek Corridor is a significant wildlife corridor with high habitat value which connects to large areas of native prairie. Conservation efforts in this corridor would preserve wildlife habitat and restore the ecological qualities of the creek’s floodplain.

Strategy NE 1.3: Conserve high value prairie grasslands

1.3.a: Southeastern native prairie between Muddy Creek and Badger Creek

Conserve remaining prairie grasslands in the southeast corner of the county just north of Highway 36 between Muddy and Badger Creeks by establishing a prairie preserve.

Herbaceous grasslands are indicated in tan on MAP 13. Even though extensive areas of grass exist in the county, few are shortgrass prairies. These are lands that are central to the American landscape, which most Coloradans have never seen, and provide a critical yet declining habitat for many high plains animals. Nature Serve has classified the shortgrass prairie as a vulnerable ecological system and notes that “the endemic bird species of the shortgrass system may constitute one of the fastest declining bird populations in North America.”¹ The shortgrass prairie faces threats such as conversion to agriculture, exurban development, and fragmentation by roadways. Adams County has the opportunity to conserve and help re-establish shortgrass prairies and expose and educate people about the importance of this natural resource.

¹ Western Great Plains Shortgrass Prairie | NatureServe Explorer



GOAL NE 2.0: PROMOTE CONSOLIDATED EFFORTS TO PROTECT WATERWAYS

Improve water quality to assure a continuing quality of life in Adams County

The largest and most ecologically diverse drainage in Adams County is the South Platte River. All other creeks eventually feed into the South Platte River, including the Clear, Sand, Box Elder, Kiowa, Lost and Comanche Creeks. Barr Lake and Horse Creek Reservoir are the largest standing bodies of water in the county. The 100-year floodplains of all the drainages and water bodies are critical elements of the open space system, since they handle runoff and floodwaters, contain wetlands and riparian zones, and provide important corridors and habitats for wildlife.

Barr Lake and the Beebe Draw wetlands, located northwest of DIA, are sensitive components of the county hydrologic and wildlife systems, and are vitally important water resources. They contain some of the most significant wildlife habitats in the state and preserve extensive amounts of wetlands and riparian areas. The Mile High Flood District, the agency responsible for the efficiency and successful water conveyance of all drainages and water systems in western Adams County, considers these lands to be extremely sensitive to development due to potential runoff.

A multi-jurisdictional approach to waterway protections, including water supply, stormwater management, wastewater management, and water-based recreation is necessary to address the water quality and quantity issues of the county into the future.

Strategy NE 2.1: Implement stormwater management best practices

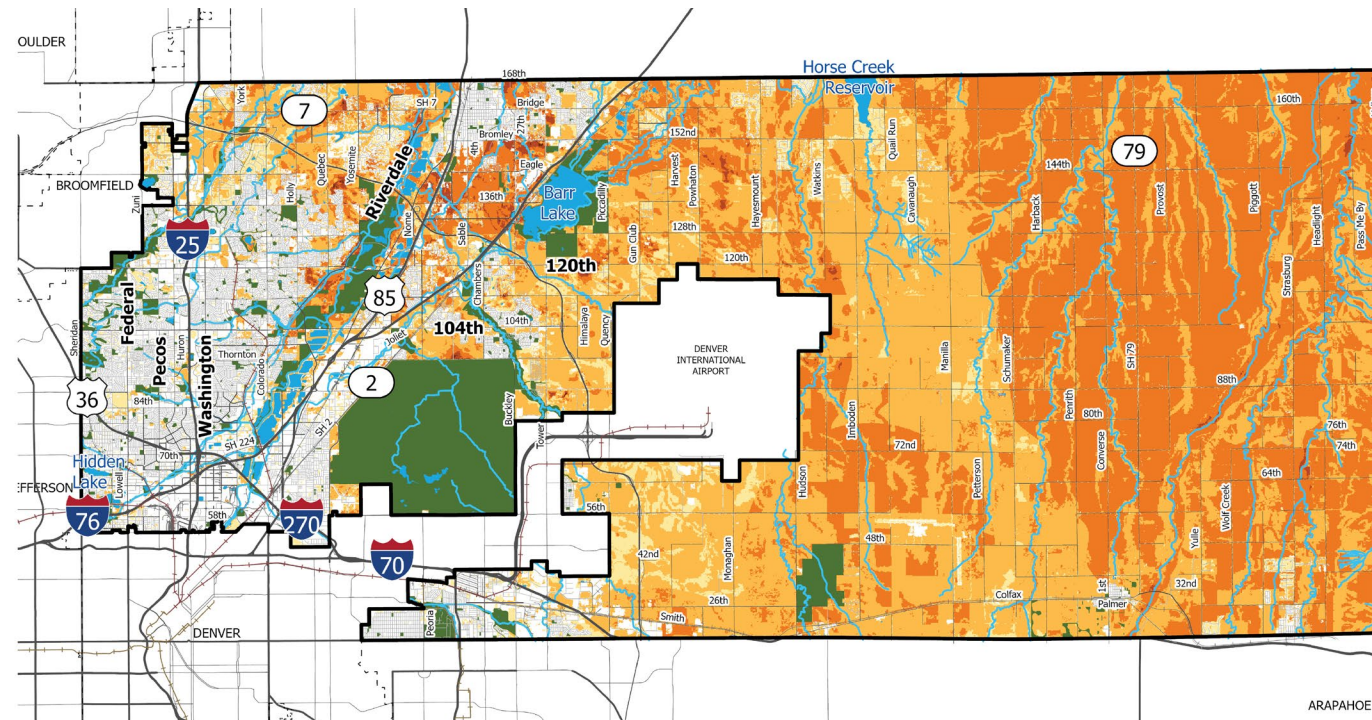
Implement stormwater management best practices to minimize runoff and encourage infiltration, protecting and enhancing wetland habitats and riparian zones.

Strategy NE 2.2: Buffer development impacts from water resources

Buffer development impacts from water resources, including rivers, lakes, and streams and their adjacent riparian habitats. Refer to the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Mapping (Map 6) when reviewing proposed developments.



For More Info
See 2022 South Platte River Trail Plan for more information about the South Platte River Corridor and Trail (Goal NE 2.0).



Data Source: Adams County and Design Workshop

LEGEND

Weighted Composite Scale

- High Value (6)
- Low Value (0)
- Parks and Open Space
- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Streams and Lakes

Strategy NE 2.3: Protect floodplains and flood hazard areas for flood event conveyance and storage

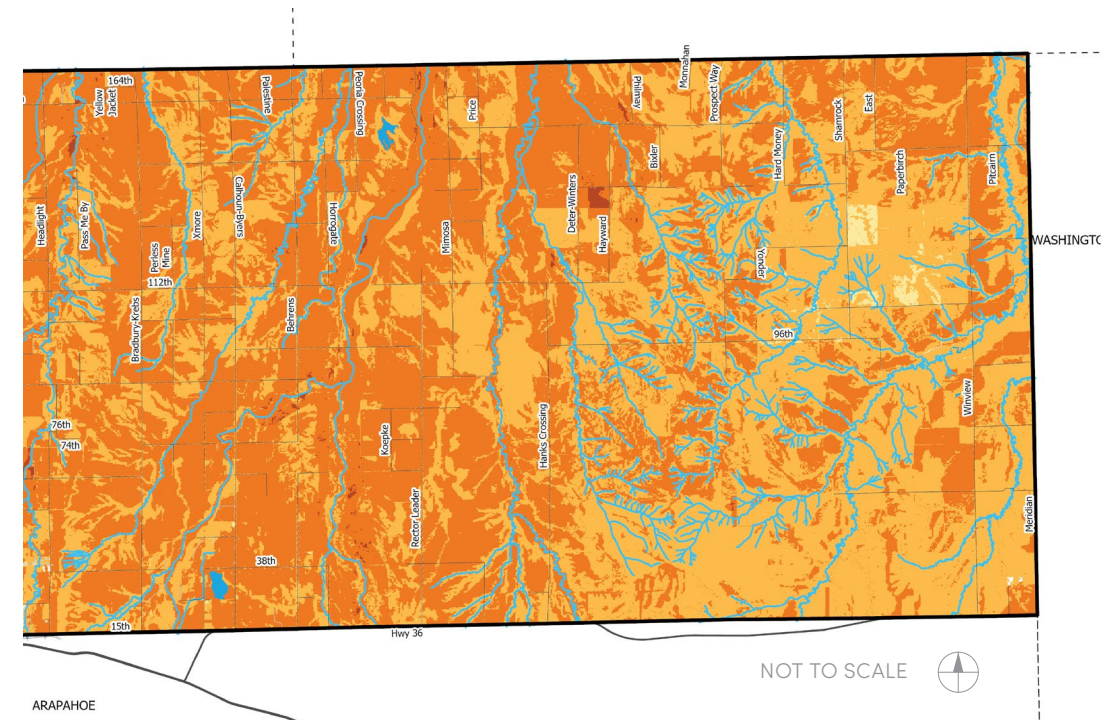
Protect, in as natural a state as possible, floodplains and flood hazard areas for flood event conveyance and storage. Enhance these corridors with vegetation to reduce erosion and siltation.

Strategy NE 2.4: Restore and enhance disturbed lands in and around river, creek and drainage corridors

Prioritize South Platte River Corridor and Clear Creek Corridor planning: Cultivate management and safety measures to promote healthy ecological conditions and greater public use and experiences along the corridors and at the confluence. Look for opportunities to provide community-serving park and open space uses adjacent to these corridors.

This map consists of layers from the Wildlife Habitat and Natural Lands Map and the Scenic Resources Map including:

- Wildlife Habitat
- Bird Species
- Hydrology
- Landcover
- Landforms
- Agricultural Views
- Scenic Road Corridors



NOT TO SCALE

Strategy NE 2.5: Refer to MAP 14: Ensure development proposals protect natural resources and minimize impacts, particularly as related to water quality, wildlife movement, erosion control, and flood management

Support directing development away from riparian and flood areas and other sensitive habitats through a review of environmentally sensitive areas during the development review process.

Strategy NE 2.6: Adjust policies that affect waterway protections

Refer to MAP 14 on page 70 describing environmentally sensitive lands, and in particular, waterways, in the development review process to ensure development proposals protect resources and minimize impacts. Also, update the land use code to point to Environmentally Sensitive Areas and establish requirements for their conservation.



GOAL NE 3.0: PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Provide environmental education and interpretation to help residents, students and open space users learn to appreciate the wealth of natural, cultural and scenic resources found in Adams County

Strategy NE 3.1: Develop a naturalist plan

Develop a comprehensive naturalist plan that will define the goals and strategies of POSCA in providing environmental education outreach and resources. This plan will identify the establishment and operations of nature centers or locations for outreach throughout the county, the role of interpretive signage, and the alignment with volunteers and with the existing Ranger Service.

Strategy NE 3.2: Support environmental education through the development of nature centers

Look for opportunities to create Nature Centers staffed with naturalists near the Bluffs and at a location at the Confluence. Provide environmental education programming for local schools, youth organizations, and the general public.

Strategy NE 3.3: Provide interpretive signage

In coordination with an overall signage program to be adopted in 2022-2023, provide interpretive signage to express stewardship goals, environmental benefits, identify special conditions and history of amenities throughout the County's park, open space and trail system.

Strategy NE 3.4: Continue to build and enhance the County's ranger program (new in 2020)

The County's ranger program is responsible for patrolling parks, open space and trails properties to provide visitor safety and resource protection, education, positive public relations, interpretation and to ensure compliance with parks rules and regulations. Beginning in 2021, the County entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Commerce City to provide park ranger services to that jurisdiction.

Strategy NE 3.5: Engage in partnerships to provide diverse nature education programming

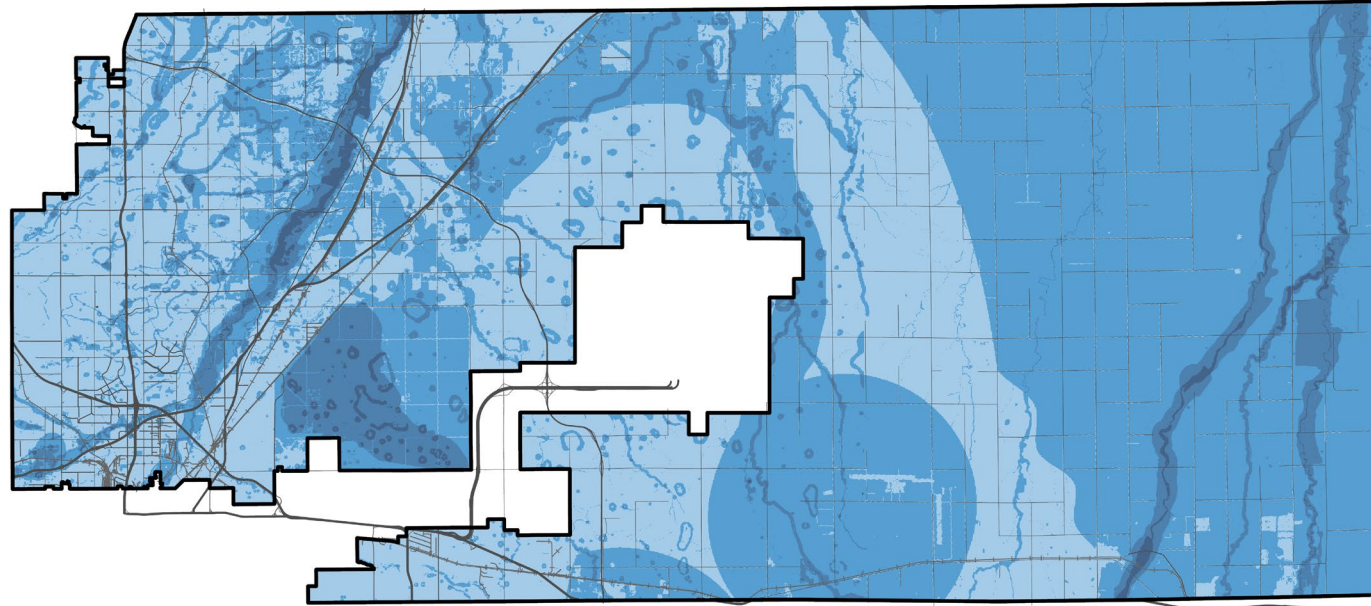


A ranger chatting with park visitors.

The County currently partners with different groups to help provide diverse community programming and outreach. Engage in partnerships to support environmental education with organizations such as state agencies like Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), academic interests such as the Colorado State University (CSU) Extension office, and other organizations such as the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and the Denver Zoo.

Strategy NE 3.6: Develop volunteer naturalist program

As part of a comprehensive environmental education program, develop a volunteer naturalist program to provide programming to county residents and to educate users of parks and trails to minimize environmental impacts.



NOT TO SCALE 

Data Source: Adams County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Data (2020), FWS National Wetlands Inventory, USGS NHD, NLCD Landcover (2016), and Design Workshop

LEGEND

Weighted Overlay Scale



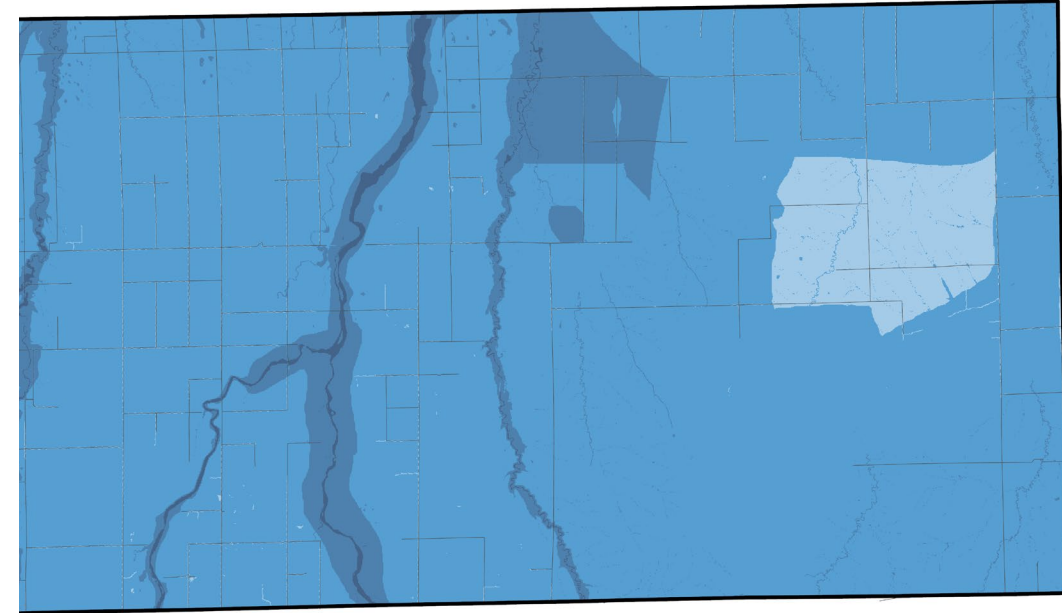
GOAL NE 4.0: IMPLEMENT RESTORATION STRATEGIES AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Employ best management strategies to restore and enhance the ecological conditions of park and open space properties throughout the county.

Strategy NE 4.1: Increase Native Plant Diversity

Native plant communities promote overall increased ecosystem function by providing habitat and food for native pollinators, birds, and mammals. They support soil development and diverse native soil microbial communities that drive key ecosystem processes, such as nitrogen fixation and decomposition that help cycle nutrients within the environment. Native plant communities are often cheaper and easier to manage because they are adapted to the local climate, soil conditions, and wildlife. Additionally, including native forbs into seeding and planting projects can have beneficial, synergistic effects on wildlife habitat quality and aesthetics.

Wildlife habitat and the presence of bird species has a strong relationship to the type of water availability, landforms, and vegetation landcover in Adams County. A composite map of all these factors is shown in Map 15.



GOAL NE 5.0: SUPPORT KEY HABITAT CONNECTIONS

Protect and enhance important and existing wildlife habitats and corridors and provide for species movement throughout the county.

Strategy NE 5.1: Provide habitat restoration review on a regular basis and no less than every five (5) years

Understanding how landscapes are performing based on the landscape type and use is important for land managers to effectively provide the highest level of service for park users and ecosystems. Through this master plan, Adams County has initiated the landscape typology process on several key properties. Landscape typology allows desktop analysis of the key parameters that are driving ecological function at these properties, but ecosystems are not static and landscape typology is only a snapshot in time. The landscape typology geodatabase is a resource for identifying areas where the County should focus their efforts for restoration or enhancement. Once a project is identified and completed, post-construction monitoring for a minimum of three years should be completed to facilitate adaptive management actions and ensure that the project goals are met. Following project completion and monitoring, the landscape typology geodatabase should be updated to help ensure the most accurate data is available to land managers for that location.



For More Info
See 2021 Adams County Parks & Open Space Landscape Typology and Ecological Assessment, prepared by Great Ecology, for more information about all strategies recommended for Goal NE 5.0: Implement Restoration Strategies and Best Management Practices.



Pelican Ponds is an important Adams County open space property for the ecological benefits it provides.

Adams County should consider expanding landscape typology to include their entire open space portfolio to allow a deeper understanding of function and performance of their open space properties. This will facilitate more effective project identification and prioritization. For properties already mapped, the landscape typology geodatabase is most effective when updated every five years. Plant communities transition over time even if maintenance actions do not change. Regular assessments of ecological performance and adapting management actions based on the quality of performance, will help Adams County provide high quality open space experiences for the community.

The evaluation of ecological assets helps to identify priority areas for enhancement and opportunities for restoration to improve the overall ecological function of various natural areas. Establish a system and schedule for assessing the ecological health of County-owned or managed parks, open space properties, and trail corridors and identify maintenance and restoration strategies to implement priority projects. While annual assessment and restoration efforts should be conducted, each year will prioritize a different list of County-owned or managed sites.

Strategy NE 5.2: Develop detailed open space management plans

Prepare detailed open space management plans for County-owned public open space properties that contain important wildlife habitat to guide long-term maintenance and enhancement activities.

Build off landscape assessment and typology work conducted by Great Ecology in 2020. Riverdale Regional Park, Clear Creek Bottomlands, the Confluence Area, and Willow Bay would all benefit from a master plan and open space management plan based on the research conducted. Pelican Ponds would benefit from a management plan.

Strategy NE 5.3: Increase and maintain the health of the county's urban forest

Urban forests are comprised of trees within the public realm of parks, sidewalks, medians and boulevards, and greenways. As a network, the urban forest provides benefits for humans and improved wildlife habitat connections. Trees and vegetation provide shade and cooling, better air quality, help with stormwater management, and provide benefits in the form of lower crime rates, increased health advantages, and economic benefits. Disparities between urban tree canopy coverage create equity issues within the county. Therefore, urban tree management should look at areas with a green deficit in disadvantaged parts of the county to help build the urban forest.

Explore and implement strategies to increase the county's urban forest, such as the following:

- Establish an urban forest management plan;
- Establish metrics defining goals in increased canopy coverage;
- Implement tree planting programs in the public rights-of-way;
- Require developer contributions to the County's forestry efforts;
- Identify tree planting prioritization areas in County-owned parks, open space properties, and trail properties; and
- Integrate best urban forestry practices into the community education and outreach of the naturalist program.

Maintenance and operational best practices should be included within a forest management plan. The plan should deal with emerald ash borer (EAB) and other pests and diseases that can afflict the overall canopy system.



For More Info
See Appendix for supplemental Landscape Typology and Ecological Assessment mapping, prepared by Great Ecology.

Strategy NE 5.4: Increase pollinator corridors where they can be effective on County-owned and managed open space properties

Include seeding forbs into more of the open space properties. The County should periodically review mowing schedules to ensure the health of pollinator corridors are taken into account. There are very few flowering plants that are not noxious weeds on Adams County properties, so the management plan needs to focus on getting a balance of pollinator species back on the landscape, and allowing those plants to establish, grow and go to seed without mowing and herbicide use.

Strategy NE 5.5: Provide for adequate buffer land

Plan for and add adequate buffers around riparian habitats to ensure a sustainable species richness, to prevent the diminution of critical wildlife habitat, and to improve the water quality.

Strategy NE 5.6: Create habitat linkages

Create habitat linkages to regional open space properties for species of importance, such as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Barr Lake State Park, Riverdale Regional Park, and river corridors. MAP 15 shows county-wide high-quality wildlife habitat.

Management actions that can be employed to increase native plant diversity include:

- Seeding;
- Planting;
- Restoration and enhancement;
- Strategic mowing; and
- Restricting driving and hiking to roads and trails.

Strategy NE 5.7: Increase wildlife and pollinator habitat abundance

While interconnected in many ways with native plant diversity, there are several strategies specific to increasing wildlife and pollinator habitat abundance and quality. When considering these strategies, it is important to determine the wildlife species Adams County is focused on providing habitat for and where wildlife habitat improvement is practical to avoid human-wildlife conflicts. It is also important to understand ecosystem-level food chains when trying to improve wildlife habitat. For example, if Adams County is focused on providing habitat for predatory birds such as red-tailed hawks or eagles, it is important to create habitat for their preferred prey species before implementing habitat



Barr Lake State Park Lake Appreciation Day volunteer pulling weeds

improvement for the higher trophic level predators themselves. Without prey, predators will not make use of constructed habitat features.

Strategies that can be employed to enhance wildlife and pollinator habitat include:

- Habitat restoration;
- Noxious and invasive weed management; and
- Habitat connectivity.

Strategy NE 5.8: Reduce noxious and invasive species abundance

Adams County established a Noxious Weed Management Plan in 2008 to “provide guidelines for effectively managing designated noxious weeds, which constitute a threat to the natural resources of lands in unincorporated Adams County.” Under the 2008 plan, Adams County adopted the Colorado noxious weed list and added two additional List B noxious weeds (Adams County 2008).

Reducing noxious and non-native species will always be a management and maintenance requirement, but implementing synergistic strategies, such as increasing native plant cover and diversity, can help combat weed issues. Large swaths of open space are dominated by noxious annual grasses and annual invasive species, primarily cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and kochia (*Bassia scoparia*). Without focused and consistent efforts to control annual species, there is



For More Info
See [Adams County 2008 Noxious Weed Management Plan](#) for more details related to Strategy NE 5.8.

concern that the loss of diversity will increase. Biotic thresholds have been crossed for some areas, so the level of effort to restore those will be greater than areas where annual species are not dominant.

Strategies can be employed to aid in controlling noxious and invasive weeds and limiting their harmful impacts on biodiversity. These strategies include:

- Monitoring invasive and noxious plant species;
- Preventing the spread of invasive and noxious plant species in park and open space areas; and
- Implementing control measures for invasive and noxious plant species present within Adams County parks and open space properties.

Strategy NE 5.9: Restore disturbed areas

Disturbed areas should be prioritized for restoration; however, the cause of disturbance should determine the approaches needed to correct the issue. Common causes of poor vegetation cover include, but are not limited to, prairie dog colonies, poor soil quality and soil compaction, heavy use, a limited seed bank, and improper herbicide application.

Strategy NE 5.10: River and stream restoration

When stream corridors are degraded, they are not able to perform to their fullest potential. Degraded streams tend to succumb to increased erosion, sedimentation and poor water quality. These factors weaken stream systems and their ability to function during a flood event as well as to provide other ecosystem services to the community.

Monitoring and identifying degraded stream areas and any sources of stress is the first step towards resolving the problem. Cut banks, incised channels, slumped material or heavy sedimentation, vegetation die-off, and water quality issues should be addressed where feasible, or where these issues pose a risk to existing infrastructure. Thoughtful adjacent land-use management, shoreline erosion control best management practices, and proper revegetation will help to restore healthy, functioning floodways.

Where possible, restoration activities to increase and diversify floodplain vegetation and reduce steep bank angles to reconnect streams with floodplains should be completed to enhance the capacity of open space area floodplains, which can absorb and support high water flows and improve water quality. Native wetland and riparian species should be used in revegetation efforts along streams and rivers and planting plans should include shrubs and trees to increase root density and surface protection.



Johanna Gentry honoring the local wildlife and wildflowers through her mural painting

An important consideration to keep in mind while planning stream restoration or riparian enhancement projects is crime prevention through environmental design. Strategies such as tree and non-native vegetation thinning can increase sight lines to help prevent camping and other unpermitted activities that may cause significant impacts on the ecological function of an area and safety of park users. Although strategies can be employed to discourage these activities, they will not solve the overarching issue of homelessness. Changes in public policy are likely needed to address the root cause of the larger issue.



4

AGRICULTURAL LANDS, RURAL CHARACTER & PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Agricultural Lands, Rural Character, and Places of Cultural Significance

Agricultural Land Conservation

Goals & Strategies

ENGAGEMENT

The top three priorities for parks and open space, according to Phase 2 Community survey respondents are:

#1 Preserving working farms and ranches

(average score of 4.17 out of 5)

#2 Preserving and enhancing scenic views

(average score of 3.81 out of 5)

#3 Agricultural conservation to preserve the heritage of Adams County

(average score of 3.78 out of 5)

PRESERVING WHAT MAKES ADAMS COUNTY SPECIAL

Agricultural lands, rural character and agrarian heritage provide a distinctive and relatable identity and source of pride for many residents, in addition to presenting the county with a significant economic resource.

Adams County has long boasted an agricultural economy and heritage. The soils are among the best in Colorado for crop production. The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service cites 705,289 acres of “land in farms.”

As development continues to encroach into agricultural lands, particularly in the western portion of the county, agricultural uses are threatened by a loss of land, restrictions on normal farming practices, and the anticipated impacts of climate change.

The agricultural lands that remain are subject to market forces and cultural shifts that are challenging the continuation of farming operations. The development of these lands will mean the permanent loss of fertile agricultural soils of state-wide importance. Once the high-quality soils are converted to urban uses, they are permanently lost. The loss of farms also means a decrease in the economic diversity that agriculture provides, a reduction in local food security, and a decline in stormwater infiltration, as well as changes to rural character, scenic views, and other open space values.

Avoiding further fragmentation of farmland and sustaining farm-supporting businesses (such as feed and equipment dealers and other agricultural services) is essential for sustaining farming operations. Agriculture is most viable when a



Old farm building along the Big Dry Creek Trail.

number of operations are adjacent to one another with limited interruption by development. Fragmentation of farms also leads to “impermanence syndrome.” This is a condition in which farmers are never certain whether or not their neighbors will be rezoned for development that will render farming difficult if not impossible. This condition convinces farmers that land conversion is inevitable and that farming and rural life in general are doomed in their area. This conviction causes landowners to defer stewardship and forego agricultural investments.

The central part of the county, along with the Historic Splendid Valley, demonstrate the areas of greatest potential to protect farmland and

related supporting agricultural businesses. The preservation and protection of high-quality agricultural lands and honoring the cultural heritage remain a strong desire of residents.

Public input through a summer of 2021 survey indicated that residents feel a loss of agricultural land is a “significant threat” (57%), or “somewhat a threat” (28%) to quality of life. The regulation of future development of agricultural properties was supported by survey respondents. Respondents ranked the importance of various conservation purposes to identify priorities.

MAP 16: FARMLAND SOIL PRODUCTIVITY



Data Source: USDA NRCS

NOT TO SCALE



LEGEND

 Prime Farmland	 Farmland of Local Importance	 Farmland of Statewide Importance	 Not Prime Farmland
--	--	--	--



Dia de La Familia at the Adams County Fair.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION

The intent of the County's agricultural preservation efforts is to help farmers and ranchers challenged by development pressures to remain in business by offering voluntary and incentive-based methods. The more agricultural land which can remain in viable production throughout Adams County, the more sustainable the local agricultural economy will remain. Since landowners have different needs, a range of options are available through the open space program. Conservation easements, transfer of development rights (TOD) programs, and assistance from land trusts are some of the mechanisms for assisting interested property owners in

conserving their lands for agricultural purposes.

- Conservation Easements:** Voluntary agreements that private landowners place on their property to preserve certain values, such as agriculture, wildlife habitat, and scenery. The property remains privately owned and managed and is not generally open to the public. In most instances a conservation easement is tax deductible and tax credits are often available as an added incentive. Property may be sold and the easement stays with the property.
- Rural Land Use Plan, Deed Restrictions, Covenants, or Conservation Developments:** Voluntary, flexible ways to encourage development that protects the county's rural character, critical areas, distinct features, and continues agricultural production while recognizing current zoning.



The Historic Charles Muegge House in Bennett includes sculptures that remind visitors of its agricultural history.

- Trail Easements:** Permanent agreements between a private landowner and an organization or agency through which the landowner preserves a linear corridor from development and allows public trail use.
- Transfer of Development Rights:** Allows property owners to transfer rights from areas where conservation is desirable to areas where higher density development is appropriate.

MAP 17 identifies priority locations for investment in cultural heritage through the arts and events, the preservation of rural character and scenic views, and the promotion of agritourism. MAP 17 also identifies high-quality agricultural land, which should be a high priority for conservation efforts.

Development growth pressures are highest in the western and central

parts of the County, requiring a greater focus on agricultural conservation in these areas. While there are agricultural lands of exceptional quality within the eastern portion of the county, other means of conservation, such as policies addressing lot subdivision, or support for productive agriculture may be more appropriate means in this area, for the time being.

EXHIBIT NOTES

Based on the presence of the greatest number of agricultural values evaluated in the existing conditions report, and historic and cultural assets as identified by stakeholders, Maps 17 and 18 highlight, in purple and magenta, the focus areas investment in agritourism and cultural arts, along with the conservation of lands and scenic views.

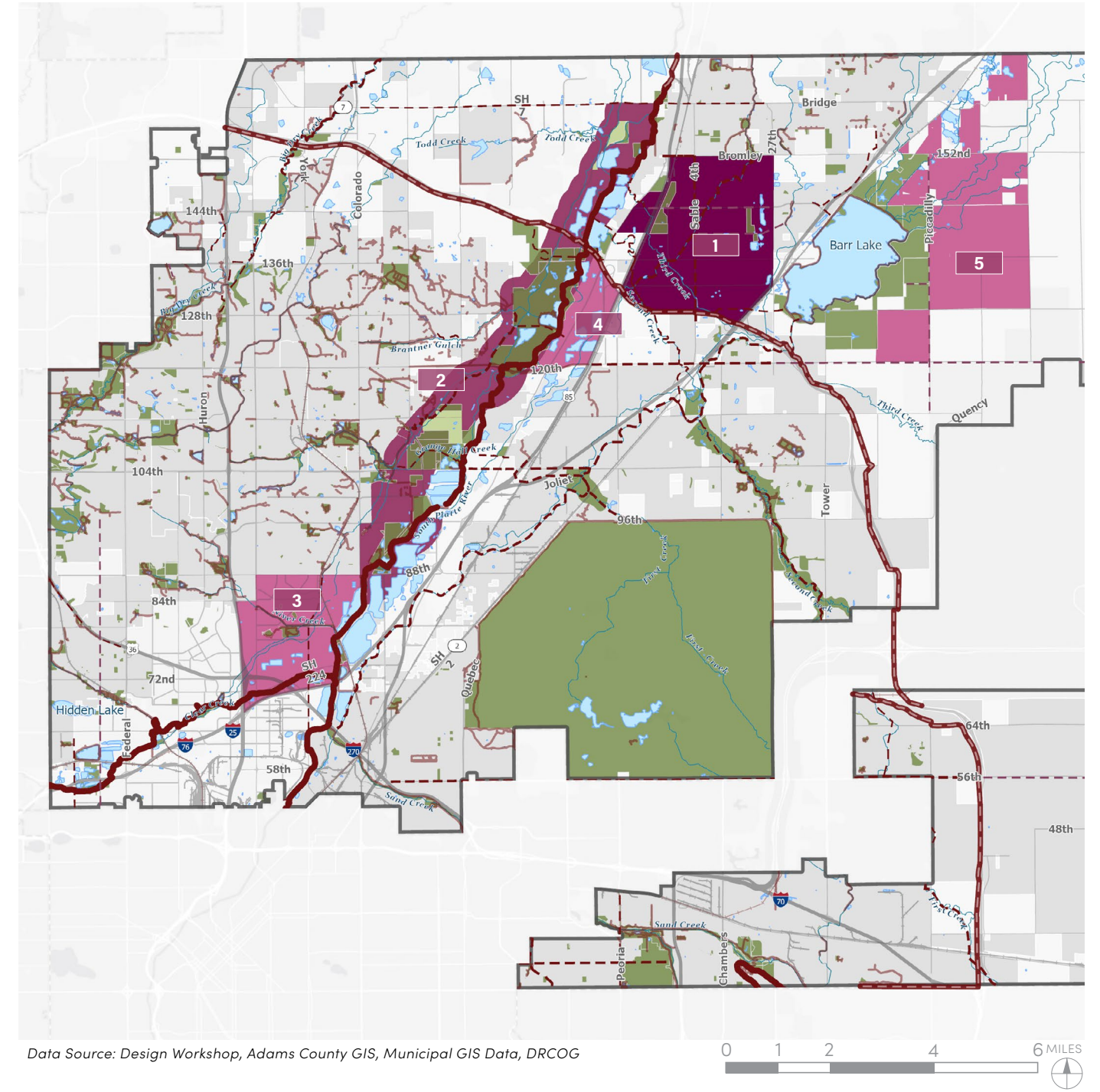


Agriculture & Cultural Significance

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (PR)	NAME	PRIORITY
1	1.1 2.2	Historic Splendid Valley Agricultural Heritage Area Agritourism, Agricultural Conservation, and Agricultural Heritage	Very High
2	2.1	Riverdale Road Cultural Heritage Area Agricultural View Corridor	High
3	2.3	Welby Cultural Heritage Area Agricultural Heritage	Medium
4	2.5	Henderson Cultural Heritage Area Agricultural Heritage and Arts Community	Medium
5	1.1	East of Barr Lake Agricultural Conservation	Medium

**The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.*

MAP 17: AGRICULTURAL LANDS & PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE PRIORITY AREAS WESTERN COUNTY



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

LEGEND

- Very High Priority Agricultural/Cultural Significance Area
- High Priority Agricultural/Cultural Significance Area
- Medium Priority Agricultural/Cultural Significance Area
- Conservation Flood Control Overlay Policy
- Existing Regional Trails
- Proposed Regional Trails
- Existing Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation Easements
- Incorporated Areas



Bromley-Hishinuma Farm in Brighton

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Three main goals related to agricultural lands and rural character were identified through the planning process:

1. **Agricultural land conservation:** Preserve and protect the viability and character of high-quality agricultural lands in the county.
2. **Rural heritage, lands of cultural significance, and historic resources:** Maintain and preserve the rural character and heritage of the county through preservation and educational interpretation of historic resources.
3. **Strengthen agricultural futures by promoting diversified use:** Allow and encourage diverse uses on agricultural lands (e.g. agritourism, solar, etc.) while preserving rural character and food production.

Residents have demonstrated their appreciation for expansive agricultural lands and the preservation of rural character. The following strategies are intended to advance the focus on conserving rural lands.



GOAL AR 1.0: AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION

Preserve and protect the viability and character of high-quality agricultural lands in the county.

Strategy AR 1.1: Consider agricultural lands and their viability to serve as natural area protection

Focused primarily in the Historic Splendid Valley; east of Barr Lake; and adjacent to major drainageways in the county.

Strategy AR 1.2: Consolidate land conservation

Focus land preservation efforts in order to... to avoid fragmentation of agricultural practices and conflict of urban and rural activities.

Strategy AR 1.3: Support and enhance agricultural lands

Support and enhance agricultural lands serving as development buffers to the urban fringe areas of the county.

Strategy AR 1.4: Preserve lands and water rights

Preserve lands and water rights that support local food production. Provide opportunities for people to learn about agricultural practices.

Strategy AR 1.5: Keep historic water rights with agricultural lands

Keep historic water rights tied to agricultural lands to ensure irrigation.

Strategy AR 1.6: Create incentives and utilize existing incentives (such as Conservation Easements) for property owners to participate in agricultural land conservation

Incentivize property owners to participate in agricultural land conservation to protect the rural heritage of Adams County.

Strategy AR 1.7: Evaluate a lease-back program

Evaluate the effectiveness of a lease-back program for partnership with farmers to keep it feasible for farmers to have a stake in the land they farm.

Strategy AR 1.8: Evaluate opportunities to incentivize retention of agricultural parcels greater than 35 acres

A conservation easement provides a tax incentive to a property owner to offset a voluntary legal agreement that limits the use of the property under the agreement.



For More Info
See the [2016 Historic Splendid Valley District Plan](#) for more information about the vision for the area.



GOAL AR 2.0: RURAL HERITAGE, LANDS OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND HISTORIC RESOURCES PRESERVATION

Maintain and preserve the rural character and heritage of the county through preservation and educational interpretation of historic resources

Strategy AR 2.1: Protect important scenic resources

Scenic resources are critical to Adams County's future. The County should protect important scenic resources, such as the rural characteristics and lands that are visible from Riverdale Road.

Strategy AR 2.2: Maintain the agricultural heritage of Historic Splendid Valley

Support the local food system, agritourism, and agricultural land conservation within the Historic Splendid Valley district.

Focus agricultural land preservation and acquisition opportunities on lands that help maintain current and future agricultural operations, support wildlife habitat, sustain water resources, that are contiguous to other agricultural parcels, and those that possess scenic qualities.

Develop educational outreach programs with partnerships and grants to introduce people to the Historic Splendid Valley and offer education on agriculture and food production. See also the 2016 Historic Splendid Valley District Plan.

Strategy AR 2.3: Honor the agricultural history and heritage of Welby through historical interpretation

To keep rural traditions alive and honor the rich agricultural history and heritage of Welby, focus on historical interpretation as a strategy to share this history with new generations and visitors. While not enough contiguous farmland remains for a conservation approach to have an impact or to distinguish an agricultural heritage area, there are many ways to highlight the cultural significance of this region.



Horses within the rural, scenic portions of the county

Strategy AR 2.4: Acknowledge the roles of all cultures in the development and successes of Adams County's legacy of agricultural production

To ensure the story of agricultural production is complete, include the stories of Indigenous populations, Japanese Americans and the history of the Hispanic and Latino populations, through interpretive elements and programs.

Strategy AR 2.5: Support an Arts District in the vicinity of Riverdale Regional Park in Henderson and off Old Brighton Road.

Create an Arts District, focusing on historical interpretation, to celebrate the cultural significance of the area along Old Brighton Road near Riverdale Regional Park.



La Charreada at the Adams County Fair



GOAL AR 3.0: STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURAL FUTURES BY PROMOTING DIVERSIFIED USE

Encourage diverse uses on agricultural lands (e.g. agritourism, solar, etc.) while preserving rural character and food production

Agritourism could include tours of working farms, education opportunities, community farms, tastings and sales of artisan foods and fresh produce, festivals, restaurants, bed and breakfast, and outdoor recreation. These activities would help diversify the economic base of the county, potentially provide sound economic returns, and help people living in urban and suburban areas connect with the land and understand the important role that food production plays in our lives. Other activities to support agriculture may include innovations in food production and animal husbandry and integration of features that offset the cost of production such as solar energy production.

Strategy AR 3.1: Support the flexible use of agricultural lands where appropriate

Support the flexible use of agricultural lands to support agritourism and other uses that benefit the surrounding community.

Strategy AR 3.2: Support diverse uses on agricultural lands

Support diverse uses on agricultural lands, such as allowing and promoting renewable energy production through solar energy (agrivoltaics), regenerative agriculture, container farming, hydroponics, and permaculture. Promote innovations in irrigation.



5

DIVERSE PARK & RECREATION ENHANCEMENT

Diverse Recreation Matters

Goals & Strategies

PARK & RECREATION ACCESSIBILITY

Adams County continues to see an increasing population with significant diversity in age groups, incomes, and racial/ethnic makeup. Most growth is expected to occur in the western portions of the county that are closer to Denver and other urban centers.

Currently, approximately 32 percent of Adams County’s residents are located more than a 10-minute walk from a community or regional park. Many of these residents live in rural areas whose development patterns do not support walking to parks. The underserved areas in unincorporated Adams County that can be accessed by a 10-minute walk are in the following regions:

- Northwest and northcentral Adams County, west of Highway 85 (Todd Creek) and east of I-76;
- Confluence Area / southwest Adams County around Washington Street south of I-270;
- The Highway 85 corridor features a gap in parks and open space, however, these areas are primarily industrial uses;
- The area between Highway 85 and I-76 along E-470; and
- Berkeley Heights and Guardian Angels Neighborhoods.

Most residents are within a 15-minute drive (roughly 10 miles) from a large regional park. This service analysis does not account for access to active recreation facilities such as recreation centers, swimming pools and some athletic fields. Public input for this project indicates how far in

miles residents would be willing to travel to access outdoor recreation opportunities. Twenty-seven percent of respondents indicated they would be willing to travel up to five miles and 23% would be willing to travel up to 10 miles. Approximately 23% are willing to travel less than two miles and 10% are willing to travel more than twenty miles, indicating an additional large park is not needed as the current destination parks are well distributed. However, it is important to ensure smaller parks that serve the daily needs of residents in more suburban and urban areas are within a comfortable walking distance. Parks also need to include amenities and designs that meet the needs of a diverse population.

Adams County should focus future acquisitions and infill opportunities over the next ten (10) years to meet the service needs of residents in the following areas:

- Buffer properties around Riverdale Regional Park, including a focus between Old Brighton Road and the River for greater habitat and recreational connectivity, as well as to support an Arts District in the vicinity.
- Properties adjacent to and surrounding Willow Bay.
- Southwest Adams County from the Denver and Arvada Border, north to Highway 36 and east to I-25.
- Properties adjacent to the confluence of Clear Creek and the South Platte River.
- Buffer properties around Barr Lake and DIA for open space purposes.
- Properties adjacent to Kiowa Creek and between Bennett and



A basketball player enjoys shooting hoops and kids play in the playground at Carmichael Park in Brighton

Strasburg for the purposes of a trail system that can connect with Arapahoe County and link the two communities.

- Properties and/or conservation easements in Historic Splendid Valley to continue to preserve farms.

locations for park and recreation investment including increased park access in underserved neighborhoods, improving linear greenway parks and enhancing access to water-based recreation.

Community outreach during Phase 2 asked “what do you think are the biggest threats to quality of life in Adams County related to growth?” Public input indicated that residents felt that overcrowding and declining quality of parks and public open space properties is a “significant threat” (44%) or “somewhat of a threat” (41%). Respondents were also asked how they would identify priorities for parks and open space. MAP 18 and MAP 19 identify general

EXHIBIT NOTES

Based on the presence of the greatest number of values for parks, open space and recreation evaluated in the existing conditions report, and recreation assets as identified by stakeholders, Maps 20 and 21 highlight in shades of orange the generalized areas to focus recreation investments in the unincorporated county.

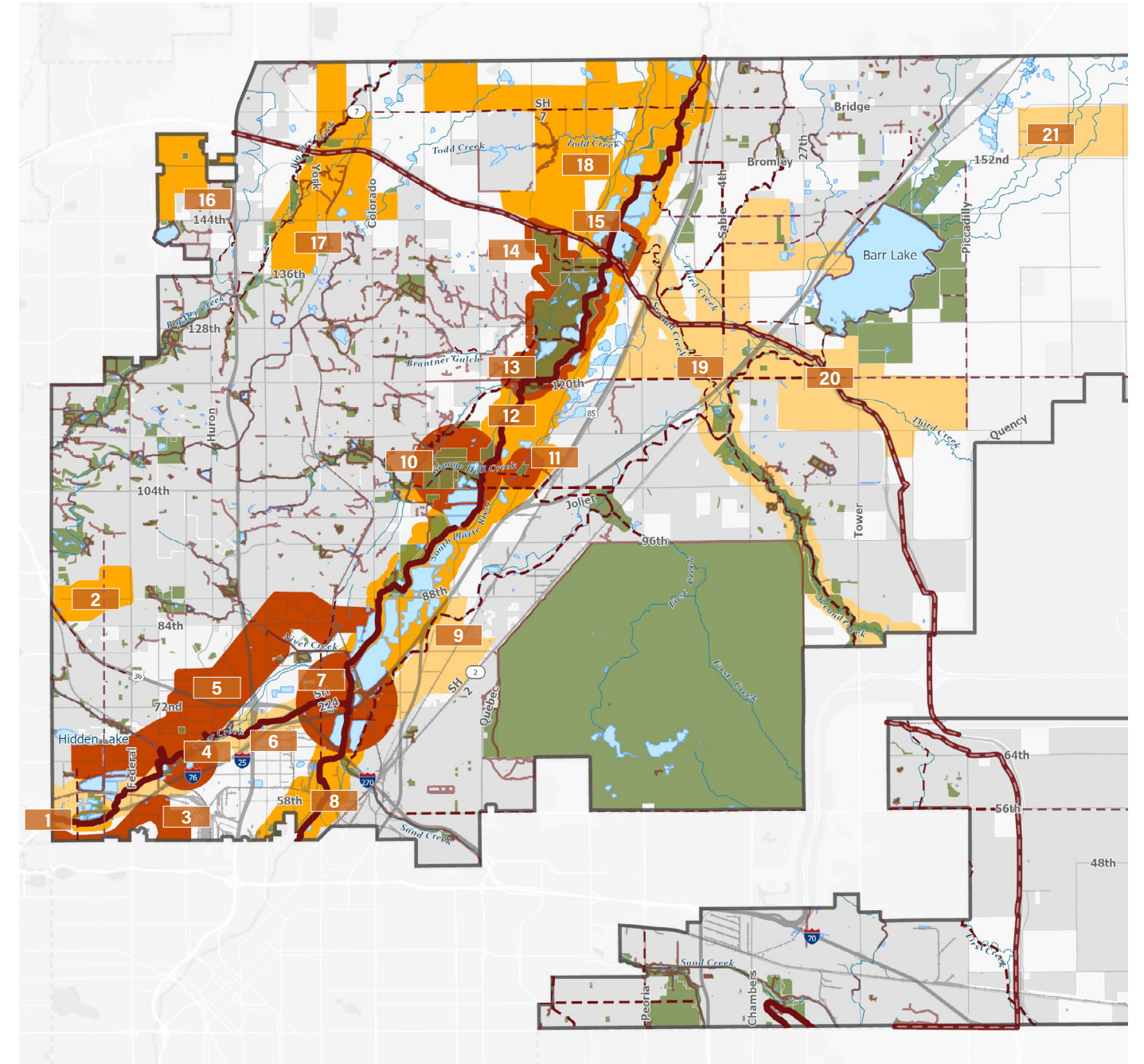


Diverse Parks & Recreation

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (PR)	NAME	PRIORITY
1		Lowell Ponds CIP and internal site trail system	Medium
2	3.8	Shaw Heights Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Medium
3	3.8	Guardian Angels Neighborhood Park Acquisition	High
4	4.5	Clear Creek and Pecos St. Whitewater Park	High
5	3.8	Berkley, Twin Lakes, Sherrelwood, and Welby Neighborhood Park Acquisition	High
6	4.1	Clear Creek Corridor Water Recreation	Low
7	4.2	Clear Creek/South Platte River Confluence Regional Park Public access to water, Neighborhood Park Acquisition in Confluence Area	High
8		Equestrian Trail Connections from Riverdale Regional Park to National Western Center	High
9	3.8	Derby and Dupont Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Low
10	3.11	Elaine T. Valente Nature Play Playground	High
11		Hazeltine Open Space Trailhead	Medium
12	4.1 4.3	South Platte River Corridor Water Recreation / Blueway	Medium
13	1.4 3.11	Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan Implementation, Culturally Diverse Event Programming	High
14		Riverdale Bluffs CIP	High
15	4.4	Willow Bay Buffer Master Plan Implementation (public water access and trails)	High
16	3.8	Northwest Unincorporated County Zuni Street to Huron Street Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Medium
17	3.8	Northwest Unincorporated County York St. to Colorado St. Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Medium

*The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.

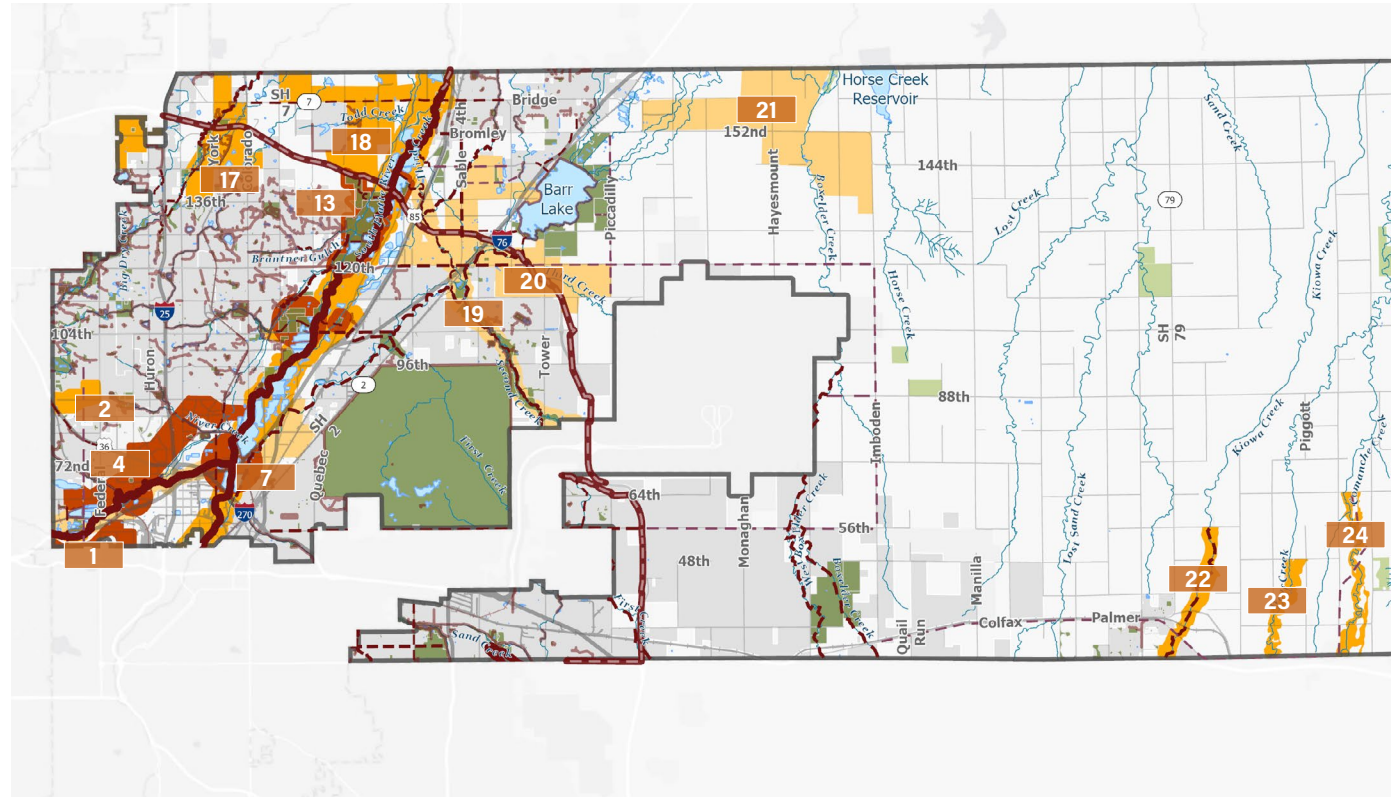
MAP 18: PARK AND RECREATION PRIORITY AREAS | WESTERN COUNTY



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

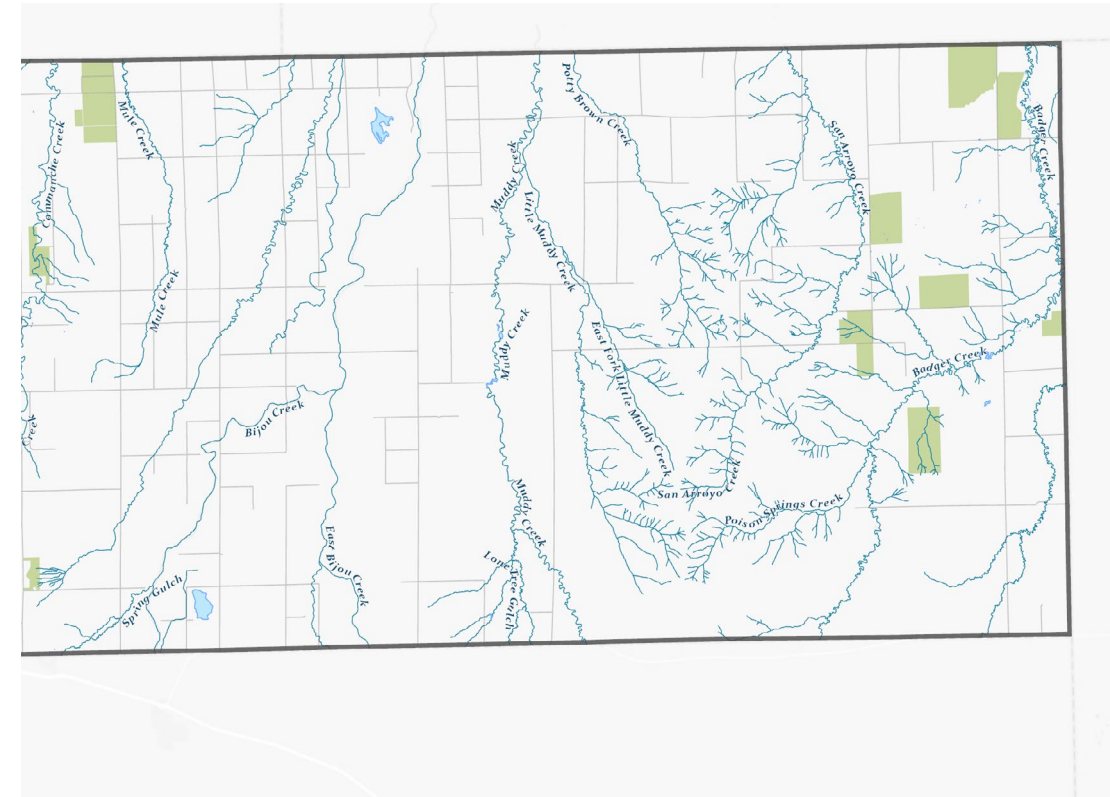
LEGEND

- High Recreation Priority Area
- Medium Recreation Priority Area
- Low Recreation Priority Area
- Existing Regional Trails
- Existing Trails
- South Platte River Trail Equestrian Improvements & Connection to National Western Center
- Proposed Regional Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation Easements
- Incorporated Areas



LEGEND

- High Recreation Priority Area
- Medium Recreation Priority Area
- Low Recreation Priority Area
- Equestrian Trail Improvements:
 (South Platte River Trail Improvements & Proposed Equestrian Trail)
- Existing Regional Trails
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation Easements
- Incorporated Areas



**The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.*

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (PR)	NAME	PRIORITY
18	3.8	Todd Creek Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Medium
19		Second Creek Greenway Linear Park/Open Space	Low
20		Unincorporated County Near Barr Lake Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Low
21		North-central Unincorporated County east of I-76 Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Low
22	3.8.b	Kiowa Creek at Bennett Parks and Open Space	Medium
23	3.8.a	Wolf Creek at Strasburg Parks and Open Space	Medium
24	3.8.a	Comanche Creek at Strasburg Parks and Open Space	Medium



Michael Gadlin painting one of the many murals in Adams County.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

- » **Creative placemaking:** Utilize parks, open space and trails to highlight and promote regional arts and culture throughout the county.
- » **Recreation facilities for Unincorporated Areas:** Provide recreation infrastructure such as fields and courts to meet the recreation demands within the county with recreation partners.
- » **Equitable distribution of access to parks and nature:** Provide parks, open space, and trails which meet the needs of county residents both in service area distribution (quantity) and in quality.
- » **Access to water-based recreation and resources:** Provide opportunities for water-based recreation within the county that supports the connection of all populations to the County's water resources.



GOAL PR 1.0: CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Utilize parks, open space and trails to highlight and promote regional arts and culture throughout the county.

Strategy PR 1.1: Highlight the natural, cultural, and historic resources of Adams County through public art and interpretive installations

Ensure that public art, signage, and other placemaking components of parks, open space properties, and trails are equitable and inclusive depictions of the county's culture, population, and heritage, and discuss the past, present, and future from a variety of perspectives.

Strategy PR 1.2: Design public spaces to provide flexible places for people to connect.

Public spaces should be context sensitive and empower and engage the surrounding inclusive community, engaging diverse types of users (demographic, geographic, cultural, socioeconomic, activity preference, etc.). Design public spaces to be flexible to accommodate displays of art installations and events.

Strategy PR 1.3: Honor Indigenous people through the arts

Honor Indigenous people through the arts in our parks, trails and open space properties.

Strategy PR 1.4: Continue to enhance the County Fair to be a more inclusive and culturally significant event

Support events and activities that are reflective of the county's varied cultures and promote inclusivity.

Strategy PR 1.5: Create opportunities for group gatherings within existing parks.

Ensure spaces are comfortable and inclusive for all people by removing barriers to access and providing safe spaces. Install amenities such as seating, pavilions, and shade structures that promote social interactions and serve as gathering spaces.

Strategy PR 1.6: Support an Arts District in the vicinity of Riverdale Regional Park

Establishing a Arts District in the vicinity of Riverdale Regional Park can help give people a sense of place and create excitement about culture and the arts.



GOAL PR 2.0: RECREATION FACILITIES FOR UNINCORPORATED AREAS

Provide recreation infrastructure such as fields and courts to meet recreation demands within the county.

Strategy PR 2.1: Conduct a needs assessment to determine recreation needs within unincorporated Adams County.

Determine gaps in current recreation services, including “active uses” such as soccer, Futsal, pickleball, and swimming. Design adaptable facilities that can provide a range of recreational experiences.

Strategy PR 2.2: Provide recreation access to residents of unincorporated Adams County

Western Adams County is built-out and there are few opportunities to acquire land for new parks. In this environment, the County may focus on converting vacant or disused properties, or on the incorporation of public park uses on school, library or other public properties. Partnerships with other recreations providers should be sought out.

Strategy PR 2.3: Provide “Colorado experiences”

Support recreation infrastructure that allows users to build confidence and skills in adventure sports in controlled, close to home locations. Recreation infrastructure may include water sports, mountain biking and nature play.



A player mid-throw during a game of football at Rotella Park.



GOAL PR 3.0: EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF ACCESS TO PARKS AND NATURE

Provide parks, open space, and trails which meet the needs of county residents both in service area distribution (quantity) and in quality.

Strategy PR 3.1: Utilize the park and open space system to support a range of year-round recreational experiences

Support a range of recreational experiences throughout the park and open space system, from larger regional parks to community level parks, that serve a variety of age groups, user-types, and economic backgrounds year-round.

Strategy PR 3.2: Provide public access to parks, open space properties, and trails close to where people live, work, attend school, near community centers, and transportation hubs so they are convenient for people to experience every day

Enhance connections and public access to parks, open space properties, and trails so that they are better integrated into neighborhoods and are embedded in daily life.



The playground at Riverdale ball fields offers recreation opportunities to residents.

Strategy PR 3.3: Evaluate the level of park access, investment, offerings, and quality at a county-wide scale

Evaluate the level of park access, investment, offerings, condition, and quality at a county-wide scale, considering county-owned and municipal parks that collectively service populations.

Strategy PR 3.4: Develop metrics to identify required staffing levels

Develop metrics to identify staffing levels required to manage each county-owned open space, irrigated park acre, and mile of trail.

Strategy PR 3.5: Continue to inventory park amenities

Continue to inventory park amenities in a database for maintenance and asset management. Use this tracking to anticipate replacement and upgrade needs for investment planning.

Strategy PR 3.6: Count attendance at parks where practical to assess the baseline level of service the parks are providing

Methods to count users include utilizing road counters at the park entrances to count vehicles; staging volunteers or rangers on typical days with hand counters to measure attendees at intervals throughout the day, identifying peak-use periods and periods of low use; and conducting population-based surveys that study

characteristics of users. If utilizing on-site observation, researchers recommend counting park users up to three or four times per day at three-hour intervals for a minimum of four days, including at least two weekdays and one weekend day.¹ Creating visitor counts is not meant to replace or negate already established level of service standards including park access and service areas.

Strategy PR 3.7: Inclusively engage surrounding residents in parks planning, establishing goals to measure engagement success

Public spaces must be accessible to all types of users. The County should work to lower barriers to use of the park system; various tools to measure progress in this area are available.

Strategy PR 3.8: Infill local park opportunities in unincorporated areas

Acquire land for new parks in the urban areas of western Adams County through infill, re-use of vacant or disused lands; explore other means of expanding access to parks in these typically underserved areas. Establish a goal that all citizens will be within a ten-minute walk of a park.

PR 3.8a: Strasburg

Work with Strasburg Parks and Recreation District to ensure park, trail and open space access opportunities within a 10-minute walk of all urban and suburban residential areas.

PR 3.8b: Bennett

Work with the Town of Bennett and the Park and Recreation District to ensure park, trail and open space access opportunities within a 10-minute walk of all urban and suburban residential areas.

Strategy PR 3.9: Support continued Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts through internal operations and practices of the department

The County’s vision, “Adams County is the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses,” sets a lofty goal that the POSCA Department should work toward.

Develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan of internal practices and external efforts to reinforce the goals of DEI as it relates to parks, open spaces, and trails.

¹ Cohen, Deborah, MD, MPH, and Bing Han, Ph.D. “Measuring the Use of Public Neighborhood Parks,” March 8, 2018, available: www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/march/measuring-the-use-of-public-neighborhood-parks

Strategy PR 3.10: Strengthen partnerships with community organizations

Strengthen partnerships with community organizations that inclusively provide outreach, programs, and recreation offerings to diverse populations.

Strategy PR 3.11: Provide accessible playgrounds and nature playgrounds at county facilities

This may include an accessible playground at Riverdale Regional Park and a nature playground at Elaine T. Valente Park.

Strategy PR 3.12: Develop strategies and policies that avoid the criminalization and displacement of people experiencing homelessness, while also addressing public perceptions and concerns about safety.

Strategies may include some of the following:

- Regional and interdepartmental coordination to address the negative impacts of homelessness occurring in parks, trails, and open space properties.
- Defining the role of the County's POSCA Department and the County's ranger program in supporting homelessness response and mitigation initiatives.
- Training of maintenance and operations staff for a compassionate approach that directs people to resources.
- Defining inclusive and participatory planning and design processes to understand, accommodate, and advocate for the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Develop clear policies and procedures for the operations of parks, open spaces, and trails.
- Regularly visit County-owned properties that are high-risk locations for habitation by people experiencing homelessness, such as floodways, and where temporary camping or habitation may cause significant ecological damage.



GOAL PR 4.0: ACCESS TO WATER-BASED RECREATION AND RESOURCES

Provide opportunities for water-based recreation within the county that support the connection of all populations to the County's water resources.

Strategy PR 4.1: Increase opportunities for public access to the South Platte River, Clear Creek, and other regional watercourses

Program areas of access as appropriate for non-motorized watercraft, water play, and fishing. Consider nearby user demographics when providing amenities that will support connecting all populations to the water.

Strategy PR 4.2: Establish a Confluence Regional Park

Establish a Regional Park at the confluence of Clear Creek and the South Platte River, providing water access for boating, tubing, fishing, water play, and wildlife viewing.

Strategy PR 4.3: Develop a Blueway plan for the South Platte River

Develop a Blueway plan for the South Platte River that outlines a safe, navigable river experience through Adams County. Plan for convenient access points and recreational segments. Support policies that maintain or improve water quantity and quality to ensure that there is enough water at the confluence to support recreation and that the river is clean enough to safely recreate in.

Strategy PR 4.4: Develop a Willow Bay Master Plan

Develop a master plan for Willow Bay to understand the potential for non-motorized boating. Implement the master plan and refer to ecological system improvements specific to the site to support the development of public, water-based recreation.

Strategy PR 4.5: Develop whitewater park on Clear Creek north of Pecos Street

Develop a whitewater park on Clear Creek north of Pecos Street for recreational paddlers (canoers, kayakers, stand up paddle boarders, play boaters, etc.) with a developed series of drops, pools, and waves to develop skills and recreate.

Strategy PR 4.6: Establish a reservoir for recreation in the central portion of county

Investigate the feasibility of a reservoir in the central part of the county could serve as a destination regional park and provide multiple purposes such as water storage and water quality enhancement, providing key habitat, and recreation such as camping, boating, swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing, trails and picnicking.

Strategy PR 4.7: Provide access to swimming for unincorporated residents

Provide residents of unincorporated Adams County with access to swimming, which includes resources for public use such as lifeguards, maintenance and management.

6 PARTNERSHIPS



Foster Care 5K
Riverdale Regional Park

Partnerships

Goals & Strategies



The Fair Queen and Lady in Waiting join group of 4-H members at the County Fair.

PARTNERSHIPS

This Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan encourages partnerships between communities, neighborhoods, the private sector and Adams County for open space conservation, stewardship, recreation, and outdoor education. The plan also encourages greenways and trails that link to adjacent counties.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Partnerships, Regional Coordination and Stewardship: Seek partnerships with County departments and other area governments and agencies to find efficiencies in the areas of maintenance, education, enforcement and support services.

Conservation: Work with local and regional partners to develop “win-win” strategies for land protection and natural resource conservation.



GOAL PC 1.0: PARTNERSHIPS, REGIONAL COORDINATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Seek partnerships with County departments and other area governments and agencies to find efficiencies in the areas of maintenance, education, enforcement and support services..

Strategy PC 1.1: Continue to pursue partnerships with neighboring governments, local non-profit institutions, and other agencies.

Partnership opportunities may exist with entities such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, the Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University Extension offices, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, among others.

Strategy PC 1.2: Pursue joint conservation efforts with neighboring counties to save resource dollars and provide more efficient conservation of high-priority lands that cross county boundaries

Strategy PC 1.3: Work with regional coalitions to develop unified visions for natural resource protection such as in the South Platte River and Clear Creek corridors



GOAL PC 2.0: CONSERVATION

Work with local and regional partners to develop “win-win” strategies for land protection and natural resource conservation.

Conservation easements are one of the most effective tools the County has for the preservation of high-priority lands. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement with a landowner that sets certain restrictions on the property, but that leaves the land in private ownership. The County may either purchase conservation easements or accept donations, in which case the donor receives a tax credit. These tax credits are transferrable in Colorado.

The County prefers to protect natural areas or farmland using conservation easements unless public access and recreation are important. A conservation easement is frequently required as a condition of grant funding for an acquisition by organizations such as GOCO or the Adams County Open Space Sales Tax Fund. Organizations such as The Conservation Fund and the Trust for Public Land have been important partners with Adams County in land protection, through both conservation easements and land acquisition. Adams County holds 65 conservation easements that cover 14,132 acres. Many more conservation easements in the county are held by land trusts and other public entities. These conservation easements include lands voluntarily preserved using the County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

Strategy PC 2.1: Revise the Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) sending and receiving areas and provisions

Adjust the ratios and create more flexible policies for smaller sized parcels. Create intergovernmental agreements to direct those sending and receiving provisions.

Strategy PC 2.2: Implement fee acquisitions as a tool to conserve lands

A fee simple purchase can transfer full ownership of a property to another party, i.e. a non-profit organization or land trust, for conservation purposes resulting in tax benefits from a donation to the landowner (seller), or donation and purchase agreement combined. Continue to work with conservation organizations and land trusts to acquire and conserve key lands. Maintain water rights with lands as possible in order to promote the continuance of active agricultural practices and to safeguard water quality, riparian, and in-stream habitat.



A volunteer helps clean up the South Platte River.

Strategy PC 2.3: Fund the administration and monitoring of conservation easements

Determine funding sources for the administration and monitoring of conservation easements for long-term oversight, such as an endowment, a portion of the Open Space Sales Tax, or a fee system.



7 DYNAMIC TRAIL CONNECTIONS

TRAILS TO CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Adams County is home to a robust trail network, with over 559 miles of trails connecting the community to experiences in nature and other destinations. Trail-based adventures in environments such as the South Platte River and Clear Creek corridors offer a chance to encounter the ecology and wildlife of riparian and high plains landscapes. Trails also provide an increased quality of life, linking communities and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Trail enhancements provide an opportunity to increase connection, advancing equitable access to nature and recreation while providing sustainable transportation options to travel between work, play and community settings. Improving connectivity, linkages and safety throughout the county’s trail system

will create a dynamic system that is user-friendly and offers a variety of trail experiences.

MAP 20 and MAP 21 highlight proposed trails which will expand regional trail connections, connect communities to open space and increase the diversity of opportunities possible by adding amenities for activities such as equestrian trail use and mountain biking.

Table 11: Existing Trails by Municipality

MUNICIPALITY	TOTAL LENGTH (MILES)
Arvada	3
Aurora	64.85
Bennett	2.1
Brighton	45.4
Commerce City	65.9
Federal Heights	4.7
Northglenn	36.4
Westminster	63.6
Thornton	185
Unincorporated County	40.7

Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG



Riverdale Regional Park path



Big Dry Creek Trail

EXHIBIT NOTES

Maps 21 and 22 highlight priority trail connections.

Dark orange reference numbers indicate trails for Adams County to focus investment, while light orange reference numbers highlight proposed trail corridors which will likely be implemented by municipalities within the county.

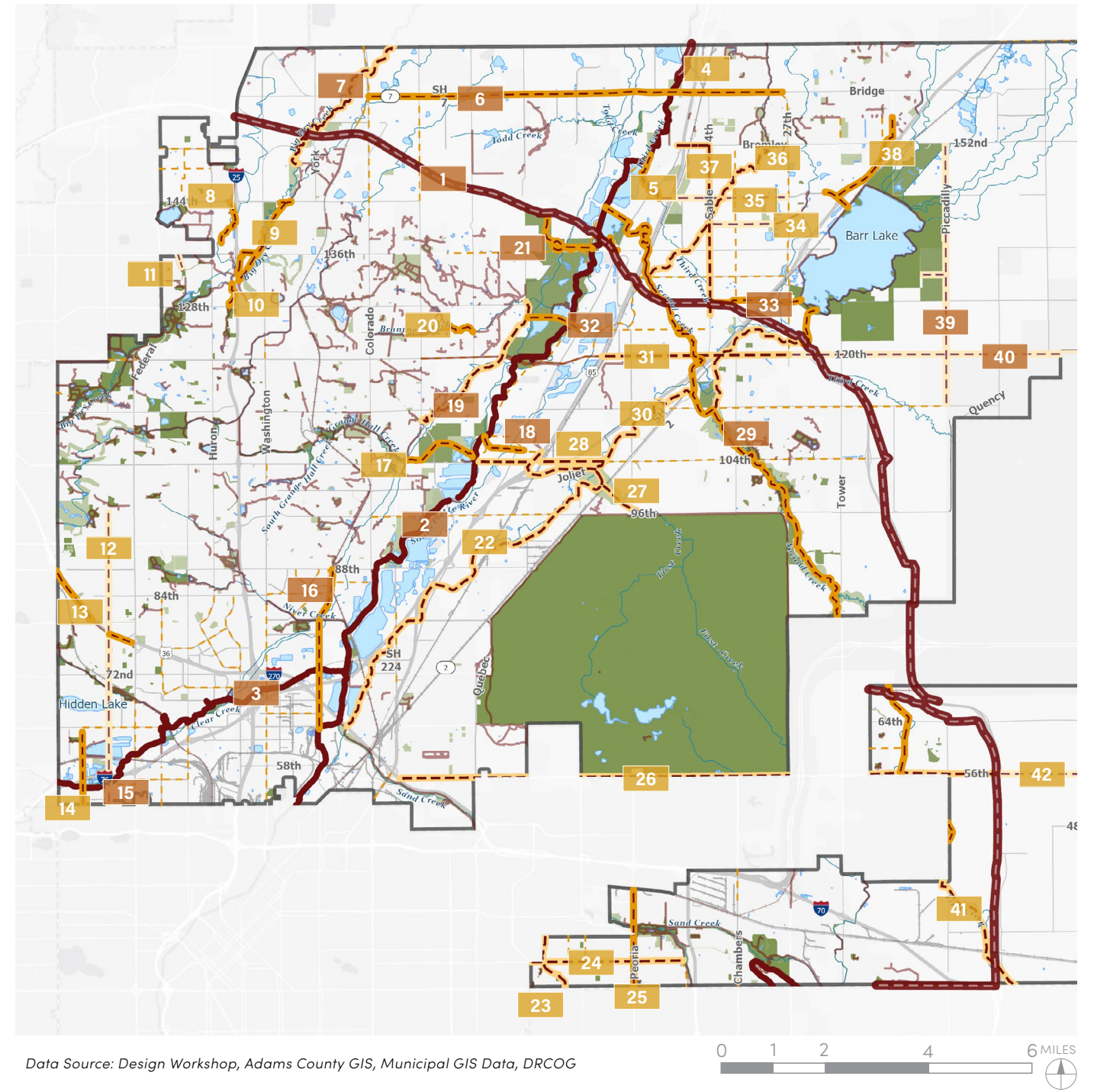


Dynamic Trails

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (DT)	NAME	PRIORITY	ENDPOINT 1	ENDPOINT 2
1	1.1.a	E-470 Trail	Very High	I-70	I-25
2	1.1.b	South Platte River Trail	Very High	Entire Corridor	Entire Corridor
3	1.1.c	Clear Creek Trail	Very High	Entire Corridor	Entire Corridor
4	1.1.d	South Platte River Trail North	Very High	Veterans Park	168th Avenue
5	1.2.a	Third Creek Trail (McCann Ditch)	Medium	168th	South Platte River Trail
6	1.2.b	Highway 7	High	Colorado Boulevard	27th Avenue
7	1.2.c	Big Dry Creek North	Medium	Big Dry Creek Open Space	168th Avenue
8	1.2.d	Bull Canal	High	Orchard Parkway	I-25
9	1.2.e	Big Dry Creek	High	Thorncreek Golf Course	144th Avenue
10	1.2.f	Tanglewood Creek	High	Existing Tanglewood Creek Trail	Big Dry Creek Trail
11	1.2.g	Quail Crossing Trail	Low	136th Avenue	Arapahoe Ridge Trail at Amherst Park
12	1.2.h	Lowell Boulevard	Low	67th Avenue	97th Avenue
13	1.2.i	Highway 36	High	88th Avenue	Highway 287
14	1.2.j	Tennyson Street	High	52nd Avenue	63rd Avenue
15	1.2.k	Lowell Boulevard/ Jim Baker	Low	52nd Avenue	67th Avenue

*The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.

MAP 20: TRAIL PRIORITY AREAS | WESTERN COUNTY



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

LEGEND

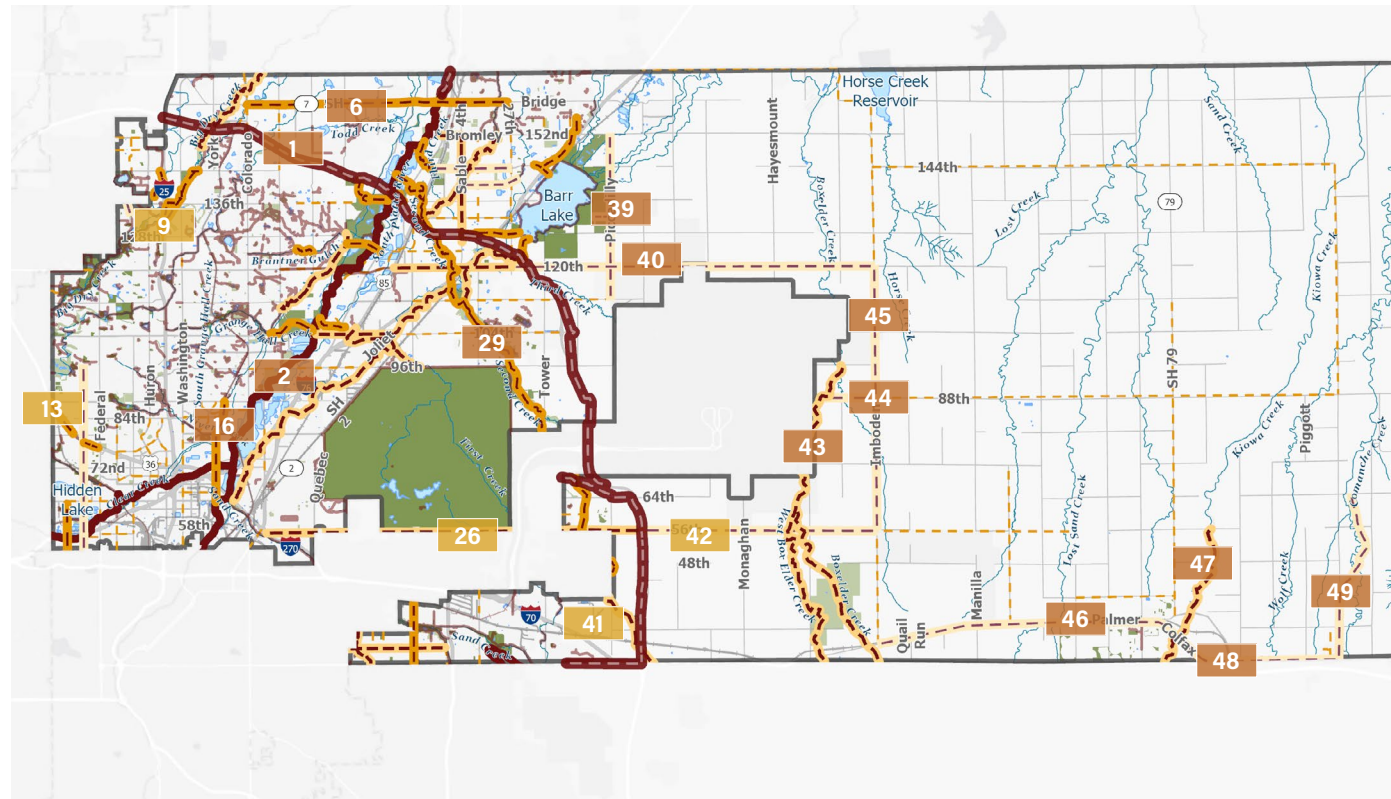
- High Priority Proposed Regional Trails
- High Priority Proposed Trails
- Medium Priority Proposed Trails
- Low Priority Proposed Trails
- Existing Regional Trails
- Existing Trails
- Unincorporated Proposed Trails
- Incorporated Proposed Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Incorporated Areas

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (DT)	NAME	PRIORITY	ENDPOINT 1	ENDPOINT 2
16	1.2.l	Niver Creek Trail Connection	High	South Platte River Trail	88th Avenue
17	1.2.m	104th Avenue	High	Existing 104th Avenue Trail	South Platte River Trail
18	1.2.n	Belle Creek Community Trail Connection	High	Belle Creek Community	South Platte River Trail
19	1.2.o	Riverdale Road Trail	Medium	Holly Park	Brantner Gulch/ Riverdale Regional Park
20	1.2.p	Brantner Gulch	High	Near Locust Way	Quebec Street
21	1.2.q	E-470 & South Platte Trail Connection to the Bluffs	Very High	Proposed E-470 Trail	Bluffs Open Space
22	1.2.r	O'Brian Canal Trail	Medium	Sand Creek Greenway	Second Creek Greenway
23	1.2.s	Del Mar Parkway	Medium	Colfax Avenue	26th Avenue
24	1.2.t	Montview Blvd. Connector	Medium	Central Park Boulevard	Sand Creek Greenway
25	1.2.u	Peoria Street Trail	High	Colfax Avenue	Smith Road
26	1.2.v	56th Ave Trail	Medium	Sand Creek Greenway	Proposed E-470 trail
27	1.2.w	First Creek Trail North	Medium	Rocky Mountain Arsenal Perimeter Trail at 96th Avenue	Belle Creek Community Connector Trail
28	1.2.x	104th Ave Trail	Medium	South Platte River Trail	O'Brian Canal Trail
29	1.2.y	Second Creek Greenway	High	56th Avenue	South Platte River Trail

*The reference numbering used in the above chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.

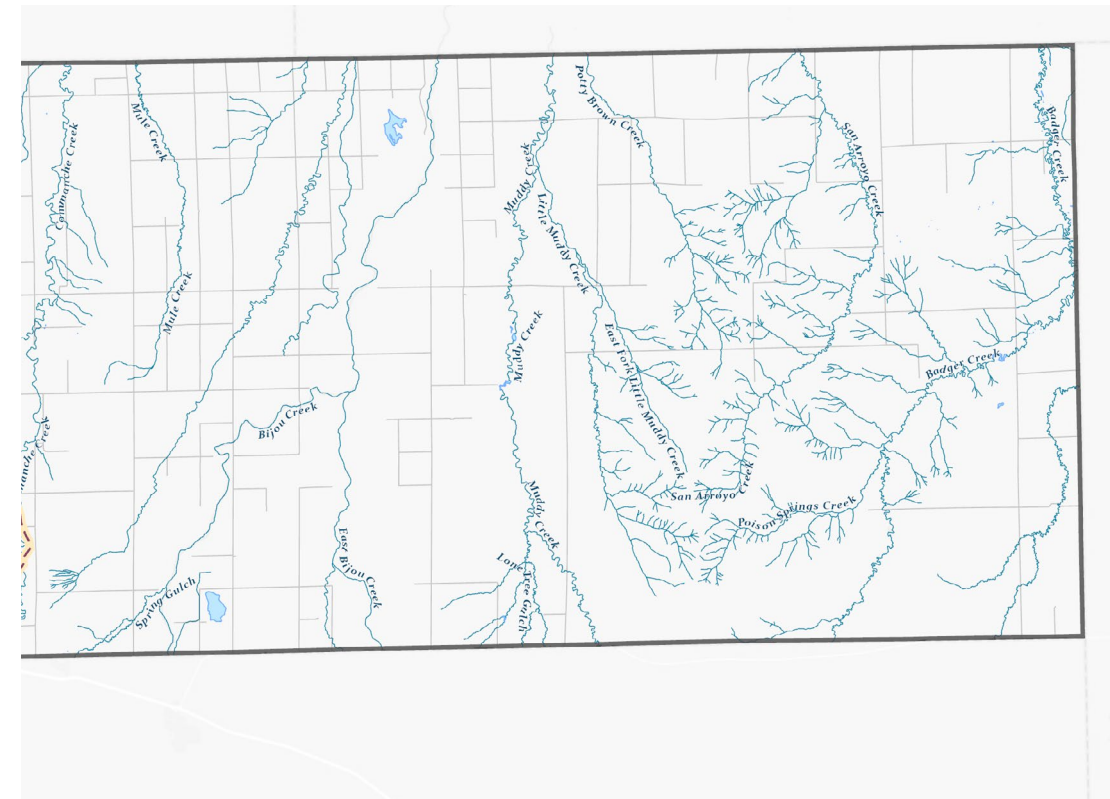
MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (DT)	NAME	PRIORITY	ENDPOINT 1	ENDPOINT 2
30	1.2.z	Denver Hudson Canal Trail	Medium	Second Creek Greenway	Future E-470 Trail
31	1.2.aa	120th: US 85 to the High Plains Parkway	Medium	US 85	High Plains Parkway
32	1.2.bb	Henderson Road at Riverdale Regional Park	High	South Platte River Trail	Future Riverdale Road Trail
33	1.2.cc	Barr Lake Connector	High	Future E-470 Trail	Barr Lake State Park
34	1.2.dd	140th Avenue	Low	Fulton Ditch Trail	Brighton Lateral Canal
35	1.2.ee	144th Avenue	Low	27th Avenue	Third Creek Greenway
36	1.2.ff	Fulton Ditch Trail	Medium	Future E-470 Trail	Bromley Creek Park
37	1.2.gg	Sable Trail to Bromley	Medium	Future E-470 Trail	Bromley Lane
38	1.2.hh	I-76 Trail	High	Eagle Street	Southern Street
39	1.2.ii	Piccadilly	Low	112th Avenue	152nd Avenue
40	1.2.jj	120th: High Plains Parkway to Imboden	Low	High Plains Parkway	Imboden
41	1.2.kk	First Creek South	High	Colfax Avenue	38th Avenue
42	1.2.ll	56th Avenue: E-470 to Imboden	Medium	Future E-470 Trail	Imboden Road
43	1.2.mm	Box Elder Creek Greenway	Medium	Future Box Elder Creek trail connections at Arapahoe County	Box Elder Creek near DIA
44	1.2.nn	88th Street Connector	Low	Future Box Elder Creek Greenway	Imboden Road

*The reference numbering used in the above chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.



LEGEND

- High Priority Proposed Regional Trails
- High Priority Proposed Trails
- Medium Priority Proposed Trails
- Low Priority Proposed Trails
- Existing Regional Trails
- Existing Trails
- Unincorporated Proposed Trails
- Incorporated Proposed Trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Incorporated Areas



**The reference numbering used in the adjacent chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.*

MAP REF. #	TEXT REF. # (DT)	NAME	PRIORITY	ENDPOINT 1	ENDPOINT 2
45	1.2.oo	Imboden	Low	56th Avenue	120th Avenue
46	1.2.pp	Colfax	Low	Future Box Elder Creek Greenway	Bennett
47	1.2.qq	Kiowa Creek Greenway	Medium	Future Kiowa Creek trail connections at Arapahoe County	56th Avenue (Approx.)
48	1.2.rr	Highway 36	Low	Bennett and Kiowa Creek	Strasburg and Comanche Creek
49	1.2.ss	Comanche Creek Greenway	Low	Arapahoe County Boundary	64th Avenue (Approx.)

**The reference numbering used in the above chart to correspond elements to the mapping is not presented in priority order.*

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Three goals have been identified for trail enhancement.

Link trails throughout the County: Work to ensure that the Open Space system is connected by well-sited and maintained trails, providing access not only to County lands but also properties managed by other agencies.

Improve the trail network for a variety of users with varying levels of mobility and ability, including hiking, walking, cycling and equestrian use: Improve the trail network to better serve as both a place to recreate and as pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Ensure these developments accommodate all ability levels and interests from beginner to expert users.

Improve the user experience of trails within the county: Create user-friendly trail environments by preserving quality habitat, maintaining and enhancing trail amenities, and improving the safety and wayfinding signage of trail corridors. Create memorable experiences by integrating activities and destinations along trail corridors such as art, nature play, bike parks or points of interest.

Community outreach has indicated the need for trail resources that are accessible, serve transportation and recreation, and are well-maintained and safe for users. Contributors highlighted the importance of increased system connectivity to link open space properties and other trails. The following strategies are intended to advance the County's goals to improve trail amenities, provide trails that facilitate a variety of recreational activities, and use trails to connect communities to recreational opportunities.



GOAL DT 1.0: LINK TRAILS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY AND REGIONALLY

Work to ensure that the Parks and Open Space system is linked together through a robust trail system including not only County properties, but open space properties owned by other agencies.

Strategy DT 1.1: Complete missing links in the regional trail system and provide connectivity to major recreation areas, including Riverdale Regional Park, Historic Splendid Valley, Barr Lake State Park, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal and the National Western Center

1.1.a: E-470 Trail

Work with E-470 Authority to complete the trail throughout Adams County. Expand the trail from I-70 to I-25.



Clear Creek Trail Mural.

1.1.b: South Platte River Trail

Enhance trail connectivity and amenities along this regional trail corridor within the County boundaries. Also support the future vision and extension of this trail beyond the Adams County boundaries, eventually connecting to the Poudre River Trail and Rocky Mountain National Park.

1.1.c: Clear Creek Trail

Enhance trail connectivity and amenities along this regional trail corridor.

1.1.d: South Platte River Trail North

Complete northern section of the South Platte River Trail from Veterans Park to 168th Avenue.

Strategy DT 1.2: Provide trail and open space linkages and connections where essential, along and across major vehicular circulation rights-of-way

Where possible, provide for grade separated trail crossings of major roadways to ensure user ease and safety.

1.2.a: Third Creek to South Platte River Trail (McCann Ditch)

Complete the trail connection along Third Creek (McCann Ditch) from 144th Avenue to the South Platte River Trail.



Views along the Clear Creek Trail

1.2.b: Highway 7

Create a trail connection along Highway 7 from Colorado Boulevard to 27th Avenue. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan. CDOT has recommended both an on-street bike lane and off-street trail along this corridor.

1.2.c: Big Dry Creek North

Continue a trail connection along Big Dry Creek from the Big Dry Creek Open Space to 168th Avenue. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.d: Bull Canal

Create a trail connection along Bull Canal from Orchard Parkway to the I-25.

1.2.e: Big Dry Creek

Complete this section of the Big Dry Creek Trail near the Thorncreek Golf Course and along German Ditch.

1.2.f: Tanglewood Creek

Create a trail connection through the Tanglewood Creek Open Space linking the existing Tanglewood Creek Trail to the Big Dry Creek Trail.

1.2.g: Quail Crossing Trail

Complete a sidepath along Quivas Street linking 136th Avenue to the Arapahoe Ridge Trail at Amherst Park. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.h: Lowell Boulevard

Create a connection along Lowell Boulevard from 67th Avenue to 97th Avenue linking the proposed Lowell Boulevard/Jim Baker connections to the future Highway 36 Trail and trail systems to the north. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.i: Highway 36

Complete the proposed trail along Highway 36.

1.2.j: Tennyson Street

Create a connection along Tennyson Street from 52nd Avenue to 63rd Avenue. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.k: Lowell Boulevard/Jim Baker

Create a trail connection along Lowell Boulevard from 52nd Avenue to 67th Avenue, linking Lowell Ponds, Jim Baker Reservoir and Hidden Lake. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.l: Niver Creek Trail Connection

Complete the proposed Niver Creek Trail connection from the South Platte River Trail at 64th Avenue through Rotella Park to 88th Avenue to provide increased north-south connectivity and access to the South Platte Trail. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.m: 104th Ave.

Continue the 104th Avenue Trail along Grange Hall Creek through the Elaine T. Valente Open Space, linking the existing 104th Avenue Trail with the South Platte River Trail. A new trail connection is being implemented near Brighton Road and 104th Avenue that will connect to the Front Range Trail and South Platte River Trail.

1.2.n: Belle Creek Community Trail Connection

Create a safe connection from north side of 104th from US 85 to the South Platte River Trail. This could be done through the Hazeltine Property on Brighton Road. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.o: Riverdale Road Trail

Continue the Riverdale Road Trail from Holly Park to Brantner Gulch at Riverdale Regional Park.



For More Info

See [Advancing Adams Transportation Master Plan](#) for more information about 120th Avenue and trail connections (Strategy DT 1.2.p).

1.2.p: Brantner Gulch

Complete missing links in the Brantner Gulch Trail from near Locust Way to Quebec Street.

1.2.q: South Platte River Trail to the Bluffs Connector

Create a connection from the South Platte River Trail to the Bluffs Open Space.

1.2.r: E-470 Trail Connection to the Bluffs

Create a connection from the proposed E-470 Trail to the Bluffs Open Space. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.s: O'Brian Canal Trail

Create a trail along the O'Brian Canal from the Sand Creek Greenway to the Second Creek Greenway

1.2.t: Del Mar Parkway

Create a connection along the Del Mar Parkway from Colfax to 26th Avenue to link neighborhoods to City Park in Aurora, the Westerly Creek Trail, Montview Park, Greenway Park, Westerly Park and Central Park. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.u: Montview Boulevard Connector

Create a connection along Montview Boulevard from Central Park Boulevard to Fitzsimmons Parkway, linking Montview Park to the Toll Gate Creek Greenway. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.v: Peoria Street Trail

Create a connection along Peoria Street from Colfax to Smith Road to link General's Park to Sand Creek Park and the Sand Creek Greenway.

1.2.w: 56th Ave Trail

Create a connection along 56th Avenue between the Sand Creek Greenway and the proposed E-470 trail. Utilize this corridor as an east-west connector. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.x: First Creek Trail North

Create a connection along First Creek Greenway from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Perimeter Trail at 96th Avenue to 104th and the Belle Creek Community Connector Trail.

1.2.y: Second Creek Greenway

Create a connection along Second Creek Greenway from 56th Avenue to the South Platte River Trail, linking to existing trails along Second Creek as well as the future E-470 Trail, future Denver Hudson Canal Trail, future O'Brian Canal Trail and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Perimeter Trail. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.



A bicyclist rides a stretch of the Sand Creek Trail through Aurora

1.2.z: Denver-Hudson Canal Trail

Create a connection along the Denver-Hudson Canal from the Second Creek Greenway to the future E-470 Trail. Portions of this trail are also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.aa: 120th Avenue: US 85 to the High Plains Parkway

Create a connection along 120th Avenue, linking the South Platte River Trail to the Future E-470 Trail. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

120th Avenue could become part of a larger scenic trail loop that connects a variety of destinations of natural and cultural heritage and creates a memorable experience for residents and visitors. This regional trail loop could connect the Denver International Airport, Rocky Mountain Arsenal, National Western Center, South Platte River Trail, Clear Creek Trail and the Colorado Front Range Trail.

The regional partnership for 120th Avenue would help maintain 120th Avenue as a critical east-west corridor for vehicle travel while also promoting more consistent multi-modal connections. In addition, challenges such as at-grade rail crossings could be addressed through adoption of crossing gates, signage,



Fulton Ditch Trail

and tactile ground surface indicators as shown in Figure 2.16. These treatments would help make at-grade multiuse trail crossings more comfortable.

The opportunity also exists to establish new connections to the east side of US-85 and connect those neighborhoods with the existing trail system and parks. While the upcoming trail connection between Brighton Road and the Colorado Front Range Trail will be valuable, there is an opportunity to expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities further east and west.



For More Info
See [Advancing Adams Transportation Master Plan](#) for more information about 120th Avenue and trail connections (Strategy DT 1.2.bb).

1.2.bb Henderson Road at Riverdale Regional Park

Create a connection along Henderson Road through Riverdale Regional Park, linking the South Platte River Trail to the future Riverdale Road Trail. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.cc: Barr Lake Connector

Create a connection linking the future E-470 Trail to Barr Lake State Park.

1.2.dd: 140th Avenue Trail

Create a connection along 140th Avenue, linking the proposed connection along Sable Boulevard to the Fulton Ditch Trail and local neighborhoods.

1.2.ee 144th Ave. Trail

Create a connection along 144th Avenue from 27th Avenue to the future Third Creek Greenway, connecting through the Fulton Ditch Trail and Sable Boulevard. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.ff: Fulton Ditch Trail

Create a connection along the Fulton Ditch from the future E-470 Trail to Bromley Creek Park. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.gg: Sable Trail to Bromley

Create a connection along Sable Boulevard from the future E-470 Trail to Bromley Lane. Continue this connection west along Bromley Lane under Highway 85. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.hh: I-76 Trail

Create a connection along I-76 from Eagle Street to Southern Street, providing access that links Barr Lake State Park to the local neighborhoods. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.ii: Piccadilly

Create a connection along Piccadilly Road from 112th Avenue to 152nd Avenue, linking Barr Lake State Park to east-west connections along 120th. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.jj: 120th Avenue: High Plains Parkway to Imboden

Create a connection along 120th Avenue from the High Plains Parkway to Imboden Road, connecting the future E-470 Trail to Piccadilly Road and future connections to the Barr Lake State Park. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

The section of 120th Avenue that serves unincorporated Adams County has a multiuse trail that provides comfortable opportunities for those walking and biking. These paths provide some access to the recreational and programmed opportunities at Riverdale Regional Park. However, the County has identified 120th Avenue as one of the strategic corridors due to gaps in multi modal access to the park, which serves as a critical recreational amenity for County residents and visitors.

While the existing multiuse trail provides a dedicated facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, there are still some barriers to these users.



For More Info
See [Advancing Adams Transportation Master Plan](#) for more information about 120th Avenue and trail connections (Strategy DT 1.2.ii).

To improve travel conditions for all users on 120th Avenue, it is recommended that Adams County spearhead an effort to establish a regional partnership that can identify a uniform vision for the corridor.

1.2.kk: First Creek South

Create a connection along First Creek from Colfax Avenue to 38th Avenue, beginning a connection to link the future E-470 Trail to Second Creek Greenway. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.ll: 56th: E-470 to Imboden

Create a connection along 56th Avenue from the future E-470 Trail to Imboden Road, creating an east-west corridor that completes a link between the South Platte River Trail, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal and the future Box Elder Creek Greenway. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.mm: Box Elder Creek Greenway

Create a trail that links to future Box Elder Creek trail connections in Arapahoe County and existing trails at Box Elder Creek near Denver International Airport.

1.2.nn: 88th Avenue Connector

Create a connection along 88th Avenue from the future Box Elder Creek Greenway to Imboden, forming a network of recreational connections in the eastern county.

1.2.oo: Imboden Road

Create a connection along Imboden Road from 56th Avenue to 120th Avenue, forming a network of recreational connections in the eastern county. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.pp: Colfax Avenue

Create a connection along Colfax Avenue from the future Box Elder Creek Greenway to Bennett, forming an east-west connection and providing recreation amenities to residents in the rural eastern county. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.

1.2.qq: Kiowa Creek Greenway

Over time, create a trail that links to future Kiowa Creek trail connections in Arapahoe County and provides recreation amenities to residents in the rural eastern county.

1.2.rr: Hwy 36

Create a connection along Colfax Avenue and Highway 36, linking Bennett and Kiowa Creek to Strasburg and Comanche Creek. This connection is also recommended in the Transportation Plan.



Access to Colorado Front Range Trail at Crossing of South Platte River at 120th Street

1.2.ss: Comanche Creek Greenway

Designate the land surrounding the creek as open space and allow for public trails to be developed over time to serve as a regional attraction and recreational amenity for residents in the rural eastern county.

Strategy DT 1.3 – Improve trail crossings and connections along the Clear Creek and South Platte River Trail Corridors.

1.3a: South Platte River crossing

Create a trail crossing at the intersection of the South Platte River Trail and Clear Creek Trail. The crossing should be located just north of the confluence at the trailhead on Highway 224, connecting over the South Platte River to Engineer’s Lake.

1.3b: McKay Road and South Platte River Trail grade-separated crossing

Create a grade-separated crossing at McKay Road and the South Platte River Trail.

1.3c: Federal Boulevard and Clear Creek Trail at-grade trail access

Create at-grade access to the Clear Creek Trail along the east side of Federal Boulevard.



South Platte River Trail on a frosty winter morning

1.3d: Broadway and Clear Creek Trail at-grade trail access

Develop at-grade access to the Clear Creek Trail on the east and west sides of Broadway.

1.3e: Washington Street and Clear Creek Trail at-grade trail access

Develop at-grade access to the Clear Creek Trail on the east and west sides of Washington Street. Continue trail connection north to the North Washington and Welby neighborhoods. This connection is also recommended in the Clear Creek Corridor Plan.

1.3f: York Street and Clear Creek Trail access

Create at-grade access to the Clear Creek Trail on the east side of York Street.

1.3g: Tennyson Street and Clear Creek Trail grade-separated crossing

Complete a grade-separated crossing at Tennyson Street, creating a seamless connection between the trailhead, Lowell Ponds, and Carl Park Community Center. This connection is also recommended in the Clear Creek Corridor Plan.

1.3h: Pedestrian bridge connection to RTD-Federal-Clear Creek Station

A pedestrian bridge should be installed along the Clear Creek Trail just east of Federal Boulevard to provide access to the Clear Creek Station. This connection is also recommended in the Clear Creek Corridor Plan.

Specifically, adding a connection to the Clear Creek Trail from Federal Boulevard would provide pedestrian access between that key regional recreational corridor, the commuter rail station, and Federal Boulevard. In addition, the Federal Boulevard bridge over the Clear Creek should be upgraded to provide a wider facility for pedestrians.

1.3i: Pecos Street and Clear Creek Commuter Trail and below-grade crossing

Create a 10' protected commuter trail along Pecos Street at Clear Creek. Improve below-grade trail connection. This connection is also recommended in the Clear Creek Corridor Plan.

Implementation of the proposed cross section north of Cargill Drive would bring a consistent cross section through the length of the corridor and provide connections to the Pecos Junction Station and the Clear Creek Trail. Approximately one mile north of the station is a new urbanist development, Midtown, with a wide, buffered multiuse trail along Pecos Street (Figure 2.8). Immediately south of the development, Pecos Street provides access to the Clear Creek Trail, an important regional connection for people biking and walking. The County is pursuing implementation of the wayfinding signage recommendations provided in the 2017 Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan in order to foster an enhanced sense of connectivity to the trail. In general, pedestrian connectivity is challenging on the corridor due to the high number of barriers including the rail lines and I-76 and should be explored further.



GOAL DT 2.0: IMPROVE THE TRAIL NETWORK FOR A VARIETY OF USERS WITH VARYING LEVELS OF MOBILITY AND ABILITY, AND A VARIETY OF USES

Improve the trail network to better serve as both a place to recreate and for hiking, walking, cycling and equestrian use.

Strategy DT 2.1: Separate trail uses from automobile traffic whenever possible and provide for user safety at all time

Survey and focus group respondents consistently reported that Adams County residents and visitors generally prefer to bike off-street (on a trail) than on-street (on a bike lane). This provides a more comfortable experience that is separated from vehicles. Therefore, the focus of the bicycle network is to leverage existing and proposed trails and focus on improving access to trails through low-stress on-street facilities. Protected bike lanes (where there is a vertical buffer between people driving and people biking) and sidepaths, (wide sidewalks that provide enough space for people biking and walking), are the



For More Info
 For more information about the pedestrian bridge along the Clear Creek Trail to access the RTD Clear Creek Station and the Pecos and Clear Creek commuter trail, see the [Advancing Adams Transportation Master Plan \(Strategies DT1.3.h and DT1.3.j\)](#).



For More Info
See the [Advancing Adams Transportation Master Plan](#) for more information about strategies to improve pedestrian, equestrian and bike routes (Goal DT2.0).

most effective way to provide those connections when a trail is not possible. Prioritize separated trails in areas of high beginner/intermediate rider demand, such as connections from denser neighborhoods to schools, parks, open spaces, regional trails, and other civic amenities.

Strategy DT 2.2: Provide equestrian trail amenities and accessible trails where practical and when public input supports this approach. Focus on safe equestrian trails that connect major amenities, such as Riverdale Regional Park and the National Western Center along the South Platte River Trail

Consider use of facilities by equestrians: People riding horses may wish to travel in Adams County or connect to the trail network. Appropriate design considerations should be made, especially on key corridors, to accommodate these users. Adams County has a prominent culture of equestrian users that wish to travel on roadways or access trails. The County should understand the design considerations for these unique users and key corridors that might provide desired access.

Washington Street, which provides a key connection to the Western Stock Show and the South Platte River Trail, would be an appropriate corridor to consider implementing equestrian trail amenities.

Strategy DT 2.3 – Expand the trail system to increase off-road bicycling opportunities

Expand the trail system to increase biking diversity such as single-track, bmx track, or other off-road trails, where appropriate and when public input supports this approach.



GOAL DT 3.0: IMPROVE THE USER EXPERIENCE OF TRAILS WITHIN THE COUNTY

Create user-friendly trail environments by preserving quality habitat, maintaining and enhancing trail amenities, and improving the safety and wayfinding signage of trail corridors. Create memorable experiences by integrating activities and destinations along trail corridors such as art, nature play, bike parks or points of interest.

Strategy DT 3.1: Provide sensitive and unobtrusive trail development and maintenance

Provide sensitive and unobtrusive trail development and maintenance to improve the quality of trail user experiences while preserving and enhancing the natural characteristics of the county, such as riparian habitats.

Strategy DT 3.2 – Implement and maintain a comprehensive trail and park signage program

Establish a consistent design language for identification, wayfinding, and interpretive signs throughout the County’s park, open space and trail system.

Strategy DT 3.3 – Track trail use of existing trails by utilizing methods such as trail counters and location-based data to inform the allocation of funding and maintenance resources in high-use corridors

Trail counters are the most reliable way to gather use data. Supplemental methods such as intercept surveys and trailhead observation on typical days at peak and low use times may also reveal user patterns.

Strategy DT 3.4 – Provide and maintain trail amenities in strategic locations

Provide and maintain trail amenities in strategic locations, such as at trailheads, trail intersections, view corridors and other areas of interest. Amenities include restrooms and site furnishings, such as bicycle racks, benches, picnic tables and shelters, and bicycle repair stations.

Strategy DT 3.5 – Incorporate opportunities for art along trails to help beautify the system, create points of interest, and to interpret local history, culture, and environmental systems

Art will contribute to the POSCA’s purpose statement, “To significantly enhance quality of life, enrich communities, & INSPIRE.”

Strategy DT 3.6 – Create destinations along trail corridors and increase the variety of experiences

Create destinations along trail corridors and increase the variety of experiences by adding points of interest and activities to key locations, such as nature play, bike parks, exercise stations, or interactive art installations.

8

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Implementation Plan

- Natural Resource, Wildlife Habitat Protection & Riparian Enhancement
- Agricultural Lands & Rural Character
- Diverse Parks & Recreation Enhancement
- Partnerships, Regional Coordination & Stewardship
- Dynamic Trail Connections



Cheering at Pat Bowlen Field in Commerce City

Source: Boys & Girls Club

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Goals are achieved step by step. The charts on the following pages describe actions necessary to accomplish the goals described in this plan, along with priority, timing, and responsible parties, and a relative idea of costs.

This should not be interpreted as an unchanging schedule, but instead should be viewed as a guide for spearheading plan implementation. Over time, it is likely that the cost, funding source, opportunities, and timing will change due to this plan being a living document.

This document should be reviewed regularly and used as a guide in policy decisions, operations and maintenance decisions, acquisitions, and budgeting and the allocation of funding to help ensure that the County is moving toward a shared vision. This implementation plan must remain flexible to accommodate new opportunities that arise, staff capacity, and funding requirements. The actions of annual work plans and budgeting processes will also require actionable items to adjust over time.

REVIEWING THE CHART

Action items are organized by how they support the goals of the master plan.

PRIORITIZATION LEVEL

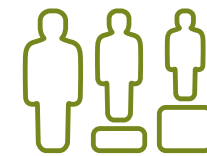
Prioritization of the action items indicates which should be accomplished first. As higher priority items are implemented, other action items will subsequently rise in urgency.

RELATIVE COST

The “relative cost” column assigns “High, Medium, and Low,” (or a combination thereof), cost commitments to the action items. High costs assume capital costs and outside resources are required to execute the item. Medium costs assume some capital costs combined with County resource costs. Low costs assume that the item can be implemented through existing staff time and other County resources.

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUE LENSES

The alignment with the plan value lenses ties the action items back to the guiding principles of the Advancing Adams effort – Equity, Sustainability and Livability – and viewing each item in consideration of those principles.



Equity

Having the fair advantages of accessing the outdoors close to home for recreational, health, social, and economic prosperity benefits.



Sustainability

The conservation and celebration of the qualities and characteristics that make Adams County unique.



Livability

Includes access to public spaces and outdoor recreation close to where residents live, creating a diversity of experiences for a diverse population.

NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal NE 1.0: Conserve high value lands		
Work with local landowners, land trusts, and other agency and non-profit partners to conserve high-priority lands, either by acquisition or through conservation easements.	High	High
Preserve water rights to conserved lands and easements.	High	High
Look for opportunities within the southeastern part of the county to acquire and conserve a tract of native prairie grassland.	Low	Low
Goal NE 2.0: Promote consolidated efforts to protect waterways		
Implement river and stream habitat restoration along Clear Creek and the South Platte River Corridors, as well as landscape typology management plans.	High	High
Look for opportunities to acquire or partner to provide community-serving park and open space uses near the South Platte and Clear Creek corridors.	High	Medium
Refer to mapping describing environmentally sensitive lands, and in particular, waterways, in the development review process to ensure development proposals respond to protecting resources and minimizing impacts.	High	Low
Work with County Departments to update the land use code to point to Environmentally Sensitive Areas and establish requirements for their conservation.	High	High
Promote and implement stormwater management best practices on county-owned lands, such as existing parks and trailheads.	Medium	Medium
Develop a public education campaign to promote water protection and conservation best management practices to land owners.	Medium	Low
Evaluate county regulations and operations in the floodplain and floodway to ensure best practices.	Medium	Low
Review and create setbacks and guidelines for operations, management, and maintenance of vegetation in the floodplain and sensitive areas.	Medium	Low
Provide incentives such as technical assistance, grants, or development incentives, to landowners to enhance riparian areas.	Medium	Medium
Coordinate the review of development applications when maintenance and flowage easements connect to POST properties. Collaborate with County Departments and partner agencies to engage with landowners regarding management of floodplain areas.	Medium	Low

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓

NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

PRIORITIZATION LEVEL RELATIVE COST

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal NE 3.0: Provide environmental education and stewardship		
Develop a comprehensive naturalist plan that will define the goals and strategies of POSCA in providing environmental education outreach and resources. This plan will identify the establishment and operations of nature centers or locations for outreach throughout the county, the role of interpretive signage, identify environmental messages, and the alignment with volunteers and with the existing Ranger Service.	High	Low/Medium
Establish a Nature Center at the Riverdale Bluffs Open Space.	High	High
Work with partner agencies that provide nature education programming on county-owned sites.	High	Low
Encourage partnerships that focus on environmental education and stewardship through the Open Space grant application program.	High	Low
Provide staff support to applicants in preparing open space, parks and trails grant applications that pertain to environmental education and stewardship.	High	Low
Implement a trail and park signage plan.	High	High
Incorporate design for interpretive signage and art into park, open space, and trails site plans to be installed with new projects.	High	Medium
Initiate an interpretive arts and culture plan to collect natural, cultural, and historic stories for interpretation throughout the system.	High	Low
Partner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to provide wildlife interpretation and viewing opportunities within County and municipal park lands.	High	Low
Develop a volunteer naturalist program as part of a comprehensive environmental education program, to provide programming to county residents and to educate users of parks and trails to minimize environmental impacts.	Medium	Low/Medium
Establish a Nature Center at the confluence of Clear Creek and the South Platte River.	Low	High
Goal NE 4.0: Implement restoration strategies and best management practices		
Promote healthy ecosystem processes through management techniques on county-owned and managed lands by promoting the propagation of native forbs, diversity in species and the development of soils.	High	Low/Medium
Conduct ecological assessments of County-owned open space lands and develop restoration plans for priority properties.	High	Low/Medium

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY SUSTAINABILITY LIVABILITY

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓
✓	✓	
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
		✓
✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	
Goal NE 4.0: Implement restoration strategies and best management practices		
	✓	
	✓	

NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

PRIORITIZATION LEVEL RELATIVE COST

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal NE 5.0: Support key habitat connections		
Utilize landscape typologies to identify where to target management of ecosystem health on county-owned and managed lands. Once maintenance activities or new projects are implemented, monitor the restoration for a three-year minimum basis.	High	Low/High
Review the ecological health of Elaine T. Valente Open Space and develop an open space management plan.	High	Medium
Review the ecological health of the Riverdale Bluffs Open Space and develop an open space management plan.	High	High
Develop a detailed landscape typology master plan and open space management plan for Riverdale Regional Park.	Very High	High
Develop a detailed landscape typology master plan and open space management plan for the Confluence properties.	High	High
Develop a detailed landscape typology master plan and open space management plan for Willow Bay.	High	High
Create an urban forest management plan.	High	Low/Medium
Require developer contributions to the County's forestry efforts.	High	Low
Identify tree planting prioritization areas within County-owned parks, open space properties and trail properties.	High	Low
Update the 2008 Noxious Weed Management Plan.	High	Low/Medium
Monitor and identify degraded stream areas and implement erosion control and restoration tactics to restore riparian habitats.	High	Low
Develop a detailed landscape typology master plan and open space management plan for Clear Creek Bottomlands property.	Medium	High
Develop a detailed open space management plan for Pelican Ponds.	Medium	High
Establish metrics defining goals in increased canopy coverage.	Medium	Low
Implement tree planting programs in public rights-of-way in conjunction with County departments.	Medium	Low/Medium
Integrate best urban forestry practices into the community education and outreach naturalist program.	Medium	Low
Manage County lands with a view towards pollinator habitat quality and health.	Medium	Low

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY SUSTAINABILITY LIVABILITY

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	

NATURAL RESOURCE, WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION & RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Monitor noxious and invasive plant species and control their spread on County-owned lands.	Medium	Low
Review the ecological health of Lowell Ponds and develop an open space management plan.	Medium	Medium
Develop a detailed landscape typology master plan and open space management plan for the Hazeltine Mine property.	Medium	High
Include seeding forbs into more of the open space properties and adjust maintenance practices to support the development and growth of native species.	Low	Low/Medium

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	
	✓	

AGRICULTURAL LANDS, RURAL CHARACTER & PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal AR 1.0: Agricultural land conservation		
Work with local landowners, land trusts, and other agency and non-profit partners to conserve high-priority lands, either by acquisition or through conservation easements.	High	Low/Medium
Support the Historic Splendid Valley District and implementation of its master plan for land conservation and seek grant funding for land conservation.	High	Low/High
Connect the CSU Extension Services to area farms. Help find farmers to manage or purchase farms that existing landowners wish to sell so that agricultural lands remain in operation.	High	Low
Provide technical and financial assistance to farmers and rural area property owners to help safeguard water quality, riparian, and in-stream habitat.	Medium	Low/Medium
Evaluate the feasibility of a lease-back program in partnership with farmers.	Medium	Low
Evaluate opportunities to incentivize retention of agricultural parcels greater than 35 acres as a land conservation strategy.	Medium	Low
Coordinate on the development of regulations for Conservation Based Development that encourages the conservation of agricultural lands and activities.	Low	Low
Goal AR 2.0: Rural heritage, lands of cultural significance and historic resources preservation		
Preserve scenic resources along Riverdale Road as described in the 2005 Riverdale Road Corridor Plan.	High	High
Support the Historic Splendid Valley District and implementation of its master plan goals for rural heritage and historic resources.	Very High	Low/High
Develop educational outreach programs with partnerships and grants to introduce people to the Historic Splendid Valley and offer agricultural and food education.	Medium	Low
Identify rural heritage and historic resources throughout Adams County to prioritize landscape and structure preservation and interpretation priorities.	Medium	Low
Initiate an interpretive arts and culture plan to collect natural, cultural, and historic stories for interpretation and art throughout the Historic Splendid Valley district.	Medium	Medium
Initiate an interpretive arts and culture plan to collect natural, cultural, and historic stories for interpretation and art throughout Welby.	Medium	Medium
Initiate an interpretive arts and culture plan to collect cultural and historic stories as part of the development of an Arts District near Riverdale Regional Park in Henderson and off Old Brighton Road.	Medium	Medium
Initiate an interpretive arts and culture plan to collect cultural and historic stories of agricultural workers and their heritage for interpretation and art.	Medium	Medium

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓

Strategy AR 2.4: Acknowledge the development and successes of Adams County agricultural production

To ensure the story of agricultural production is shared with Indigenous populations, Japanese American populations, and Latino populations, through interpretation.

Strategy AR 2.5: Support an Arts District in Henderson and Old Brighton Regional Park in Henderson and off Old Brighton Road

Create an Arts District, focusing on historic and cultural significance of the area along Old Brighton Road in Henderson Regional Park.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS, RURAL CHARACTER & PLACES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal AR 3.0: Strengthen agricultural futures by promoting diversified use		
Support the Historic Splendid Valley District and implementation of its master plan.	High	Low/High
Implement demonstration projects for renewable energy production on County-owned lands; promote other innovations.	Medium	Low/Medium

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
	✓	✓
	✓	✓

DIVERSE PARKS & RECREATION ENHANCEMENT

PRIORITIZATION LEVEL RELATIVE COST

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal PR 1.0: Creative placemaking		
Incorporate design for interpretive signage and art into park, open space, and trails site plans to be installed with new projects.	High	Low/Medium
Initiate an interpretive arts and culture plan to collect natural, cultural, and historic stories for interpretation and art throughout the system.	High	Medium
Design spaces to be flexible to accommodate public displays of art, events and installations.	High	Low
Provide early and thorough notification of proposals and projects, through a variety of means, to users, user groups, neighborhoods, neighborhood groups, and other interested people, especially those who have not traditionally participated in park planning efforts.	High	Low
Increase efforts to gain participation in park planning from underrepresented groups, such as providing translation services, using methods that are suitable for all ages, paying plan ambassadors, conducting engagement at neighborhood gathering spots, and conducting engagement at different times of the day/week.	High	Low
Continue to seek greater inclusivity and culturally significant events for the County Fair to reflect the diverse population by seeking broader representation in leadership, programming, and conducting outreach to cultural groups to encourage their participation.	High	Low
Ensure spaces are comfortable and inclusive for all people by removing barriers to access and providing safe spaces. Install amenities such as seating and shade structures that promote social interactions and serve as gathering spaces.	Medium	Medium
Develop a plan for an Arts District near Riverdale Regional Park in Henderson and off Old Brighton Road.	Medium	Medium
Goal PR 2.0: Recreation facilities for Unincorporated Areas		
Consider a new tax that specifically supports the County's parks, open space, recreation offerings, trails and cultural facilities.	High	Low
Conduct a needs assessment study for recreation facilities and outdoor amenities. Support the development of highly functional and adaptable facilities that can provide a range of activities.	High	Medium/High
Expand upon the sources of outside grants for Adams County projects and seek funding for new special projects. (See the Funding Sources section of the Action Plan for more information.)	High	Low
Complete an audit of the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan to track progress of performance measures and completion of initiatives.	High	Low
Develop a multi-use trail system at the Riverdale Bluffs.	High	Medium/High
Provide access to recreation centers for residents of unincorporated Adams County.	Medium	Low/High

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY SUSTAINABILITY LIVABILITY

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
Goal PR 1.0: Creative placemaking		
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓
✓		
✓		
✓		✓
		✓
Goal PR 2.0: Recreation facilities for Unincorporated Areas		
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	
		✓
✓		✓

DIVERSE PARKS & RECREATION ENHANCEMENT

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Based on the recreation research and public outreach, activate parks with both traditional and new and innovative uses and amenities.	Medium	Low/High
Goal PR 3.0: Equitable distribution of access to parks and nature		
Update code requirements to ensure new development provides for the recreation and open space needs of residents.	High	Low
Create a operations and maintenance plan for all parks and open space properties managed by the County to inform staffing levels, identify deficiencies, and assess long-term funding needs and sources.	High	Medium/High
Inventory park amenities such as restrooms, parking, benches, and picnic tables at existing Adams County recreation areas in order to start the process of determining replacement and facility needs.	High	Low/Medium
Develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan of internal practices and external efforts to reinforce the goals of DEI as they relate to the Department.	High	Low/Medium
Encourage partnerships that focus on serving diverse populations through the Open Space grant application program in the form of support letters, financial contributions, and/or in-kind contributions.	High	Low
Provide staff support to applicants in preparing open space, parks and trails grant applications that pertain to underserved and diverse populations.	High	Low
Build a new inclusive playground at Riverdale Regional Park.	High	High
Build a new adventure nature playground at Elaine T. Valente Open Space.	High	High
Conduct an assessment of all park offerings throughout the county to quantify the services being provided and condition, but also review quality of resources with a view to equitable offerings.	Medium	Medium/High
Use counters to understand the baseline metrics of park and open space use throughout the county, identifying where high visitation may require additional facilities and assessing which locations may be underperforming or underserving their surrounding populations. Creating visitor counts is not meant to replace or negate already established level of service standards including park access and service areas.	Medium	Low
Become involved in district/neighborhood planning projects to identify park, recreation, open space, arts and culture, and trail needs identified by residents.	Medium	Low

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
✓		✓
Goal PR 3.0: Equitable distribution of access to parks and nature		
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓		
✓		✓
✓		✓
✓		✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓
✓		✓

DIVERSE PARKS & RECREATION ENHANCEMENT

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal PR 4.0: Access to water-based recreation and resources		
Improve water access and amenities for activities such as fishing and swimming within existing and new parks and along the South Platte River and Clear Creek Corridors.	High	High
Work with willing landowners to acquire lands to support the development of a regional park at the Confluence of Clear Creek and the South Platte River.	High	High
Complete and implement the South Platte River Vision Plan	High	Medium/High
Implement and construct a master plan for a whitewater park on Clear Creek.	High	Medium/High
Develop a Confluence Regional Park master plan.	Medium	High
Study the feasibility of and possibilities for a regional park and reservoir in the central part of the county to serve multiple purposes such as water storage and water quality enhancement, providing key habitat, and recreation such as camping, boating, swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing, trails and picnicking.	Low	Low

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓

PARTNERSHIPS, REGIONAL COORDINATION & STEWARDSHIP

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal PC 1.0: Partnerships, regional coordination and stewardship		
Strengthen and build relationships with parks, open space and trails managers from partner cities, recreation districts, surrounding counties, and conservation land managers through regularly scheduled meetings and forums.	High	Low
Work with school districts to plan for better connections between school children and parks and open spaces and create nature educational opportunities.	High	Low
Revise Open Space Grant requirements and scoring to reflect the priorities of this master plan.	High	Low
Provide staff support to applicants in preparing open space, parks and trails grant applications.	High	Low
Coordinate planning of trails and recreation bike routes with local and regional transportation plans.	High	Low
Leverage partnerships with local jurisdictions, neighboring communities, and partner agencies to coordinate projects that cross boundaries.	High	Low
Continue to maintain an updated regional GIS map database of existing and proposed parks, open space and trail projects. Work with partner agencies to have their data available as part of a working regional database for enhanced regional collaboration.	Medium	Low
Goal PC 2.0: Conservation		
Work with conservation organizations and land trusts to acquire and conserve key lands and maintain water rights with lands where possible.	High	Low
Explore the creation of intergovernmental Transfer of Development Rights agreements with Brighton, Aurora, Commerce City, and Bennett to identify receiving areas to benefit from the program.	Medium	Low
Determine funding sources for the administration and monitoring of conservation easements for long-term oversight, such as an endowment, portion of the Open Space Sales Tax, or fee system.	Medium	Low

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓

DYNAMIC TRAIL CONNECTIONS

ACTION	PRIORITIZATION	
	LEVEL	RELATIVE COST
Goal DT 1.0: Link trails throughout the county and regionally		
Complete high priority off-street trail connections identified in the TMP.	High	High
Leverage partnerships with local jurisdictions and neighboring communities to implement projects that cross boundaries.	High	Medium
Goal DT 2.0: Improve the trail network for a variety of users with varying levels of mobility and ability, and a variety of uses such as hiking, walking, cycling and equestrian use		
Create safe routes for on-street cyclists by coordinating road designation, widening and signage with the Public Works Department.	High	High
Promote on-street regional bicycle routes to cyclist organizations, interest groups and race organizers.	Medium	Low
Create an equestrian trail connection from Riverdale Regional Park to the National Western Center.	High	High
Provide trails suitable for equestrian use along routes identified in the master plan, as well as staging and parking areas for horse trailers where feasible.	Low	Medium
Conduct listening sessions with the public to identify what types of trail opportunities they support and feel are needed.	Low	Low
Goal DT 3.0: Improve the user experience of trails within the county		
Implement and maintain a comprehensive trail and park signage program. Create consistency in the signage plan implementation as trails may move through various jurisdictions.	High	Low/Medium
Initiate an arts and culture plan to identify points of interest, areas for interpretation, and locations appropriate for art installations throughout the County's trail system.	High	Medium
Use trail counters to understand the baseline metrics of trail use throughout the county, identifying where high visitation may require additional facilities and assessing which locations may have barriers to access.	Medium	Low
Assess through user feedback and cataloging of existing facilities, the need for trail amenities throughout the County's trail system, including restrooms and site furnishings, such as bicycle racks, benches, picnic tables and shelters, and bicycle repair stations.	Medium	Low
Assess the County's trail system for areas appropriate for points of interest. Develop a master plan to facilitate the addition of areas of activity and interest for users.	Low	Medium/High
Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and regional entities to provide trail connections across the region.	Medium	Medium/High

ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUES

EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
Goal DT 1.0: Link trails throughout the county and regionally		
✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
Goal DT 2.0: Improve the trail network for a variety of users with varying levels of mobility and ability, and a variety of uses such as hiking, walking, cycling and equestrian use		
		✓
✓		✓
✓	✓	✓
✓		✓
✓		✓

BEING PROACTIVE

Adams County will use this Implementation & Monitoring section to take a proactive approach to better serve current and future residents of Adams County with an outstanding county-wide Parks, Open Space & Trails system.



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
PLANNING FOR A SHARED FUTURE

