



OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN



TOWN OF WINDSOR

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-16

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE *TOWN OF WINDSOR 2022 OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN*

WHEREAS, the Town of Windsor (“Town”) is a Colorado home rule municipality with all powers and authority provided by Colorado law; and

WHEREAS, statistically valid survey results from the 2019 *Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan* revealed that the Windsor community is eager to have more access and opportunities to engage with open spaces and trails; and

WHEREAS, the Town’s Open Space and Trails Division (“Division”) is currently responsible for conservation of natural habitats for native species, preservation of agricultural lands, and watershed areas for the improvement of water quality; and

WHEREAS, the Division also maintains paved and unpaved through-ways that connect Windsor residents and visitors to key destinations such as downtown, neighborhoods, parks and open spaces; and

WHEREAS, the Division’s 2021 budget included an appropriation for completion of a Trails and Open Space Strategic Plan to guide the Division for the next 5-10 years in the acquisition of open space and determination of trail development priorities; and

WHEREAS, the Division retained Logan Simpson Design, Inc. and PROS Consulting in 2021 to serve as consultants; and

WHEREAS, the Division and its consultants conducted community outreach, study and analysis to arrive at the *Town of Windsor 2022 Open Space and Trails Strategic Plan* (“2022 Plan”), which has been presented for review by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Board and the Town Board; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 Plan meets its goal of better-defining community expectations and, more specifically, providing guidance on how to meet those expectations; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board finds that adoption of this Resolution promotes the public health, safety and welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The *Town of Windsor 2022 Open Space and Trails Strategic Plan* prepared by Logan Simpson Design, Inc., is hereby approved and deemed incorporated herein in its final form.
2. The *Town of Windsor 2022 Open Space and Trails Strategic Plan* shall serve as a comprehensive guide for meeting community expectations with respect to acquisition, development, preservation and access to open space and trails serving the Town's residents.
3. The Open Space and Trails Division shall make copies of the *Town of Windsor 2022 Open Space and Trails Strategic Plan* available to the public by all customary means.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the foregoing Resolution was adopted this 28th day of March, 2022.

TOWN OF WINDSOR, COLORADO

By: _____

Paul Rennemeyer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Karen Frawley
Karen Frawley, Town Clerk





PREPARED FOR



PREPARED BY



L O G A N S I M P S O N





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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01// INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

1.2 HISTORY OF WINDSOR'S OPEN SPACE & TRAILS SYSTEM

1.3 NEED FOR THIS PLAN

1.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

1.5 OPEN SPACE & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

1.6 GOALS & PRINCIPLES

1.1 BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

PLAN OVERVIEW

Long before the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the many mental and health benefits of outdoor recreation and spending time in natural environments, the Town of Windsor had identified the desire and future need of conserving open spaces and connecting residents to them via trail experiences. This Open Space and Trails Strategic Plan provides a five- to ten-year framework to define areas for open space preservation and trail development within Windsor's Growth Management Area (GMA). The Plan will serve as strategy and policy for the Open Space and Trails (OST) Division's acquisition, restoration, long-term stewardship, capital project planning, and funding efforts. The Open Space and Trails Strategic Plan is informed by public input on open space and trail priorities, desired public benefits, and community expectations that have been highlighted through this and past planning efforts.

The Open Space and Trails Division of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department is responsible for conserving and maintaining natural habitats for native species, agricultural lands, and watershed areas that aid in the improvement of water quality. The OST Division also builds and maintains paved and unpaved paths that connect Windsor residents to key destinations such as downtown, schools, retail, restaurants, other neighborhoods, museums, Town facilities (Town Hall, Police, Recreation Center), parks, open spaces, and regional connections to neighboring municipalities. The OST Division is instrumental in the planning and development of Windsor's non-motorized and active transportation network.



THIS PLAN IS ORGANIZED IN THREE CHAPTERS

1. Introduction
2. Needs Assessment
3. Recommendation

RELATIONSHIP TO TOWN PLANNING EFFORTS

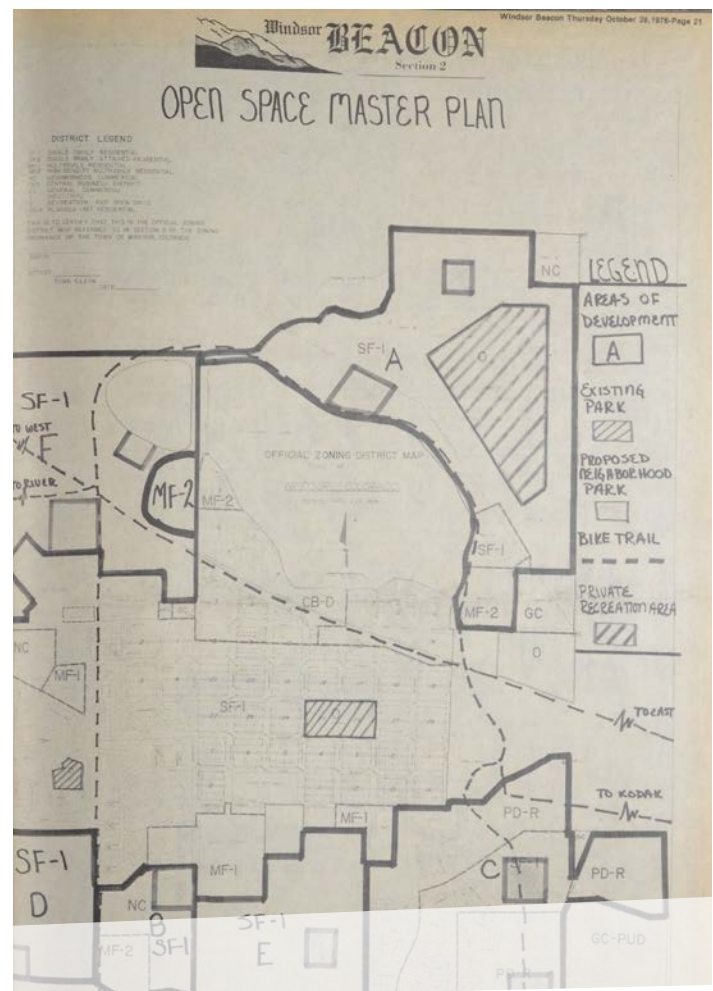
The 2020 Town of Windsor's Strategic Plan and the 2020 Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan (PRC Strategic Plan) contain several high-level action items that have a strong focus on increasing the amount of open space preservation and trail development, which can be tracked via the Performance Dashboard (a public Town Website to track the progress towards these action items). In addition, the 2020 Transportation Master Plan includes recommendations for low stress on and off-street trail connections. These plans provide the overall framework for this OST Strategic Plan, which further refines the concepts and direction of these documents with the goal of providing a robust open space and trails system for the community. Public feedback in those previous planning efforts, including a statistically-valid survey in the PRC Strategic Plan, show strong community support for investing in open spaces and trails. This OST Strategic Plan accomplishes many action items and advances other longer-term action items in the PRC Strategic Plan by gathering additional public input on open space and identifying more specific and relevant open space action items. The OST Division is also actively working to implement property management plans which are being designed to meet the OST Strategic Plan vision, such as for Kyger Open Space, Boardwalk Park, and the Middle School/Public Safety complex at WCR 15 and WCR 70.

PARKS, RECREATION, & CULTURE DEPARTMENT CORE VALUES

1. Exceptional Customer Experience
2. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
3. Innovation
4. Sustainability
5. FUN

Nearly fifty years ago, well before the region's growth took off, the Town of Windsor anticipated public demand for open space, trails, and parks.

Windsor Beacon, October 28, 1976



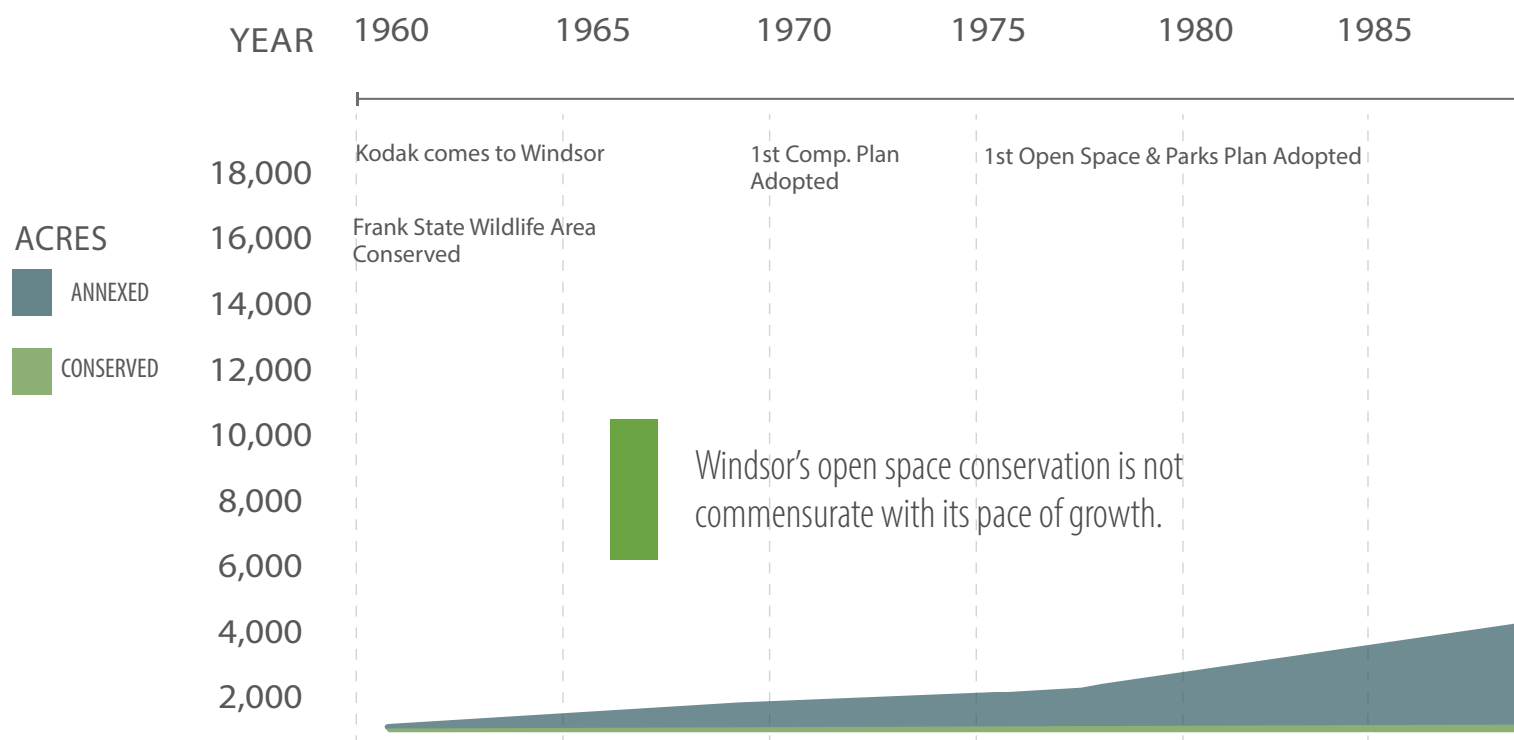
1.2 HISTORY OF THE OPEN SPACE & TRAILS SYSTEM

Even though preservation of open space has been a concept bantered for over 50 years and the Town has acquired a couple of larger open space areas, Windsor's OST Division is truly in its infancy. Prior to the 1990s, Windsor's preservation of open space had not been a priority due to the generally slow pace of development and perspective that there is no need. The preservation that did occur started in the 1960's with the Colorado Division of Wildlife acquiring the Frank State Wildlife Easement, a 326-acre easement dedicated for wildlife related activities that allowed for public use of the site; however the underlying landowner retained the right to use the site for mining operations, which still occur today. In the 1990s, many instrumental efforts started to strike a chord for preservation of lands and trail development. One of the first tangible efforts was the fulfillment of the vision and construction of a trail around the perimeter of Windsor Lake. Now named the Dr. Tom Jones trail, the lake trail was largely developed via financial and volunteer contributions starting at Boardwalk

Park and working towards the east as well as a soft surface trail on the north perimeter from Highway 257 to Chimney Park Drive. Paving of the lake trail was completed in 2005 after dredging of the lake created a trail platform along the west and southwest portions of the lake.

The 1990's also brought the creation of the Poudre River Trail Corridor Authority. The Poudre Trail is a regional effort between Greeley, Larimer County and Windsor with the vision of developing a trail along the Poudre River. Other efforts in the 90s cast a vision of open space preservation through community separators with an emphasis between Windsor and the communities of Greeley, Loveland, and Fort Collins. The 2000s brought on two decades of fast paced development with the construction of the Windsor Highlands areas, River West, Bison Ridge, Poudre Heights, Peak View Estates, High Pointe, and Belmont Ridge. In 2000, Windsor transitioned from parks and trails maintenance occurring under the management of the Public Works Department to a

WINDSOR ANNEXATION AND OPEN SPACE 1960-PRESENT





parks maintenance team under the Parks and Recreation Department, which later became the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department.

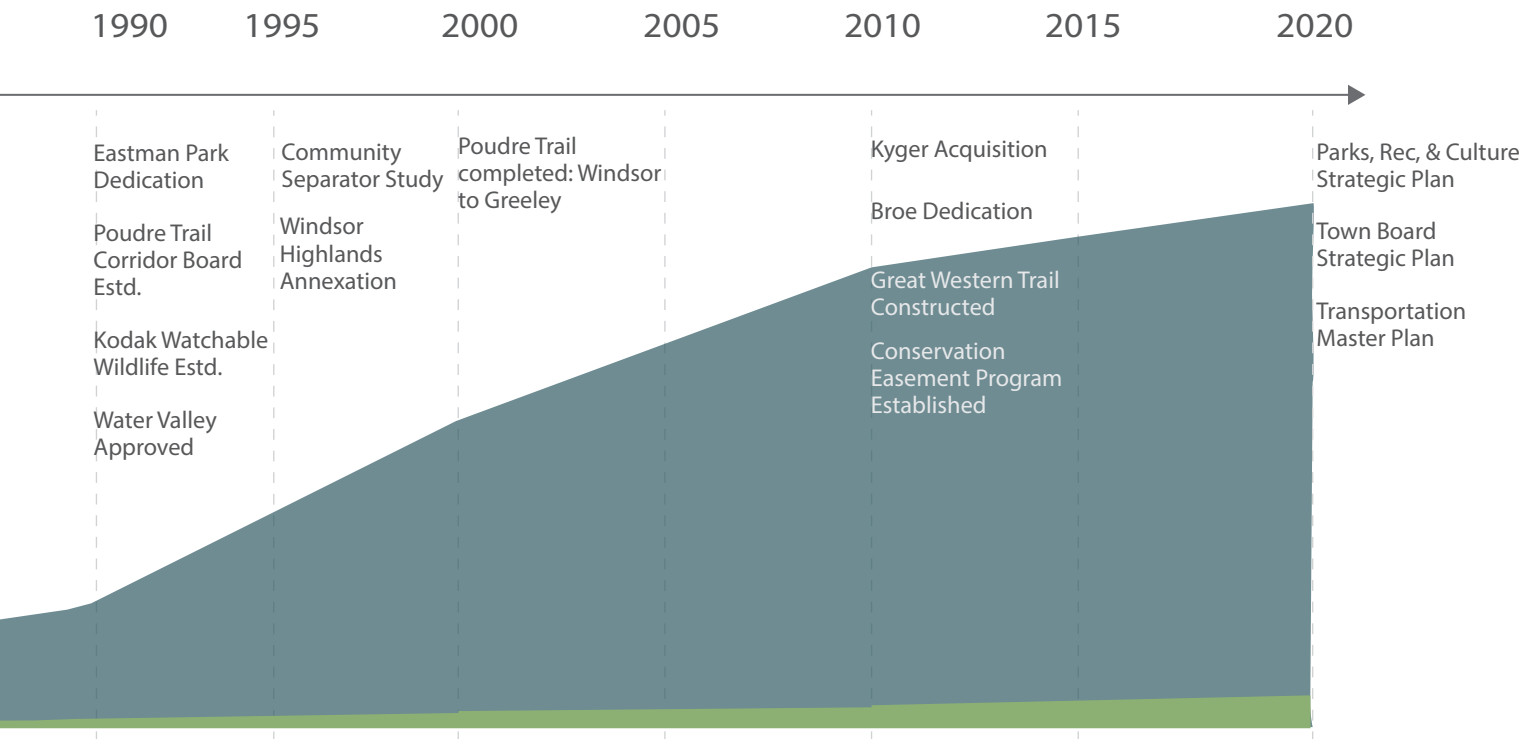
The rapid growth brought on the development of many new neighborhood and community parks. The concept of low water/natural areas became a priority in parks, showcasing water conservation efforts by allowing portions of the parks to be designed and developed as low/ no water natural habitat areas. In the 2010's, Windsor acquired two significant parcels the Kyger Open Space and the Kodak Watchable Wildlife property. In 2018, the Parks and Open Space Manager position is split into two separate positions, one with a focus on parks maintenance operations and another focused on the growth, development, and care of open space and trail areas.

Open Space refers to lands that include agriculture lands, scenic viewsheds, and trails. Open space exists in a natural state and contain few or no structures; they may also contain significant natural, aesthetic, and recreational features that warrant protection.

Community Separator – a parcel of undeveloped land, sometimes in the form of open space, separating two or more urban areas under different municipal jurisdictions which has been designated to provide a permanent low-density area preserving the communal integrity of the two municipalities.

Restoration means the act of restoring; renewal, revival, or reestablishment. A return of something to a former, original, normal, or unimpaired condition.

Parks and Open Space Draft Ordinance



1.3 NEED FOR THE PLAN

The urgency and importance of this plan, are summarized according to the five focus areas stated below.



TRAILS

- Public demand for outdoor recreation and commuting options is at an all-time high.
- Trail use has increased exponentially.
- The volume, diversity, and mode types of users will continue to increase.
- Public desire for connectivity from one's front door to the neighborhood, the Town, and to the region.
- Safer connections are critical, especially at intersections.
- Incomplete trail networks and disconnected areas are common.
- Substantial trail gaps between outlying neighborhoods (Harmony Ridge/Windsor Highlands) to the Town core.



OPEN SPACE

- Development occurring at an extraordinary pace.
- Regional growth plans identify few opportunities for open space preservation.
- Windsor's identity and borders are becoming diluted as neighboring municipalities grow together.
- Soaring property acquisition costs.
- Insufficient funding/absence of dedicated funding source.
- A need to preserve agriculture and recognizing it as a key open space conservation tool.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ENRICHMENT

- Need to involve and educate the public so that existing and future residents and visitors can understand the importance of, appreciate, and advocate for preservation and stewardship of open spaces.
- Educate the public and elected/appointed officials on open space management practices and conservation tools.
- Users are uninformed about the negative effects of their actions on wildlife.
- A common vision for open space and trails creates community pride and unified support for the system.

In 2020, 160.7 million Americans participated in at least one outdoor activity -- **7.1 million more** than in 2019.

Outdoor Industry Association 2021 *Outdoor Participation Trends Report*



STEWARDSHIP & OPERATIONS

- Stewardship priorities and role of open space in Windsor need to be defined, especially for agriculture.
- Maintain open space as natural, self-sustaining landscapes, which are also more cost-effective.
- Impacts from public use exceeds current maintenance capabilities.
- Wildlife habitat is being lost due to rapid town growth.
- Lack of proper open space maintain standards has led to degraded landscapes that are in need of restoration.



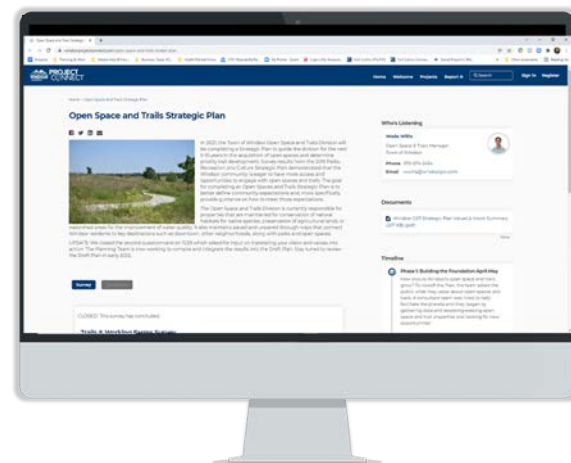
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- There is not adequate funding to conserve large open spaces or life-cycle replacement of existing assets.
- A dedicated funding source is needed to achieve all OST Division's goals.



1.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

While building from previous planning efforts as described earlier, the public outreach process involved two detailed online questionnaires to refine the public needs around open space and trail priorities. Questionnaires, along with other project updates, were provided on Windsor's public [engagement website](#). Short summaries are provided here with additional input placed through out the document.



QUESTIONNAIRE #1

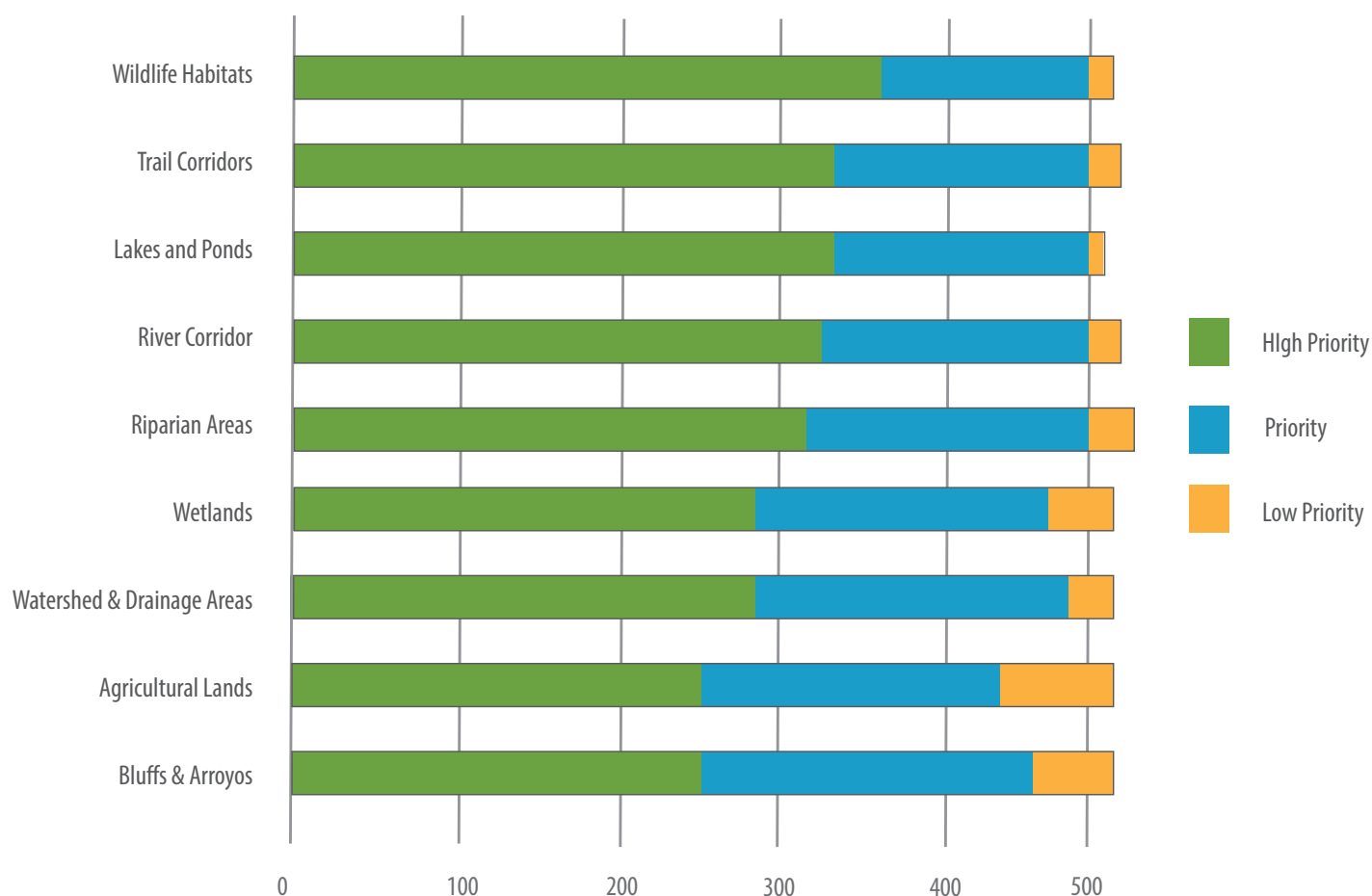
The first questionnaire was administered in spring of 2021 and had over 500 respondents. Results found that most participants have visited Windsor Lake or the Poudre River Trail far more than any other Windsor open space property. The most popular activities while visiting an open space are hiking, biking, or running. Town open space properties are also used for wildlife viewing and as a place for solitude and quiet reflection, but to a lesser degree.

Viewing wildlife and conserving wildlife habitat consistently ranked high as an activity and conservation priority. This priority was closely followed by protecting areas from urban development and creating recreational opportunities such as trail corridors. The Cache la Poudre River (Poudre River) and its adjacent riparian areas, as well as other bodies of water, are also vital to the community.

Open space and trails are significant to people for different reasons. Respondents indicated that open space and trails are, unquestionably, good investments and important to have in the community. Respondents take pride in Windsor's open space and feel that children need experience in natural, wild places as they grow up. Respondents are more likely to bike or walk to a destination if there are trails that lead there, and many respondents recommended specific connections they would like to see in the future.



PRIORITIES FOR PROTECTION





QUESTIONNAIRE #2

Additional outreach was conducted in Fall 2021 to gather input on level of support for two key ideas that were emerging - trail priorities and working farm opportunities. Responses showed that trail priorities were selected because of safety concerns and desires to connect to the Poudre River Trail. The 7th Street connection was also identified as an important connection to Downtown. Participants highlighted that they were willing to walk or bike longer distances for recreation, exercise, or visiting a park or open space. Traveling via bike or walking for shopping and work was less popular, but participants noted a willingness to travel farther by bike. It's important to note that most Windsor workforce residents work in other communities, which would limit commuting by bicycle because of the distance. As the Town continues to grow and evolve, the number of local jobs is anticipated to increase.

Most of the lands that could be conserved as open space in the future are currently being used for agricultural crop production or rangeland, which offer some opportunities for wildlife habitat, hunting, or fishing. As the Northern Front Range continues to grow, most of these farms will most likely be converted to residential or commercial uses and/or their water purchased by other entities, which has been done by Thornton in the 1980s and Aurora in the past five years purchasing water shares in the area for their growing population. The second questionnaire sought to further educate the community on agricultural lands as open space and refine the public feedback. Additionally, if lands with water rights are conserved as open space, the water could be shared for farming and municipal use during dry years, if necessary.



Since 2020, new outdoor recreation participants are largely motivated by opportunities with low barriers to entry that are available and accessible close to home, including walking, running, biking and hiking.

Outdoor Industry Association 2021 Report: *The New Outdoor Participant*

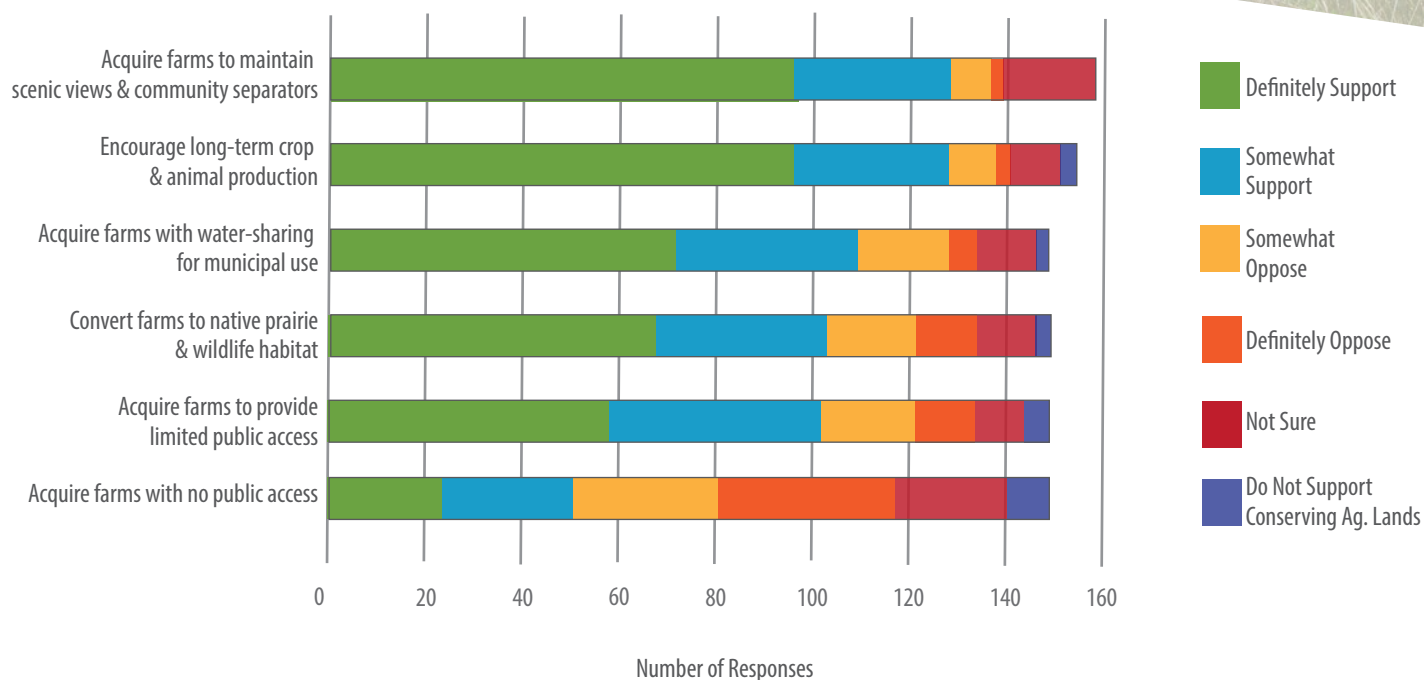
DRAFT PLAN OUTREACH

The Draft Plan was provided to the public for review in February and March 2022 via Windsor ProjectConnect and a survey asked the community to weigh in on the plan's recommendations. Over 87 percent of respondents agreed with the vision for the plan. Comments strove to emphasized a desire to maintain quality open spaces and trails and Windsor's community values within the broader context of a growing community.



AGRICULTURAL LANDS AS OPEN SPACE

Questionnaire respondents support acquiring working farms to maintain scenic views and community separators between municipalities. However, responses also indicated a desire to access future conserved properties.





1.5 OPEN SPACE & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

Building upon existing Town and the PRC Strategic Plan guidance, as well as vast public input, a community vision and five focus areas were identified.

WINDSOR'S OPEN SPACE & TRAIL VISION:

**TO BE THE NATIONAL
LEADER IN EXCEPTIONAL
OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL
EXPERIENCES**

1.6 GOALS & PRINCIPLES

The following goals and principles guide Windsor to meet the OST Strategic Plan vision. The needs assessment, which is described in Chapter 2, informed the goals and principles based on current management considerations and local and regional outdoor recreation and open space trends.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A NATIONAL LEADER FOR EACH FOCUS AREA?



Equitable access to parks and open spaces



Wild lands for wildlife and people



**Fun, joy, discovering, appreciating
beauty, community identity, and creating
memorable family experiences**



**Community pride in long-term
management**



Financially sound, strategic investments



TRAILS

GOAL: Establish a high-level of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and accessibility throughout Windsor.

Principles:

- 1.1. Provide an equitable distribution of open space and trails throughout all of Windsor's neighborhoods via a 0.5 mile walk/roll.
- 1.2. Improve connectivity between downtown and other cultural destination amenities that lie outside the downtown area.
- 1.3. Create access within existing open space sites such as Kyger Reservoir, Kodak Watchable Wildlife, and Frank State Wildlife.
- 1.4. Create trail connectivity to new open space, parks, and schools as they are developed.
- 1.5. Working with adjacent municipalities and other partners, develop and/or finish regional trail connections to surrounding communities and explore new connections based on regional planning efforts.
- 1.6. Improve river restoration and potentially increase access to the Poudre River.
- 1.7. Offer the full breadth of trail types and experiences in non-sensitive areas, including neighborhood access points, paved and unpaved loops, regional trail connections, and uses that range from adventure mountain biking to running and walking to quiet reflection and wild spaces for children to play.
- 1.8. Improve public health by prioritizing low-stress on- and off-street trail connections and safe intersections and crossings, to make daily biking and walking to school, parks, and nature easier and more attractive as an alternative to driving.





OPEN SPACE



Goal: Establish community separators and conserve open space that ensure Windsor maintains its identity and for the benefit and protection of wildlife.

Principles:

2.1. Opportunistically pursue open space per the following priorities:

- o Wildlife habitat and native plant communities
- o Lakes, ponds, river, riparian areas, drainages, and wetlands
- o Community gateways and separators between adjacent cities and towns
- o Bluffs and arroyos
- o Small habitats with interpretive experiences that provide equitable neighborhood nature access

2.2. Conserve sensitive natural resources by:

- o Concentrating trail and river access to disturbed properties
- o Minimizing human disturbance to natural systems, significant wildlife habitats and native plant communities, some of which may have no or limited public access
- o Restoring previously impacted landscapes and ecosystem services.

2.3. Conserve farms, especially with prime soils, as community gateways and separators with long-term water sharing for municipal use.

2.4. New neighborhoods along community separator corridors should include a discernible setback from roadways to maintain a rural feeling.

2.5. Encourage and incentivize soil health best practices, water conservation and sharing, and other sustainable agricultural practices.

2.6. Meet statewide initiatives for land conservation.

2.7. Collaborate with other jurisdictions in the region to preserve community separators and sensitive lands.

GOAL: 30 x 30

The bold vision to protect 30 percent of the world's lands and oceans by 2030 will require a variety of local approaches and creative solutions. 30x30 conserves nature, strengthens our communities, and improves public health. While this expansive global view of conservation may not be fully achieved within Windsor's GMA, local progress strengthens close to home, community-driven efforts and contributes to the statewide initiative in a responsible way.



PERCENT OF COLORADANS WHO:

69% consider themselves to be a "conservationist."

74% support a national goal of 30x30.

Source: *Colorado Pathways to 30x30*



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ENRICHMENT

Goal: Provide education and outreach services that promote the vision of the Open Space and Trails Division.

Principles:

- 3.1. Continually involve the community in future open space and trails planning, implementation, and education.
- 3.2. Ensure open space and trail priorities and projects are integrated into other Town of Windsor planning efforts.
- 3.3. Enhance signage and wayfinding to make trail access points more visible, extend the OST Division's brand recognition by showcasing Windsor's accomplishments, and clearly communicate funding for capital projects.
- 3.4. Reinforce community identity through Windsor's key gateways with natural character, community separator corridors/agricultural lands, and strategic open space preservation.
- 3.5. Foster community and visitors' understanding of the public benefits and importance of open space and trails and the responsible use of Windsor's properties, including wildlife habitat, river ecology, native plantings, agricultural practices, etc.
- 3.6. Foster beneficial, imaginative, and diverse recreational and educational activities for residents and visitors.
- 3.7. Continue to evaluate open space and trail opportunities to meet Town-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.



Wayfinding signage, such the proposed system for the Poudre River Trail, provides a recognizable sense of identity that contributes to improved user experience and safety, encourages use, and supports local economic activity.



STEWARDSHIP & OPERATIONS



Goal: Manage open spaces for a high-level of biodiversity and sustainable ecosystems.

Principles:

- 4.1. Monitor and manage open spaces to protect sensitive vegetation and reduce presence of noxious weeds.
- 4.2. Prevent resource degradation and support restoration of critical resources.
- 4.3. Align management plans (e.g., Colorado Parks and Wildlife raptor or prairie dog management) and maintenance operations (e.g., mowing and weed control) to support local vegetation and wildlife species and biodiversity.
- 4.4. Manage open space lands, including existing detention facilities, to be pollinator and wildlife-friendly habitat.
- 4.5. Manage riparian areas to reduce environmental hazards and mitigate flooding.
- 4.6. Highlight and interpret history and cultural and historic resources throughout the open space and trail system.
- 4.7. Continually assess alternative stewardship practices based on climate and environmental impacts, funding levels, and community growth.
- 4.8. Develop education and programs that promote and encourage stewardship opportunities, such as a Windsor Naturalist Program, volunteer efforts, and BioBlitz events.
- 4.9. Work with other Town of Windsor departments to integrate open space and trail best practices into planning, design, and management/operation.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY



Goal: Develop and implement a sustainable funding strategy that allows for growth, preservation and on-going maintenance of the trails and open space system.

Principles:

- 5.1. Secure dedicated funding mechanisms to ensure open space.
- 5.2. Develop partnerships to provide open space and trails infrastructure.
- 5.3. Leverage federal and state conservation funding for water quality, wildlife, cultural/historic resource preservation, and equitable access.
- 5.4. Align priorities and capitalize on future roadway redevelopment/expansion programs.
- 5.5. Obtain leasable sources of income from agricultural properties/community separators.
- 5.6. Prioritize trail investments that are cost-effective and fiscally responsible, including those that:
 - o Connect existing trail systems.
 - o Improve bike/pedestrian environments in high crash and high stress locations.
 - o Can be implemented quickly or phased.
 - o Meet the needs of underserved and/or lower income populations.





02// NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2.1 OPEN SPACE & TRAIL INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

2.2 OPEN SPACE & TRAIL DIVISION FUNDING & STAFFING OVERVIEW

2.3 TRENDS

2.4 NATURE IN WINDSOR: ECOSYSTEMS & WILDLIFE

This chapter outlines what Windsor currently needs for open space and trails, as well as how those needs will grow in the future. The needs assessment is based on community input, inventory and assessment of the existing open space and trail system, demographics, land use patterns, recreation trends, and the ecosystems that are present in the Windsor area.

2.1 OPEN SPACE & TRAIL INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

The Town manages and maintains numerous open space and trail corridors that offer a variety of recreational experiences and conserve important habitat. This section provides an assessment of those various open space properties and the current trail system.

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

Windsor's open space ranges from multi-acre properties that are habitat oriented (i.e., 150-acre Kyger Open Space) to small naturalized portions within traditional developed parks (i.e., 2.6 acres in Windsor Highlands).



A PROTECTED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM MAKES OUR COMMUNITY:

- Environmentally Sustainable
- Wildlife-friendly
- Rejuvenated
- Memorable
- Beautiful
- Rooted
- Joyful



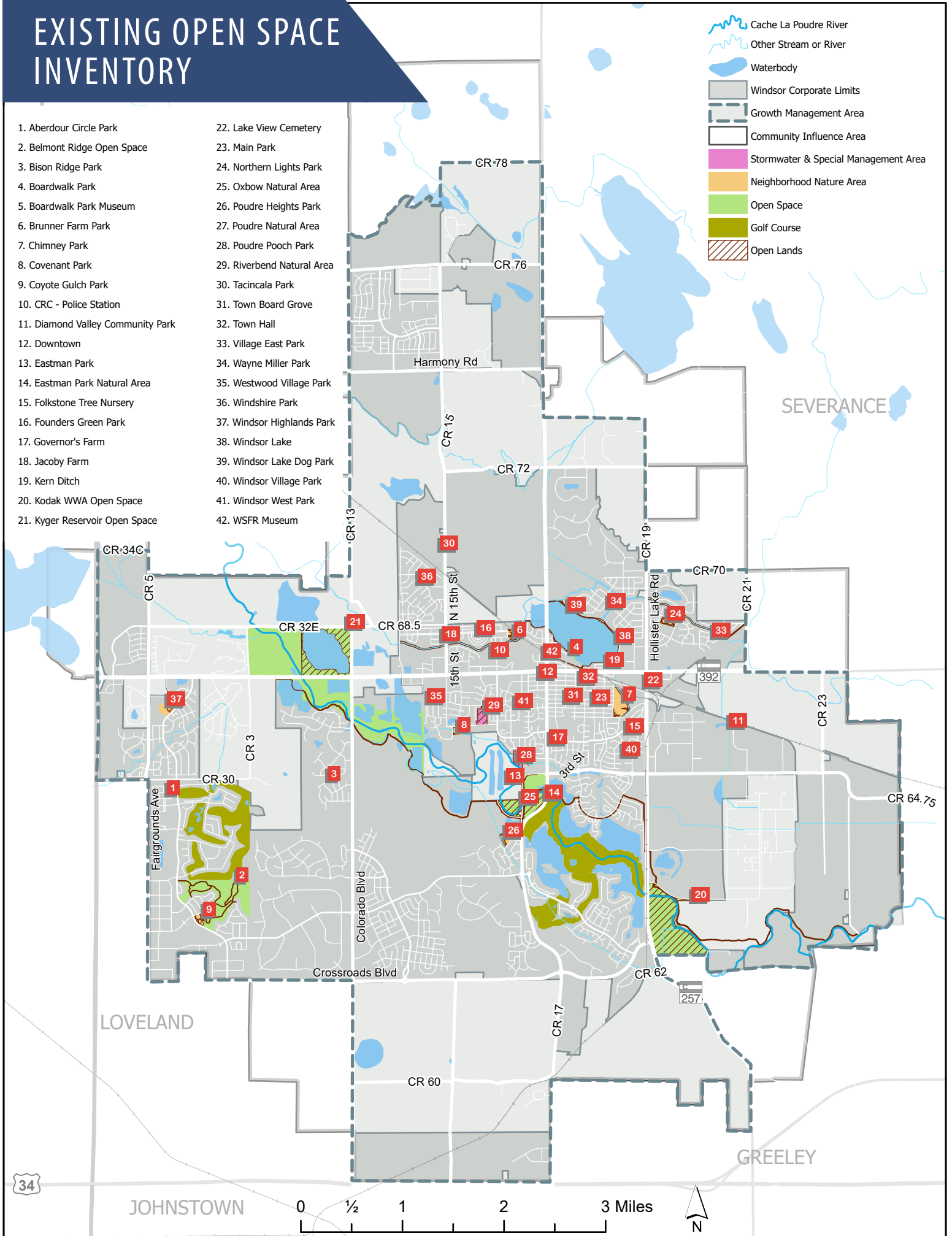
PRC Statistically Valid Survey, OST Values Questionnaire, Windsor Comprehensive Plan

EXISTING OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

1. Aberdour Circle Park
2. Belmont Ridge Open Space
3. Bison Ridge Park
4. Boardwalk Park
5. Boardwalk Park Museum
6. Brunner Farm Park
7. Chimney Park
8. Covenant Park
9. Coyote Gulch Park
10. CRC - Police Station
11. Diamond Valley Community Park
12. Downtown
13. Eastman Park
14. Eastman Park Natural Area
15. Folkstone Tree Nursery
16. Founders Green Park
17. Governor's Farm
18. Jacoby Farm
19. Kern Ditch
20. Kodak WWA Open Space
21. Kyger Reservoir Open Space

22. Lake View Cemetery
23. Main Park
24. Northern Lights Park
25. Oxbow Natural Area
26. Poudre Heights Park
27. Poudre Natural Area
28. Poudre Pooch Park
29. Riverbend Natural Area
30. Tacincala Park
31. Town Board Grove
32. Town Hall
33. Village East Park
34. Wayne Miller Park
35. Westwood Village Park
36. Windshire Park
37. Windsor Highlands Park
38. Windsor Lake
39. Windsor Lake Dog Park
40. Windsor Village Park
41. Windsor West Park
42. WSFR Museum

- Cache La Poudre River
- Other Stream or River
- Waterbody
- Windsor Corporate Limits
- Growth Management Area
- Community Influence Area
- Stormwater & Special Management Area
- Neighborhood Nature Area
- Open Space
- Golf Course
- Open Lands





OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT & METHODOLOGY

The table belows lists the total land area of open space regardless of manager (See Total Open Space Acres column), as well as the amount of acres that are maintained by the OST Division also referred to as “treatment areas” (See Total Acres Maintained by Windsor column). Additionally, the Total Acres Maintained numbers only account for land area, not water acres, of managed open space.

The following pages provide details of each existing Town property that is in whole or in-part managed by the OST Division. Properties were visited and assessed by the OST Division Staff and consulting team in May 2021. Various uses, features, and environmental stressors were assessed to develop site specific challenges and opportunities. Environmental stressors, factors that pose threats to a healthy ecosystem, were rated on a level of presence: 0 being not present to 5 highly present on the site.

The existing properties are categorized as follows:

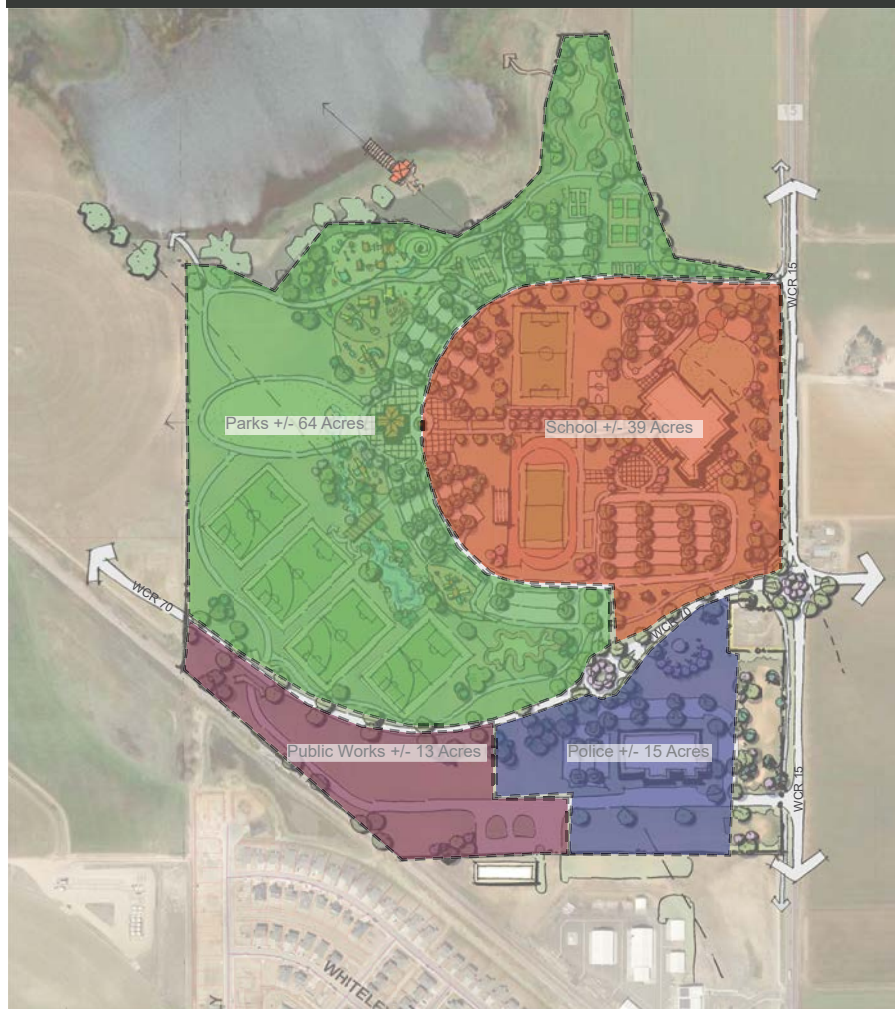
- **Open Space:** Lands that are in primarily a natural state and contain few or no structures; and/or they contain significant natural, aesthetic, and recreational features that warrant protection.
- **Stormwater And Special Management Areas:** Properties serving as stormwater conveyance but also provide habitat, scenic, and/or recreation values consistent with open space.
- **Neighborhood Natural Areas:** Wild areas including small portions of existing urban parks and neighborhoods that offer nature exploration, respite, micro-habitats, and/or visual viewsheds.
- **Trail Corridors:** Open corridors associated with trail easements or ROWs that are also managed for natural values and visual greenspace.

Property Type	Total Open Space Acres (including other management)	Total Acres Maintained by Windsor “Treatment Areas”
Open Space	945.0	183.1
Stormwater & Special Management Areas	55.6	55.6
Neighborhood Natural Areas (within Parks)	23.2	223.0
Trail Corridors	96.7	20.6
Total Acres	1,120.5	282.3

WINDSOR, CO MIDDLE SCHOOL AND PUBLIC SAFETY - MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

Windsor, Colorado

September 2nd, 2021 | 021-05804



1" = 200'
SCALE IN FEET



ochsner hare + hare

the olsson studio

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As part of the open space inventory assessment, the team also considered potential future opportunities, such as the Middle School/Public Safety complex at WCR 15 and WCR 70. Set adjacent to undeveloped land, this complex offers an opportunity to expand into a larger vision of an expanded trail network and community buffers. The buildings on the site will setback from WCR 15 and trails will tie northern parts of Windsor into the town trails system, both recommendations in this OST Strategic plan. Future opportunities could include public access to wetlands and ponds, trail along the railroad corridor, and partnerships to conserve agricultural viewsheds.

OPEN SPACE

Highland Ridge Open Space

7005 Aladar Dr, 5.69 AC Maintained, 110.41 AC Total (HOA Owned)



Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Uses:

- Use Level: Moderate
- Typical trail uses (Walking, running, bicycling, and other trail activities)
 - Wildlife observation
 - Special trail running events

Access:

- Moderate visibility
- Local road
- Neighborhood
- On-street parking on adjacent local road
- Sewer access road (for Town of Windsor staff only)

Features:

- Natural landscape/wildlife habitat
- Unique bluffs
- Scenic viewshed
- Wetlands
- Habitat area/movement corridor
- Singletrack mountain bike trails





Environmental Stressors								
Type	Presence							Note
Nonnative and Invasive Species	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Noxious Weed Species	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Social Trails	0	1	2	3	4	5		From adjacent homes
Wildfire	0	1	2	3	4	5		Risk from and to adjacent homes
Flooding	0	1	2	3	4	5		Stormwater from adjacent homes
Habitat Fragmentation	0	1	2	3	4	5		Social trail and major roadway
Overgrazing/browsing	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Challenges:

- Social trails from surrounding apartments and private residences
- Property owned by Highlands Ridge HOA
 - HOA can formalize new social trails
 - Town management of trails via easement
- Unauthorized off-leash dogs
- Concern about trail races staying on established trails
- Limited parking for events

Opportunities:

- Gateway art/signage at entrance
- Wildlife interpretation
- Control access with gates to restrict use when conditions are poor
- Increase mountain biking for varying skill levels
- Market singletrack as a unique feature in Windsor
- Sewer access road as ADA compliant trail
- Habitat/ecosystem interpretation
- Sewer road could be used as an ADA compliant trail

OPEN SPACE

Eastman Open Space/Oxbow Natural Area

7025 Eastman Park Dr - 25.56 AC/16.74 AC Maintained, 28.06 AC/18.82 AC Total



Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Uses:

Use Level: Heavy

- Typical trail uses
- Wildlife observation
- Regional disc golf destination
- Nature exploration
- River Experience

Access:

- High visibility
- Arterial/collector
- Off-street parking lot
- Regional trail

Features:

- River corridor/floodplain
- Habitat area/movement corridor
- Soft surface trails
- Poudre River Trail



Eastman Open Space/Oxbow Natural Area



Environmental Stressors								
Type	Presence							Note
Nonnative and Invasive Species	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Noxious Weed Species	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Social Trails	0	1	2	3	4	5		Throughout disc golf course
Wildfire	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Flooding	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Habitat Fragmentation	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Overgrazing/browsing	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Challenges:

- Extremely high level of use by disc golfers
- Prairie dog colony
- Floodplain and Northern Integrated Supply Project wetland development constraints
- Managing use levels to maintain a high quality native landscape
- Trails in Oxbow area are not ADA compliant
- Preservation of river banks and vegetation projection

Opportunities:

- Expansion of disc golf course
- Define additional river access points
- Poudre River Trail access trailhead
- Define long term use on site and on adjacent property
- Develop nature discovery and interpretation amenities
- Proposed camping
- Proposed zipline/ropes course
- Gateway art/signage at entrance
- Fly fishing
- Wetland habitat development

OPEN SPACE

Kodak Watchable Wildlife Area

SH 257/WCR 19 - 66.34 AC OS Management, 69.1 AC Ag. Lease, 145.62 AC Total



Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Uses:

Use Level: High

- Agricultural leases
- Typical trail uses
- Archery
- Wildlife observation

Access:

- State Highway
- Regional trail
- Moderate visibility
- Off street parking north of the river off SH 257

Features:

- Wetlands
- River corridor/floodplain
- Habitat area/movement corridor
- Cultivated lands (partially leased for agriculture)
- Lakes/ponds
- Trail corridor
- Regional destination
- Interpretation
- ADA/ABA accessible elements
- Portable toilet
- Archery range
- Bald eagle roost
- Poudre River Trail



Kodak Watchable Wildlife Area



Environmental Stressors								
Type	Presence						Note	
Nonnative and Invasive Species	0	1	2	3	4	5	Farmer's responsibility under lease	
Noxious Weed Species	0	1	2	3	4	5	Thistle	
Social Trails	0	1	2	3	4	5	From Poudre River Trail and future neighborhood to River	
Wildfire	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Flooding	0	1	2	3	4	5	Erosion of Poudre River	
Habitat Fragmentation	0	1	2	3	4	5	Industrial development	
Overgrazing/browsing	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Challenges:

- Natural character of Poudre River compromised
- Planned arterial extension (Crossroads Blvd) to cut through property
- Parking consistently over capacity in the summer
- Planned residential development to the north
- Open mining rights exist on property until 2025
- No setback requirements on development adjacent to natural areas or open spaces

Opportunities:

- Attracts regional audience
- Restore natural river character
- Create access from north side to south side of property over the Poudre River
- Trail loop from Poudre River Trail

- River restoration, including improving constraints (e.g., box culvert to filter plant)
- Neighborhood buffer
- Guided interpretation
- Adjacent property owned by Town's sewer plant
- Acquisition of Herman Property to south includes watershares with Trust for Public Lands
- Adjacent to Shur View Property under acquisition by Greeley
- TAP grant of \$850,000 for ½ to ¾ miles of trail
- Planned 3D Archery Course
- Controlled access for hunting and fly fishing
- Keep water on site through interruptible supply that is available for municipal use in drought years by partnering with a water district

OPEN SPACE

Kyger Open Space

555 WCR-13 - 58.43 AC OS Management, 148.83 AC Total



Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Uses:

Use Level: Moderate

- Typical trail uses
- Wildlife observation

Access:

- Arterial/collector
- Connection to regional trails
- Local trail (#2 Ditch)
- On-site unpaved parking (19 spaces)

Features:

- Wetlands
- River corridor/floodplain
- Habitat area
- Lakes/ponds
- Portable restroom with enclosure
- Paved and gravel trails
- Diverse plant palette
- Obligation for wildlife corridors
- Scenic views to Continental Divide



Kyger Open Space



Environmental Stressors								
Type	Presence							Note
Nonnative and Invasive Species	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Noxious Weed Species	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Social Trails	0	1	2	3	4	5		Behind pump station
Wildfire	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Flooding	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Habitat Fragmentation	0	1	2	3	4	5		Isolated by arterial roads
Overgrazing/browsing	0	1	2	3	4	5		Prairie dog encroachment NW edge

Challenges:

- Drainage from parking lot flows over trails
- Water level fluctuations and steep undercut banks create difficult water access conditions
- Siberian Elm and Russian Olive
- Realignment of Colorado Blvd/WCR-13 will cut into NE corner of property
- Cellular tower to be built north of existing parking area
- Minimal shade
- Major vehicle corridors of Hwy 392 and CR 32C negatively impacts wildlife

Opportunities:

- Prairie and aquatic habitat restoration
- Gateway art/signage at entrance
- Open, level area in NE corner could be a location for several facilities/activities including a nature center, bike skills course, or picnic pavilion
- Interpretive/Discovery trail with native plant and animal species
- Paddle sports and fishing
- Property master plan as prototype for future open spaces
- Incorporate nature play features throughout site
- Good location for formal photography
- Additional soft-surface and/or single-track trails
- Designated overlooks and water access points
- Bird viewing area

OPEN SPACE

Windsor Lake Open Space

100 N 5th St - 10.32 AC OS Management



Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Uses:

Use Level: High

- Typical trail uses
- Wildlife viewing
- Motorized boating and paddle sports
- Fishing

Access:

- Arterial/Collector
- Local trail
- On-site paved parking

Features:

- Paved trail
- Lake
- Connection to #2 Ditch and Great Western Trail
- Floating perches for water fowl
- Nature education programming by Museums





Environmental Stressors							
Type	Presence						Note
Nonnative and Invasive Species	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Noxious Weed Species	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Social Trails	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Wildfire	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Flooding	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Habitat Fragmentation	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Overgrazing/browsing	0	1	2	3	4	5	

Challenges:

- Shoreline habitat quality low due to level of use and rock stabilization.
- Motorized boating compromises peaceful experience during summer.
- Dog park allows dogs to swim in lake create negative wildlife interactions.
- Park-like use levels which requires the site to be highly managed and manicured.

Opportunities:

- B.H. Eaton Nature Center being constructed in 2022 - interpretation for history, water, and wildlife.
- Gateway art/signage at entrance
- Future residential development to the north could adjust the management objectives

STORMWATER & SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Poudre Natural Area

7025 Eastman Park Dr - 11.28 AC OS Management, 11.28 AC Total

Uses:

Use Level: Light

- Passive Recreation
- 2-track trail

Access:

- Local road
- Neighborhood
- Trail connection



Poudre Natural Area

Features:

- Mowed detention basin
- OST Division maintains trails

Challenges:

- Meeting stormwater conveyance requirements while preserving natural character
- Current management practices suppress natural qualities
- No structures can be built in stormwater management area

Opportunities:

- Explore non-structural conveyance of stormwater and modify management practices to improve natural character
- Nature trails
- Sensory or pollinator garden

STORMWATER & SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Poudre Natural Area - Poudre Pooch Park

7025 Eastman Park Dr - 1.28 AC OS Management, 1.28 AC Total

Uses:

- Use Level: High
- Dog Park

Access:

- Local Road
- Neighborhood



Poudre Pooch Park

Features:

- Dog park

Challenges:

- Protection of existing trees
- Potential conflicts between dog park users and wildlife, i.e., snakes
- Keeping vegetation/ natural grasses in good condition
- High use area

Opportunities:

- Interpretive signs

STORMWATER & SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Riverbend Natural Area

525 Parkwood Dr - 9.64 AC OS Management, 9.64 AC Total

Uses:

Use Level: Light

- Water quality
- Detention/retention

Access:

- No Public Access
- Local road
- Neighborhood



Riverbend Natural Area

Features

- Stormwater
- Mowed meadow

Challenges

- Public Works property, different standards and management practices than natural areas
- Channelized drainage
- Past property management changes reduced public confidence

Opportunities

- Develop a designated wetland habitat area adjacent to trickle channel
- Develop a pollinator garden
- Alternative water quality treatment
- Nature in the city educational opportunity

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Brunner Farm Park

305 Prospector St - 2.57 AC OS Management, 4.14 AC Total

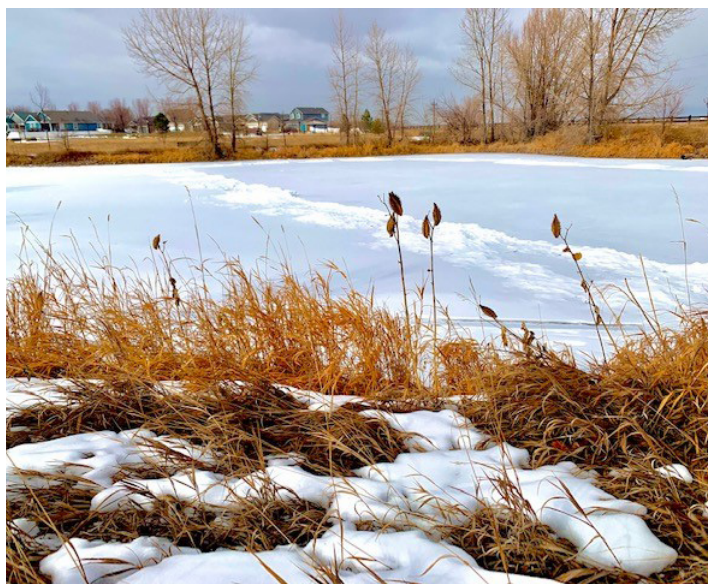
Uses:

Use Level: Moderate

- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Neighborhood



Features:

- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park

Challenges:

- Railroad tracks adjacent and unmanaged vegetation
- Crossing of ditch using trestle is unsafe
- High prairie dog activity area.

Opportunities:

- Install bridge over ditch to connect trails and eliminate trestle safety issue
- Install education kiosks
- Promote local bass fishing area

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Chimney Park

200 E Chestnut St - 4.19 AC OS Management, 21.20 AC Total

Uses:

- Use Level: Light
- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Local road
- Neighborhood



Chimney Park

Features:

- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park
- Small irrigation ditch on east edge of park

Challenges:

- Smaller open space area adjacent to highly developed park

Opportunities:

- Establish low water/ natural grass area showcasing water conservation
- Education about ditch infrastructure and agricultural heritage.

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Covenant Park

1401 Fernwood Dr - .68 AC OS Management, 4.01 AC Total

Uses:

- Use Level: Light
- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Local road
- Neighborhood



Covenant Park

Features:

- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park

Challenges:

- Public education on natural area

Opportunities:

- Opportunity as trailhead if able to get trail connection to Frank SWA to west along Whitney Ditch

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Northern Lights Park

550 Saratoga Way - 1.57 AC OS Management, 5.62 AC Total

Uses:

Use Level: Low

- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Local road
- Neighborhood



Features:

- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park

Challenges:

- Residents directly adjacent to natural area, which creates public perception safety and aesthetic concerns.
- Future development or park site could impact feel of natural area.

Opportunities:

- Interpretive signage
- Future grade school site, could utilize park to provide outdoor education area.

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Poudre Heights Park

1670 Green River Dr - 1.86 AC OS Management, 5.22 AC Total

Uses:

Use Level: Low

- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Local road
- Neighborhood



Poudre Heights Park

Features:

- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park

Challenges:

- Smaller open space area adjacent to highly developed park

Opportunities

- Interpretive signage

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Windsor Highlands Park

7985 Highlands Meadow Pkwy - 2.60 AC OS Management, 8.56 AC Total

Uses:

- Use Level: Low
- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Local Road
- Neighborhood



Windsor Highlands Park

Features:

- Benches
- Shelters/Pavilions (2)
- Soft Surface Trails
- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park

Challenges:

- Public education on natural area

Opportunities

- Public education on park and natural area differences and values

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE AREAS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Coyote Gulch Park

7005 Aladar Dr - 3.64 AC OS Management, 5.96 AC Total

Uses:

Use Level: Low

- Naturalized area adjacent to developed park

Access:

- Local Road
- Neighborhood



Coyote Gulch Park

Features:

- Shelters/Pavilions (2)
- Wayfinding
- Interpretive Signage
- ADA/ABA Accessibility (partial)
- Natural landscape surrounding a developed park

Challenges:

- Very natural area with higher potential for wildlife interactions
- Perception of fire danger.

Opportunities

- With connection to Highland Ridge Open Space and views to west opportunities for interpretive signage about mountain peaks, purpose of arroyos, history as wheat farming

TRAIL CORRIDORS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Poudre River Trail

36.98 AC

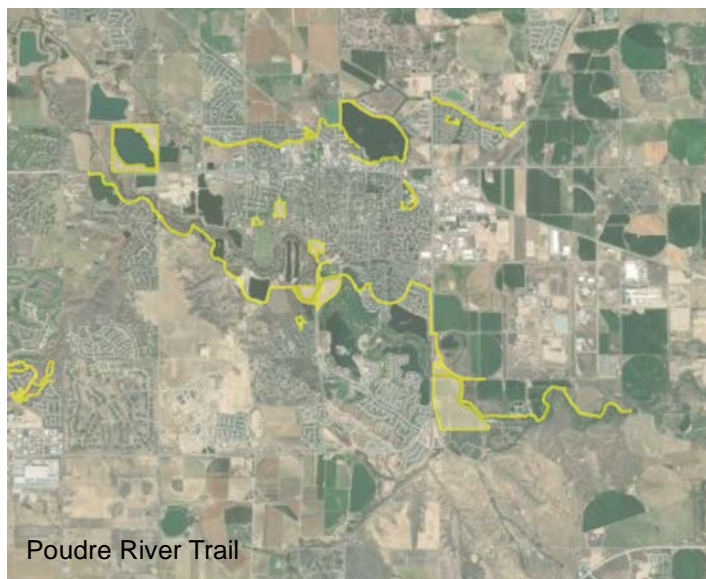
Uses:

Use Level: Heavy

- Typical trail uses
- Wildlife observation
- Fishing
- Ad hoc river access/wading

Access:

- Multiple



Poudre River Trail

Features:

- Long distance paved trail passing through a variety of environments
- Trailhead parking lots at River Bluffs Open Space, Colorado Blvd, Kodak, Eastman Park, etc.
- Riparian, wetlands, and prairie habitats
- Underpass under SH392 and pedestrian-activated crossings of major roads

Challenges:

- Crossing of SH 257 major safety concerns
- Riverbank stability
- Nesting bald eagle/human interactions

Opportunities:

- Grant to move trail within Kodak Watchable Wildlife Area, \$850,000 for ½ to ¾ miles of trail
- Planned parking lot expansion at Kodak
- Planned connection north of Kyger Open Space
- Planned Eastman Open Space loop
- Planned Alternate soft surface alignment and neighborhood connection east of WCR13 north of river
- Wildlife/ecosystem interpretive signage

TRAIL CORRIDORS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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#2 Ditch Trail

Central: 5.58 AC, East: 5.15 AC, West: 3.18 AC

Uses:

- Use Level: Moderate
- Typical trail uses

Access:

- Arterial, collector, and local roads
- Paved parking on west end of Windsor Lake and Boardwalk Park
- Neighborhood trail connections



Features:

- Long distance paved trail along large ditch
- Pedestrian bridge across ditch
- Pedestrian-activated crossing at SH 257

Challenges:

- Additional waysides with shade
- Has potential to be very intensively used possibly for user conflicts.

Opportunities:

- Prairie dogs undermining trail
- Historic interpretation
- Placement adjacent to schools and recreation center creates many walking and biking opportunities, walking classroom, exercise classes, commuting, and downtown.

TRAIL CORRIDORS

Most Protection (Nature First)	More Protection	Balanced	More Activities	Most Activities (People First)
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Great Western Trail

1.08 AC

Uses:

Use Level: Low

- Typical trail uses

Access:

- Local roads



Photo by: Great Western Trail Authority



Great Western Trail

Features:

- Soft surface trail managed in conjunction with Great Western Trail Authority Board

Challenges:

- Low grade vegetation
- Illegal uses due to rural area motorized vehicles
- Public perceptions of prairie dog

Opportunities:

- Trail will be paved with concrete over time through the development process.
- Interpretive signs

TRAIL INVENTORY

In addition to their many mental and physical benefits, trails provide residents with safe travel routes and recreational experiences, reduce vehicles on roadways, alleviate traffic congestion by providing alternative methods of transportation, which improves Northern Colorado's air quality. The most popular recreational activities – walking, hiking, running, and biking – heavily rely on trails. Respondents to the community preferences questionnaire indicated a strong preference for using open space to hike, bike, or run, as illustrated in the graph below. This is consistent with national trends as reported in the Outdoor Industry Association's 2021 *Outdoor Participation Trends Report* for 2021.

A WELL-CONNECTED, LOW-STRESS TRAIL SYSTEM MAKES OUR COMMUNITY:

- A desirable place to live
- Emotionally resilient
- Physically fit
- Competitive
- Prosperous
- Friendlier
- Safer



Source: PRC Statistically Valid Survey, OST Values Questionnaire, Windsor Comprehensive Plan

WINDSOR TRAILS BY THE NUMBERS (EXISTING TRAILS WITHIN GMA)

SOFT SURFACE: 5.4 miles

OFF-STREET: 52.5 miles

ON-STREET: 51.6 miles

MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BY PARTICIPATION RATE, NATIONWIDE

01	RUNNING, JOGGING AND TRAIL RUNNING	21.0% of Americans	63.8 million participants
02	HIKING	19.0% of Americans	57.8 million participants
03	FRESHWATER, SALTWATER AND FLY FISHING	18.0% of Americans	54.7 million participants
04	ROAD BIKING, MOUNTAIN BIKING AND BMX	17.3% of Americans	52.7 million participants
05	CAR, BACKYARD, BACKPACKING AND RV CAMPING	15.8% of Americans	47.9 million participants

Outdoor Industry Association 2021 *Outdoor Participation Trends Report*



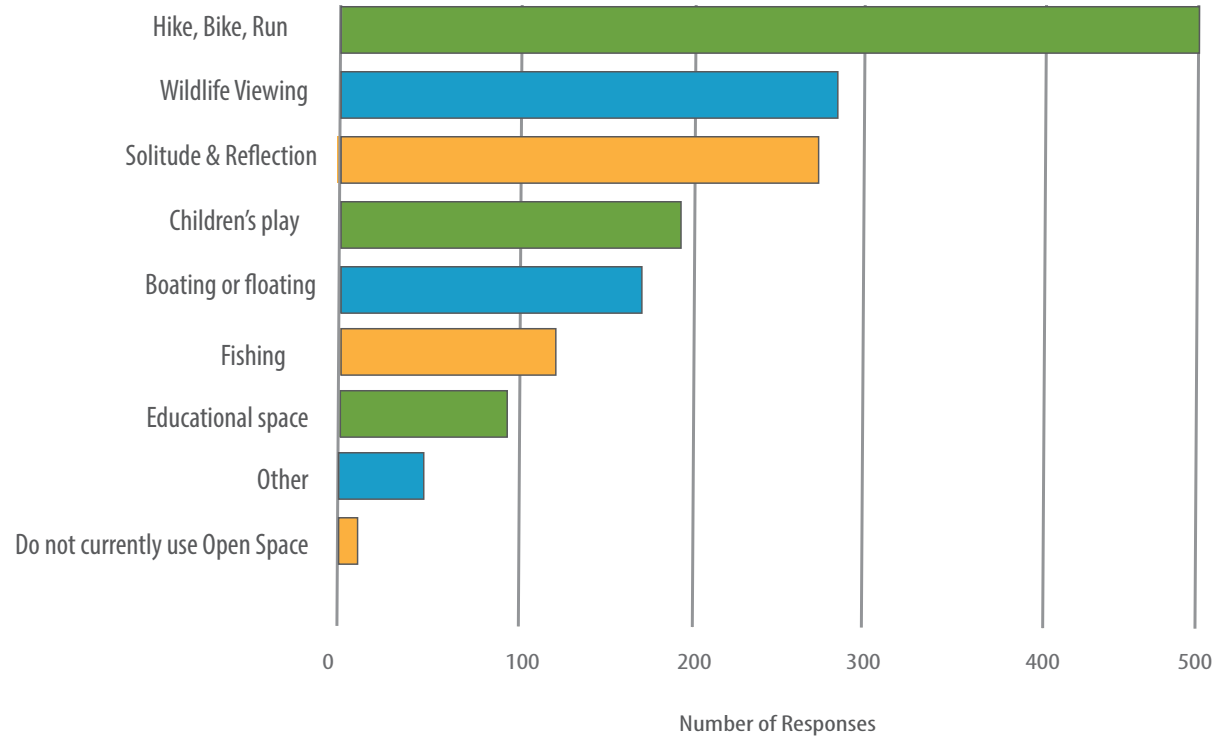
Multiple types of connections create the ideal low-stress trails network, which is defined by the Transportation Master Plan as routes generally comfortable and safe for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Windsor’s off-street trail network consists of 52.5 miles within the Growth Management Area (GMA).

Many of the main off-street, low-stress trail connections follow river or water features, such as the #2 Ditch Trail, running through the heart of the Town, and the Poudre River Trail, the main regional connection between Fort Collins, Timnath, Windsor, and Greeley. The off-street network is enhanced by the Highlands Meadows Parkway, Steeple Chase/ New Liberty Road, Eaton Ditch, Kodak, and 7th Street trail corridors.

Soft surface trails for hiking are primarily located in Kyger Open Space and Highland Ridge Open Space, which also allows mountain biking. These trails provide a unique opportunity to explore Windsor’s open spaces.

Additionally, on-street trails provide connectivity to all parts of the Town via bike lanes within the street right-of-way corridor where off-street connections may not be available or for additional connections to neighborhoods. On-street trails are managed by the Town of Windsor Engineering Division of the Community Development Department, and are an important part of the non-motorized transportation network. The successful implementation of the 7th Street and Walnut Street multi-modal improvements added to the low-stress network.

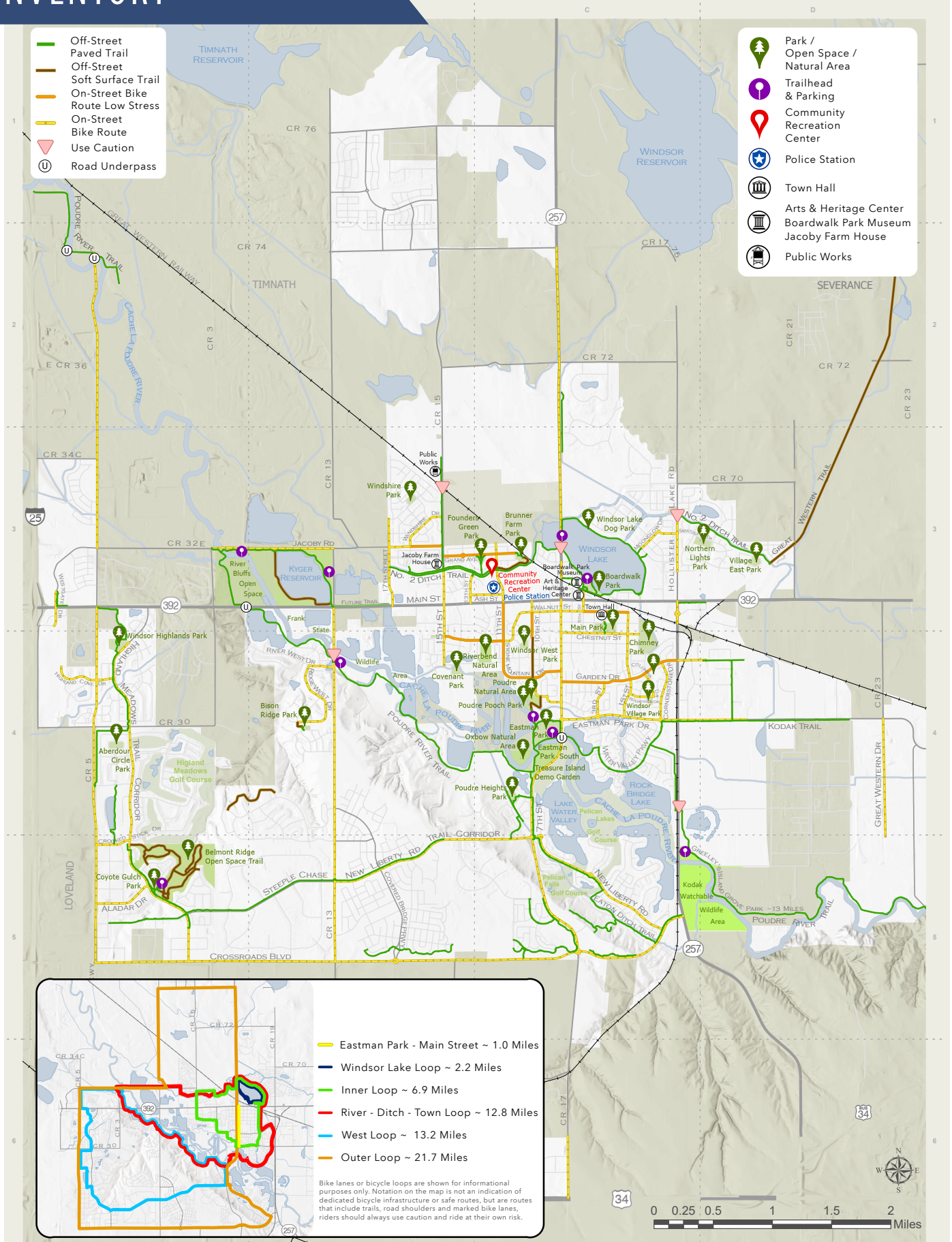
PREFERRED USE OF OPEN SPACE IN WINDSOR





The #2 Ditch was built in 1870 to provide water for the growing Union Colony and continues to be the lifeblood of the region's agriculture community. The #2 Ditch Trail sits within the #2 Ditch right-of-way and is reflective of a successful collaboration between the Town of Windsor and the New Cache la Poudre Irrigating Company, the managing entity for the #2 Ditch. Without the visionary leadership of the New Cache Board and entity staff, this right of way would be off limits like so many ditch right of ways throughout Colorado. The trail along the #2 Ditch is a truly unique experience and is a critical active transportation thoroughfare through the core of Windsor. The #2 Ditch Trail connects the Poudre River Trail on the West end at River Bluffs Open Space and the Great Western Trail to the East as well as many key Windsor public and private destinations, including breweries, a garden center, a grade school, middle school and high school, the Windsor Recreation Center and Police Department, Windsor Lake, grocery stores, retail, and restaurants.

EXISTING TRAILS INVENTORY





2.2 OST DIVISION FUNDING & STAFFING OVERVIEW

CURRENT FUNDING

The OST Division has a budget that averages about \$300,000 annually. Capital projects, such as trail developments, are primarily funded through Park & Trail Development Fees charged per residential unit and from the Larimer County Open Space Tax. The Park & Trail Development Fee, which increased in 2021 from \$5,955 to \$6,255, is tied directly to the strength of the residential construction market. On average, \$1.5 – \$2 million is typically available every year for trail projects. A 2021 Windsor Fee Study estimates that land dedications and the Park & Trail Development Fee will be sufficient to build 40 additional off-street trail miles by the time a buildout population of 75,000 is reached. A significant funding gap exists for open space. Open space lands have never been directly acquired by the Town; they have either been donated or acquired through the Water Fund.

The Larimer County Open Space Tax typically generates about \$200,000 (allocated) yearly to Windsor open space projects, and is based on Windsor's population in Larimer County only. Funds have historically been used for trail development and are only allowed to be used on projects located in the Larimer County side of Windsor.

The Conservation Trust Fund monies come from revenue collected by the State of Colorado on proceeds from sales of lottery tickets. Each participating municipality receives a per capita portion of the proceeds. The amount per capita varies each year with the amount of lottery ticket sales. Approximately \$2 million from the Conservation Trust Fund are received annually.

Grant money typically acquired by Windsor includes funds from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). However, outside funding sources can be unpredictable and

most come with limitations. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and GOCO require that the conserved land not be sold or redeveloped in perpetuity. Some grant programs like GOCO fund major projects yet are highly competitive and cannot be relied upon from year to year. To fully leverage grants, the Town needs matching funds, staff capacity to prepare novel ideas for successful applications, and partners who demonstrate support for the application and/or contribute financially to a joint project.

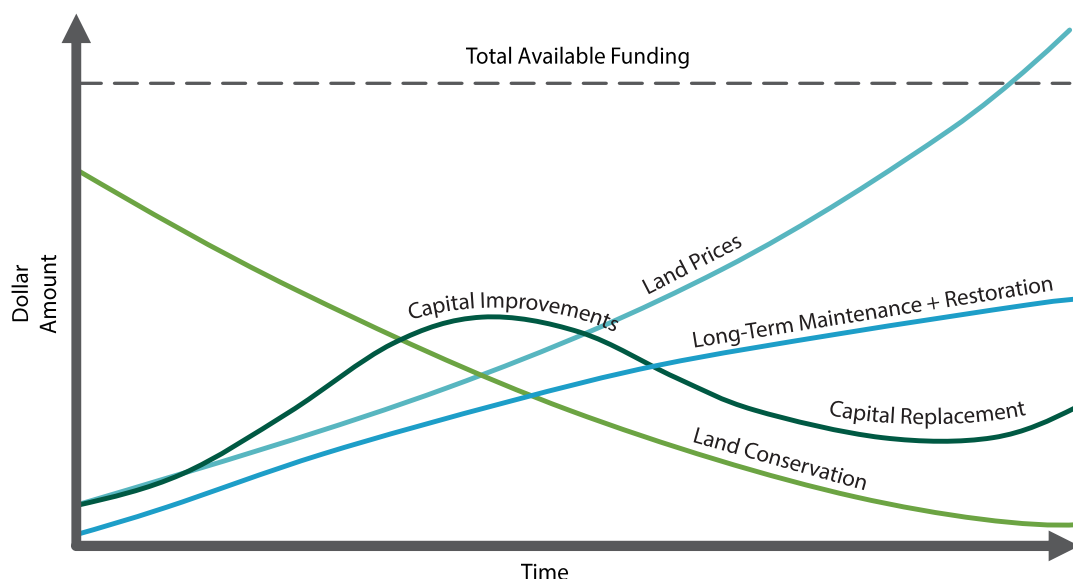
Total available funding for open space is inadequate to accomplish the community's vision without a dedicated funding source. Land prices will continue to increase and acquisition opportunities will decrease without other conservation tools, which are discussed in Chapter 3. Further, only General Funds, collected through sales and property taxes, primarily fund the Division's maintenance and operations of Town-owned open space or trails. In peer communities, these routine activities are typically paid out of a dedicated tax. General Fund dollars are shared amongst all Town functions and priorities. Without sufficient funding for conservation, all existing funds must first be directed to maintenance of the existing open space system.

Spending on parks improvements and open space areas remains a priority as does the enhancement of the Town's multiuse street corridors for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.

-Shane Hale, Town Manager in the 2021 Budget Book

A 2021 Fee Study estimates that land dedications and the Park & Trail Development Fee will be sufficient to build **40 additional off-street trail miles** by the time a buildout population of 75,000 is reached. Funding for additional trail mileage will require new funding sources.

BALANCING DIVISION EXPENSES OVER TIME



STAFFING

The OST Division comprises of a manager and one open space technician. Trails and Open Space was split from the Parks Division in 2018 to prioritize open space and trail maintenance and development.

The Division works closely with other PRC Divisions, the Public Services and Community Development Departments, and adjacent communities to create and manage the open space and trails system. For example, the Culture Division provides programs related to open space and the Engineering Division manages on-street bicycle connections. Regional trail planning efforts are discussed further in Section 2.3.

Current staffing levels are low and gaps exist in maintenance due to the increased population and use. The majority of the gaps affecting the

OST Division are due to the full responsibilities of managing open spaces and trails. These challenges are not uncommon when managing a system within a rapidly growing community/region that has high development and demand for existing/new facilities and services.

Additional staff is needed to properly implement an appropriate level of management and maintenance. Initially, gaps may be able to be partially filled with part-time and seasonal staff. Volunteers can also help reduce the gaps. For example, developing a noxious weed crew of volunteers to assist with removal. However, as the community continues to grow and develop new housing and facilities for public services, there will be a need to add more staff to achieve the outcomes.



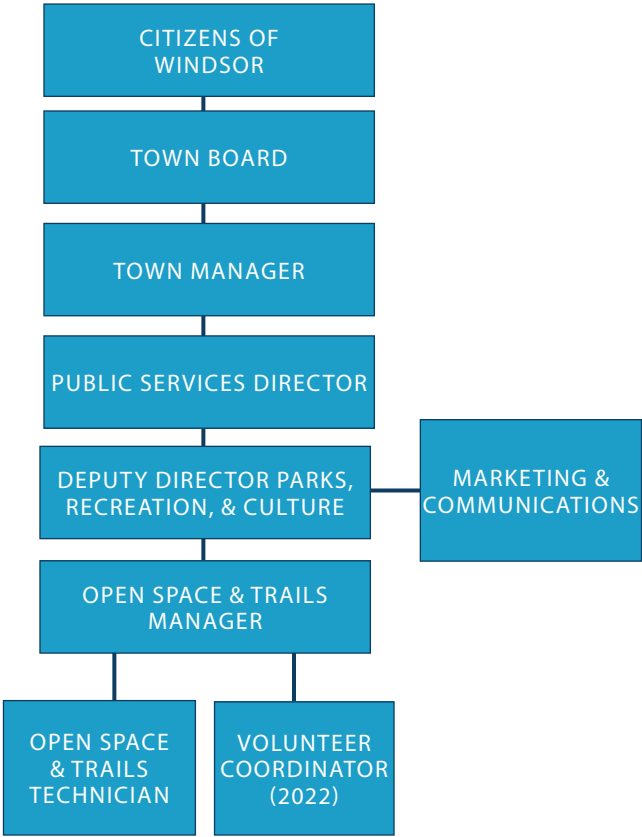
Open space varies greatly from community to community as does the approach to standards for staffing. Some factors that come into the equation are; number of acres, level of public access, assets within the property, and proximity to the population. In some communities like Durango, Colorado, the open space is vast in acres and located outside of the city jurisdiction for passive recreation and active recreation. Then, some are like the Town of Windsor, where the open space separates neighborhoods and are closer to concentrated populations. With several communities that have a hybrid of both. One of the biggest factors impacting the staffing levels other than size and assets is the amount of use open spaces closer to concentrated populations receive. This can increase the need for additional staff. Since there is not a set standard for open space, the Town should consider the current level of service and staffing levels to establish a standard and adapt as assets, trail miles and acreage is added. Documenting the responsibilities in a maintenance management software can help inform decisions as data is collected. This standard does not take into account the planning, public awareness outreach, and administrative responsibilities, that currently, the existing staff work diligently to complete.

Current OST Division Structure

The OST Division falls under the PRC Department and is housed under Public Services, which includes the Public Works Department (PW). Both departments look for opportunities to share resources and collaborate where feasible to ensure efficient operations and management of resources. With that being said, the specialized nature of preservation and maintenance of Windsor’s open spaces and trails requires a unique and strategic approach. Both the OST Division and PW Department are involved in the transportation network with a priority being safety for the traveling public. While PW has a focus on primarily

the roadway cross section, the OST Division focuses on the safe conveyance of non-motorized travelers. Both are also responsible for vegetation management; the PW Department ensures the road right-of-way is maintained free of weeds and vegetation is mowed and the OST Division maintains vegetation in a natural state with an emphasis on providing a natural landscape and preservation of habitat. The functional OST Division structure illustrated in the graphic below represents current operations. While sufficient as a foundational beginning, the need to establish a larger structure based on the division functions will assist in managing the balance of preservation and use. Identification of the primary and secondary functions will help allocate resources appropriately to better prioritize needs.

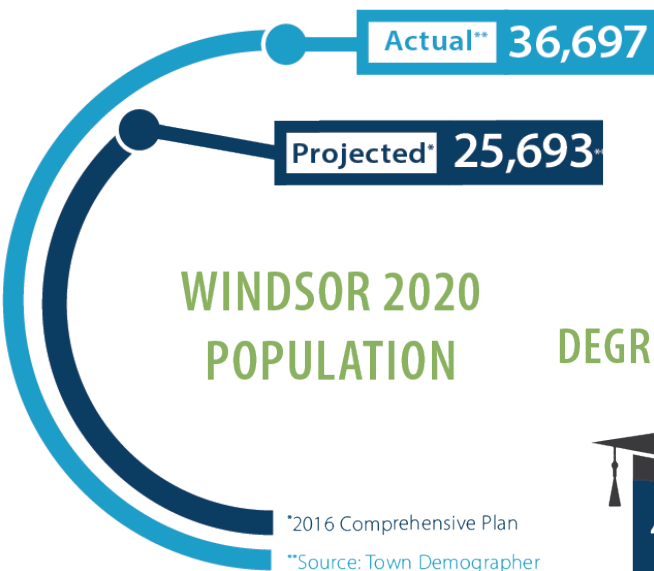
OST DIVISION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



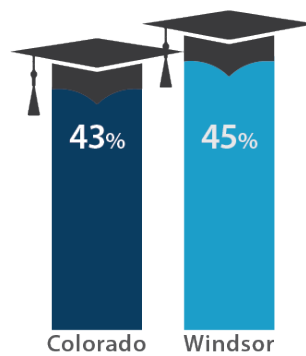
2.3 TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Windsor continues to experience unprecedented residential growth, consistently exceeding prior population projections. The Town's population nearly doubled between 2010 and 2020. In January 2020, the Town Demographer determined Windsor's population to be 36,697, compared to 18,672 in 2010 – an 80% increase. Colorado continues to be one of the fastest growing states. With a total population of 5,773,714, the state gained a new congressional district after the 2020 census. The overall United States population grew by 7.4% between 2010-2020, while Colorado grew by 14.8%. This trend is expected to continue as new housing is permitted daily.

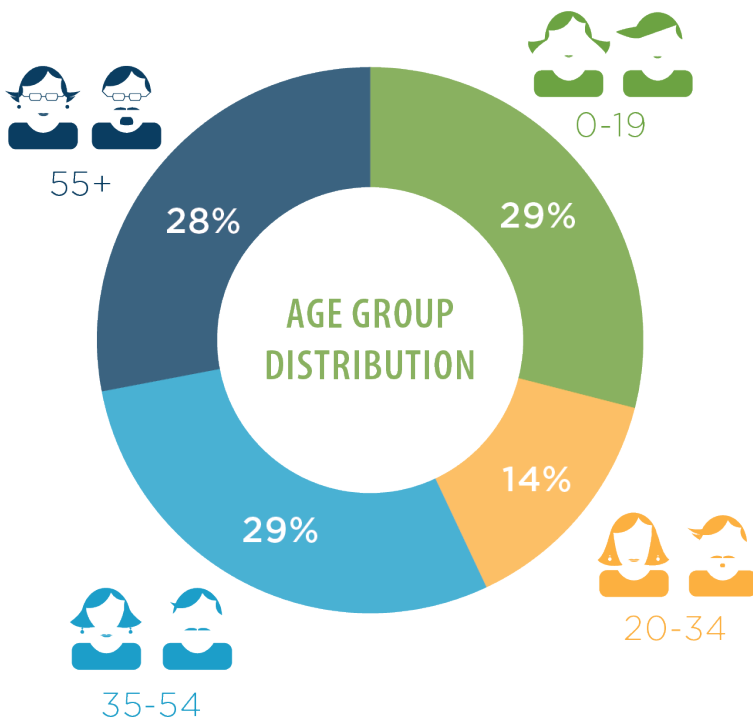


DEGREE ATTAINMENT MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



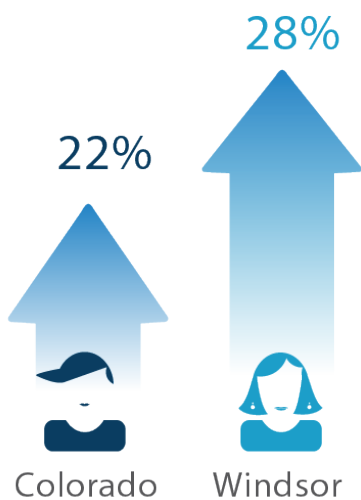
Bachelor's Degree or Higher





Approximately 16.5% of students in the Weld County RE-4 School District are on the free or reduced-priced lunch program. Additionally, Tozer Primary & Mountain View Elementary were classified as Title 1 schools in 2020-2021

CHILDREN UNDER 18

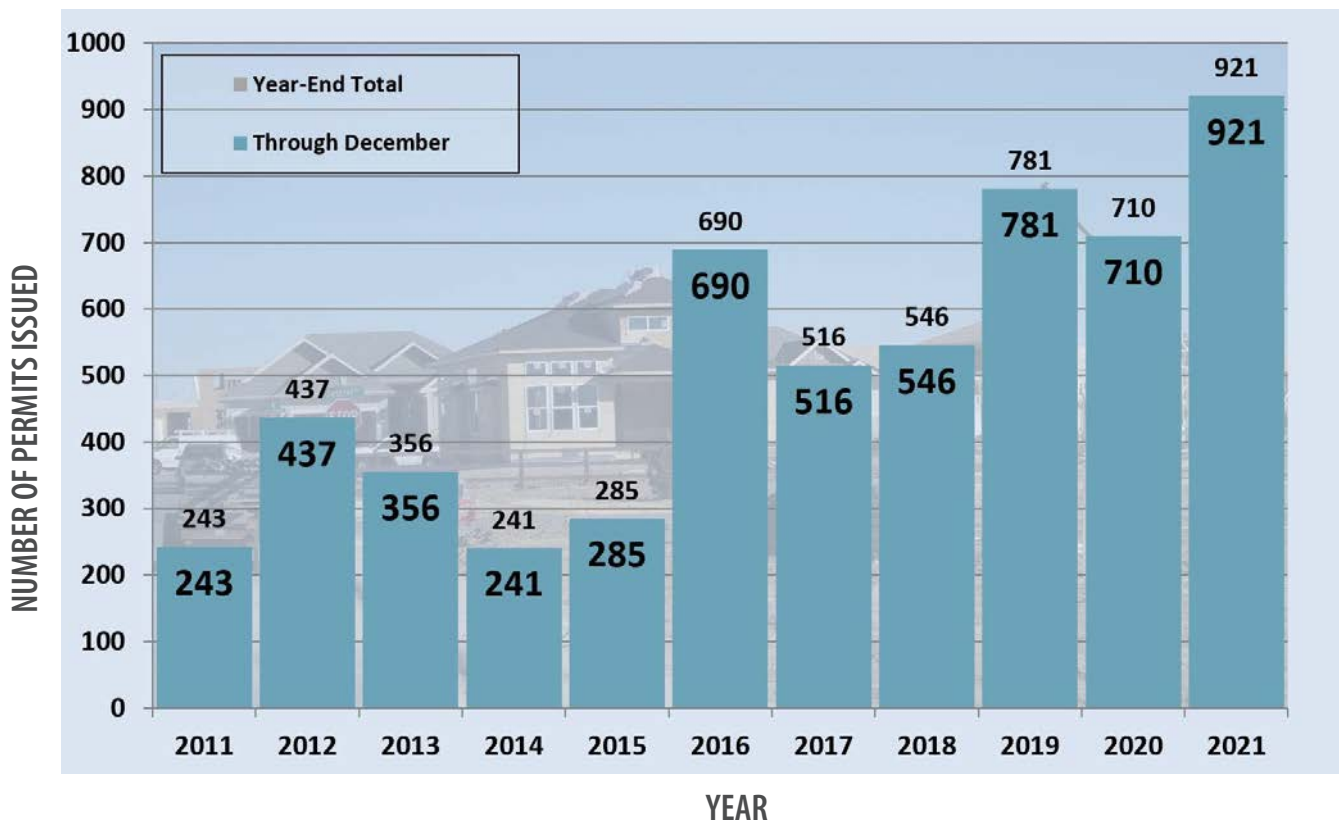


HISPANIC POPULATION



Windsor's population is increasingly comprised of mostly upper-middle class, young families. Across the U.S., the under-18 population is down 1.4%. Windsor's housing is primarily owner-occupied with a low vacancy rate, even with a steady stream of development. Unprecedented growth has occurred since 2016, with 2021 building permits being the highest ever. The majority of new development is single-family housing that has waiting lists to purchase.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PERMITS ISSUED BY YEAR



Source: Town of Windsor Planning Department (December 2021)

Windsor continues to experience unprecedented residential growth, with the Town's population nearly doubling between 2010 and 2020.

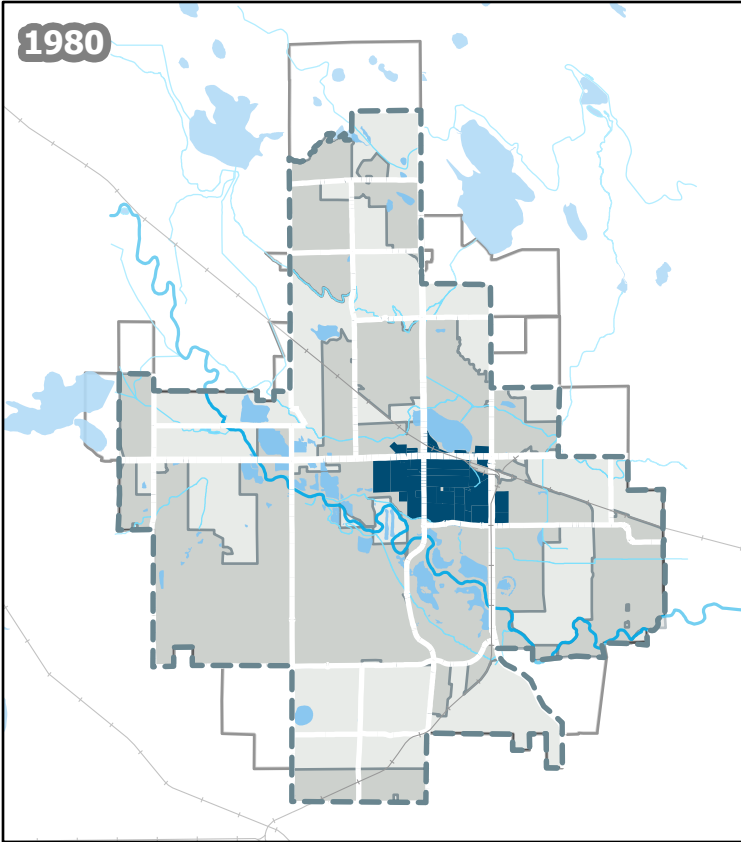
WINDSOR ANNEXATION HISTORY

- Windsor Corporate Limits
- Growth Management Area
- Community Influence Area

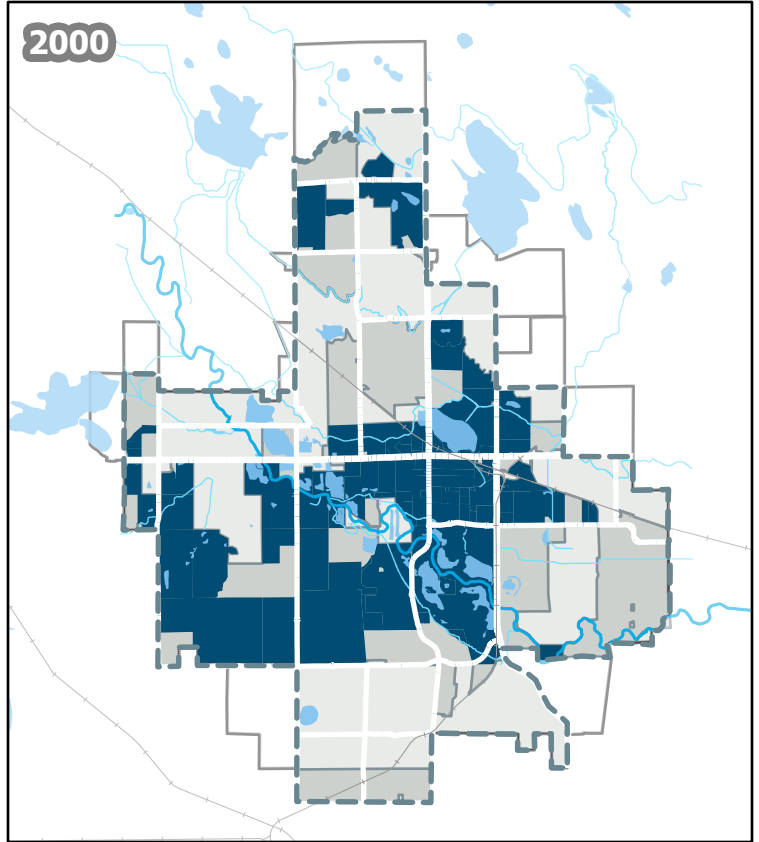


0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

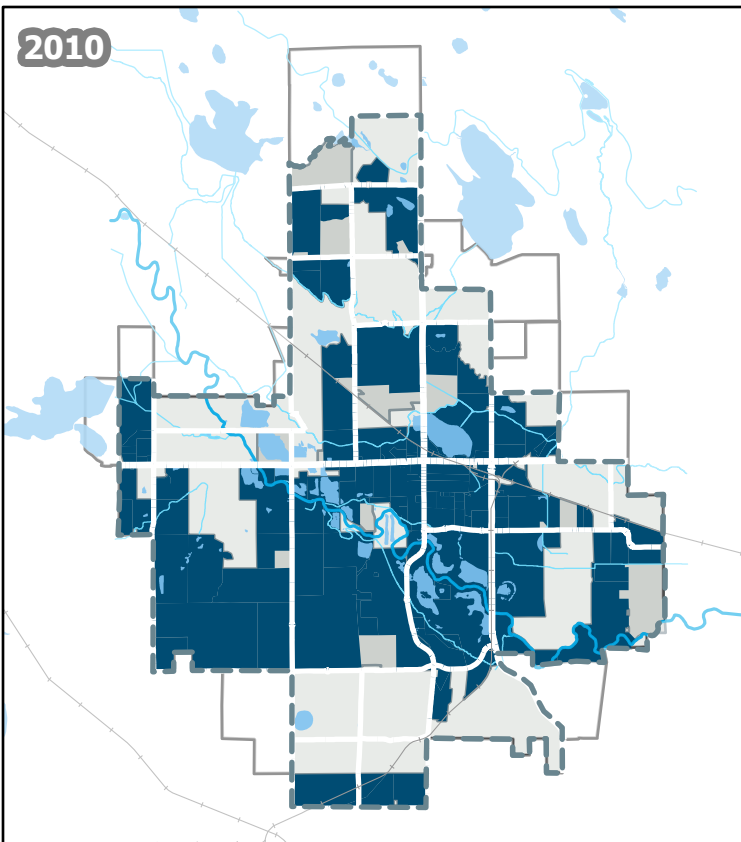
1980



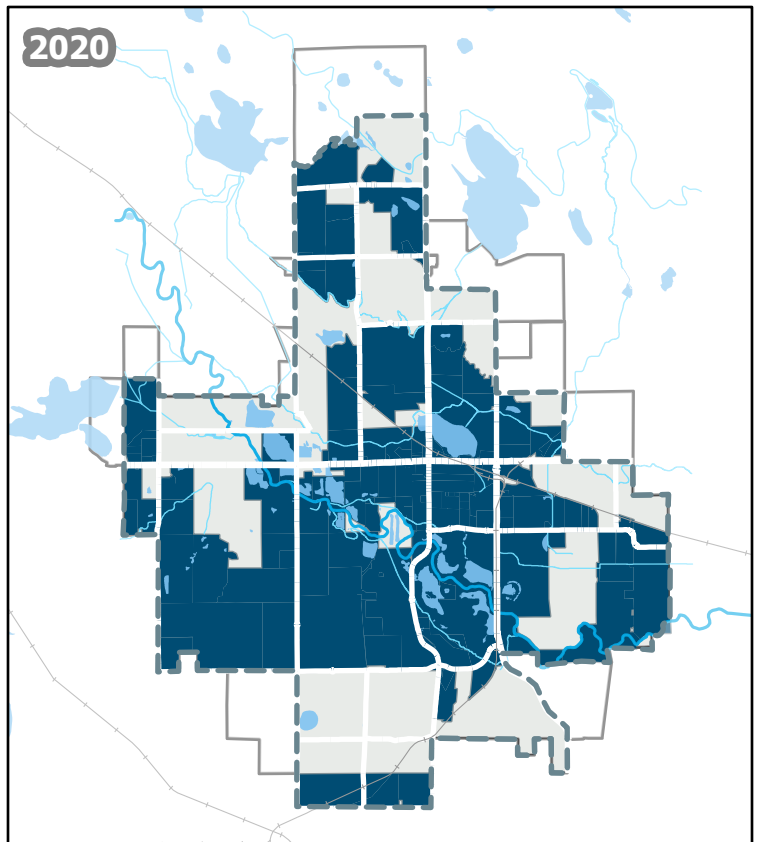
2000



2010

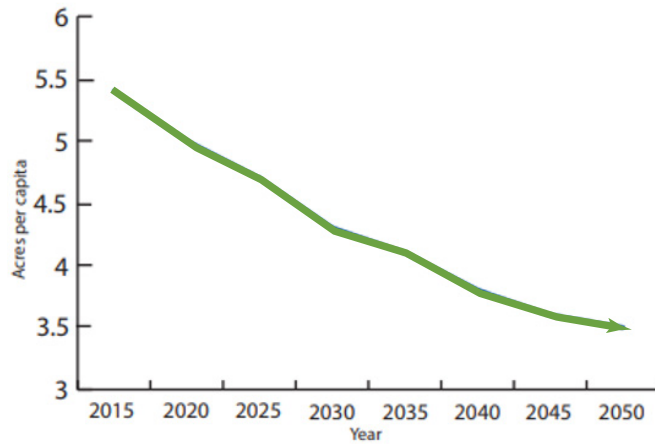


2020



As the population of Windsor continues to grow, demand for outdoor recreation spaces is at an all-time high as documented by previous Town surveys. As in Windsor, the amount of land available for recreation (and associated open space) in the State of Colorado is finite, which will result in a decline in the level of service as the population grows if there are no additional land acquisitions.

Statewide Projected Recreation Acres per Capita



Source: CPW

Statewide acres per capita decline without new acquisitions as population grows.



REGIONAL PLANNING



Windsor is located adjacent to many communities that share similar goals for open space and trails, the Poudre River, and environmental and historic education and interpretation. For example, the OST

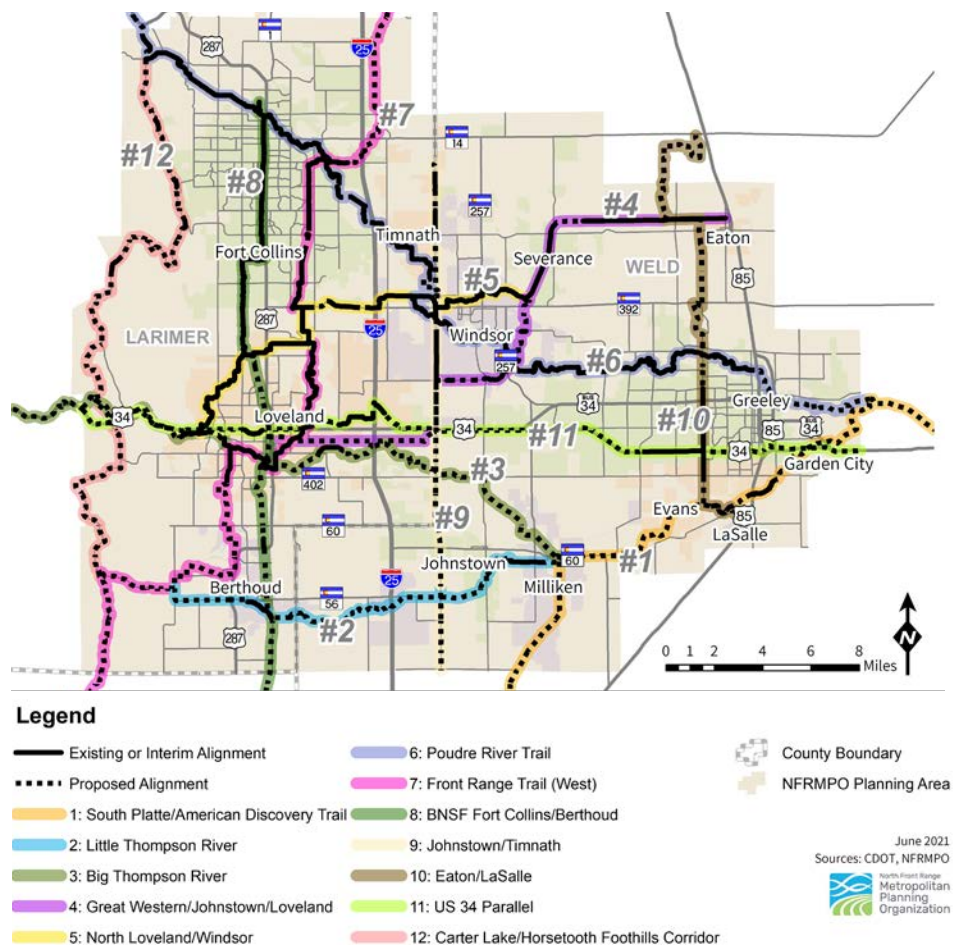
Division Manager provides professional support to the Poudre River Trail Corridor, Inc., a non-profit that maintains and improves the Poudre River Trail in coordination with Weld County and the City of Greeley. The Poudre Heritage Alliance is another non-profit that focuses on education and interpretation of the 45-mile long Cache la Poudre National Heritage Area, which runs through Windsor.

Larimer County and Windsor have agreements to manage the Poudre River Trail through River Bluffs Open Space. Other agreements exist between Greeley and Windsor for co-planning of the community separator in the Shur View area, as well as for other open space acquisition.

Regional trail coordination is vital to the future implementation of a complete and convenient multi-use regional trail network. Larimer County and the Northern Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), as well as the Town of Timnath and the City of Greeley, have completed plans for regional trail corridors, also known as “active transportation corridors.”

In 2021, the NFRMPO updated the Non-Motorized Plan to complete a Regional Active Transportation Plan, which expands important local connections, major barriers, and opportunities for completion. In Windsor, these include the Poudre River Trail, a North Loveland/Windsor connection, and the Great Western Trail.

The 2015 Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan also highlights regional trail corridors and is intended to be used primarily for the coordination of regional connectivity between open space and adjacent jurisdictions.



Communities outline their desired land use patterns through their comprehensive planning process, in which Future Land Use categories are identified to help guide future decision making. The adjacent map shows Future Land Use categories from Windsor and each adjacent municipality, aggregated and simplified to show comparisons to adjacent jurisdictions. All communities are currently committed to protecting the Poudre River as an interconnected habitat corridor for the health of the river ecosystem and the wildlife that depend on it (circled in blue).

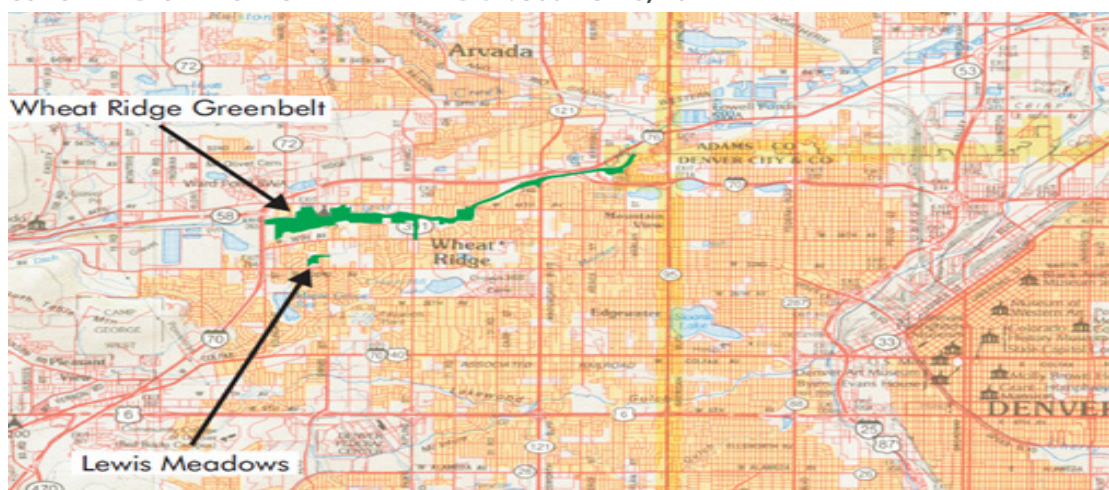
Areas between Greeley and Windsor highlight a current desire to conserve agricultural lands as community separators. The plans also reflect a transition to rural densities between Severance, Timnath, and Johnstown. These green circled areas highlight key opportunities to refine Windsor's priorities and future growth patterns to conserve additional acreages as open space for clear, defined community separators between adjacent municipalities.

DECADE OF DECISION

Most every community along the Front Range wants open space, but not all achieve their goals. In 2000, the City of Wheat Ridge set out to achieve a grassroots vision for open space preservation, but never developed the dedicated funding sources and acquisition methods to retain "its rural past by preserving a mix of natural areas, wildlife habitat, open space and the Clear Creek Greenbelt; as well as physical evidence of the City's agricultural heritage." By the time Wheat Ridge reached Windsor's current population, it was only able to conserve the Clear Creek floodplain, an already-unbuildable, 10-acre meadow.

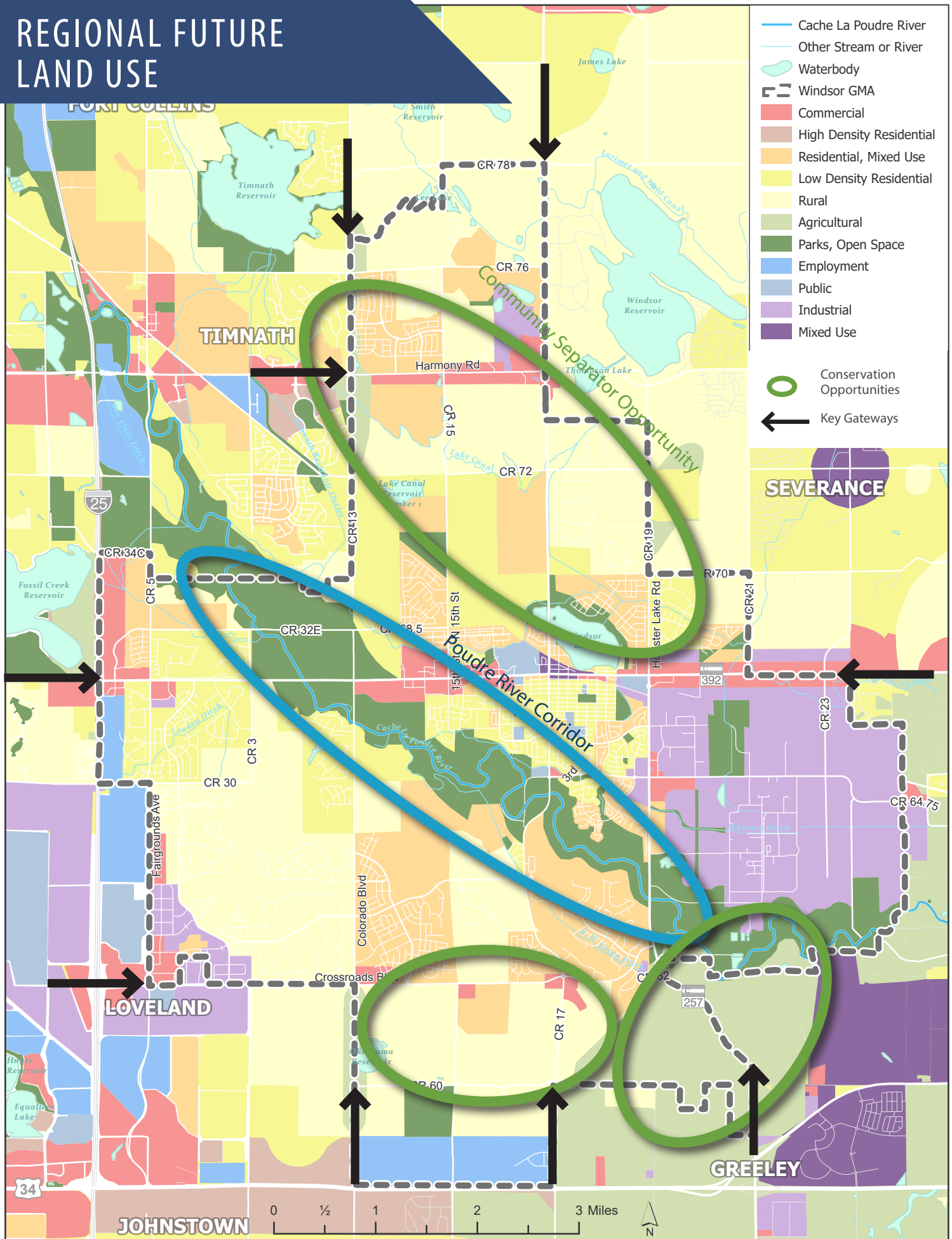
A vision without funding mechanisms is only a delusion. Wheat Ridge missed the opportunity of a lifetime because it failed to act within the lifetime of the opportunity. Open space planning is fundamentally different from parks. Parks are built concurrently with subdivision development. Open space must be secured a decade ahead of subdivisions, or the opportunity is lost.

CONSERVED OPEN SPACE IN WHEAT RIDGE: 300 ACRES, 2021



WHEAT RIDGE
POP. 32,398

REGIONAL FUTURE LAND USE



PEER-COMMUNITY COMPARISONS

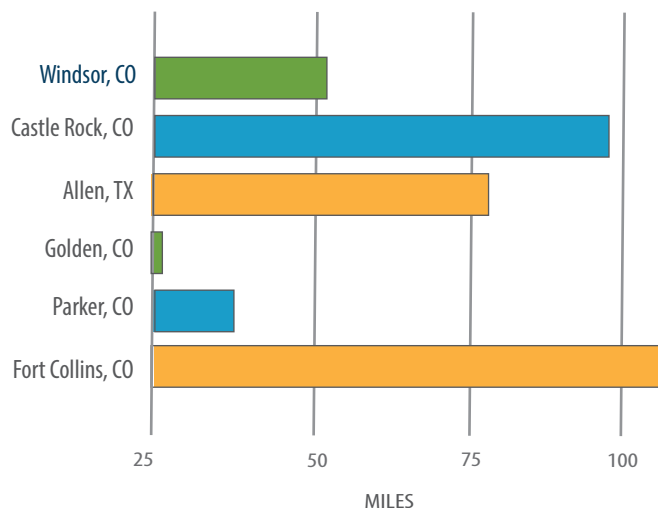
Across the West, many communities are striving to improve the quality of life for residents through conserving open space and providing trails. Building off of the peer agencies identified in the PRC Strategic Plan, additional communities were assessed that had larger open space and trail programs. Those that do not manage open space were removed from the analysis.

	Windsor	Castle Rock, CO	Allen, TX	Golden, CO	Parker, CO	Fort Collins, CO
Population	36,697	73,158	106,062	20,749	58,512	167,823
Dedicated Open Space/Trails Funding Source	A portion of Larimer County 25-year, 1/4 cent sales tax (2014) For trails, a portion of Park & Trail Development Fee	A portion of Douglas County:	None	1/2 cent sales tax	Parks and Recreation Fund (sales tax, use tax, excise tax, note matures in 2025), Public Improvements Fund (use tax and developer contributions)	City: 25-year, 1/4 cent sales tax (2002) A portion of Larimer County: 25-year, 1/4 cent sales tax (2014)
Annual Budget*	\$300,000	\$5,747,381 (General Fund Parks Division)	\$1 million	\$800,000, from sales tax, total of \$1.6 million	\$7,788,631 (recreation budget for 2021)	\$13 million
Open Space Acres	1,120.5	6,000	1,364	402	1,200	36,600
Acres per 1,000 Population	31.1	82	12.9	19.4	20.5	218.1
Miles of Off-Street Trail	57	95	78	24	35	110
Miles of Off-Street Trail per 1,000 population	1.55	1.3	0.74	1.16	0.6	0.66

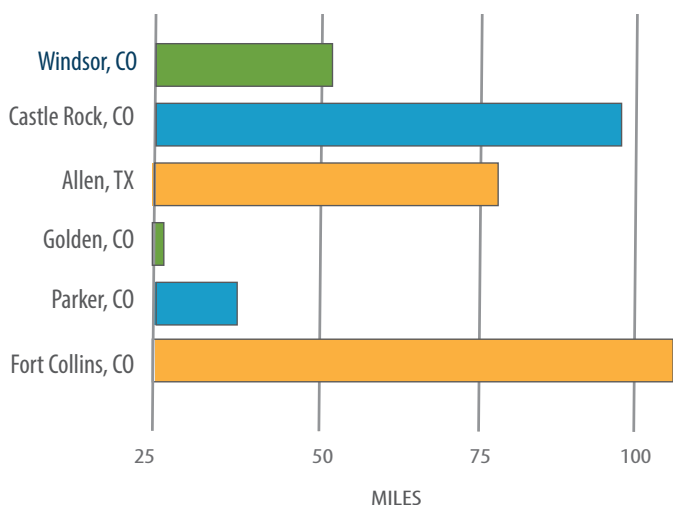
* The Annual Budget numbers for each agency are not identical since many agencies have not provided a breakdown of their Open Space and Trails budget but rather an overall budget number itself.



MILES OF OFF-STREET TRAIL BY COMMUNITY



ACRES OF OPEN SPACE MANAGED PER 1,000 CITIZENS



TAKING INSPIRATION FROM WINDSOR'S NAMESAKE

Windsor, CO can look to its namesake, Windsor England, for inspiration. The home of Windsor Castle and one-thousand years of British kings and queens, Windsor, England boasts some of the highest median incomes in the UK and a premier quality of life. How? By directing growth toward its center, at three times the density as Windsor CO, and conserving nearly twenty square miles around its perimeter. Critical choices in the Town's upcoming Comprehensive Plan include where to grow, how to grow, and where not to grow.

	WINDSOR, CO	WINDSOR, ENGLAND
Population (2020)	36,697	33,000
Median Income (2020 US Dollars)	\$99,732	\$65,465
Tenure (years)	131	1,000+
Square Miles	96.72	20.56
Agricultural Preservation	120 acres	1 mi. buffer from Town Limits



LOCAL AND REGIONAL RECREATION TRENDS

Awareness of Open Space & Trails Benefits

Open space is invaluable for both its life-giving and planet-saving benefits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people have turned to parks, trails, and outdoor recreation spaces like never before (Town EcoCounter) for fresh air, safe space, exercise, physical-distance gatherings, and mental rejuvenation. Additionally, people are staying closer to home instead of traveling internationally or flying across state borders. The effects of the pandemic emphasize the importance of outdoor recreation, recreation tourism, and outdoor-based leisure activities and their role in the physical and mental health of residents as well as economic impacts from tourism (OIA & Naxion 2021).

Other community-wide economic benefits of open spaces include ecosystem services. A healthy ecosystem can help pre-treat stormwater, mitigate floods, lower ambient temperatures, sequester carbon, and reduce soil erosion. These services provided by nature reduce the costs to treat water, recover after floods, cool homes, and restore soil-eroded lands. Additionally, working farms and the historical landscape of Windsor reduce the amount of land cover that is paved or developed, avoiding the negative impacts of heat islands associated with pavement and creating community separators that keep Windsor unique from its neighboring cities and towns.

In 2020, 160.7 million Americans participated in at least one outdoor activity -- **7.1 million more** than in 2019.

Outdoor Industry Association 2021 *Outdoor Participation Trends Report*

Bicycle and pedestrian trip are tracked throughout Windsor. Over 445,000 trips were counted in 2021!

	Pedestrians	Cyclists
Boardwalk Park	125,072	8,137
Eastman Park	88,703	45,592
Poudre East	32,688	50,959
#2 Ditch Trail CRC	37,190	37,190



Public Health & Equitable Access

Interaction with nature has many psychological, cognitive, physiological, and social human health benefits. Effects on mental processes and behaviors such as reduced anxiety and tension, increased self-esteem, increased academic performance, and increased prosocial behavior may all be attributed to contact with the natural world. Similarly, “aesthetic appreciation of biodiversity may contribute to the cultural and emotional components of human well-being” (Sandifer et al. 2015). Further, increased physical activity through parks and recreation programs help improve the physical and mental health of residents, in turn, lowering health care related expenses for members of the community.

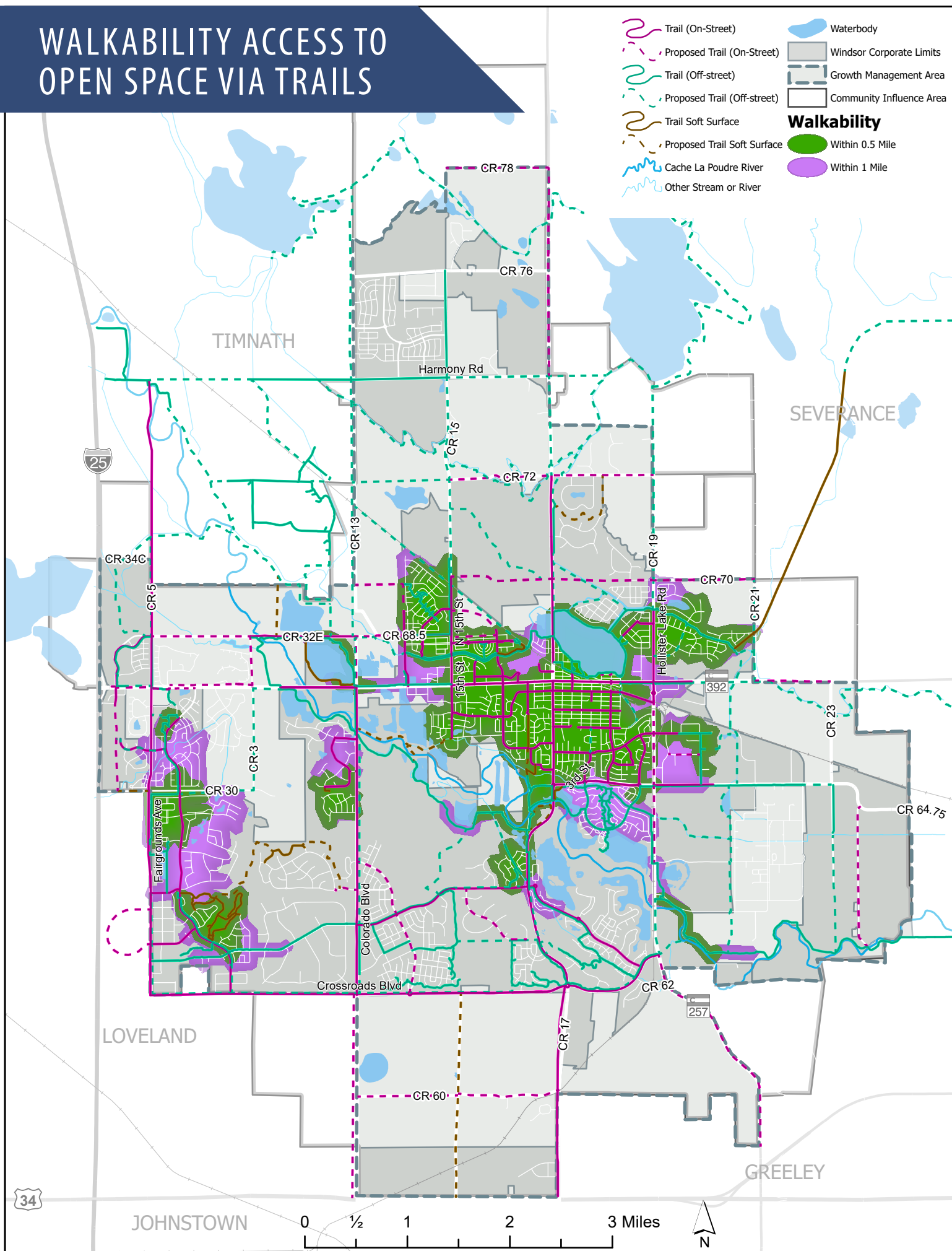
The Walkability Access Map identifies areas of Windsor that are provided access to a trail connection within a 0.5 mile or 1 mile distance from their homes. Access throughout residential areas is critical as people will visit open space more frequently if they are located within a reasonable walking distance. This analysis considers all trails as well as the pedestrian network (sidewalks) as safe and ideal transportation options. The map shows reasonable access for most residents. Notably, newer developments such as Harmony Ridge and Rain Dance have less access.



“Children with a park or playground within half a mile of their homes are almost five times more likely to be a healthy weight than children without playgrounds or parks nearby.”

Generation Wild, Get Outdoors Colorado

WALKABILITY ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE VIA TRAILS

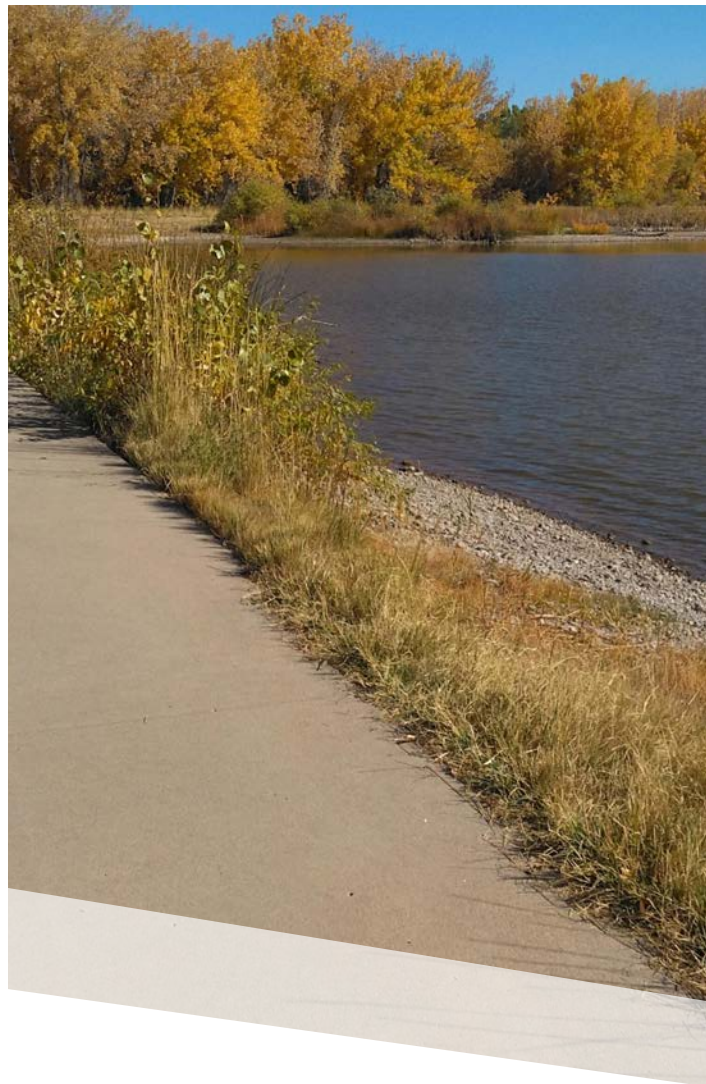


Visitation Trends and Economic Impact

Approximately 92% of Coloradans recreate in the outdoors and most of the visitors to the state are coming, in part, for the unique recreational opportunities it provides (SCORP, 2020). In Windsor, open spaces are provided as a public service and the community is able to use them free of cost, which makes them an attractive option for outdoor recreation.

Open space and trails are recognized as major contributors to economic development. Increasingly, especially amid the COVID global pandemic, employees are choosing where they want to live and work based on the quality of life in a community, including access to trails and open spaces. Home buyers and employers are willing to pay a premium for proximity to open space and trailheads (Journal of Leisure Research, 2019). These assets influence business expansion decisions and attract new residents to a community, as well as retain some of the best and brightest local employees. Many business owners first learn about places as visitors or tourists; these positive recreational experiences can influence both business and talent recruitment.

Colorado's outdoor recreation industry adds \$12.2 billion to the GDP annually and generates 149,140 jobs. In 2019, Colorado ranked 9th among all states in outdoor recreation value added, and 14th among all states in outdoor recreation value added growth.



Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area generates \$81.6 million in economic impact, supports 1,067 jobs, and generates \$6.9 million in tax revenue.

The Economic Impact of National Heritage Areas, Fall 2017

2.4 NATURE IN WINDSOR: ECOSYSTEMS & WILDLIFE

OVERVIEW

The ecosystems in Windsor provide a multitude of tangible benefits and services, apart from their intrinsic values. Generally speaking, these services are categorized into four groups: 1) provisioning services, such as food, water, and fuel; 2) regulating services, such as climate, disease, and pollination; 3) cultural services for sharing heritage values and recreation; and, 4) supporting services, such as nutrient cycling (USFS, 2016). These human benefits are driven largely by biodiversity, or the variety of life within an area (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

Biodiversity is integral to important environmental processes that support ecosystems, especially with resiliency and resistance to large disturbance events, because diverse systems have multiple ways they can rebound. Colorado is home to over 960 native wildlife species (SWAP, 2015). More than 50 species of mammals, over 140 species of birds, and approximately 50 species of reptiles and amphibians are known to occur in Windsor area and interact with nutrient, water, and climate cycles in profound ways (The Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, 2016, Amphibians and Reptiles in Colorado, 2nd Edition, 1999).

Biodiversity is just as impactful in urban settings as it is in large, undeveloped ecosystems. Understanding that urbanization is a major driver of ecosystem loss throughout the state, it is still possible to achieve sustainable growth while supporting essential ecosystem services. Human development can create novel habitats, which, in abundance, may increase the overall species richness of an area (Rebele, 2004).

VALUABLE IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

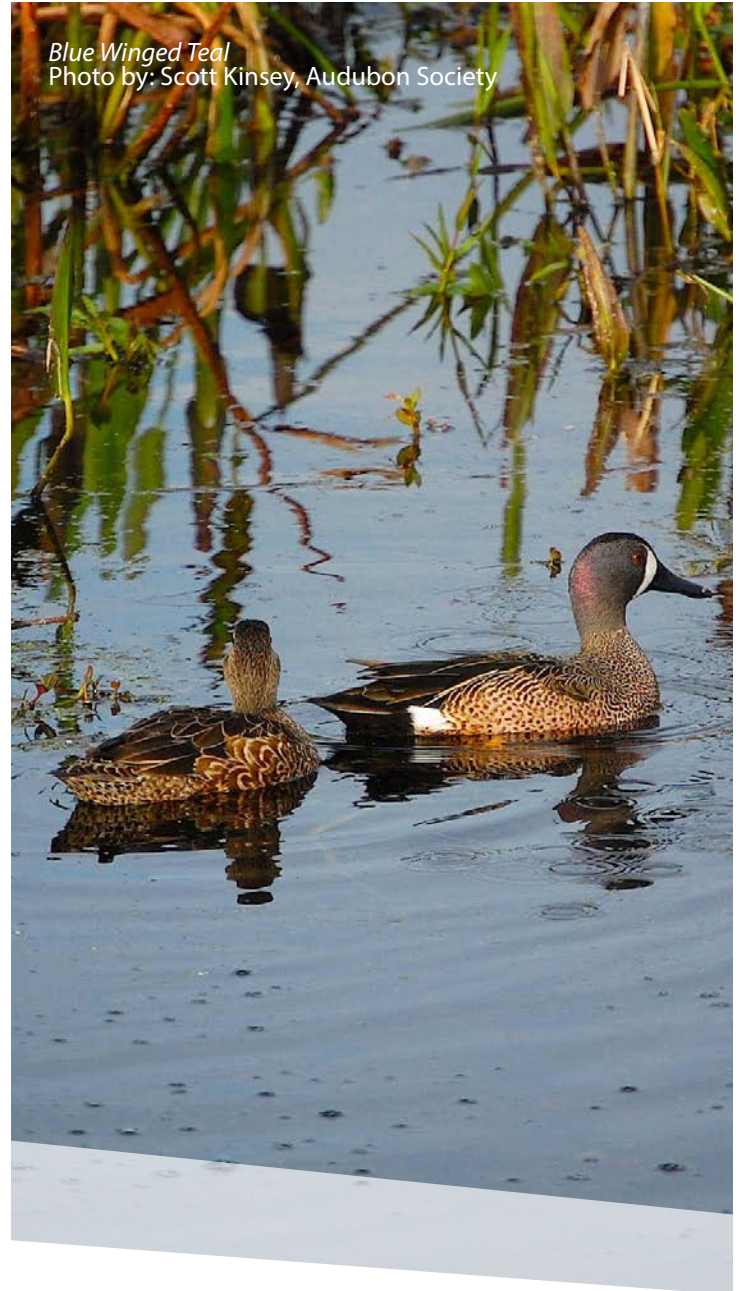
True, nature benefits humans. Yet each wildlife, plant, and insect species has tremendous worth springing from respect for life, for their long evolutionary heritage and potential, even if there is not a direct or monetary benefit to humans.



Windsor is located within the Central High Plains of Colorado (Major Land Resource Area [MLRA] 67B – Central High Plains, Southern Part) (NRCS, 2006). Over the past 120 years, residential developments converted much of the agricultural lands to streets, homes, landscaped yards, and developed parks leaving remnants in areas that are difficult to develop. A more focused look at vegetation communities within the Town and its Growth Management Area reveals an abundance of biological and ecological activity in a variety of settings – wetlands, riparian areas, and cottonwood gallery forest; uplands and shortgrass prairie; and bluffs. These habitats are highly variable, making wildlife one of the important considerations in determining conservation priorities.

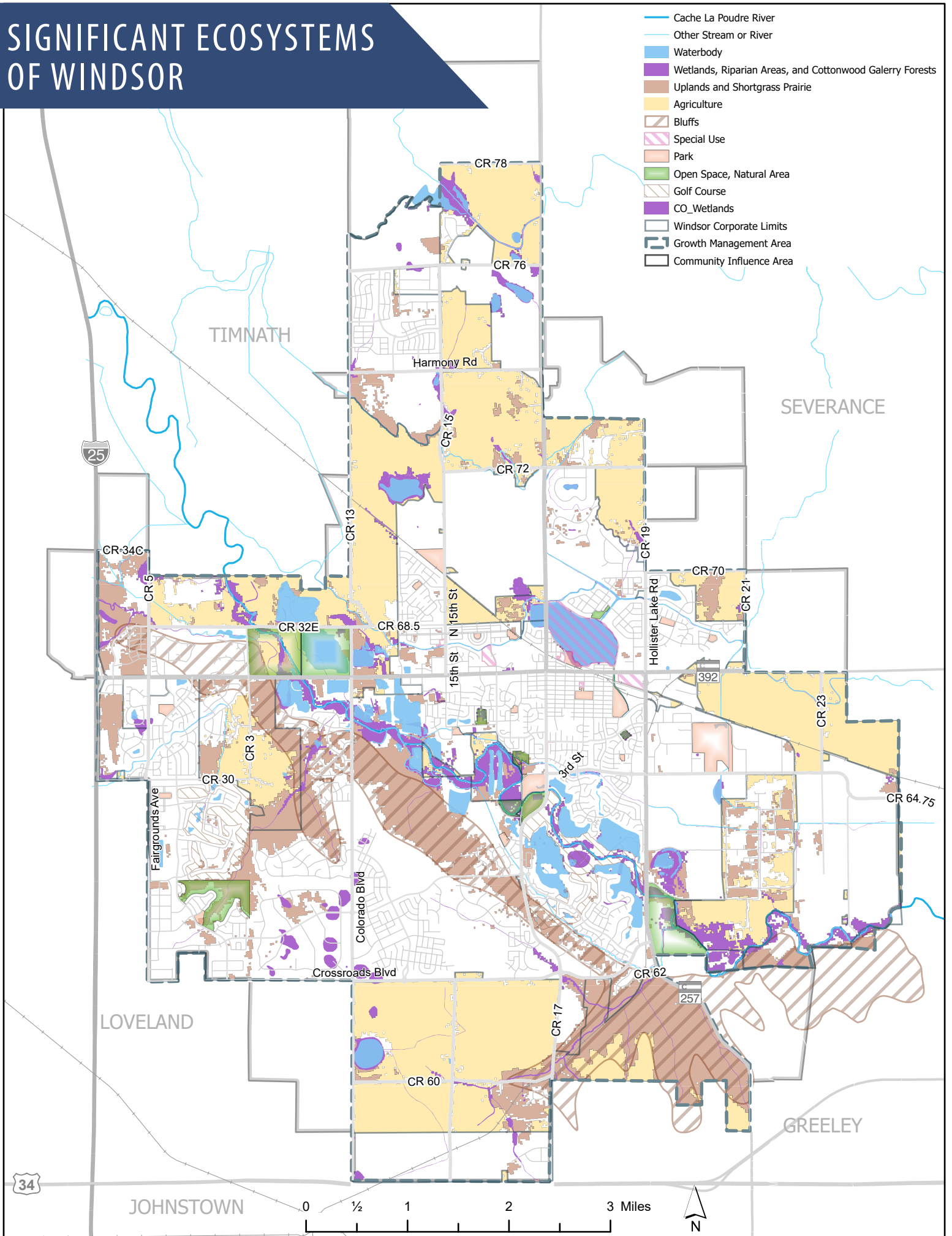
Eighty-one (81) different species of birds were observed at Windsor Lake in 2021.

Crowd-sourced bird counts recorded at ebird.org



Blue Winged Teal
Photo by: Scott Kinsey, Audubon Society

SIGNIFICANT ECOSYSTEMS OF WINDSOR



UPLANDS AND SHORTGRASS PRAIRIE

A large portion of the Town encompasses upland vegetation communities such as shortgrass prairie, grasslands, shrublands, and more, which are known to be dry and arid. These upland areas developed, in part, due to being in the rain shadow of the Rocky Mountains. Though much of the prairie ecosystem has been impacted by grazing and agriculture, complicated soil matrices and abundant plant and animal life persist. Characteristic cool and warm season grass species such as Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*) and blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), respectively, cover the ground alongside a multitude of herbaceous flowering plants like sundrops (*Calylophus* spp.), coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*), and paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), at times leaving space for shrub species such as saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) and rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) to establish (NatureServe, 2020c). These types of native grasses and plants require less water, reduce impacts on water quality, provide healthier habitats for wildlife, and require less maintenance than turf grasses (e.g., Kentucky Bluegrass) commonly found in developed parks and recreation spaces. Biological symbioses and composite organisms such as lichens may occur in less vegetated portions where soils are bare. Although dominant species in these upland areas are wind pollinated and dispersed, many of the forbs are dependent on pollination by wildlife such as bees (Apoidea), butterflies (Lepidoptera), beetles (Coleoptera), and hummingbirds (NatureServe, 2020c).

The arid and wide-open environment of prairies has caused some wildlife to evolve special adaptations to survive, such as the ability to move rapidly (like pronghorn) or the ability to live underground (like prairie dogs). Though often dominated by grass species such as blue grama, scattered native forbs and shrubs provide for variation in diets.

Shortgrass prairie and upland habitats have been considerably impacted due to encroachment, increased use, and disturbance from humans. Once-thriving wildlife species such as wolves, grizzly bears, elk, black-footed ferrets, sharp-tailed grouse, prairie chickens, burrowing owls, ferruginous hawks, swift foxes, and more have disappeared due to human influence. Similarly, grassland bird species have declined in abundance as habitat is converted for human use.



Photo Credit: Colorado Virtual Public Library

The Poudre River affords a wealth of vegetation communities such as riparian woodlands and shrublands, and herbaceous wetlands, among others. Freshwater emergent wetlands are scattered around the Town, while forested shrub wetlands tend to follow the Poudre River. Floodplains may completely inundate some habitats early in the year then dry out, resulting in unique conditions where both upland and wetland plants can survive. As the riverbed is scoured and the banks are displaced, the meandering river is constantly creating new habitats and providing a much-needed supply of water to others.

Poudre River riparian areas are known for large woody species such as willows (*Salix* spp.) and cottonwoods (*Populus* spp.), but they also support smaller herbaceous species such as rushes (*Schoenoplectus* spp., etc) and sedges (*Eleocharis* spp., etc.) that are specially adapted to live in wet soils, and ecologically important forbs such as milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.). All of these communities together help to regulate sediment transport and erosion, while also providing crucial habitat for wildlife (NatureServe, 2020a, 2020b).

2015

July 2013

1984

1948

E County Rd 32

Reach 5

1969 Active Channel

2015 Active Channel

Project Reach Breaks

1948 River Centerline

Roads

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

N

Sny Lake

Winds or

Boyd Lake

Lower Poudre River
Historical Aerial Imagery
Reach 5:
River Bluffs

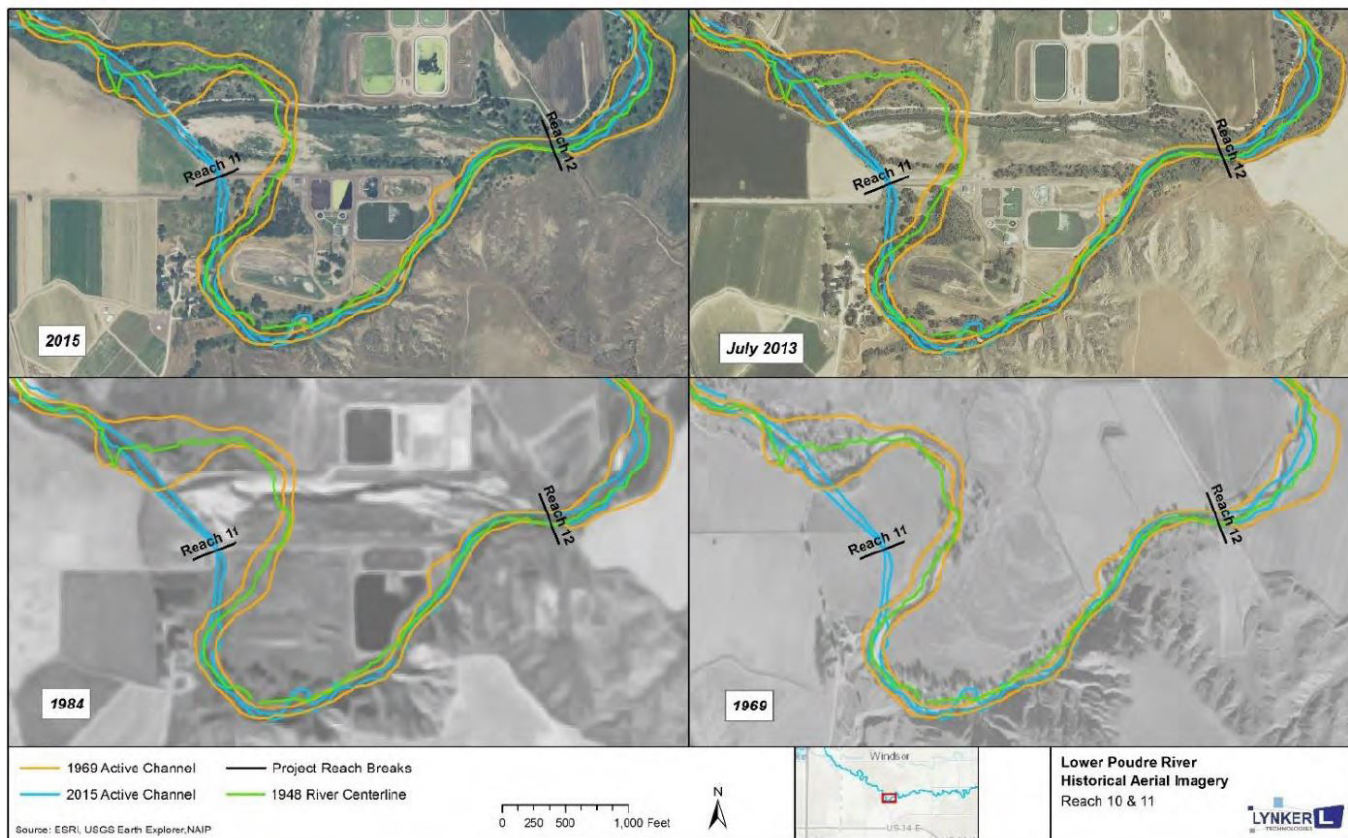
LYNKER
TECHNOLOGIES


source: ESRI, USGS Earth Explorer, NAIP

Cottonwood gallery forests line the Poudre River through the Town. These are areas with mature cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*) with a diverse understory of other native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species. Cottonwood roots provide a multitude of important ecological benefits, such as streambank and floodplain stabilization, sediment trapping, and protection from the sun for fish and other aquatic species. The trees themselves serve as important nesting habitat for birds and raptors, while providing shade below for other wildlife species. Because older trees are susceptible to changes in natural hydrologic conditions, and regeneration is limited by deer browsing, conservation of cottonwood gallery forests may be challenging, but is still possible.

Open space preservation gives the river room to move, thereby reducing future flood damage.

POUDRE RIVER CHANNEL MOVEMENT AT KODAK OPEN SPACE

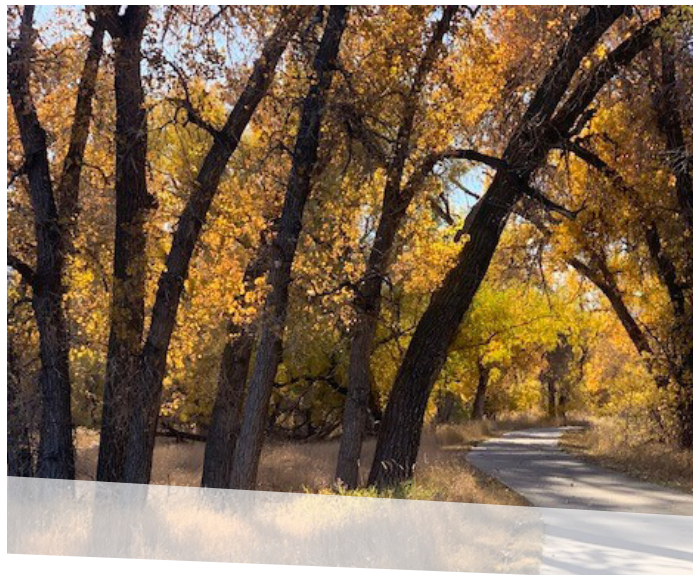




Riparian woodlands serve as migration and movement corridors for many wildlife species and provide them with food, water, shelter, cover from predators, and much needed space. The river's health plays a large role in the quality of riparian habitat. For example, long and undisturbed sections of rivers provide shelter from human pressures and help to prevent transmission of wildlife disease by distributing species over larger areas. Similarly, wetlands serve a large role in the success of wildlife. Emergent wetlands, or bodies of water surrounded by vegetation, provide habitat for a variety of waterfowl, marsh birds, amphibians, and aquatic species. Depending on the season, adjacent upland areas may flood, which temporarily increases habitat for water birds, insects, and invertebrates, as well as replenishing ground water and soil moisture for survival of plants. Playas, or seasonal wetland areas within uplands, provide similar benefits to wildlife, with the added influence of seasonal stopover habitat for migrating species.

Seasonal changes in vegetation within riparian and wetland habitats also impact wildlife species. In spring, nutritious forbs and shrubs begin to grow, alleviating starvation periods from winter. As groundwater thaws, vegetation becomes more abundant, which in summer may provide shelter and a place for offspring to hide. In the fall, the onset of berries and new growth of late season forbs provide additional nutrition and help to prepare wildlife for the coming winter.

Riparian areas are threatened by urban and recreational development in nearby upland habitat, which serves as a buffer for sensitive areas (SWAP, 2015). As these upland areas are disturbed, invasive plant species such as myrtle spurge and cheatgrass, and animal species such as racoons, may invade and dominate sensitive riparian habitat. This upland pressure is magnified by human activity, which may lead to wildlife abandoning riparian habitats and the formation of biological deserts, or areas with very low ecological and wildlife benefit.



The Cache La Poudre National Heritage Area was designated by Congress in 2009 and extends the entire length of Windsor and a total of 45 miles. Its significance is attributed to the river's roles in the development of water law in the Western United States, the evolution of water delivery systems, and the shaping of the region's cultural heritage. These contributions are all commemorated along the flood plain of this "working river" through programs and activities that combine the area's rich history, beautiful scenery and many opportunities for recreation.

Photo credit: National Park Service

BLUFFS

Bluffs, cliffs, and outcrops occur along the Poudre River through the Town. These typically sandstone and limestone systems offer limited habitat for plant life. However, within shelves, cracks, and crevices in the rock, drought and wind tolerant vegetation communities will develop in the limited soils. Short shrubs such as three-leaf sumac (*Rhus trilobata*) and long-leaf sage (*Artemisia longifolia*), and mixed-grass species such as side oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), or prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*) dominate, though vegetation cover in general is sparse (NatureServe, 2020d). These areas are strongly influenced by drought and wind erosion, which impact the development and accumulation of soils.

Bluffs can act as a haven for many wildlife species by providing cover and protection, refuge during periods of extreme temperature, and much needed forage. Missile Silo Park, for example, overlooks the Poudre River and hosts an abundance of gamble oaks (*Quercus gambelii*) and chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). Bluffs provide a unique water resource and cooling effect in a relatively dry area, which allows wildlife to thrive. Because of this, drainages are used by deer and turkeys, small mammals will burrow into soft soil within the vertical structures, birds will nest and forage in denser forested areas, and reptiles may access sun with nearby shelter from predators.

Further, bluffs are culturally and socially important areas, both historically and currently. Prehistoric artifacts have been found in the area, highlighting the importance of bluffs use as shelters, tool sharpening sites, and bison kills. In modern times, bluffs serve as community and neighborhood buffers, while providing scenic quality not found elsewhere in the



Town. These areas may attract visitors seeking wildlife and nature viewing opportunities and solitude. Opportunities for interpretation include: increased understanding and appreciation for natural resources, increased public awareness of natural systems and processes, and opportunities to share important historic resources that may occur nearby.

AGRICULTURE

Like many towns in northern Colorado, sugar beet farming contributed greatly to the growth and development of Windsor. As sugar beet production grew, so did the economy, helping farming families to thrive (Town of Windsor, 2021). The rich soils in the area also supported wheat crops, leading to establishment of a flour mill (Windsor Area Chamber of Commerce, 2021). However, Windsor and the surrounding area has lost prime farmland and cropland through development and conversion to urban use. Conservation of agricultural land uses may be improved by irrigation water management, conservation tillage, nutrient management, and prescribed grazing, among other factors (NRCS, 2006).

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identifies and classifies soils throughout the country. To satisfy NRCS criteria for prime farmland, soils must have adequate physical and chemical characteristics to support agricultural activities that produce food, feed, fiber, and other crops (NRCS, 2021). Much of the soils within the Town are classified as prime farmland, if irrigated, meaning that additional supply of water is needed to supplement typical precipitation (NRCS, 2020). Additionally, some of the soils within the Town are classified as farmland of statewide importance, which is land that has met additional criteria determined by the Colorado State Experiment Station, Colorado State Department of Agriculture, and the Colorado State Soil Conservation Board.

Historically, agricultural areas have not been framed in the context of ecology, but it may be considered surrogate habitat for the purpose of conservation. Sustainable and holistic agricultural and grazing practices improve soil health, rangeland function, water quality, and support both vegetation and wildlife species diversity. While farmland provides less habitat values than native vegetation, deer and antelope can be found grazing in fallow fields, and microbiomes in the soil may still teem with life. Other benefits include providing community separators and open spaces for scenic views and maintaining the region's economic diversity such as farm-to-table market and dining opportunities.



Photo by: Timothy Hurst/Fort Collins Coloradoan via AP

PLANNING OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS WITH WILDLIFE

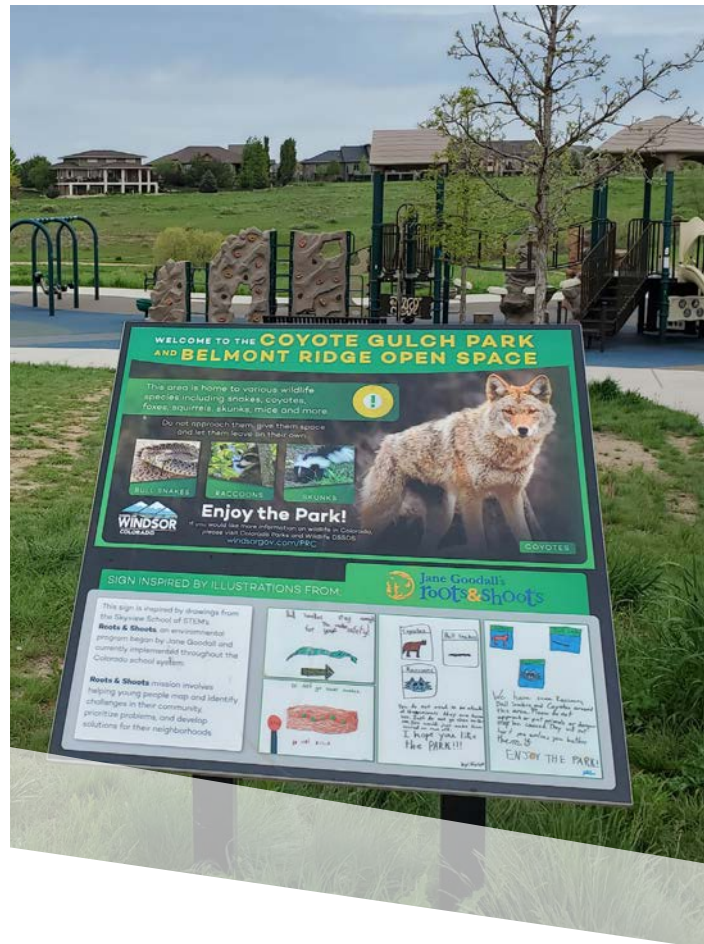
Recreation Impacts on Wildlife

All recreation has an impact on wildlife, both directly and indirectly. Wildlife may decrease in abundance or density, experience increases in stress or reduced reproductive success, and develop behavioral changes. With more year-round recreation, fish and wildlife are affected during their sensitive breeding and nesting seasons. Unmanaged recreation compacts soils, brings in weeds that overtake native forage vegetation, and the growing number of people means that it becomes harder for wildlife to avoid human interaction. Literature demonstrates that recreation and trails may displace wildlife at a variety of ranges; mule deer may avoid an area nearly one quarter mile from trails (Audrey and Knight, 2003), and some species of songbirds 250 to 330 feet (Miller et al., 2001).

Minimizing Impact

Development impacts on wildlife can be minimized if not avoided. As urban density increases, the quality of wildlife habitat must increase. Similarly, as development fragments wildlife habitats, larger habitat blocks, patches, and corridors are needed to maintain viable populations.

Impacts on wildlife from recreation can be mitigated, starting with education. Informing users of responsible recreation habits and conservation practices may help to alleviate certain pressures; next would be trail location and design. Ecologically focused planning may avoid the most sensitive habitats in an area and limit trail density, where possible, to provide exclusion areas that may serve as wildlife refuge. Intensity of use can be monitored and adapted depending on time of day and season. Additionally, where impacts are unavoidable, it may be possible to improve nearby or connecting habitats to support wildlife.



WILDLIFE NEEDS SPACE TO SURVIVE

Agriculture and rangeland areas provide large open spaces and may be a haven for wildlife. Food may be abundant, especially after a recent harvest, and migratory birds may use certain spots as stopover habitat. Large, contiguous parcels mitigate natural and human impacts during both day and night. Wildlife may hide from predators, find shelter during times of intense heat or cold temperatures, and find forage to store necessary energy for the winter season. Even poorly managed rangeland and agricultural lands still provide crucial space for wildlife.





03// RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 OPEN SPACE EXPERIENCES

3.2 TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

3.3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

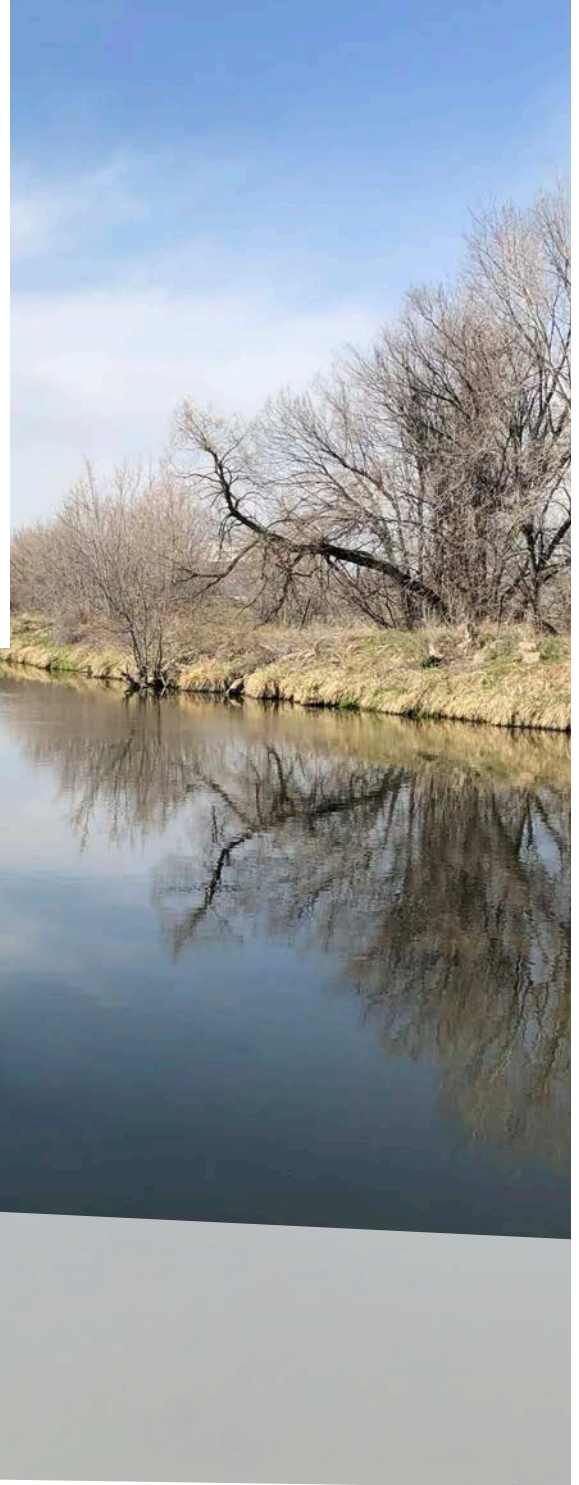


This chapter:

- Defines desired experiences and standards for future open space and trail development and management
- Identifies proposed trail connections
- Outlines open space and trails priorities and big moves
- Establishes metrics to evaluate the Division's effectiveness

3.1 OPEN SPACE EXPERIENCES

The following five open space experiences explain the purposes and benefits of various types of open space, as well as their different values, management, and user experiences. Multiple experiences could be achieved within a specific property.



NATURE EXPERIENCE

Adventure-based recreation landscapes and enhanced facilities that demonstrate natural resources and environmentally sensitive values



Examples: River Experience, disc golf at Eastman Park

Conservation Tools: Fee simple, development dedication

Purpose: Nature-based play

Values: Recreation access, interpretation, ecological and ecosystem processes, wildlife habitat, water quality

Size: Variable, appropriate to accommodate use and conserve resource

Social: Nature-based recreation including groups

Public Access: High, people first

Primary Uses: Recreation, environmental education

Potential Facilities: Parking, trails and trailheads, nature play, restroom, environmental education/interpretive areas, picnic sites, visitor support facilities, wayfinding signage

Maintenance: Moderate, focus on recreation facilities

Restoration: Moderate

TRAIL EXPERIENCE

Open corridors associated with trail easements or rights-of-way that connect regional and local park, open space, and trail facilities



HABITAT EXPERIENCE

Small, wild areas including portions of existing urban parks and neighborhoods that offer nature observation, respite, micro-habitats, and/or visual access



Examples: Poudre River Trail

Conservation Tools:

Development dedication, fee simple, trail partnerships

Purpose: Connectivity, linear recreation

Values: Recreational corridors, mental and physical health, visual open, habitat movement

Size: Corridor width of 100 feet or wider

Social: High volume community connections to neighborhoods and destinations

Public Access: People First, Connecting

Primary Uses: Trail corridor, interpretation

Potential Facilities: Ditch corridor, paved and soft-surface trails, signage

Maintenance: Moderate, Native plant no-mow areas

Restoration: Moderate

Examples: Detention area at Highlands Park

Conservation Tools:

Development dedication

Purpose: Water quality, wildlife habitat

Values: Water quality, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, visual open space

Size: Relatively small or integrated into larger developed park

Social: Respite, environmental education

Public Access: Balanced, Visual

Primary Uses: Visual open space

Potential Facilities: Soft surface trails, interpretation signage

Maintenance: Low.

Native plant no mow areas. However, higher maintenance is needed during establishment

Restoration: High

HABITAT PRESERVATION

Protected areas with limited to no public access and significant and sensitive ecological, biological, and ecosystem values



Examples: Frank Conservation Easement

Conservation Tools: Conservation easements, fee simple

Purpose: Resource protection

Values: Ecological and ecosystem processes, wildlife habitat, water quality, visual open space, riparian protection

Size: Large

Social: Solitude

Public Access: None to Limited, Resource First

Primary Uses: Conservation, habitat, limited passive recreation

Potential Facilities: If any, facilities concentrated at trailheads, trails tread is native materials, wayfinding & interpretive signage

Maintenance: Moderate

Restoration: High

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Lands used for irrigated crop production that serve as visual and community buffer areas and traditional uses such as hunting



Examples: River Bluffs Open Space

Conservation Tools: Land trusts, conservation easements, county & water partnerships, water

Purpose: Agricultural heritage, community separation

Values: Agriculture, hunting & fishing, cultural heritage, scenic quality, community separator, economic resiliency, food supply

Size: Variable, typically large

Social: Traditional uses

Public Access: None to Low, visual

Primary Uses: Irrigated crop, rangeland, community agriculture, habitat, private ownership

Potential Facilities: If any, interpretive signage

Maintenance: As required for agricultural uses

Restoration: Varies

TYPES OF LAND CONSERVATION TOOLS

To date, Windsor has primarily relied on the land dedication process for trail easements and grant funding to acquire land, which has amounted to slow, minimal growth in the amount of open space acres compared to rapid regional development growth. The Town's greatest opportunity for large scale, low-cost land protection will be through conservation easements, zoning and development code regulations, and water rights acquisition. However, these are complex and can be limited given the availability of water, especially long term. A new dedicated funding source would open up more fee-simple ownership opportunities that are currently out of reach but desired by the community.

Tool	Owner	Potential Acres	Protection Costs	Operations Costs	Public Access	Resource Protection
Conservation Easements (on private land)	Private owners who are responsible for land management and the certified conservation easement holder (i.e., Town) acts as the stewardship monitor.	High	Moderate	Low	None to Low	High
Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Development Code Regulations	Farmer, developer, or property association owners. Confirm dedication req's for open space by zone district, definition of common areas, emphasis on native habitat/ restoration. Define the conservation values.	Moderate	None	Low to None	Varies	High
Land Dedication / Developer Contributions	Town (Open space may manage certain stormwater areas if provide open space values)	Low, though effective in securing trail connections	None	Depends on open space classification	High	Low, though depends on open space classification
Purchase of Water Rights or Alternative Transfer Methods	Town, local municipalities and water districts	Very High	High	Low if retained in dryland farming or restored to natural habitat	Depends on open space classification	Complex, varies depending on water sharing agreement
Donations	Town, land trusts, or similar agency	Low	None	Depends on open space classification	Depends on open space classification	Depends on open space classification
Fee-Title (Fee-Simple) Acquisition	Town or similar agency	Low to High depending on funding availability	High	High	High	Depends on open space classification
Agricultural Leasing	Town or similar agency	High depending on funding availability	High (with the potential for CEs)	Cost neutral	None to Low	Moderate to High as the Town can influence agricultural practices

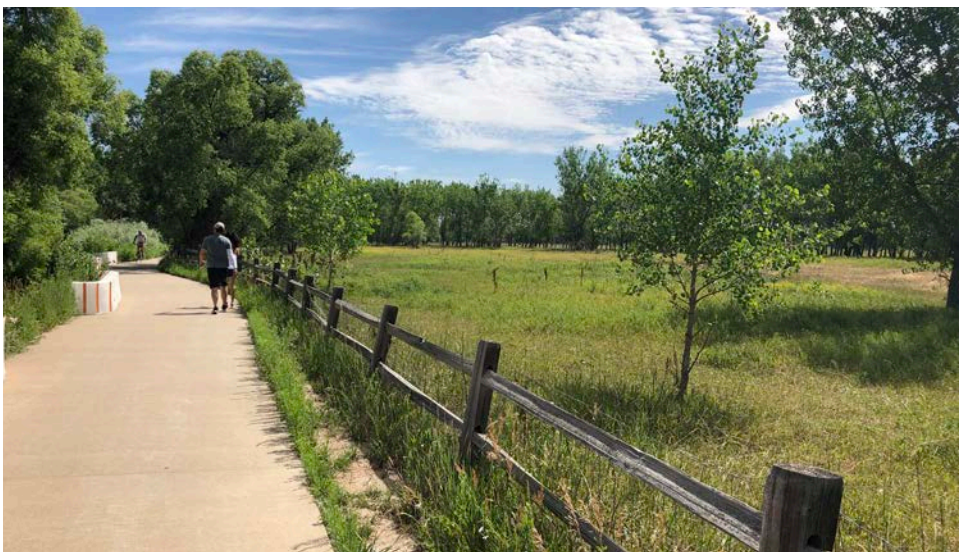
3.2 TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESIGN STANDARDS

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Trails are paved or unpaved thoroughways that connect Windsor residents to downtown, other neighborhoods, and to parks and open spaces. While all types of trails may pass through the above open space types, five types of trails are envisioned.

REGIONAL CONNECTOR

Connection to community destinations, parks, and open spaces. Road biking, running, wildlife viewing, commuting. Recreation destination for visitors.



Management: Public

Surface: Concrete (possible soft surface parallel trail)

Corridor Width: 50-100ft.

Tread Width: 10ft.

Shoulder Width: 2ft.

Vertical Clearance: 12ft.

Horizontal Clearance: 3ft.+

Grade: ADA accessible, up to 8.3%, ideally 5% or less

Trailheads: At major access points

Lighting: At trailheads and access points, underpasses, crosswalks and intersections

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS (CONT.)

SECONDARY & NEIGHBORHOOD

Local connection, ties neighborhoods to larger connections for commuting or recreation



Management: Private

Surface: Concrete or crushed gravel path

Corridor Width: 20-30ft.

Tread Width: 8-10ft.

Shoulder Width: 2ft.

Vertical Clearance: 12ft.

Horizontal Clearance: 3ft.+

Grade: ADA accessible, up to 8.3%, ideally 5% or less

Trailheads: None, neighborhood access points

Lighting: At trailheads and access points, underpasses, crosswalks and intersections. Utilize adjacent. roadway lighting where appropriate

SOFT SURFACE

Running, walking, wildlife viewing



Management: Public or Private

Surface: Crushed gravel

Corridor Width: 20-30ft.

Tread Width: 6-8ft.

Shoulder Width: N/A.

Vertical Clearance: 8-12ft.

Horizontal Clearance: 1.5ft.

Grade: ADA accessible, up to 8.3%, ideally 5% or less

Trailheads: At major access points

Lighting: At trailheads and access points

SINGLE TRACK

Running, walking, mountain biking. Recreation destination for visitors.



Management: Public or Private

Surface: Native or aggregate

Corridor Width: N/A.

Tread Width: 3-4ft.

Shoulder Width: N/A.

Vertical Clearance: 8ft.

Horizontal Clearance: 1.5ft.

Grade: 5-15%; Up to 8.3% for ADA; . Steps may be required on hiking-only trails steeper than 10%

Trailheads: At major access points

Lighting: At trailheads and access points

HERITAGE TRAIL OVERLAY

Features that are added to other trail types to interpret history and historic and cultural resources.



Management: Public

Audience: All ages and abilities

Overarching Messages: Similarities and differences between the past and present, and lessons learned from the past.

Interpretive Media: Signs, art, QR code links, embedded materials in pavements and features, interpretive walks

and lectures, buried historic and cultural resources with surface markers, existing visible features.

Special Features: Waysides with seating, overlooks, elevated or depressed viewing platforms, areas for small group learning, naturalistic amphitheater for performances and presentations/lectures for large groups

TRAILS ACTION PLAN MAP

Previous planning efforts, which were refined through this OST Strategic Plan process, recommend doubling future off-street connections. These refinements considered public input, the Transportation Master Plan, and the walkability analysis.

TRAIL TYPES BY THE NUMBERS

Trail Type	Existing Miles	Proposed Miles	Total Miles
Soft Surface	5.4	7.5	12.9
Off-Street	52.5	45.0	97.5
On-Street	51.6	30.3	81.9
Total	109.4	82.8	192.3

The Trails Action Plan Map highlights a complete, low-stress network that will serve existing and planned development throughout Windsor. The table above summarizes the total existing and proposed miles, and the complete system at build out within the GMA.

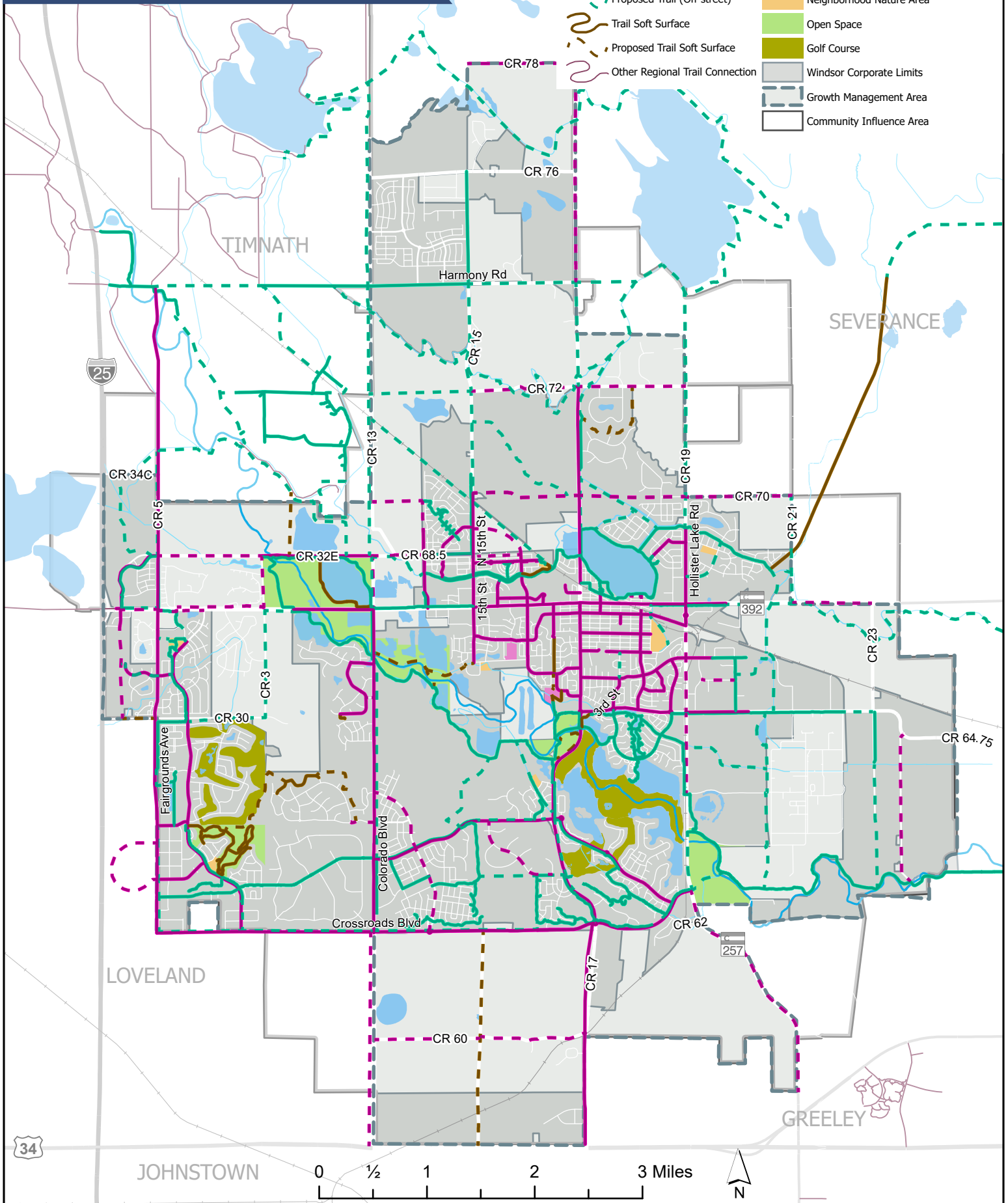


TRAIL ACTION PLAN MAP

Trail Type

- Trail (On-Street)
- Proposed Trail (On-Street)
- Trail (Off-street)
- Proposed Trail (Off-street)
- Trail Soft Surface
- Proposed Trail Soft Surface
- Other Regional Trail Connection

- Cache La Poudre River
- Other Stream or River
- Waterbody
- Stormwater & Special Management Area
- Neighborhood Nature Area
- Open Space
- Golf Course
- Windsor Corporate Limits
- Growth Management Area
- Community Influence Area





3.3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this OST Plan will involve careful consideration of priorities to be effective in meeting the established goals and principles, as well as community identified needs. While some of the priorities go beyond the Town's current capacity, they are highlighted here to inspire action and achieve a larger community driven vision of being "the national leader in exceptional open space and trail experiences". Plan implementation meets the goals in Chapter 1 by establishing recommendations for a robust open space and trails system throughout Windsor. Additional implementation steps, including operational, staffing, and administrative action items, are identified in a detailed Action Plan at the end of this document.

OPEN SPACE BIG MOVES

Large Community Separator / Agriculture Acquisitions Corridor with Water Resources

- **Recommendation:** In coordination with Water Resources and willing landowners, identify future acquisitions that meet multiple goals.

Windsor Water Resources recognizes a benefit of working with OST Division to acquire lands with water rights as OST specializes in the management and stewardship of large open space and agricultural parcels. Water Resource's focus on water acquisition provides opportunities to acquire certain types of lands that also contribute to OST and Town Board goals to conserve community separators between adjacent municipalities. Collaborating also affords the opportunity of securing water and land for municipal use, scenic viewsheds, wildlife habitat, and other mutual benefits allowing for larger scale land acquisitions with currently available funding from the Water Fund.

The purchase of land can offset the future water and sewer demands to the Town and reduce the need for raw water and sewer infrastructure. For example, the Town recently closed on a farm north of the Public Works facility and the purchase reduced the demand of potable water by 400 homes. The Town will not have to secure water for those homes now that the Town owns the land.

Smaller Urban Habitat Acquisitions, Restoration, and Education

- **Recommendation:** Continue to acquire and restore smaller urban habitat spaces and inform the public of their benefits.
- **Recommendation:** Update (and follow) Sec. 17-1-40 (b)(5)(F). Stormwater Facilities section on future maintenance and management of stormwater facilities as open space.



STEWARDSHIP &
OPERATIONS GOAL: Manage
open spaces for a high-level
of biodiversity and sustainable
ecosystems.



Code Modifications for Open Space & Community Corridor Buffer Requirements

- **Recommendation:** In addition to working with the Planning and Engineering Divisions on future long-range planning efforts to emphasize open space and trail priorities, add development standard of at least 300-500' buffer along community separator corridors.
- **Recommendation:** Revise code to include threshold of conservation values and benefits to the entire community rather than just for an HOA and only in stormwater detention areas.

Where large community separator conservation is not possible between adjacent municipalities, additional buffer requirements could be implemented to improve the rural feeling and separation. Setbacks

are used in many zones to separate different land uses and help maintain an ordered aesthetic in communities. The code should be updated to include a buffer of at least 300-500' along these community separator corridors. These areas should be large enough to be managed as open space with habitat, naturalized vegetation, and ecosystem benefits, versus a highly developed manicured lawn. Adjustments could be considered if the setback is either infeasible or unnecessary depending on parcel size and shape, location, natural features, and topography. Examples from Lumpkin County, GA and Butte County, CA include a 300' setback from agricultural lands. Subdivisions within the community separator between Loveland and Fort Collins, such as Manor Ridge and Registry Ridge, include a distance of 250' from major roads.

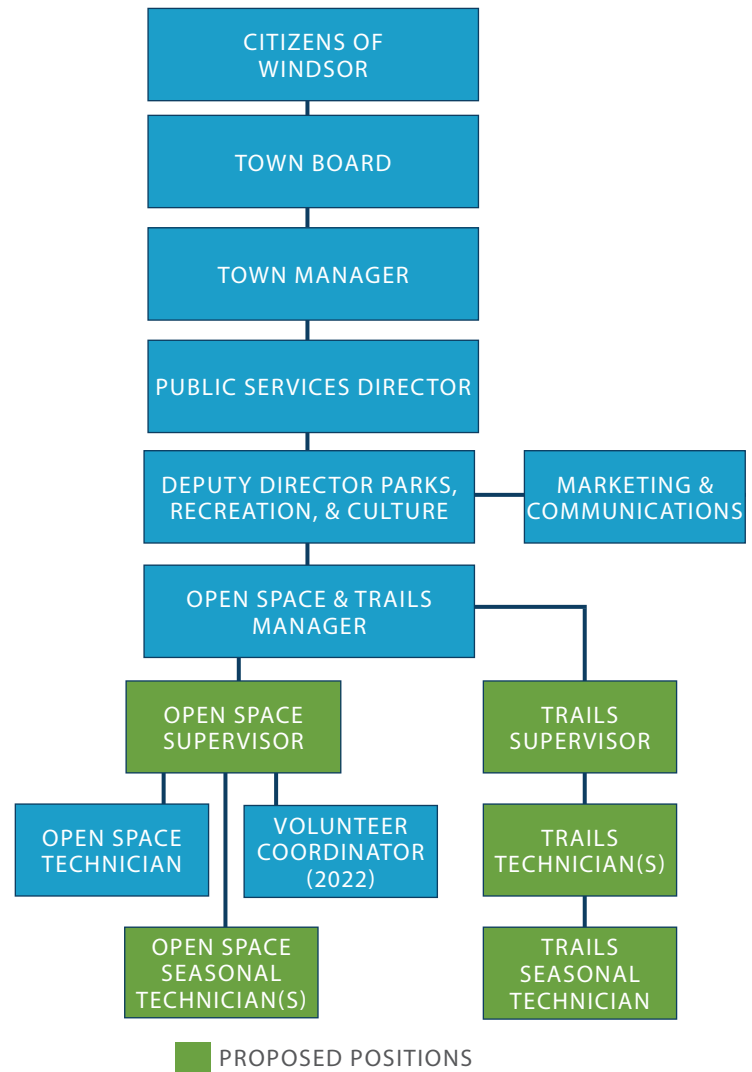


OPEN SPACE Goal: Establish community separators and conserve open space that ensure Windsor maintains its identity and for the benefit and protection of wildlife.

Future OST Division Structure

- **Recommendation:** A personnel plan should be prepared as staffing needs change to respond to increased use levels and additional open space acres and trail miles. It would be beneficial to establish two areas of responsibility within the OST Division that are focused on open space and trails. A supervisor and part-time/seasonal technician should be considered for both areas of responsibility.
- **Recommendation:** Additionally, PRC Department staff assigned to environmental education, outreach, and volunteer coordination should assist OST Division staff with projects and programs.

While the OST Division currently receives assistance from other Divisions and Departments, there will come a time when providing the assistance is more challenging. It is anticipated that responsibilities and needs will increase for these groups, reducing their ability to support the needs of the OST Division.



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY Goal:

Develop and implement a sustainable funding strategy that allows for growth, preservation and on-going maintenance of the trails and open space system.

Open Space Dedicated Funding to Secure Future Acres

- **Recommendation:** Secure dedicated funding source to fund acquisition, stewardship, and maintenance of an additional 1,290 acres of open space.

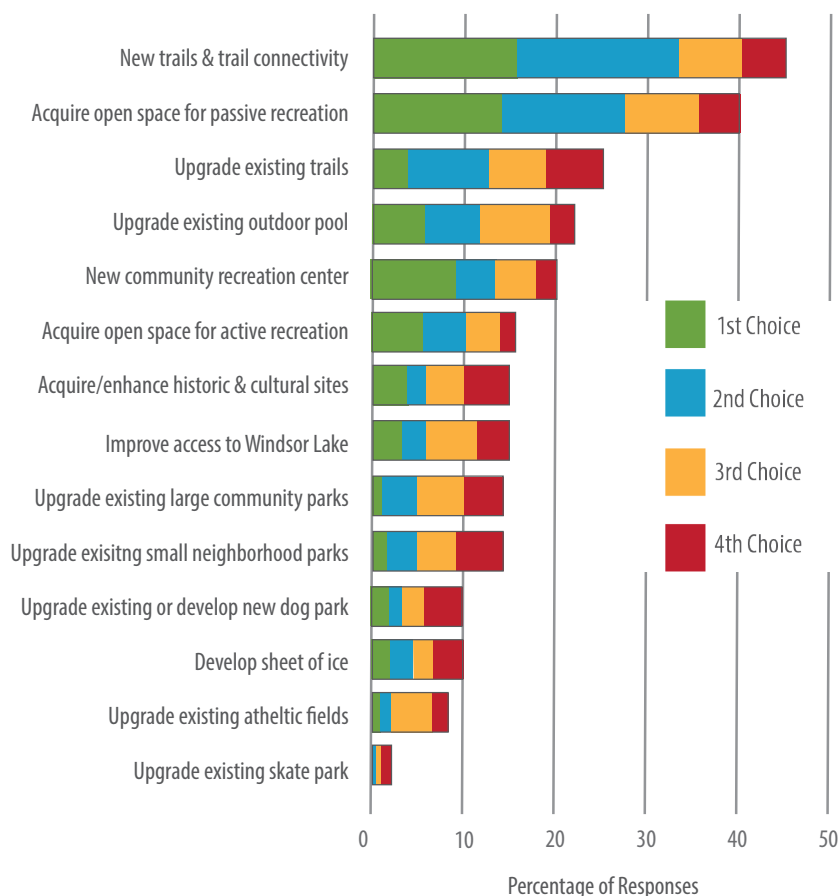
Multiple feedback opportunities identify the public's desire for expanding Windsor's open space. At a minimum, Windsor should maintain the same ratio of open space per 1,000 people. This means at least an additional 250 acres would need to be conserved in the next 10 years. But the vision isn't to maintain the status quo. If Windsor were to achieve the metric of conserving 15% of the area within Town limits as open space today, irrespective of future growth, an additional 1,300 acres would need conserved. These lands could be fee-title opportunities, conservation

easements, or other partnerships with open space entities. Additional acres would be needed as more area is annexed.

The Town should further engage The Trust for Public Land to do a funding analysis. As previously discussed, partnership with the Water Resources is an important, short-term opportunity; however, not all acquisitions and priorities will be made possible through that source. Given the current real estate market, prices may fluctuate and other factors like, improvements, adjacency to existing development, or unique features, may come into play on any given property.

Community engagement results from the PRC Strategic Plan indicate the public's willingness to support future funding for open space through a tax measure. One of the most viable funding alternatives is a dedicated sales tax. Taxes provide a relatively predictable outcome versus grants and other sources which could vary significantly between year to year, or become non-existent. The Town currently has a sales tax of 3.95%. Based on the current sales tax revenue, a 1/4 cent increase would generate about \$1.27 million annually which could acquire, at a rate of \$19,000/acre, about 65 acres. A 1/4 cent sales tax increase would on average cost each person \$33 per year. Funds could be used as matching dollars, which are critical in many grants, to make funding go even farther. As the time is now, funds could be bonded to allow for purchases ahead of growth.

ACTIONS MOST WILLING TO FUND WITH TAX DOLLARS





TRAIL BIG MOVES

Top Trail Segments for Implementation

- **Recommendation:** Complete the following priority segments in order to close trail gaps, expand network connectivity, and improve safety.

Previous planning efforts identified high-priority off-street trail connections that were further refined through this planning effort. Future investments should focus on these connections to meet safety and connectivity goals across Windsor. The OST Division should continue to work with Planning and Engineering to update the TMP priority lists.

- 7th Street between Eastman Park Drive and New Liberty Drive
- 15th Street north of WC Road 68.5 (first connect to new school and Public Services building, then complete to Harmony Ridge)
- SH 392 between WC Road 21 and SH 257 (address railroad crossing)
- Widen sidewalks along SH 392 in front of Middle/High School
- Poudre River Trail connection to Timnath
- Continue to discuss easements along SH 257 from SH 392 to Harmony Road
- Improve wayfinding signage to existing connections

Additional 40 Miles of Trails & Level of Service

- **Recommendation:** Build an additional 40 miles of trails as development occurs.

In tandem with completing priority trail segments, build an 40 miles of new trails, which are funded by the current Park and Trail Development fees. While the LOS may vary some with population, building this amount of trails would achieve a level of service of 1.25 per 1,000 residents.

Regional Trail Initiatives

- **Recommendation:** Complete existing regional trail initiatives (Poudre River and Great Western Trail) and begin conversations for new regional trail initiatives to the south and west.



TRAILS Goal: Establish a high-level of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and accessibility throughout Windsor.

Poudre River Corridor Preservation

- **Recommendation:** Expand river preservation efforts to ensure protections for the resource and explore opportunities for responsible increases to public access.

The Poudre River extends 10.5 river-miles through Windsor from River Bluffs Open Space to the Jones Ditch, which the public desires to interact with and is an important natural resource. Preservation of the river corridor, including upland areas, is important to maintain a healthy river ecosystem that residents and visitors can enjoy. Opportunities could include increase access to the Poudre River from the Poudre River Trail; education and stewardship activities; access points for fishing and river play; and river morphology improvements to protect the Poudre River Trail. Additional opportunities for river corridor preservation are presented in the Lower Poudre River Flood Recovery and Resilience Master Plan (2017) developed by the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed.

Work with Colorado Parks & Wildlife, City of Greeley, Larimer County, Town of Timnath, adjacent landowners, emergency service, and other partners to validate and resolve potential constraints and identify opportunities. Share appropriate education materials with the public to ensure community safety and mitigate risks.

Building on public support and enthusiasm for the Eastman Park, which increased education and access to the Poudre River for water recreation. Windsor's existing parks and open spaces such as Kodak Watchable Wildlife area provide opportunities for river access.

As shown on the map on the following page, potential challenges include bridge hazards, inconsistent water flow, diversions, and river access limitations within the Frank SWA, which could be addressed through administrative action by Colorado Parks & Wildlife. Additional consideration should be given to seasonal wildlife closures and periods of inadequate flow.



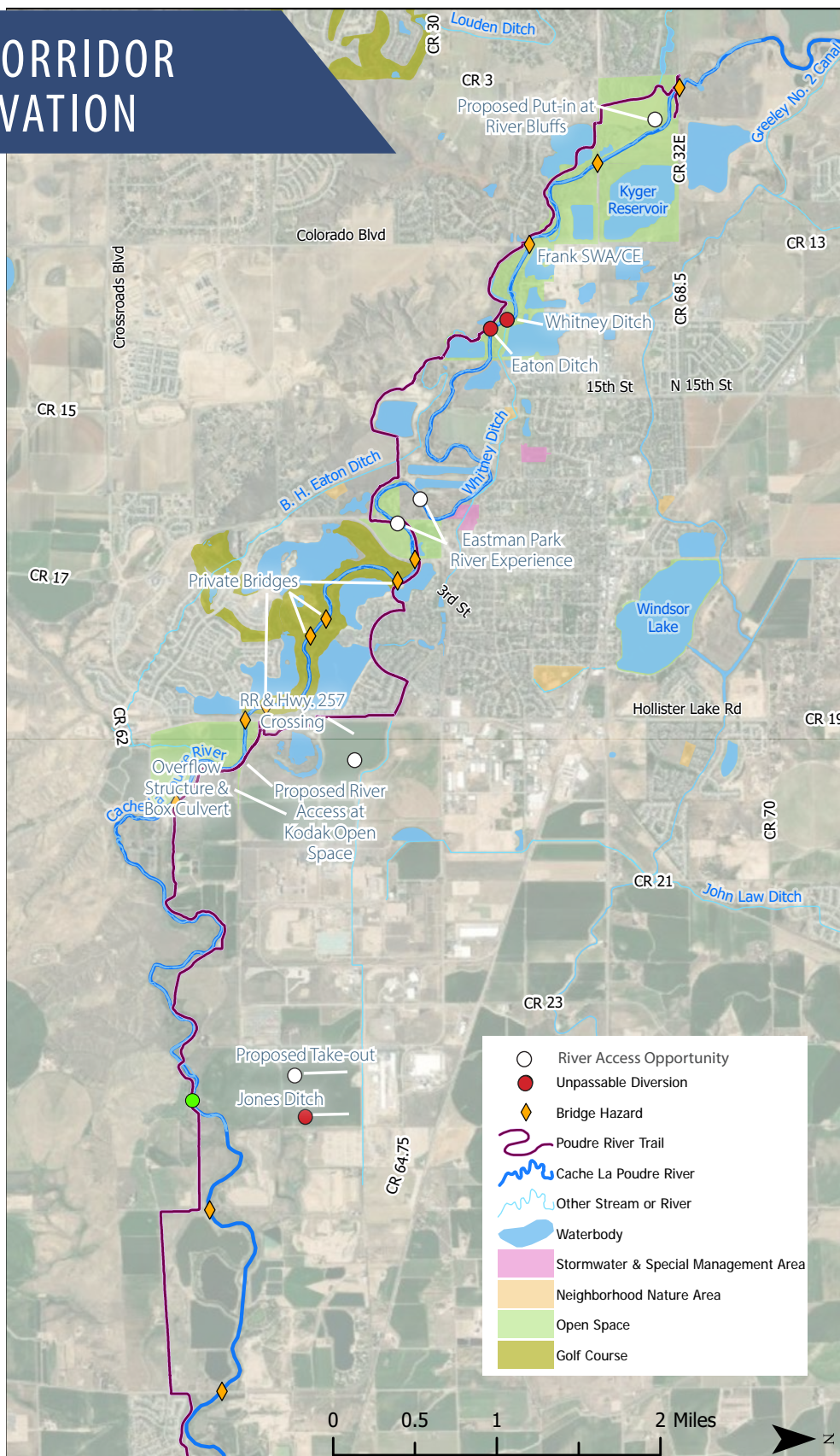
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ENRICHMENT

Goal: Provide education and outreach services that promote the vision of the Open Space and Trails Division.



Whitney Diversion Structure
Photo by: Colorado State University

RIVER CORRIDOR PRESERVATION



METRICS

Metrics reflect community needs, inspire action, and help decision-makers to make informed decisions and adapt to evolving management issues. While no single indicator can paint a complete picture of progress, this plan recommends a handful of carefully selected indicators to demonstrate the OST Division's impact.

Systematically measuring and communicating how tax dollars are used improves accountability and documents how the program is meeting identified community goals. A compelling summary of achievements and challenges should be prepared annually by the Town, and 5-year progress can be shared in Strategic Plan updates.

Selection Criteria

- Relevancy to long-range goals (see Goal column), rather than tracking disconnected short-term outcomes
- Clarity and ease of understanding
- Reliability to be accurately tracked over time at no/low cost
- Usability by elected and appointed leaders and staff in making decisions, reflecting an issue the community can do something about.
- Ability to improve management of multiple resources
- Return on investment

Goal Area	Related Goal & Principle*	Metric	Baseline (2021)	Progress (2030)
Community Engagement & Trails	3.3, 1.1, 1.7	Percent of residents say "definitely agree" or "agree" that open space and trails add to their quality of life	TBC through future efforts	Increase by 5%
Community Engagement	3.5	Percent of total residents contacted through online platforms or educational and stewardship activities/events	Platform followers: 18,600 Events: 5	Increase by 20%
Community Engagement	4.7	Total volunteer hours donated annually for open space and trails	0	Increase to 1,000
Safety	1.2, 1.4, 1.8	Percent of citizens responding as "always safe" or "usually safe" on open space and trails	TBC through future efforts	90%
Safety	1.8	Number of vehicle and pedestrian/bicyclist crash counts within the Town	TBD	0
Stewardship	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6	Acres of disturbed/degraded habitat restored per year	0	10
Land Acquisition	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.6	Percent of annexed area conserved as open space	7%	15%
Trails	1.1, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8	Miles of trails per 1,000 residents (Level of Service Standard)	1.55	1.25
Trails	1.1	Percent of residents who live within a .5 mile from an off-street trail	TBD	100%
Trails	1.2, 1.4	Trail user counts	425,000	Increase by 10%

*See Goals and Principles on pages 15-18.

POTENTIAL ACQUISITION & MAINTENANCE COSTS

The following action plan is dependent on adequate funding to integrate a property or corridor into the OST Division meeting OST standards, which includes acquisition, capital improvements and/or restoration, and long-term funding for operations and maintenance costs. Based on 2022 dollars, approximate costs to be considered include:

Type of Land	Acquisition/ Conservation Costs	Capital Improvement & Restoration Costs	Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs
Open Space (Per Acre)			
Large Community Separator	\$5,000 - \$19,000	\$2,000	\$100
Agricultural Acquisitions	\$19,000	\$0	\$20 (Revenue)
Riparian Corridor or Natural Area	\$8,000	\$5,000 - \$10,000	\$400
Conservation Easements	\$0 - \$5,000	\$0	\$100*
Trails (Per Mile)			
Soft Surface Trail	\$10,000**	\$50,000	\$3,400
10' wide Concrete buffered (e.g., Poudre or Great Western Trails)	\$200,000	\$800,000	\$6,200.
10' wide Concrete no buffer (e.g., Steeplechase)	\$150,000	\$700,000	\$1,250

*Does not account for potential enforcement and litigation of violation

**Assumes trail will be a part of larger acquisition

ACTION PLAN

The following matrix identifies specific action items for implementing the goals and recommendations presented in this plan. The matrix identifies the type of action, timeframe for completion, proposed funding sources, estimated cost, and partner agencies.


Action	Category	Priority	Costs	Staff Time	Lead/Partners
Retain water rights on conserved lands through Alternative Transfer Methods, water sharing agreements, or other methods. Coordinate with town staff, water attorneys, water brokers, and water rights engineers. Continue to work with ditch and irrigation companies to maintain effective operations.	Acquisition	2	\$\$\$	****	Water Resources, other municipalities
In partnership with Water Resources explore opportunities for acquisition of regional water storage facilities for public access. At the time of this plan, examples include the water storage ponds the Central Colorado Water Conservancy owns.	Acquisition	2	\$\$\$	****	Water Resources, Water Districts

Priority (High-1, Medium-2, Low-3)

Costs (Low - \$, Med - \$\$, High - \$\$\$, Large Capital project - \$\$\$\$)

Staff Time (Low - *, Med - **, High - ***, Large time intensive project - ****)

Action	Category	Priority	Costs	Staff Time	Lead/Partners
Complete the transaction to transfer the Frank State wildlife easement to the Town of Windsor and explore the benefit of redefining the easement to ensure the current easement allows for nature based programming	Acquisition	1	\$	**	OST, Parks and Wildlife
Conservation easement program - promote/ explore with willing landowners to preserve ag, habitat, values, etc.	Acquisition	1	\$	**	OST, Planning
Establish policies related to specific keystone species and determine the value/depth of implementation (all Windsor properties vs town wide even on private. (prairie dog, raptor, etc)	Admin	2	\$	**	OST, Parks and Wildlife
Engagement/further discussion with TPL to do a funding analysis	Admin	1	\$ + Staff time	*	OST, TPL
Update (and follow) Sec. 17-1-40 (b)(5) (F). Stormwater Facilities section on future maintenance and management of stormwater facilities as open space.	Admin	2	\$ + Staff time	**	OST, Public Works, Stormwater
Develop e-bike and scooter code language as needed in the future. Collaborate on policies where trails cross jurisdictions. For example, e-bikes continue to rise in popularity. Many communities have begun to allow for and create guidance around allowing Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes on paved trails only.	Admin	1	\$	*	OST, PRC, Town Board
Explore the increase of setback requirements as an alternative for creation of community separators/ open space between communities where land acquisition is no longer feasible.	Admin	2	\$	***	Planning, Town Board
Revise code to include threshold of conservation values, benefits to the entire community vs HOA only vs just stormwater detention areas.	Admin	2	\$	**	Planning, OST
Work with Planning through their 2022 Comprehensive Plan update to include revised open space policies and direction; update the Land Use Plan to show 30 percent of lands and water as undeveloped.	Admin	1	\$\$	**	Planning, OST
Ensure access via public trails through all HOA's and metro districts to improve regional and neighborhood connectivity for the safe enjoyment of all.	Admin	1	\$	***	OST, Planning



Action	Category	Priority	Costs	Staff Time	Lead/Partners
Develop an agricultural lease policy and process. Allow small game hunting guides to lease the land in the winter for additional revenue.	Admin	3	\$	*	OST, PRC, Parks and Wildlife
Amend the municipal code to allow grazing on Open Space for resource management.	Admin	1	\$	*	OST, Legal
Develop IGA's with neighboring municipalities with a focus on open space and community separators between cities/towns.	Admin	1	\$	**	OST, Other Municipalities
Continue partnerships with adjacent municipalities on regional trail connections. Emphasis on southern connections as well	Admin	2	\$	***	OST, Other Municipalities, MPO
Create master plans for each publicly accessible open space.	Admin	2	\$\$	**	OST
Based on Eastman's success, work to preserve the river corridor, build relationships with landowners, and explore barriers. Two examples could include River Bluffs to County Line Road or through the Broe property.	Admin	2	\$	**	OST
Develop a master naturalist program.	Education/ Outreach	3	\$	**	OST, Museum Programming
Continue to expand signage/interpretation on benefits of wildlife, trails, open space, and other resources of significance.	Education/ Outreach	1	\$	**	Windsor Communication Team, CPW, Museum
Educate the community and visitors on the public benefits and importance of open space and trails and the responsible use (e.g. Leave No Trace - Care for Colorado) of Windsor's properties through public programming and interpretive signage.	Education/ Outreach	1	\$	**	Museum
Develop adult and children programming about open space - skygazing, birding, wellness-related topics, history, geology, water ecology, community science.	Education/ Outreach	3	\$	**	Museum
Working with the Museum and Parks, educate the community on agricultural related history and industries, local farms, farm to table restaurants, etc. to enhance the local food economy and appreciation.	Education/ Outreach	2	\$	**	Museums



Action	Category	Priority	Costs	Staff Time	Lead/Partners
Working within the framework of the NOCO Bike and Ped Wayfinding Plan standards, sign Poudre River Trail and other regional trails with mileage markers, destination signs, etc.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$	**	Regional trail partners, Windsor Communication Team, DDA, Planning, Community Development, Poudre Heritage Alliance
Implement the open space signage plan to guide signage on all properties within the open space program, including monument signs (e.g. if future ag preserved, sign similar to Larimer County properties), trail etiquette, speed limit, interpretative, etc.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$	***	Windsor Communication Team
Develop a volunteer program with dedicated staff to ensure the success of stewardship and outreach goals as identified in this Plan. Some positions could be shared with other PRC divisions in the short-term.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$	*	PRC Dept
Hire a environmental education/outreach position.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$	*	
Increase staffing consistent with acres of managed open space and miles of regional trail corridors (including maintenance operations technicians, environmental education, outreach, planners, and seasonal crews). Some positions could be shared with other divisions/ departments/entities in the short-term.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$\$	**	OST
Develop system/meetings to align CIP and future road improvement projects with trail projects.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$	**	OST, Planning, Engineering
Develop/expand non-pot water system in open spaces.	Staffing/ Operations	2	\$\$	*	
Work with Parks to provide clean and safe open spaces.	Staffing/ Operations	1	\$	*	
Develop maintenance protocols related to native grass, nesting ground birds (seasonal mowing), etc.	Staffing/ Operations & Admin	2	\$	**	OST

