



**WESTMINSTER**

**Parks, Recreation & Libraries**

# *Vision Plan*

ADOPTION DRAFT | MARCH 2025



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SPECIAL THANKS to the thousands of Westminster residents who contributed their ideas, feedback and support to this Vision Plan. These community members and partners represent a variety of perspectives including arts and culture, health, heritage, business, faith, sports, urban agriculture, inclusivity, schools, student organizations, neighborhoods, open space, family services, governmental agencies and more.

THANK YOU to the Parks, Recreation, and Libraries staff who continue to deliver exceptional services to the community and enhance quality of life for all Westminster residents.

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**DATA DISCLAIMER:** All PRL System data used in calculations and presented in maps throughout the Vision Plan represent the system at the time of data collection from April to August 2024.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, the Westminster PRL Department launched a comprehensive vision planning effort. This plan updates and replaces the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and, for the first time, brings all PRL services under the guiding framework of a single plan that will position the Department to continue its extensive provision of exceptional services to the Westminster community. This summary provides a snapshot of the key elements and recommendations of the plan.

## PLAN VISION

Westminster PRL creates equitable opportunities for programs that empower, spaces that ignite creativity, and events that unite us. Together, we nurture a healthier community by fostering deeper bonds among our diverse residents.



## FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PRL DEPARTMENT

- Health and Wellness
- Child Development
- Economic Engine
- Community Connections
- Resilience and Sustainability

## GOALS

### Goal #1:

Provide places, programs, and services that value our community's diversity, interests, and needs.

### Goal #2:

Preserve, protect, and enhance our parks and open spaces.

### Goal #3:

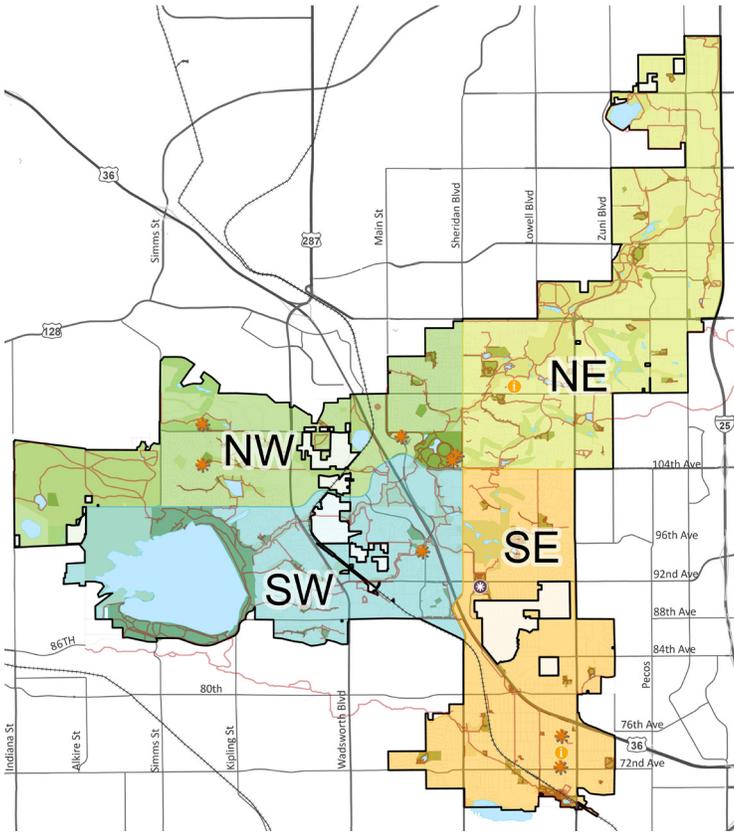
Support learning and literacy.

### Goal #4:

Continue to leverage creative solutions and collaborative partnerships.

### Goal #5:

Empower PRL staff to provide exceptional service delivery.



## PLANNING & OPERATIONS DISTRICTS

The PRL Vision Plan proposes the establishment of districts to geographically organize planning and maintenance operations for PRL services. The purpose of the districts is:

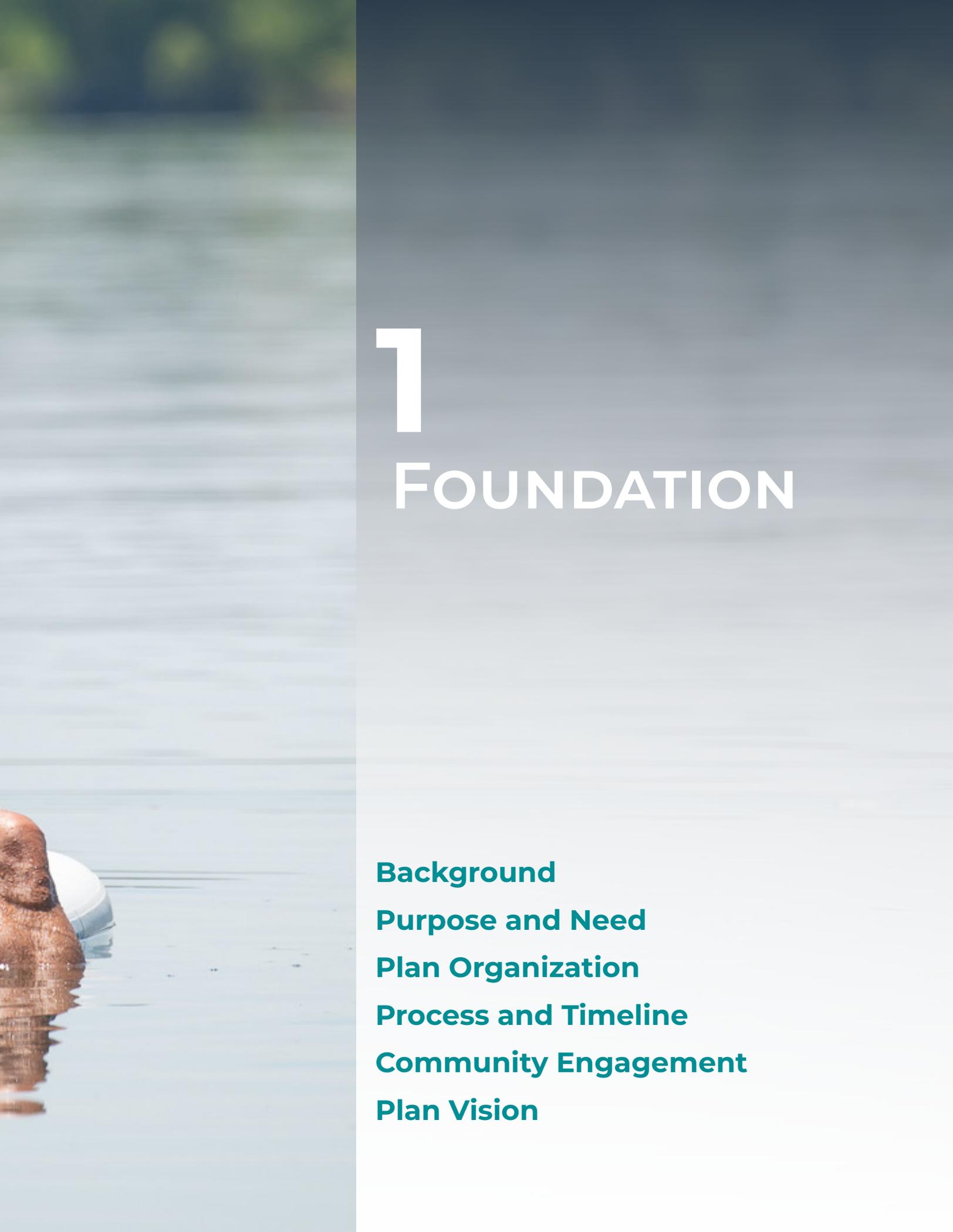
- to establish a framework for tracking and planning future investment of developer-paid fees as required by City code; and
- provide an organizing framework for dispersed PRL maintenance hubs.
- This shift in organization supports asset management by tracking needs according to district and increases staff's sense of ownership, accountability and efficiency by limiting the distance of maintenance vehicle trips. The result is a more efficient and sustainable maintenance operations system.
- The specific boundaries of each district are being refined.

## IMPLEMENTATION = BALANCE

Resources are limited. In the near term, the Department will continue to focus on doing as much as it can with the resources currently available. It is critically important to identify viable funding sources and community partnerships that can support implementation of new projects. This includes exploring options related the Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) sales and use tax; development code and fee structure; foundation partnerships; cost recovery; and the continued aggressive pursuit of grants.







# 1 FOUNDATION

**Background**

**Purpose and Need**

**Plan Organization**

**Process and Timeline**

**Community Engagement**

**Plan Vision**



## BACKGROUND

The Westminster Parks, Recreation & Libraries Vision Plan is the guiding framework for the Parks, Recreation & Libraries (PRL) Department for the next 10-20 years. With over 30% of the City's land area covered by parks and open space, establishing a guiding plan for the PRL Department to continue the extensive provision of exceptional services to the Westminster community is essential. As the City's population grows, and becomes older and more diverse, the creation of this PRL Vision Plan is intended to reflect community preferences and priorities while identifying new opportunities to serve the needs of PRL users and establish best management practices.

This plan builds upon Westminster's 2040 Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2023. This plan was developed in conjunction with other city-wide plans and identified the creation of this Vision Plan as a concurrent need in the city-wide planning effort. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan additionally identified five goals related to PRL services. This plan updates and replaces the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

## PRL DEPARTMENT MISSION

*“Together we create exceptional opportunities for a vibrant community with a commitment to nature, wellness, and life.”*

If the mission statement is any indication, the breadth of services offered by the PRL Department is extensive. As an entity that provides maintenance for planted street medians and rights of way, community events, citizenship classes, golf, aquatics, libraries, recreation, and a vast network of trails all within one department, PRL touches the lives of every Westminster resident in a meaningful way. Fulfilling the Department mission and delivering high-quality parks, recreation and library services on a daily basis requires the steadfast dedication of hundreds of full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees backed by volunteers and partner agencies. Parks, recreation, libraries, and open space are vital elements of Westminster’s high quality of life.

Updating this mission statement was explored during this planning process through interviews with key PRL partners, public engagement opportunities, and conversations with PRL Department staff. Ultimately, PRL staff feel deeply connected with the existing mission statement and its representative statement of the services provided the Westminster community.

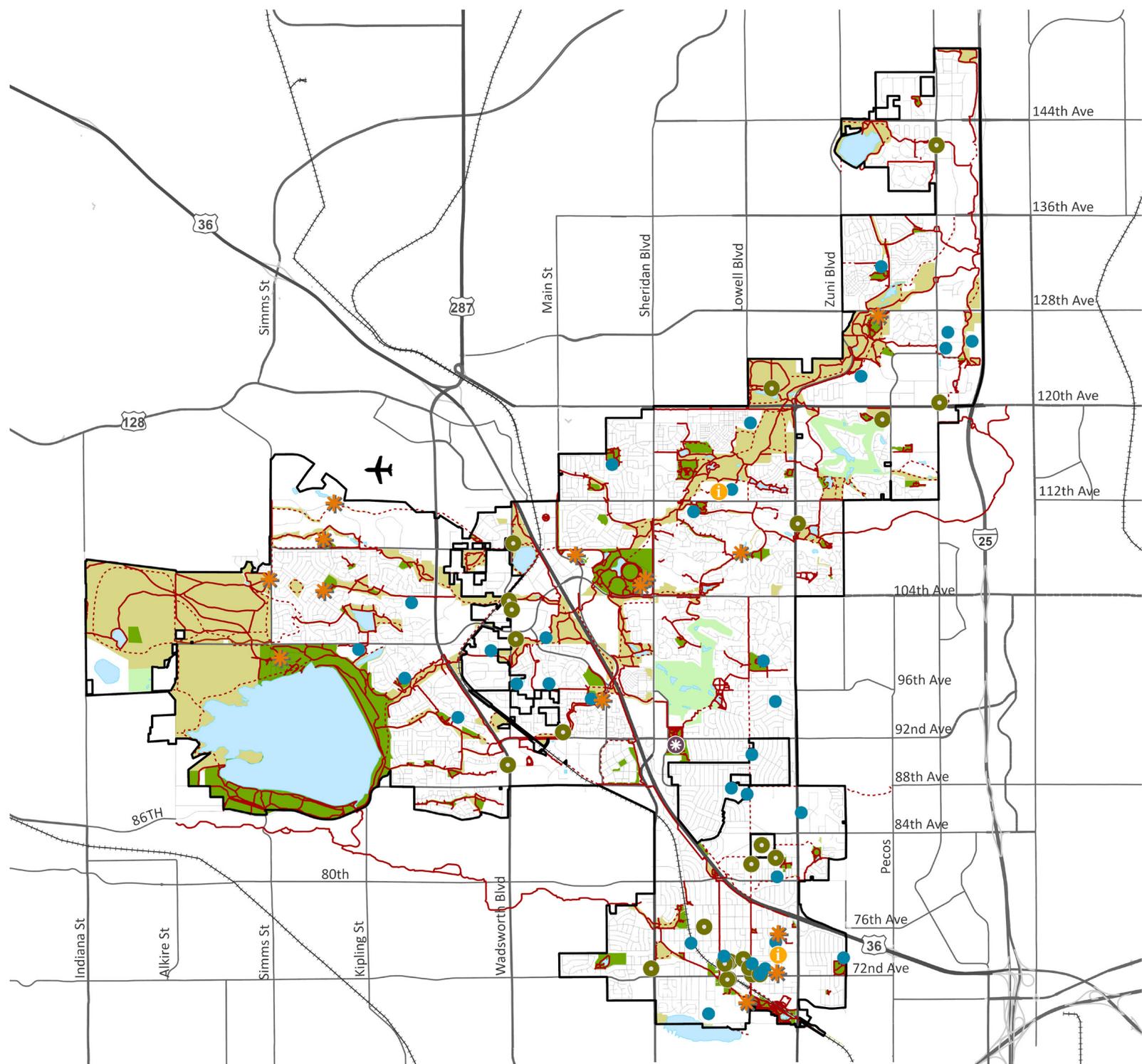




## THE PRL SYSTEM

The current Parks, Recreation and Libraries system includes seven award-winning recreation facilities, two libraries offering programs and resources, 62 parks including the 205-acre City Park, two championship golf courses, an extensive 126-mile off-street trail system, and 3,817 acres of open space throughout the community.

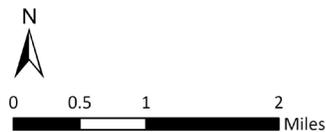
The City's parks and recreation system is supplemented by the Hyland Hills Park and Recreation District. The Hyland Hills District serves 110,000 residents in a 24 square mile area located in Adams County including large areas of Westminster and adjacent municipalities. All Westminster residents, even those outside of the boundaries of the Hyland Hills Parks and Recreation District, receive discounted in-district rates to the District's facilities and programs.



**Map 1.** Parks, Recreation, and Libraries System Map

**Legend**

- Parks
- Open Space
- Golf Courses
- Recreation Facilities
- Libraries
- Historic Resources
- Public Schools & Educational Institutions
- City Hall



- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Highway
- Major roads
- Local roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Westminster



## PURPOSE AND NEED

### NEED FOR A PRL VISION PLAN

The PRL system is one of the City’s most popular attractions and part of the overall community infrastructure. The PRL system did not occur by chance but was the result of many deliberate actions over the last 50 years. As the City has matured from a greenfield community to a built-out community, there is a need to reassess community needs, preferences, and ensure a PRL system that supports current and future residents with a high quality of life. Many of the facilities and infrastructure that were implemented as a result of previous planning efforts are now aging and approaching the end of their useful life. The City must determine how to balance the demands of a mature system while providing new opportunities for residents. This visioning will be balanced with the financial realities of a built-out City with few opportunities for additional revenues.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The 2023 City of Westminster Strategic Plan identifies an updated Parks, Recreation and Libraries Plan as a key goal. The 2023 Strategic Plan, Focused Objective 4.1.b calls for a new master plan for PRL to address libraries, parks, golf, open space, trails, urban tree canopy, recreation programs, and recreation facilities. Additionally, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2023, identified the development of this Parks, Recreation and Libraries Vision Plan as a concurrent effort in citywide planning.

The scope of the PRL Vision Plan supports the City’s Strategic Plan priority of Preparedness and Resilience by incorporating health, climate, and resilience considerations to ensure the community not only endures but thrives. The priority of Proactive Public Safety as well as the priority of Shared Sense of Community are met by incorporating safety considerations into the plan framework and supporting activation and placemaking strategies. The priority of Quality of Life is met through visioning for the arts, parks, recreation, open space, and library services throughout Westminster. The priority of Robust Infrastructure is met as the PRL system is an integral part of the community’s infrastructure and strategies will be identified to further ensure alignment of goals for water, urban forestry, stormwater, and mobility.

Upon completion of the PRL Vision Plan and subject to staffing resources, subsequent technical plans will be developed including updates to the Acquisition Plan for additional open space, parks and trails; Parks and Open Space and Urban Forestry Management Plan; City Trail Master Plan; Libraries Master Plan; and others as determined through the resulting PRL Vision Plan.

*The Parks, Recreation and Libraries (PRL) Vision Plan will build upon guidance and strategies established in the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2009), the 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2040 Plan), and Sustainability Plan and will complement mobility and trail related content identified in the Transportation & Mobility Plan.*

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this PRL Vision Plan is to align the PRL Department with the needs of the community to continue to succeed in providing exceptional services through prioritized recommendations developed through multiple analyses and public engagement.

- Update, refine, and unify the vision for parks, recreation, golf, open space, and libraries, based on meaningful community engagement and an understanding of needs and priorities that have changed since previous planning efforts in each of these areas.
- Address current challenges including maintenance of PRL assets and expanding equitable access to PRL facilities and amenities.
- Identify strategic partnerships and funding opportunities both regionally and within Westminster to meet community demand, provide high-quality experiences, and reduce costs.
- Prioritize investments and capital projects, including tangible actions that the PRL Department can take to implement these projects.

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## WHO WILL USE THIS PLAN?

The success of this PRL Vision Plan is dependent on community-wide adoption, use, and support. The continued endorsement and implementation of this plan by the people and organizations that helped shape the goals and recommendations is essential to ensuring that the plan has a tangible impact.

### *Westminster City Council*

This plan serves as a strategic guide for City Council on matters related to parks, recreation, golf, libraries, open space, arts, and cultural and event programming. The goals and recommendations should guide decisions across all areas of local governance since PRL services are key contributors to quality of life for Westminster residents. The plan should be consulted to inform the annual budget and capital improvement plan, and when applicable to land use and development, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure decisions to capitalize on opportunities to advance the recommendations of this plan and to consider impacts to existing PRL assets and future goals.

### *Parks, Recreation, Libraries and Open Space Advisory Board (PRLOSAB)*

PRLOSAB will use this Vision Plan to set annual goals and priorities as well as ensure that all decision-making and recommendations of the advisory board is aligned with the goals, objectives, actions and recommendations of the plan.

### *PRL Department/City Staff*

This Vision Plan is key in guiding PRL Department in planning, prioritization, directing investment, and securing external funding for PRL projects. City Staff should reference the plan when preparing the annual PRL Department budget, developing the annual Capital Improvement Program, and facilitating strategic partnerships. This plan will also guide the PRL Department staff in setting annual Department goals.

### *Local Partner Organizations*

The PRL Department has enjoyed partnerships with many different community groups and organizations, such as the Westminster Community Foundation. This Vision Plan establishes the importance of these groups continuing to play a key role in advancing PRL goals and services.

### *Westminster Community*

The future of Parks, Recreation and Libraries in Westminster must have strong community support. Residents, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and partner agencies must work collectively to strengthen and improve the PRL assets that are a source of community pride and cohesion.

The full PRL Vision Plan is available online; however, the executive summary, along with the goals and objectives, serves as the primary working document to guide operations.



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# OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS



## CHAPTER 1: FOUNDATION

This chapter outlines the Plan's background, purpose, process including community engagement, and plan vision.



## CHAPTER 2: NEEDS

This chapter provides a summary of the Needs Assessment process including a variety of analyses of PRL services. The chapter provides results of the Statistically Valid Survey, Market Trends Analysis, Benchmark Community Analyses, Population-based Level of Service Analyses, and Neighborhood Needs Analysis. The chapter concludes with specific recommendations of what and where to invest in the PRL system.



### CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter describes the recommendations as determined by the analyses by PRL Planning Area, fundamental Department functions, level of service, classifications and standards, staff capacity and operations, sustainability, and overall goals, objectives, and actions that PRL can take to achieve those goals and objectives.



### CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter prioritizes projects and plan actions and provides implementation details for objectives and actions including funding sources and maintenance of plan actions.

## PLAN PROCESS

The planning process was organized in four phases completed over a 15-month period.

### PHASE 1

**Phase 1** established the basis for the plan through data collection, defining existing conditions and assessment of the current system.

Existing Plans Summary	Recreation, Golf, and Arts/Culture Program Assessment Results
Project Branding Package	
Preliminary Plan Outline	Summaries of Existing Conditions & Community Engagement
Facility Inventory and Assessment Report	

### PHASE 2

**Phase 2** determined community needs based on technical analyses, trends, benchmark comparisons, and public/ stakeholder input.

Statistically Valid Survey	Level of Service Analysis and Targets
Needs Assessment	Environmental Impacts of Maintenance Operations
Planning District/Quadrants	

### PHASE 3

**Phase 3** defined specific goals, objectives, and recommendations for the next 10-20 years.

Parks & Facilities Recommendations	Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Financial Assessment
Program Recommendations	Priority Investment Areas
PRL Fundamental Functions	Funding Strategies
Staff Capacity Analysis	

### PHASE 4

**Phase 4** directed final plan development, staff and public review, and City Council adoption.

Action Plans	Plan Adoption
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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## OVERVIEW

Community engagement informed every phase of the project and took place in three (3) stages through in-person and online interactive activities.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STAGE #1 – VISION & NEEDS, SEPTEMBER 2023 – AUGUST 2024**

This first series of outreach introduced the project and posed initial questions regarding values, challenges, opportunities, preferences, and needs.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STAGE #2 – GOALS, BIG IDEAS, & RECOMMENDATIONS, AUGUST 2024-OCTOBER 2024**

The second stage of engagement offered an opportunity to present a bold vision statement, goals, objectives, and PRL fundamental functions informed by community input collected in Stage 1. Additionally, engagement materials presented a summary of the neighborhood needs assessment. Outreach tools at this stage also sought input on community priorities and preferences for future public investment in the parks, recreation, and libraries system.

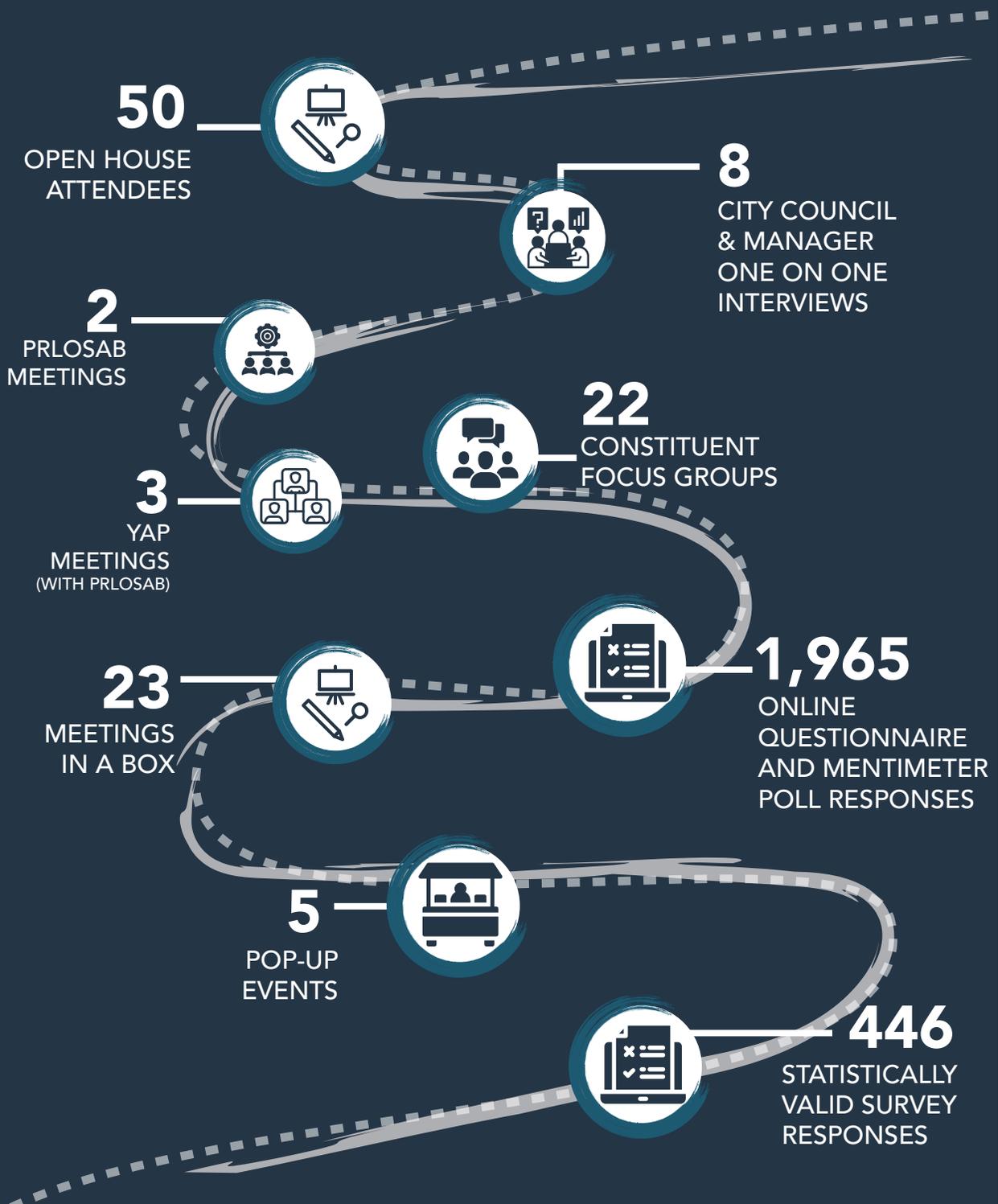
### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STAGE #3 –DRAFT PLAN REVIEW, JANUARY 2025**

The third stage of engagement provided an opportunity for the community at large to review and provide feedback on the draft plan to include recommendations for improvements, level of service standards, and funding mechanisms for priority projects. The in-person public meeting open house was further supported with online plan review.

## PRLOSAB ROLE

The Westminster Parks, Recreation, Libraries, and Open Space Advisory Board (PRLOSAB) is an established City board that advises staff and City Council on various community needs and provides input related to parks, recreation, libraries, and open space issues, service delivery to the community, and long-range planning. The role of PRLOSAB members during the development of the Vision Plan was to act as a source of local perspective and insight as well as a sounding board for ideas, concepts, and recommendations to be included in the plan. PRLOSAB members also assisted in generating public engagement and increasing awareness of the planning process through their professional and social networks. Over the course of the planning process, there have been five PRLOSAB meetings, including three in conjunction with the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP), and accompanied by regular transmittal of draft plan materials, engagement opportunities, and process updates.

# OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS



## ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Engagement strategies used in the Vision Plan process provided a framework for meaningful and inclusive community engagement early and frequently. The project team engaged the Westminster community through a variety of methods, including in-person and online engagement opportunities. The following summarizes key engagement strategies throughout the planning process. Detailed community engagement results can be found in Appendix B.

### *Project Webpage*

The use of the official Westminster website to create a [Vision Plan web page](#) that conveyed plan progress, in-person and online engagement opportunities, and results and updates.

### *Online Questionnaires & Polls*

Two online questionnaires were administered during the planning process and gathered 1,569 responses. The first online questionnaire was launched in mid-August 2023 and aimed to collect information on public use of the City's PRL assets and understand community preferences for strategies to support arts and culture, health and wellness, and sustainability. The second online questionnaire was launched in early April 2024 and was structured to collect mostly open-ended responses on resident opinions of strengths and weaknesses of PRL, concerns for the future of PRL, and ideas on ways to strengthen PRL offerings.

Online polls were also live throughout the planning process through an online platform called Mentimeter, where residents could quickly share their opinions on most important priorities and goals of the process. These polls were especially effective when deployed at popular Westminster events such as Westy Fest, where attendees could quickly provide input through their mobile phones.

### *Constituent Focus Groups*

The project team conducted a series of four 90-minute focus groups on October 9 and 10, 2023. Approximately 65 individuals were invited to participate in the focus groups. Attendees represented a wide range of PRL constituents and partners. Each focus group discussed the same series of questions aimed at illuminating current challenges, opportunities, and successful outcomes for the planning process.

An additional fourteen focus groups were hosted by the Westminster Community Foundation between

## PRL STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Input from PRL and other City Departments has strongly influenced plan direction and the development of the vision, goals, and objectives. In October 2023, representatives from each department helped kick off the project through a facilitated meeting that resulted in staff-identified opportunities for aligning the Vision Plan with the City's Vision Statement and goals for the planning process. PRL staff at all levels continued to engage throughout the process by completing Meetings in a Box within their division teams. PRL Supervisors were especially involved in shaping the plan's vision statement, goals, and objectives through virtual and in person workshops that took place in August and September 2024. Finally, staff participated in an open house event in October 2024 that presented community engagement and analysis results, and budgeting activities.



March and April 2024. The focus groups were comprised of 124 participants of diverse backgrounds, including 75% identifying as Latiné, specific representation from individuals experiencing homelessness, and 14% of participants under the age of 18.

### *Meetings in a Box*

Meetings in a Box were available to community members from December 2023 – August 2024. This take-home kit is designed for community groups, neighborhood associations, or friends to gather at a convenient time and location to share and document their opinions about the future of parks, recreation, and libraries in Westminster. Meetings in a Box kits were developed including Plan background, maps, and feedback questions. Over 20 meetings in a box were held by a range of interest groups and sent back to the City.

### *City Council Interviews*

City Council, the Mayor, and City Manager were interviewed individually between January 22 and February 12, 2024. The purpose of the interviews was to hear from City leadership early in the process to identify issues that are important to address in the plan and identify opportunities and ideas that the plan should further explore. Topics discussed during the interview included the PRL Department’s mission, opportunities, challenges, strengths, potential partnerships, barriers to participation, and fundamental functions.

### *Community Open House Events*

Three community-wide open house events were held during the planning process. The first was held in November 2023 to provide a formal in-person opportunity for the community to be introduced to the planning process and provide input on the PRL facilities and amenities that are most important to them. The second open house was hosted in conjunction with the Grand Re-Opening of the renovated Swim and Fitness Center and Provided attendees with the opportunity to give input on draft goals, objectives, and fundamental department functions. The third open house was held in January 2025 to review the draft plan.

### *Online Document Review*

Draft documents were also available for review by the public through the online platform Konvio. This public platform allowed the public to comment, reply, and make suggestions for changes to documents that shaped the structure of this final Vision Plan.

## KEY THEMES

The following major themes emerged consistently throughout the public engagement process and are reflected in the vision, goals, and objectives of this Plan.

**Equity & inclusion.** Provide PRL services equitably and inclusively across the City for all populations.

**Care for what we have.** Protect the longevity of PRL assets through sustainable management and investment in maintenance and lifecycle replacement of existing PRL infrastructure, facilities, and services.

**Connect the City.** Engage residents consistently and frequently, and fill gaps in trail connectivity to maximize the trail system.

**Sustainability.** Prioritize sustainable management practices and opportunities to “green” PRL services and operations.

**Partnerships.** Leverage partnerships with recreation districts, school districts, other PRL service providers, community organizations, and volunteer groups to enhance or expand offerings to residents efficiently and cost-effectively.

**Love for libraries.** Westminster libraries provide much more than books and are critical service centers in the community that should be enhanced and expanded.

**A home for history, arts, & culture.** Need for a cultural center with a performance venue among other amenities to support the arts.

**Linguistic inclusion.** Embrace multi-lingual communities throughout Westminster in the PRL system by ensuring multi-lingual programming, facility staff, and promotional communications.

**Continuum of Compassion.** As front-line service providers, Westminster PRL is frequently the first point of contact for vulnerable populations in the city, such as people experiencing homelessness. By offering resources and assistance to those in need, the PRL system, and by extension, the City of Westminster, will become more welcoming to all users.

## PLAN VISION

This plan is guided by an over-arching Vision Statement that conveys the ideal future conditions reflective of the community values that have emerged through public engagement as described in this chapter. All goals, objectives, and recommendations of the plan support the realization of this vision.



# *Vision Statement*

***Westminster PRL creates equitable opportunities for programs that empower, spaces that ignite creativity, and events that unite us. Together, we nurture a healthier community by fostering deeper bonds among our diverse residents.***





# 2 NEEDS

**What Services are Needed?**  
**Where are Services Needed?**  
**Implications for PRL Service Delivery**



From January-May, 2024, the PRL Vision Plan project team conducted a Needs Assessment consisting of five detailed analyses to determine the “what” and the “where” of the Westminster community’s PRL needs for improved quality or quantity of services and amenities.

To better understand what the community’s PRL needs are, the consultant team conducted a statistically valid survey (SVS), market trends analysis, benchmarking study against peer-city PRL agencies, and population-based Level of Service Analysis by park type and City quadrant.

To understand geographic areas where PRL facilities, amenities, and programs are most-needed, City staff and the consultant team conducted a Neighborhood Needs Analysis, population-based Level of Service Analysis by City Quadrant, and cross-tabulated the SVS results by City quadrant. The results of all five analyses are highlighted on the following pages and conclude with a summary of key takeaways and implications for Westminster PRL service delivery. Complete results are available as appendices to this report.

## **STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY**

In January 2024, the City of Westminster partnered with the ETC Institute to conduct a Statistically Valid Survey (SVS) to understand the needs and preferences of Westminster residents for parks, recreation, and library (PRL) services. Two-thousand surveys were distributed to households that had not been previously surveyed in the recent SVS conducted for Hyland Hills Park and Recreation District or the biannual City of Westminster Community Survey (also conducted by ETC Institute). To achieve a level of statistical confidence, a minimum of 400 responses were needed, and this call for action resulted in 446 surveys completed. The SVS results identify opportunities for the PRL Department to strategically direct its efforts to better meet the needs of Westminster residents. Notable City-wide results are highlighted below. Results by City quadrant are presented in the second section of this report as they relate to geographically-specific areas. Full results, including demographic data on survey respondents, are included in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses.

# WHAT PRL SERVICES DOES WESTMINSTER NEED?

## CITY-WIDE RESULTS

### Supported Facility and Amenity Actions

Nearly all improvements and possible new facilities assessed on the survey were supported by at least 50 percent of respondents, but the improvement and maintenance of existing infrastructure received significantly higher levels of support than new capital development.

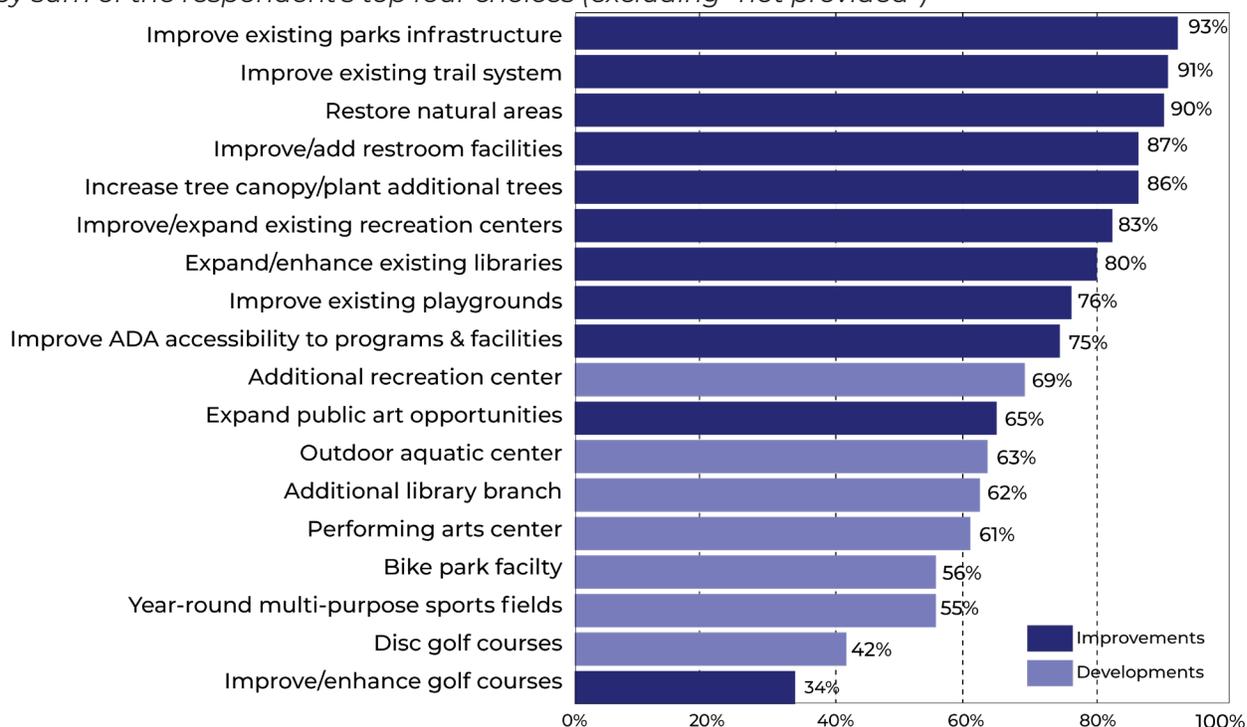
The top three most supported potential improvements to existing facilities were:

- Improving existing parks infrastructure
- Improving the existing trail system
- Restoring natural areas

The top three most supported potential new capital developments were:

- Additional recreation center
- Outdoor aquatic center
- Additional library branch

**Figure 1. Importance of Improvements and New Developments**  
by sum of the respondent's top four choices (excluding "not provided")



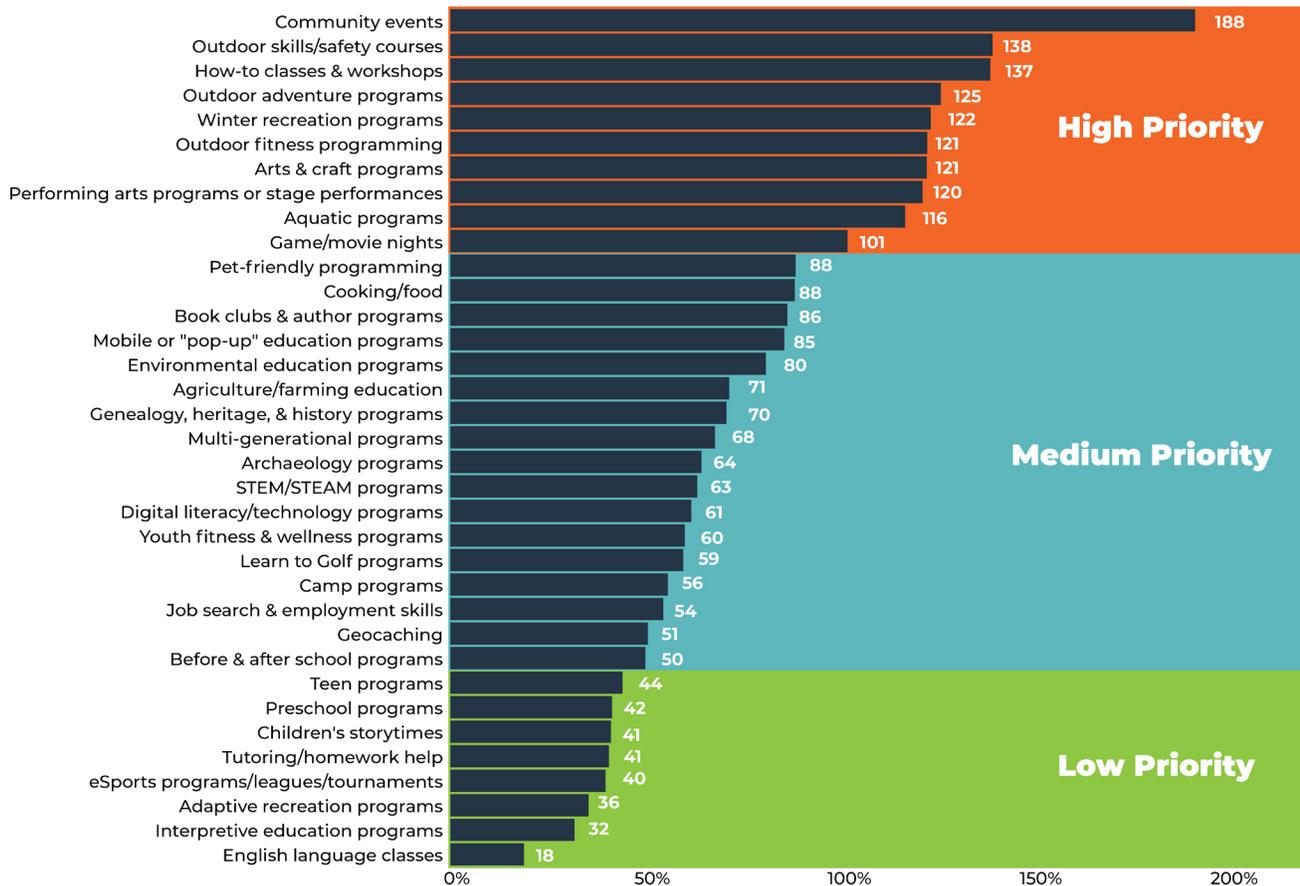
### Priority Investment Rating

**Programs.** The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on programs and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the program. The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 35 programs assessed on the survey. 200 is the maximum priority investment rating score.

The top 5 program priorities for investment based on need and importance as follows:

- Community events
- Outdoor skills/safety courses
- How-to classes & workshops
- Outdoor adventure programs
- Winter recreation programs

**Figure 2.** Top Priorities for Investment for Programs Based on PIR

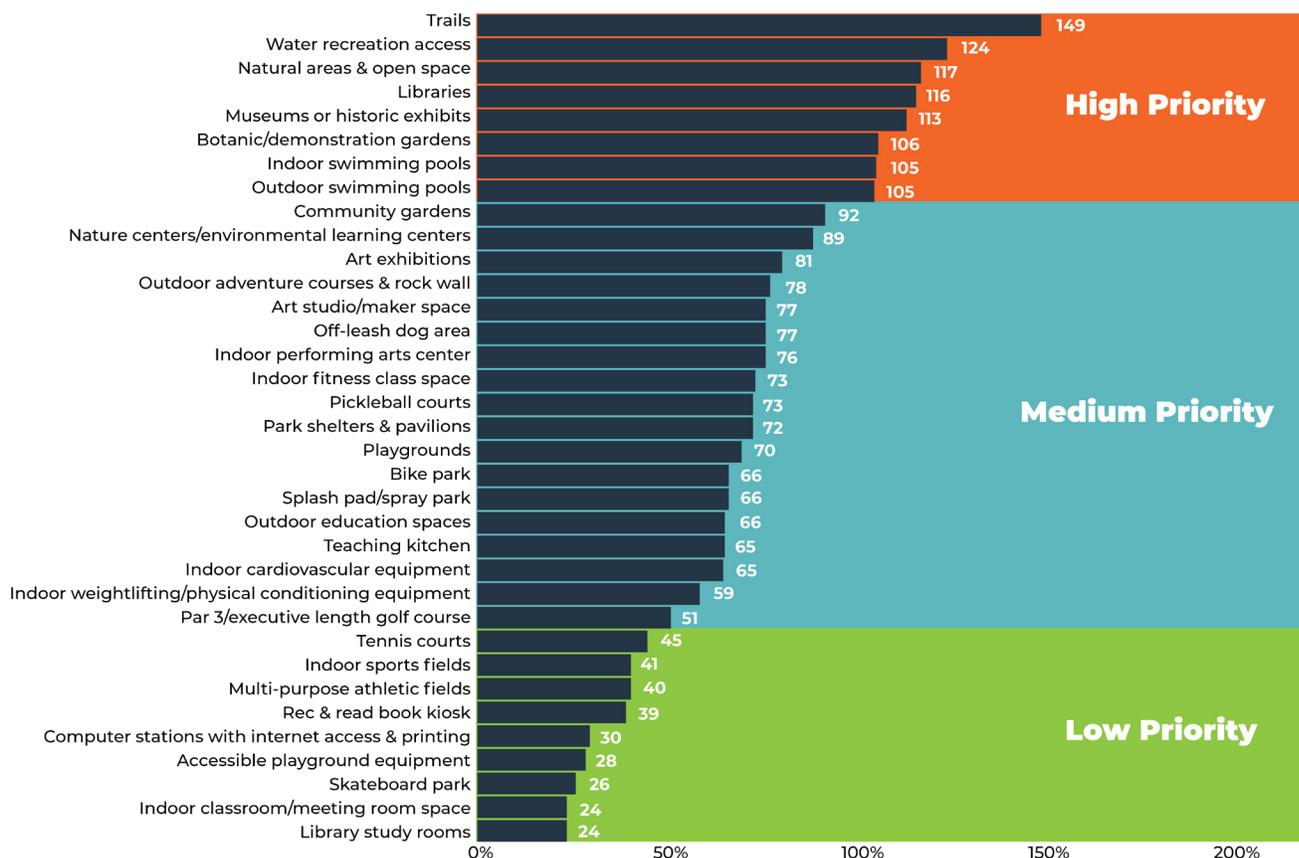


**Facilities and Amenities.** The PIR equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and amenities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility or amenity. The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 35 facilities/amenities assessed on the survey.

The Top 5 facility and amenity priorities for investment based on need and importance as follows:

- Trails
- Water recreation access
- Natural areas and open space
- Libraries
- Museums or historic exhibits

**Figure 3.** Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities/Amenities Based on PIR



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## MARKET TRENDS

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

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

### *Demographic Implications*

While it is important not to generalize recreation needs and priorities based solely on demographics, the analysis suggests some potential implications for Westminster PRL that include the following:

- Westminster's aging population trends indicate a need to identify and understand the interests of all ages, especially middle-aged and elderly populations. Adding more recreational activities for the active adult population, such as exercise classes or recreational leagues, may prove beneficial in keeping older adult populations active. In addition to adults, the increasing percentage of children under the age of 13 should be considered for future planning.
- Westminster's relatively average household income characteristics suggest some potential disposable income at the individual and family level. The Department should be mindful of this when pricing programs and events, but remaining aware of the projected upward income trend that the City may expect over the next decade.

- Westminster’s relatively low annual growth rate from 2020 to 2023 is projected to increase slightly from 2023 to 2038, showing a continuation of the steady growth the community has seen in the past decade. This moderate population growth should be considered and accounted for when planning new amenities and offerings for the community, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of current offerings.
- Finally, Westminster should ensure its diversifying population is reflected in its offerings, marketing communications, and public outreach. With increasing racial, ethnic, and age group diversity, Westminster should remain prepared to evolve its offerings over time in response to cultural shifts in demand.

### *Market Potential*

Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the City. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national average. The national average is 100; therefore, numbers below 100 would represent lower than average participation rates, and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rates.

When analyzing Westminster’s MPIs, the data demonstrates above average market potential index (MPI) numbers in almost all assessed areas, with high potential in several more specific activities. For example, Tennis, Mountain Biking, and Pilates scored well above the national average, while also outperforming most of their other General Sports or Outdoor Activities counterparts, according to the analysis. Westminster’s MPI scores indicate very few activities below the national average, with only five of the measured 45 activities scoring less than 100. This becomes significant when the Department considers initiating new programs or building new facilities, providing a tool for estimating resident attendance and participation.

The full MPI analysis is included in the Market Trends Report in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses.



### Local Trends in Recreation Programming

The consultant team analyzed 2022 and 2023 recreation program enrollment data from the PRL Department’s internal tracking system. This data includes every program that was provided by the Department for the last two years, with specific attention on the programs that were held in both 2022 and 2023 as points of comparison. The table below summarizes the programs with the greatest increase in percentage of enrollment capacity (percent full) from 2022-2023. It should be noted that 2022 program enrollment was still recovering from COVID-19 pandemic shifts in attendance.

According to the table below, smaller, specialty programs (like Movie Night or Cheer Camp) made significant jumps in enrollment capacity percentages. Note that some changes in enrollment percent-full can be attributed to reducing or increasing the maximum enrollment capacity rather than higher or lower demand from the community.

**Table 1.** Programs with Greatest Increase in Percentage of Enrollment Capacity (Percent Full) from 2022 to 2023

Category	2022			2023			Total percent full change from 2022 to 2023
	Total Enrollment Count	Total Max Enrollment Count	Total Percent Full	Total Enrollment Count	Total Max Enrollment Count	Total Percent Full	
Movie Night	126	251	50.20%	147	150	98.00%	47.80%
Cheer Camp	61	90	67.78%	95	90	105.56%	37.78%
Adult Basketball	10	14	71.43%	12	11	109.09%	37.66%
Pets	63	248	25.40%	140	246	56.91%	31.51%
Watercolors	54	72	75.00%	49	48	102.08%	27.08%
Baton	73	240	30.42%	104	185	56.22%	25.80%
Bird Walks	220	564	39.01%	421	650	64.77%	25.76%
Tap	133	201	66.17%	109	119	91.60%	25.43%
Outdoor Recreation	62	135	45.93%	65	92	70.65%	24.72%
Nature Programming	299	769	38.88%	335	542	61.81%	22.93%
Jewelry Making	10	26	38.46%	24	40	60.00%	21.54%
Colorado Rockies Games	28	34	82.35%	57	57	100.00%	17.65%
General Dance	114	352	32.39%	134	268	50.00%	17.61%
Acrylic Painting	64	78	82.05%	127	130	97.69%	15.64%
Pottery	1221	1233	99.03%	1110	973	114.08%	15.05%

Clear trends within programming attendance emerge from this analysis. Swim Lessons have increased significantly after being unavailable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other nationally emerging sports and recreation programs like Pickleball, Yoga, and Taekwon-Do have also experienced significant growth. The Department has also experienced increased demand in arts and educational programming, including Science/Technology/Engineering/Math (STEM) Programming, Theater, Acrylic Painting, and Nature Programming. The complete dataset of all 66 program groups can be found in the full Market Trends Report, found in Appendix D, Needs Assessment.

Programs nearing capacity should be analyzed annually for expansion to meet community demand relative to limitations such as available space, staff capacity, and state regulations on capacity for licensed programs such as summer camps. While national trends can be helpful in providing a framework for widespread changes in recreation programming, current and local programming trends will provide the highest level of insight to guide programmatic offerings.

## **BENCHMARK ANALYSIS**

### *Parks and Recreation*

The planning team identified metrics to benchmark against other Front Range communities with similar parks and recreation systems. The complexity in this analysis was ensuring direct comparison through a methodology of statistics and ratios to provide objective information that is relevant and as accurate as possible. The goal of benchmarking is to evaluate Westminster PRL Department's position among peer agencies as it applies to the delivery of its parks and recreation system through operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, programming, and inventories.

Information used in this analysis was obtained directly from each participating benchmark agency (as available) and information available through the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park Metrics Database. Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains, and reports data, variances may exist. These variations can impact the per capita and percentage allocations, and the overall comparison must be reviewed with this in mind.

The agencies listed below were selected for benchmarking because they are communities of similar size, located in Colorado's Front Range outside of major metro areas,



and had similar socioeconomic characteristics as that of Westminster. These benchmarked agencies included:

- Arvada Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- Boulder Parks and Recreation
- Broomfield Parks, Recreation, and Senior Services
- Fort Collins Recreation
- Lakewood Parks and Recreation
- Loveland Parks and Recreation
- Thornton Parks and Recreation

While each agency included in this analysis is a high performing system, it is important to note that each agency varies, sometimes significantly, in the size and scope of the parks and services provided, making direct comparisons difficult. The power in this analysis is to identify areas where benchmark agencies excel, providing opportunities for peer collaboration to better understand the factors that contribute to their success. For example, it is worth learning more about what is driving Arvada to achieve a cost recovery of 107%, over 40% higher than any other benchmarked agency. Equipping Westminster staff to examine the areas of greatest contrast is the true value of benchmarking.

Specific areas where Westminster performs at an exceptional level, compared to benchmark agencies, include program cost recovery, program attendance, and staffing.

When it comes to staffing and operating expenses, Westminster is comparably staffed but only moderately funded when compared to benchmarked agencies. Westminster also demonstrates a relatively stable level of capital investments over the past three years.

Overall, the parks and recreation benchmark analysis reveals that Westminster is a stable, high performing park system measured against its peers. Westminster PRL can utilize these findings as a baseline comparison that provides key performance indicators (KPIs) to be tracked and measured over time.

### *Libraries*

The City of Westminster Public Library (WPL) System was benchmarked against 48 peer library agencies organized into state, regional, national, and aspirational cohorts.

Thirty-six different performance measures were benchmarked. A high-level summary of key conclusions is presented below. Benchmark results were used to inform the Libraries Level of Service assessment and recommended targets included in the complete Library Benchmarking and Level of Service Analysis.

### **Key Conclusions**

- The Westminster community considers the Library one of the three most important assets/services of the City's PRL Department (per 2024 PRL Statistically Valid Survey).
- Funding of the Library (operational and capital for facilities), which is well below state and national averages, is not aligned with this community expectation given the Library was in the top 3 priorities of the community as shown in the statistically valid survey. This is impacting staffing, space, and resource availability and indicated in being lower than average usage in all service level areas above.
- Westminster Libraries are underbuilt (total square feet) in terms of local and national averages, which is also not in alignment with the high priority that the community puts on the Library. Though the overall community is generally satisfied with the current service levels of the library relative to other PRL services, there are opportunities for continued improvement and adaptation to evolving needs. Current WPL users have not been surveyed on level of satisfaction as part of the PRL Vision Plan and may present different opinions regarding library service levels. The Library Master Plan will further explore satisfaction levels with current library users.
- There is need for more space, particularly for an additional outlet to increase user accessibility in the North.
- The long-term viability of the College Hill location must be resolved or a contingency plan developed for replacement should Front Range Community College choose to take full control of the current library space.
- Overall, the short-term focus should be on ensuring the levels of service meet current needs. The upcoming library focused master planning project will assess if residents' needs are met and how staffing levels and space limitations impact the Library's ability to meet residents' needs.

## POPULATION-BASED LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

Level of Service (LOS) guidelines are targets that define the quantity of parkland and open space relative to population. LOS can and will change over time. As the population changes, LOS standards should be reviewed and revised accordingly to provide a high level of service while remaining realistic.

The City of Westminster's 2024 LOS for developed parks and open space is reported in comparison to the targets set in the 2010-2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan in the table below. The table does not include a target LOS standard for Special Use Parks as these parks serve a specialized purpose in response to a distinct community need and are not standardized amenities, such as the Sensory Park. The PRL Department is currently meeting the 2010-2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan target for regional parks, open space, and combined parks and open space acreage. The Department is very close to meeting its target for community parks, but is deficient in neighborhood parkland.

**Table 2.** Parks and Open Space Level of Service (*park acres per 1000 residents*)

Classification	Total Acres	Current LOS	Target LOS (2010 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan)
Neighborhood Park	143.71	1.24 acres/1000	2.5 acres/1000
Community Park	222.66	1.92 acres/1000	2.0 acres/1000
Regional Park	1,756.25	15.21/1000	15 acres/1000
Special Use Park	33.71	0.29 acres/1000	N/A*
<b>Total Parkland (with Standley Lake)</b>	<b>2,336.86</b>	<b>20.23 acres/1000</b>	
<b>Total Parkland (without Standley Lake)</b>	<b>754.59</b>	<b>6.53 acres/1000</b>	
<b>Total Open Space</b>	<b>3,817.62</b>	<b>33.05 acres/1000</b>	<b>24.4 acres/1000</b>
<b>Combined Parks and Open Space</b>	<b>6,154.48</b>	<b>53.28 acres/1000</b>	<b>51.2 acres/1000</b>

## WHERE ARE PRL SERVICES NEEDED?

### NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS ANALYSIS

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

- Public enjoyment and engagement. Where parks and open space are plentiful, residents enjoy the closest attachment and engagement within their communities. Studies indicate higher levels of local gross domestic product and economic well-being.
- Quality recreation time with family and friends. Parks and open space provide a space and a reason to enjoy quality time, relaxation and fun among family members and friends, thus strengthening the social and familial bonds that provide balance and satisfaction in life.
- Improvement of mental and physical health. Parks, open space, and recreation can reduce the impacts of chronic diseases, especially in such vulnerable populations as children, older adults, and the socially vulnerable.
- Measurable decreases in rates of crime and other detrimental activities. Communities are safer because of a wholesome atmosphere created by well-managed parks, open space and recreation services that provide healthy activities and programming for all people.

Some neighborhoods and segments of the population require greater investment because they have historically been underserved and underrepresented. Public parks, recreation, open space, and libraries should be provided equitably to all residents.

### *Analysis of Equitable Access to PRL Facilities and Amenities*

In 2021, the PRL Department conducted an analysis of the geographic distribution of PRL facilities and amenities to document the quantity of PRL facilities within each City quadrant and reveal where facilities are concentrated and where they are lacking. The 2021 analysis also mapped user density to evaluate the relationship between concentrations of PRL users and the location of facilities.



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The 2024 PRL Vision Plan takes this analysis a step further to evaluate need for PRL services and facilities by considering factors that are demonstrative of structural inequity based on system-level indicators for socioeconomic advantage or disadvantage, demographic characteristics, and attributes of the built and natural environments. The data included in the analysis takes into account PRL acquisitions and new trails developed since 2021.

### *Neighborhood Need Indicators: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) Disproportionately Impacted Communities*

The PRL Vision Plan utilizes the CDPHE Enviroscreen Disproportionately Impacted Communities (DIC) index dataset to inform plan recommendations. The CDPHE Disproportionately Impacted Communities is an index calculated as part of the Department's Enviroscreen analysis. Variables used in calculating DIC status of Census Block Groups include the following: low-income communities, communities of color, housing cost-burdened communities, historically marginalized communities, cumulatively impacted communities, tribal lands, and mobile home communities. See the full Neighborhood Needs Analysis Report or CDPHE Enviroscreen [documentation and website](#) for data definitions.

### *Neighborhood Needs Conclusions*

A map of Westminster's Disproportionately Impacted Communities is included in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analysis.

The map reveals three disproportionately impacted areas, as identified according to the factors described above:

1. Northeast Westminster, from 112th to 136th Avenues between Zuni Boulevard and I-25; and between N. Pecos and Huron Streets.
2. Southern area of Historic Westminster which is home to two recreation centers; Swim and Fitness Center and the MAC, as well as Irving Street Library, affirming the location of these facilities as serving a disproportionately impacted community of Westminster.
3. West-central Westminster in the Westcliff area between Highway 36 and the rail corridor.



## POPULATION-BASED LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS BY QUADRANT

The quantity of developed parks and open space per City quadrant relative to population (per 1000 residents) was calculated as shown in the table below and the respective quadrants are reflected in the map on page 45.

**Table 3.** Parks and Open Space LOS by Quadrant

Quadrant	Population	Park Acres per 1000 Residents
Quadrant 1 (NW)	29,257	60.20 acres/1000
Quadrant 2 (SW)	27,323	101.62 acres/1000
Quadrant 3 (NE)	33,913	38.98 acres/1000
Quadrant 4 (SE)	50,504	5.83 acres/1000

## STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS BY QUADRANT

### *Why don't residents visit PRL facilities?*

- Northeast quadrant residents state that facilities are too far away from home.
- Northwest and Southeast quadrant residents who do not visit PRL facilities, do so because they use another city, county, private, or Homeowners Association (HOA) facilities.
- Southwest quadrant residents also responded with the same top reasons as above, but at lower rates than the other quadrants.

### *Why don't residents participate in PRL programs?*

- Across quadrants, between 35%-39% of residents who do not participate in PRL programs agree that they do not participate because they are unaware of what is offered.
- Highest percentages of residents who were "too busy/not interested" are in the Northwest and Northeast quadrants.
- In the Northwest quadrant, a higher percentage of residents than other quadrants cited inconvenient program times.

### *What facilities and programs are important?*

- Across all quadrants, trails, natural areas, and libraries are important facilities to residents.
- Across all quadrants, residents responded that community events and arts and crafts were important.

### *Which new facilities are most important to residents?*

- Southeast and Northeast quadrants support an additional library branch at a marginally higher rate than Northwest and Southwest quadrants.
- All quadrants support an additional recreation center (location not specified), with the Southeast quadrant showing the highest level of support.
- Northwest quadrant residents have the highest level of support for an outdoor aquatic center compared to other quadrants.

### *How can the city improve the PRL system?*

- Supported actions were similar across all quadrants, with overall support for improvement of the existing trail system, increasing tree canopy/additional trees, and restoring natural areas.
- The Southeast and Northwest quadrants expressed support for improvements to existing parks infrastructure at a higher rate than other quadrants' residents.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRL SERVICE DELIVERY

The results of each of the five analyses are synthesized and reconciled below to provide a concise list of considerations for PRL service delivery over the next 10+ years. It is important to note that these analyses present a data-driven approach to understanding community needs and preferences and should be supplemented by meaningful community and PRL participant input when considering specific projects or policy changes.

### WHAT TO PRIORITIZE

- Prioritize improvements to existing facilities and infrastructure over new capital projects, especially for the assets listed below. Significant portions of PRL infrastructure are reaching the end of their lifecycles from the City's early days of rapid growth and development from 1970-1990.
  - Park infrastructure
  - Trail system
  - Natural areas restoration
- As funding for new facilities becomes available, invest in the following or consider partnerships with adjacent communities to connect the community with services/facilities that may be gaps in the City and/or where new facilities may not be feasible:
  - Additional recreation center
  - Outdoor aquatic center
  - Library branch or additional outlets
  - Trails
  - Water recreation access (stand up paddle board, kayak, canoe launches, fishing piers)
  - Museums or historic exhibits
  - Convert undeveloped parkland into Neighborhood Parks
- Invest in developing new or expanding and improving existing programs, consider need for space to accommodate expanding programs:
  - Community events
  - Outdoor skills/safety courses

- How-to classes and workshops
- Outdoor adventure and nature programs
- Winter recreation programs (snow tubing, cross country skiing, etc)
- Older Adult/Silver Sneakers
- Culturally diverse programs and events
- Swim Lessons
- Pickleball
- Yoga
- Taekwon-Do
- Theater
- Educational programs such as STEM
- Market potential supports growth in the following recreation activities:
  - Tennis
  - Pilates
  - Mountain Biking
  - Art galleries and art programming
- Expand volunteer capacity (increase volunteer hours) to fill gaps in staffing
- New strategies for revenue retention and reduced operating expenses
- Identify additional library funding sources or partnerships to meet community needs
- Contingency plan for the College Hill Library
- Marketing and promotional campaigns to increase awareness of program offerings
- Calibrate program times for greater community convenience

## WHERE TO INVEST

- Northeast Westminster, from 112th to 136th Avenues between Zuni Boulevard and I-25; and between N. Pecos and Huron Streets. This area especially lacks nearby library services compared to the rest of the City and has half as much park and open space land as the western quadrants of the City.



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- Historic Westminster in the southern area of the City (southeast quadrant) is significantly lacking in parks and open space compared to the rest of the City; however this area is home to two recreation centers and the Irving Street Library, affirming the location of these facilities as strategically placed to serve a disproportionately impacted community of Westminster.
  - West-central Westminster in the Westcliff area between Highway 36 and the rail corridor - an area identified by CDPHE as a Disproportionately Impacted Community.
  - Northwest residents most strongly support an outdoor aquatic center and improvements to existing park infrastructure.
  - Geographic programming preferences, according to the statistically valid survey, include the following:
    - In the Southeast and Northeast quadrants, how-to classes are more important than in other quadrants
    - In the Southwest quadrant, outdoor adventure programs, performing arts programs or stage performances are more important than in other quadrants
    - In the Northwest quadrant, outdoor fitness and game/movie nights are more important than in other quadrants







# 3

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**PRL Planning Districts**

**PRL Fundamental Functions**

**Level of Service Targets**

**Classifications and Standards**

**Goals and Objectives**

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This chapter identifies recommendations that will guide the City of Westminster to achieve the Vision identified in Chapter 2.

The recommendations presented in this chapter are informed by data-driven research, best planning practices, and the rich set of community values and aspirations that were conveyed through the public engagement phase. Collectively, these strategies represent a wide range of tools, resources, and strategies necessary to address existing challenges, meet future demands, and realize preferred outcomes.

## PRL PLANNING DISTRICTS

The PRL Vision Plan proposes the establishment of districts to geographically organize planning and maintenance operations for PRL services. The PRL Department should coordinate with the Public Works and Utilities Department to realize resource and facility efficiencies as planning districts are implemented.

### PLANNING AREAS

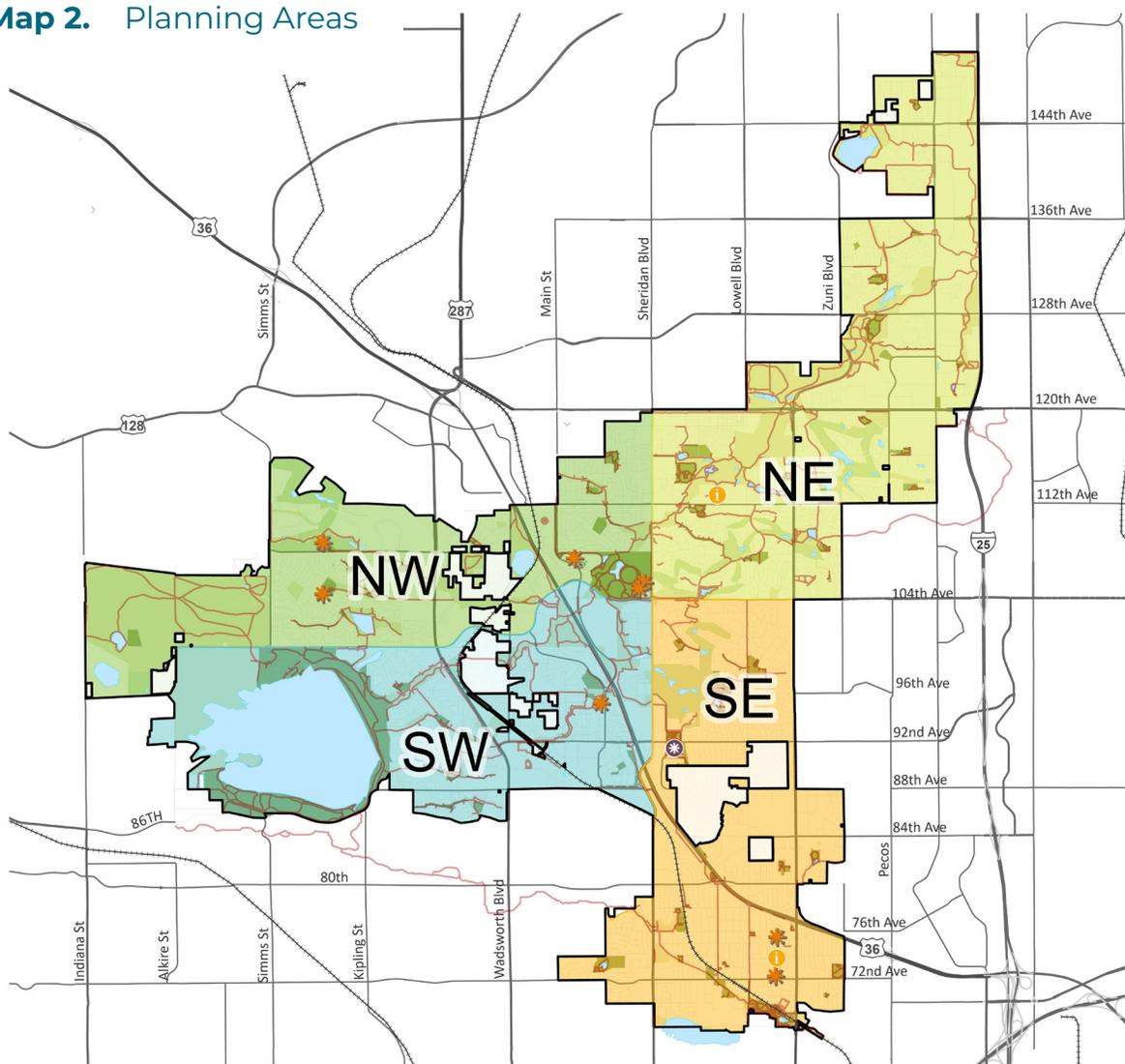
The purpose of the district is to provide a framework for tracking and planning future investment of developer-paid fees as required by City code. This framework will allow the PRL Department to maintain a database of developer-paid fees by districts to invest those fees in the development of PRL facilities, parks, and services within the same district in which the fees were paid. This framework ensures that investment in PRL facilities is proportional to the amount of change and development occurring in each district so that an appropriate level of service is maintained as the population of a district grows.

Developer-paid fees are beneficial for districts experiencing development and population growth, but do not ensure equal levels of funding between the districts. Built-out or developmentally-stable districts that are not experiencing new development or redevelopment will not receive the same level of funding from developer-paid fees. Therefore, the PRL Department must also ensure that funding mechanisms are in place to provide the financial capital necessary to maintain existing PRL assets in areas of the City where infrastructure is aging.

## MAINTENANCE HUBS

The districts will also function as a future organizing framework for dispersed PRL maintenance hubs. This represents a shift in organization from the Department's current central operations model. Under the dispersed hub model, each district would have a dedicated PRL maintenance hub facility and staff dedicated to serve that specific district. This model increases staff's sense of ownership, accountability and efficiency by limiting the distance of maintenance vehicle trips, which also reduces carbon emissions and staff time spent traveling between PRL sites. The result is a more efficient and sustainable maintenance operations system.

**Map 2.** Planning Areas



\*This is an example of maintenance districts, but may not reflect the actual boundaries to be used by the Department.

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## FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PRL DEPARTMENT

The PRL Department works year-round to plan, implement, and evaluate a wide variety of parks, recreation, libraries, and cultural programs, events and community services while operating and maintaining a diverse collection of facilities. The Westminster community can choose from hundreds of city-provided offerings in sports, arts and culture, summer camps, aquatics, library services, and others. Additionally, Westminster partners with other local organizations to further expand offerings. As the Department strives to continue providing outstanding programs, services, and amenities, it is helpful to define the Fundamental Functions of the PRL Department. These fundamental functions are of greatest importance to the community as informed by current and future needs. Parks, recreation, and library agencies are often challenged by trying to provide all things to all people and are, at times, not viewed as the essential service providers that they are. Identifying fundamental functions and services helps the public, elected and appointed officials, and staff focus on functions that meet basic needs and fill critical service gaps for residents that otherwise would not be met.

## WESTMINSTER PRL DEPARTMENT FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS:

### *Health and Wellness*

- Westminster's parks and recreation facilities encourage physical activity, reducing healthcare costs and prevalence of chronic disease.
- Access to nature and art programs lowers stress, improves mental health, and boosts cognitive function.
- Parks and recreation provide healthy meals, cooking classes to youth, nutrition education, and fitness programs.

### *Child Development*

- Parks, recreation, and libraries promote literacy, cultivate the development of life-skills, and offer out-of-school time programs, such as childcare and summer camps.
- Youth sports programs promote teamwork, sportsmanship, and healthy competition.
- Parks and libraries nurture environmental awareness and creativity through STEM programs and nature exploration.

### *Economic Engine*

- Parks, recreation, and libraries generate jobs, boost property values, and attract businesses.
- Investments in parks and libraries create a synergistic cycle of private sector investment and attract new residents.
- Parks, recreation, and library programs are a primary source of first-time jobs for youth and young adults.

### *Community Connections*

- Parks bring people together through festivals, community events, programs, public art, and nature walks.
- Parks, recreation centers, and libraries serve as a community space, countering social isolation and promoting social capital within communities.
- Westminster residents have historically supported funding for parks, recreation, libraries, open space and trails, emphasizing the community value placed on these services.

### *Resilience and Sustainability*

- Parks and open space mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing flooding, filtering air, and lowering temperatures.
- Parks, recreation facilities, and libraries provide essential services during emergencies and widespread crises.
- Green spaces and natural landscapes promote healthy living and contribute to longer life expectancy.

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# LEVEL OF SERVICE

## PARKS

Level of Service (LOS) defines the quantity of parkland relative to population. Westminster's 2024 park LOS is compared to the target LOS for each park classification on page 32. The PRL Department is currently meeting or very close to meeting its target for regional parks, open space, and combined parks and open space acreage as originally defined in the 2010-2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The PRL Department is well above the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) median acreage of total parkland for agencies serving similar sized communities, which is 11.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. As of 2024, Westminster provides 20.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

The Department is currently only deficient in neighborhood parkland. The planning team evaluated the City's existing LOS to determine guidelines for future parkland acquisition or development, taking the following into consideration:

- Population growth
- Supply of existing undeveloped City parkland
- Feasibility for the City to acquire new parkland
- Community input and needs prioritization
- Ability for the City to financially sustain new high-quality parks
- Staff capacity to maintain current and future developed parks
- Target LOS compared to peer agencies in the surrounding region
- Current LOS by City quadrant (See Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses)

This plan recommends that the City increase its current level of service for neighborhood parks to meet the existing park LOS target by developing existing undeveloped parkland, as resources allow, with special focus on neighborhood parks in Historic Westminster (southeast quadrant). This recommendation is based on the following:

- Eighty-one percent of residents are very satisfied with parks and recreation facilities (2024 City of Westminster Community Survey Results).
- Significant financial strain of current asset maintenance and lifecycle replacement.
- In addition to parks provided by the City of Westminster, there is a robust network of parks and open space provided by Hyland Hills Park and Recreation District, homeowners' associations, and adjacent municipalities that helps meet local demand for self-directed outdoor recreation and experiences in a natural setting. Nearly all of Westminster is located within a 10-minute (half mile) walk of a park (see Walkability Analysis map in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses).
- The City has 79.3 acres of undeveloped parkland. Developing these parks will increase the neighborhood parks LOS to 1.93 acres of parkland per 1000 residents, bringing the City significantly closer to meeting its 2.5 acres per 1000 residents target.

## TRAILS

When compared to seven other cities in the region, Westminster was the second lowest in terms of total miles of managed trails with 126 miles. (See Benchmark Communities Analysis in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses.) However, Westminster far out-performs the NRPA national median for similarly-sized communities (31 miles of trail managed for communities up to 250,000).

Community engagement has consistently revealed that trails are a top priority for residents. The City should strategically focus on expanding the trail network by completing existing trails and strategic connections to key destinations and regional trails.





## OPEN SPACE

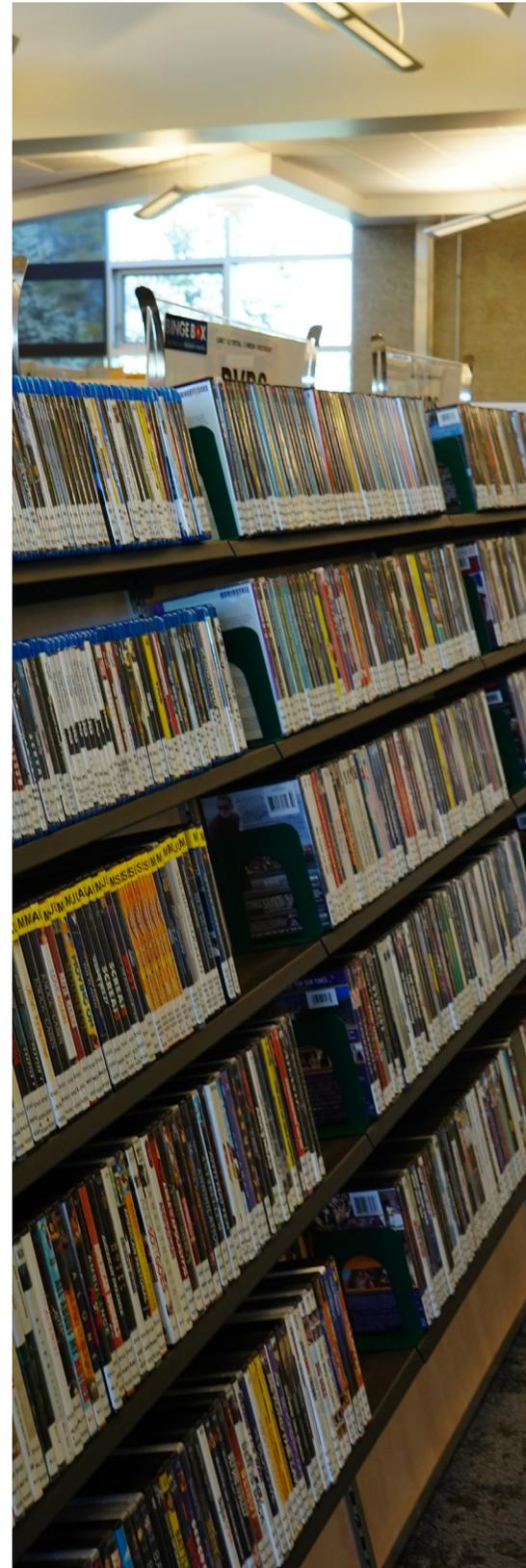
The City of Westminster manages 3,817 acres of open space, or approximately 15% of the City's total land area, and has long been a leader in the state in conserving land. When benchmarked against peer agencies in the region, Westminster's undeveloped open space acreage is intermediately ranked (See Benchmark Communities Analysis in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses), but well above the NRPA median for agencies serving similar sized communities. Given that Westminster has successfully assembled a sizable open space network but has only completed a small amount of open space land restoration and that high ecological value land is scarcely available within city limits, this plan recommends that the City take an opportunistic approach to new open space acquisition and instead focus resources on restoring and maintaining the existing 3,817 acres of open space.

## INDOOR RECREATION CENTERS

The PRL Department is currently exceeding the LOS targets identified in the 2010-2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan for recreation centers, which were set based on a population of 125,000 residents at buildout. Since the plan was adopted in 2009, the City has built three recreation centers, bringing the total number to seven and population growth has not reached the anticipated buildout number. As mentioned in the previous chapter, all of Westminster is located within a 12-minute drive of a recreation center within City limits. Therefore, this plan recommends that the City take an opportunistic approach to developing a new multipurpose recreation center as resources and partnership opportunities allow, with specific focus on the northeast quadrant of the City.

## LIBRARIES

In the Needs Assessment, summarized in Chapter 2, Westminster libraries were benchmarked against 48 peer library agencies organized into state, regional, national, and aspirational cohorts (See Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses). This analysis suggested that the construction of a new library outlet, particularly in the northern part of Westminster, would allow the City achieve a level of service metric that is typical of peer library systems for similarly-sized cities. This presents an opportunity to consider a new library and recreation center in the north as a combination multipurpose facility should resources and opportunities allow. Additional detail on level of service recommendations for Westminster libraries can be found in the forthcoming 2025 Library Master Plan.



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## CLASSIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS

The PRL Department manages a variety of lands and facilities of varying sizes, uses, amenities, functions and programming. Classification systems are useful for inventory, planning, and asset management. A classification system can also serve as the basis for calculating existing and targeting proposed LOS and helps identify staff maintenance needs. The classification system sets mutual expectations between the Department and the community regarding the look, function, and management of various types of facilities. The Department's 2010-2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified classifications for park and recreation facility types.

The following sections provide a general description of the recommended classifications, service area, access provisions, and appropriate amenities for each type of park or facility. The list of amenities is not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive. The amenities for any individual park, recreation, open space, or trail should be determined through site planning that involves the community it is meant to serve. All parks and recreation facilities should be designed to serve multiple age segments and abilities. Library classifications are not recommended as part of this plan.

Classification maps for parks, open space, and trails are found in Appendix F, Classifications.

## PARKS

The PRL Department identifies four park classifications through their geographic information system database: Regional, Community, Neighborhood, and Special Use. Details on size, function, and service area for each are described in the following table:

**Table 4.** Parks Classifications

Park Type	Service Area	Site Criteria	Function and Amenities	Examples
<b>Regional Park</b>	City-wide	Over 250 acres	Destination parks with a variety of amenities serving the entire City and surrounding areas; provides ample parking, trails, open space or self-directed recreation fields, visitor center or performance facility, regulation size sports courts and ball fields as appropriate for the site, campgrounds, and water bodies for recreation	Standley Lake; City Park
<b>Community Park</b>	2.5 miles	15 to 50 acres	Serve multiple neighborhoods and typically provide flexible spaces for passive use and group gathering in addition to regulation-sized facilities for organized team sports; ideally, community parks have easy access to arterial streets and regional trails	Squires Park, Westfield Village Park
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	0.5 mile	0.5 to 14 acres	Smaller parks that are close to residents providing a common area for neighbors of all ages to gather, socialize, and play; within walking and biking distance of neighborhoods; fulfill self directed and active recreation needs; often include playgrounds, play fields, multipurpose courts, picnic shelters, and passive green space	Amherst Park, Bishop Square Park
<b>Special Use Park</b>	Variable	Dependent on uses	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Sensory Park, Promenade Terrace, Roemersberger Fields at Countryside Park

## RECREATION FACILITIES

This plan proposes the following classifications for the PRL Department’s recreation facilities:

**Table 5. Facilities Classifications**

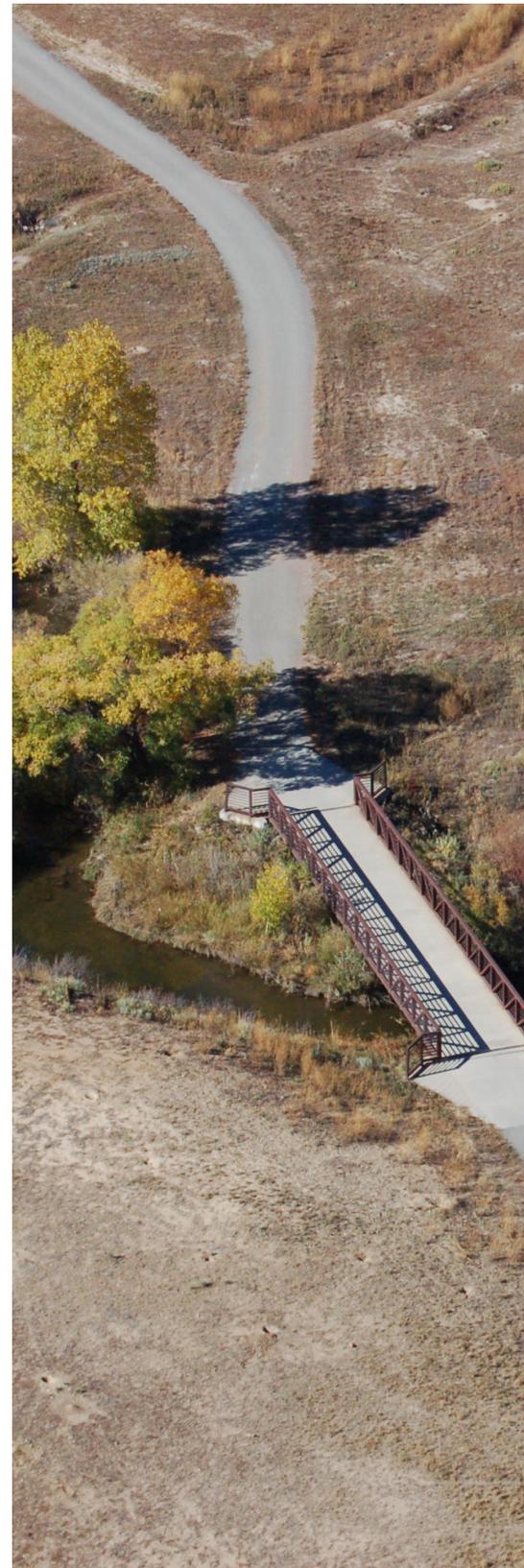
Facility	Function	Service Area	Typical Features	Examples
<b>Recreation/ Multi-use Center</b>	Serve residents from all over the City, especially from surrounding cluster of neighborhoods; may attract users from all over the city for certain speciality recreation experiences; ample opportunities for self-guided or programmed fitness and wellness; provides places to gather, wide variety of programs, opportunities to learn and teach; can host small or large team sports; ideally co-located with parks to promote indoor/outdoor recreational opportunities; ideally accessible by sidewalks, trails, transit, and major streets; on site parking	Neighborhoods within a 12-minute drive	Gymnasium, weight or cardio room, indoor track, multi-purpose activity or meeting rooms, pools, art/craft studios, maker space, can include library space	City Park Recreation Center, City Park Fitness Center, West View Recreation Center, the MAC, Swim and Fitness Center
<b>Special Use Facility</b>	Special-purpose indoor/outdoor spaces; can be located within or adjacent to parks or as standalone facilities; on site parking	Regional	Unique to each facility	Legacy Ridge Golf Course, Walnut Creek Golf Preserve, Westminster Sports Center, Ice Centre
<b>History, Culture, Arts Facilities</b>	Cultural programs; art displays and historic interpretation; preserve historic structures; facilitate interactive experiences; unique indoor/outdoor experiences	Regional	Unique to each facility	Vicky Bunsen Sculpture Garden, Downtown Westminster Art Walk, Fuse Box Container Art Gallery, Art a la Carte mobile art studio, public art installations, designated historic landmarks located across the City
<b>Aquatic Facilities</b>	Vary in size; self-guided or programmed aquatic fitness; ideally co-located with parks or recreation centers to promote multiple recreational opportunities	Primarily adjacent neighborhoods, but likely attract users citywide	Lap pools, splashpads/spraygrounds, slides, lazy river, aquatic playgrounds	Countryside Pool, City Park Splash Pad & Aquatic Center, Swim and Fitness Center Pool

## TRAILS

The 2014 Open Space Stewardship Plan (OSSP) maps Westminster trails in four categories: major, minor, connecting trails, and natural trails. Major trails are intended to serve as regional connectors, typically constructed in linear corridors associated with drainage and irrigation conveyances along Big Dry Creek, Little Dry Creek, Farmers High Line Canal, and Walnut Creek. Minor trails are typically constructed as part of new residential development with the purpose of linking neighborhoods to each other and to commercial centers. The OSSP further identifies off-street trail facility specifications according to material type and mode (see Appendix F, Classifications for details). Forthcoming future updates to the 2014 OSSP and Trails Plan will reconsider classifications and specifications for Westminster trails.

## OPEN SPACE

The 2014 Open Space Stewardship Plan identifies five landscape management classifications for the City's open space: Sensitive Landscape, Urban Natural, Transitional, Functional, and Historic/Agricultural (see Appendix F, Classifications, for details). Open space lands are classified into one of the five management categories according to their natural features, site conditions, function, and historic value, if any. A forthcoming future update to the 2014 OSSP will reconsider the management classifications and make adjustments to meet the open space section's current needs for landscape management.





## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following five goals are based on community input and will help guide the Department's delivery and management of facilities, services, and programs. Each goal is supported by objectives and specific actions that will position the Department to meet or make substantial progress toward achieving the goal and ultimately, the vision of this Plan. Specific actions items are identified in Appendix J, Implementation Action Plans.

### GOAL #1: PROVIDE PLACES, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES THAT VALUE OUR COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY, INTERESTS, AND NEEDS.

**Objective 1.1:** Ensure equitable access to high-quality parks, facilities, trails, and natural areas for all residents .

**Objective 1.2:** Offer diverse and inclusive programs that cater to the unique needs of all community members.

**Objective 1.3:** Promote community health and well-being.

**Objective 1.4:** Foster community identity through the provision of public art and historic preservation.

**Objective 1.5:** Implement effective communication strategies that encompass multiple languages to reach all community members and promote engagement.

**Objective 1.6:** Develop and implement sustainable plans.

### GOAL #2 PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND ENHANCE OUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES.

**Objective 2.1:** Develop and implement management plans for environmental sustainability.

**Objective 2.2:** Promote climate appropriate landscapes across Department-managed parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, and rights-of-way.

**Objective 2.3:** Enhance environmental literacy by educating about the ecological value of preserving natural areas, riparian corridors, and habitats within all open spaces.

**Objective 2.4:** Restore natural habitats on PRL land.

### GOAL #3 SUPPORT LEARNING AND LITERACY.

**Objective 3.1:** Enhance comprehensive literacy and life competencies across all age groups and demographics.

**Objective 3.2:** Provide adequate, functional space for educational programming and experience-based classes.

### GOAL #4 CONTINUE TO LEVERAGE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.

**Objective 4.1:** Foster strong partnerships to expand and enhance program offerings for residents and revenue streams.

**Objective 4.2:** Diversify revenue streams through grant pursuit and exploration of innovative funding sources, philanthropic partners, and sponsorships.

### GOAL #5 EMPOWER PRL STAFF TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY.

**Objective 5.1:** Prioritize and execute PRL core services strategically based on available resources.

**Objective 5.2:** Hire, retain, and support the best qualified staff.





A photograph of a brown and white dog walking on a wooden bridge. The bridge has a dark brown railing with vertical slats. The background shows green trees and a clear blue sky. A teal-colored overlay covers the right side of the image, containing the text.

# 4 IMPLEMENTATION

**Investment Needs Prioritization**  
**Funding Needs Analysis**  
**Funding for the Future**  
**Plan Maintenance**

# INVESTMENT NEEDS PRIORITIZATION

## METHODOLOGY

To prioritize projects that best meet the needs of Westminster despite limited capacity and funding sources, the Vision Plan utilized a *Facility/Amenity Prioritization Ranking Model* to quantify the level of importance of investing in certain amenities based on input from the community, PRL leadership, and the consultant team.

The Prioritization Ranking Model utilized four sources of input to evaluate facility and amenity projects: quantitative community input from the statistically valid survey; qualitative community input from other engagement efforts; PRL staff leadership; and the consultant team. Results of the statistically valid survey received the greatest weighting because they are most representative of all Westminster residents, not just current PRL users who often come from outside the City. The weighted scoring system and variables are described in the table below.

**Table 6.** Prioritization Ranking Model Scoring System and Variables

Data Source	Description	Weight
Quantitative Community Input	Priority Investment Ratings reported by the PRL statistically valid survey.	<b>50%</b>
Qualitative Community Input	Relative importance of park and recreation facilities/amenities as communicated through all other engagement methods.	<b>20%</b>
City Staff Input	Relative importance of park and recreation facilities/amenities as ranked by leadership staff of the PRL Department.	<b>15%</b>
Consultant Team Input	Relative importance of park and recreation facilities/amenities as ranked by the Consultant Team.	<b>15%</b>

## CRITERIA

PRL leadership and the consultant team considered four overarching categories of criteria when evaluating and ranking each facility or amenity as follows:

- **Financial Viability.** All projects should demonstrate financial viability prior to inception.
- **Immediate Need.** Projects that address immediate health and safety needs, compliance, and deferred maintenance.
- **Benefit-driven.** Projects that meet the parkland and amenity needs of the community, complete a partially-developed project, and/or serve as a potential catalyst for economic development.
- **Opportunity-driven.** Projects that leverage resources and offer partnership opportunities, are located on a significant site, and/or promote economic development opportunities.

For a full description of qualitative prioritization criteria, see Appendix H, Prioritization Criteria.

## RESULTS

Thirty-five facility or amenity projects were evaluated in the Prioritization Ranking Model. The highest priority projects, top 20 according to the model, are presented in the table. Full ranking results are available in Appendix G, Operations, Staff Capacity, Funding Analysis, and Capital Improvements Report. These results are not intended as the final recommendation on the sequence of developing new amenities. Rather, they are a summary metric that should serve as a guidepost when making decisions on investment in PRL facilities and amenities. Development of new amenities will largely be influenced by available funding, partnership opportunities, and other factors that may bring certain amenities forward as an opportunity before others. This plan acknowledges that priorities can and should be re-evaluated annually as needs and opportunities shift. The project prioritization criteria and model equip community partners, appointed and elected officials, and PRL staff with a framework for reconsidering priorities each year as the PRL Department develops its annual priorities and Capital Improvement Program.



**Table 7.** Facility/Amenity Priority Ranking Highest Priority Projects

Facility/Amenity	Priority Ranking
Outdoor swimming pools	12.00
Libraries	11.40
Trails	11.40
Natural areas & open space	11.40
Indoor swimming pools	11.40
Community gardens	10.60
Off-leash dog area	10.60
Splash pad/spray park	10.00
Art studio/maker space	10.00
Playgrounds	9.40
Pickleball courts	9.40
Computer stations with internet access & printing	9.20
Outdoor adventure courses & rock wall	8.80
Tennis courts	8.60
Botanic/demonstration gardens	8.20
Museums or historic exhibits	8.20
Park shelters & pavilions	8.00
Multi-purpose athletic fields	8.00

## FUNDING NEEDS ANALYSIS

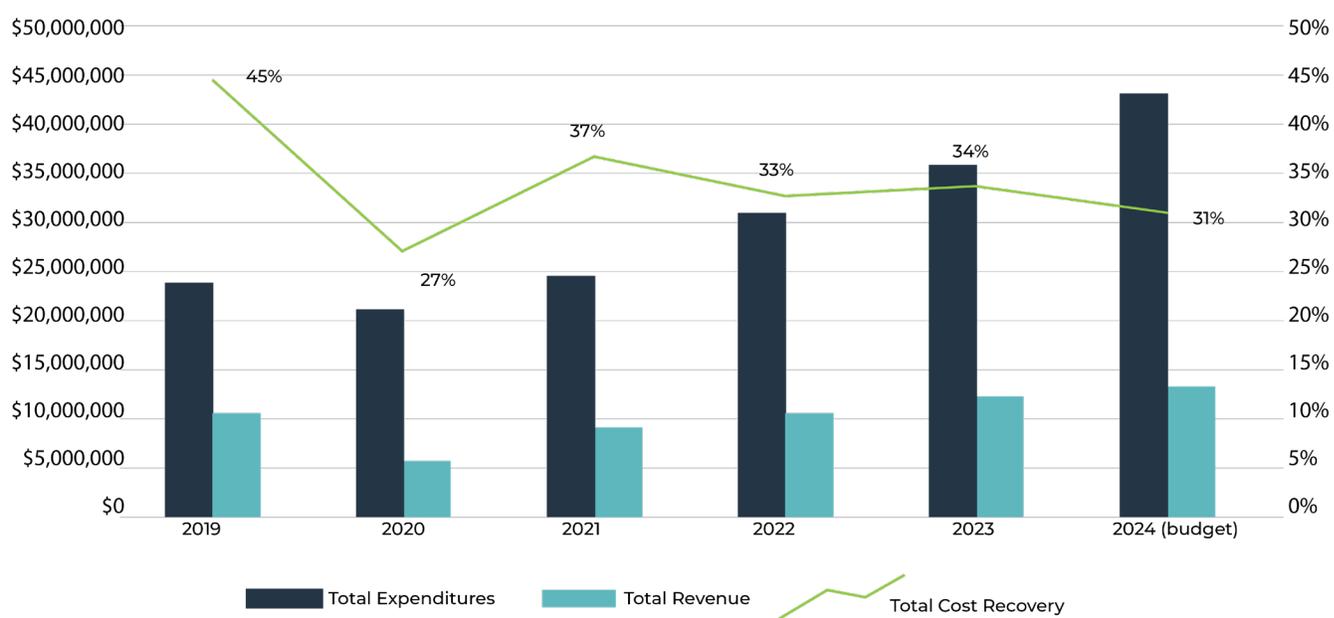
### FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW 2019 – 2024

The graph on the following page (Figure 4) depicts total expenditures, total revenues, and the level of cost recovery for 2019 to 2024. Like other municipal systems, in an effort to keep programs affordable, the PRL Department absorbs some of the cost of providing services such as expenses for instructors, administrative staff, equipment, and other indirect costs. The amount that is recovered by the Department through user fees is referred to as cost recovery and is calculated as ratio of expenses to earned revenues.

Generally, total expenses have increased annually by an average of 13% from 2019 to 2024, with the largest annual increase of 26% occurring from 2020 to 2021, reflecting the reopening of operations after closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Revenues grew 14% during the same period, with the largest increase being a 57% increase from 2020 to 2021. The three largest categories of revenue generation based on average performance from 2019 to 2024 are Golf (46.2%), City Park Recreation Center (13.8%), and General Recreation (12.1%).

Cost recovery from 2019 to 2024 has averaged at 35% and is well above the national median for a public park and recreation agency serving a community the size of Westminster based on the 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Report. The slightly lower cost recovery rate from 2023 to 2024 is the result of increased operational expenditures from year to year rather than decreased revenues. For additional details on revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery rates from 2019 to 2024, see Appendix G. Operations, Staff Capacity, Funding Analysis, and Capital Improvements Report.

**Figure 4.** Top Expenditures, Revenues, and Cost Recovery





## OPERATIONS

### *Staff Capacity*

As the City continues to expand its parks, recreation, and library services to meet community needs, the demand for staffing resources also grows. To ensure sustainable operations and high-quality service delivery, potential staff additions may be considered. Any such additions would require a thorough evaluation of ongoing funding needs and alignment with strategic priorities.

We recognize the importance of working collaboratively with City Council throughout this process. Any proposed staffing changes would undergo a detailed analysis as part of the annual budget process, requiring approval from Human Resources, Policy & Budget, and the City Manager's Office. Ultimately, City Council would have the final decision on any staffing adjustments. This approach ensures fiscal responsibility and alignment with the City's long-term goal.

Staffing capacity was evaluated in three major areas:

1. Park and facility maintenance
2. Recreational programming
3. Administration and support services

Overall, the greatest Department constraint in these areas is current staffing levels given the demands placed on the Department to maintain a high-quality system of parks, recreation and library facilities, and a robust portfolio of recreation, leisure, and library services. There are substantial daily demands for the Department staff to meet the varied and diverse expectations of residents. A summary of staffing recommendations is included below. Staffing needs were developed in direct conversation with Division leadership. See Appendix G for more detail on the staffing evaluation process.

### ***Park and Facility Maintenance Staffing Recommendation***

The PRL Department is not only responsible for park, recreation facility, and library maintenance and development, but also manages contracted maintenance and upkeep of 1.2 million square feet of public rights-of-way, median landscaping, and landscaping maintenance at municipal facilities throughout the City.

In August 2024, meetings were held with the Department leadership staff following an evaluation of existing parks

and recreation sites, discussions with the maintenance staff responsible for the parks and recreation facilities, as well as an assessment of data provided by the Department.

Staffing evaluations determined that the maintenance division is currently understaffed in open space management, forestry, park maintenance, golf course maintenance, and recreational facility maintenance such as daily custodial support. Additionally, there are gaps in specialized staff such as irrigation technicians, arborist technicians, and open space restoration specialists. The youngest recreational facility in the system is 25 years old and the oldest is over 50 years old. These facilities host over 1 million visitors annually with extensive operating hours that can complicate the ability to conduct regular maintenance and repair activities. The Department's volunteer program diminished significantly starting in 2019 and was further challenged by restrictions on public gatherings in the COVID-19 pandemic through 2020, but is currently rebuilding with a new dedicated volunteer specialist. These factors produce a significant strain on staff capacity.

- Over the next five years hire an additional 11 full time equivalent (FTEs) to support park and facility maintenance:
  - Open space management: one FTE
  - Forestry: two FTEs
  - Park maintenance: four FTEs
  - Golf course operations: two FTEs
  - Recreational facility maintenance: two FTEs
- Support the evolution of park maintenance to a district maintenance management strategy. This better supports asset management by tracking needs according to district and could dramatically reduce travel time for maintenance staff but would require future expansion of existing maintenance facilities and greater disbursement of staff and equipment to fully implement the district maintenance model.
- Increase the resources supporting contracted services for street/boulevard landscaping maintenance and general landscaping needs of public spaces across the community.

### CASE STUDY: OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE WORK PROGRAM

The City of Lakewood Community Resources Department is currently piloting a work program for People Experiencing Homelessness. The Department contracts with Denver-based nonprofit Bayaud Enterprises to administer the program and provide support services for program participants as they transition into the workforce. In Lakewood, program participants perform maintenance work and fire fuel mitigation. Workers' pay is \$20 per hour and includes the cost for Bayaud to provide program oversight and management. Lakewood Community Resources staff report that the program has been successful thus far. The City of Boulder has also recently conducted a similar pilot program.

- 
- Purchase parks and recreation maintenance management software to track lifecycle replacement schedules of equipment, asset lifecycle of amenities, cost of service for maintenance standards, and forestry inventory.
  - Continue and grow the volunteer program for park and open space maintenance. Establish a workforce program that employs people experiencing homelessness to assist with park and grounds maintenance.

### ***Recreation Programming Staffing Recommendation***

The PRL Department maintains a recreational program portfolio of 142 distinct offerings that hosts over 1.1 million participants annually. City leadership has expressed a strong desire for the Department to be customer focused and responsive to the needs and requests of a very diverse community. Currently, 28 community special events are held annually, serving over 83,000 attendees. The recreational programming division is currently overwhelmed with the magnitude of this portfolio and the need to stay aligned with evolving community priorities and demands. While recruiting and hiring seasonal hourly staff has not been an issue, additional FTE personnel are needed, specifically in the areas of community events, specialized programming, and overall program management.

Over the next five years hire an additional six FTEs to support recreational programming demands:

- Program management: one FTE
- Youth program development and delivery: three FTEs
- Specialized programming (i.e. adaptive/therapeutic): two FTEs
- Work with the Human Resources Department to improve the efficiency of seasonal hires and onboarding.
- Dedicate earned revenues from non-resident fees at recreational facilities to a capital fund supporting the maintenance needs of those facilities.

### ***Administration and Support Services Staffing Recommendation***

The PRL Department is managed by a strong leadership team, but this team could benefit from additional support service personnel to expand the Department's ability to engage the community; promote awareness of programs, events, and opportunities; and provide special project management. Specifically, there is a strong need for more community engagement and event specialist FTEs particularly given the increasing diversity of the community, social media management needs to support improved marketing and communications, grants management, project management, contract management, and purchasing. Additional staff would greatly improve the Department's ability to maintain superb customer service and expand funding opportunities for projects.

Over the next five years, hire an additional ten FTEs to support the administrative and support service needs of the Department:

- Community engagement and events specialists: five FTEs
- Public information officer: one FTE
- Social media management: one FTE
- Grants management, project management, and asset management: three FTEs

### ***Libraries Staffing Recommendation***

As detailed in Appendix D, Needs Assessment Analyses, the PRL Department's current library level of service is 3.7 FTE staff per 10,000 residents. Benchmark comparison suggests that 5.0 to 5.7 FTE per 10,000 residents is an appropriate level of service target. This translates to the addition of 13 new FTEs to support expanded hours of service, expanded outreach (especially to underserved communities), strengthening community partnerships, additional programming, staff training and skills development, and increased marketing and awareness efforts.

Over the next five years hire 13 additional FTEs to support expanded hours of service, expanded outreach (especially to underserved communities), strengthening community partnerships, additional programming, staff training and skills development, and increased marketing and awareness efforts.

### Maintenance Expenses

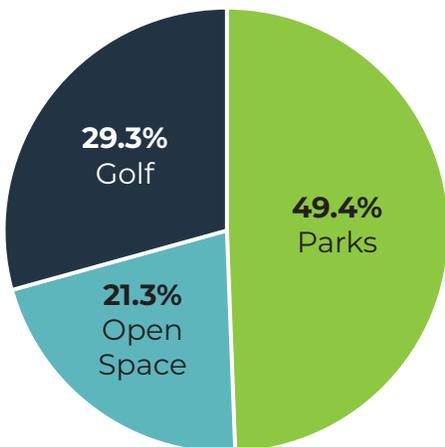
Annual maintenance expenses were evaluated in three major categories from 2019 to 2024, not including recreation facilities or library maintenance expenses:

1. Park Services
2. Open Space
3. Golf

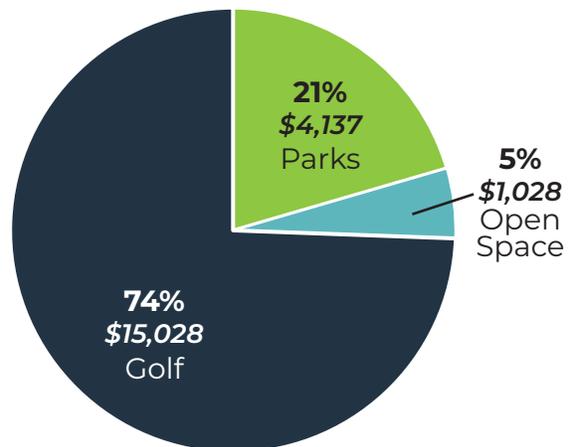
Over the six-year period from 2019-2024, Park Services averaged 49.4% of total annual maintenance expenditures—comprising the highest proportion of annual maintenance expenses for the Department. Golf was next highest with an average of 29.3% of total annual maintenance expenditures in that time period, and open space was the lowest with a six-year average of 21.3%.

Annual maintenance costs per acre were calculated for parks, open space, and golf courses from 2019 to 2024. Maintenance costs have increased over time. As expected, maintenance costs for golf courses is notably higher due to the maintenance intensity required for these facilities.

**Figure 5.** 2024 Maintenance Expenses as Percentage of PRL Expenditures



**Figure 6.** 2024 Maintenance Cost per Acre



### *Supporting Operational Resource Needs through Reduced Cost Recovery*

For the Department to grow its resources to meet current and emerging demands, the financial resources supporting these needs will need to also grow over time. The operations of a public parks and recreation agency can be extremely dynamic and offer many opportunities for re-evaluation of how resources are deployed and operationalized.

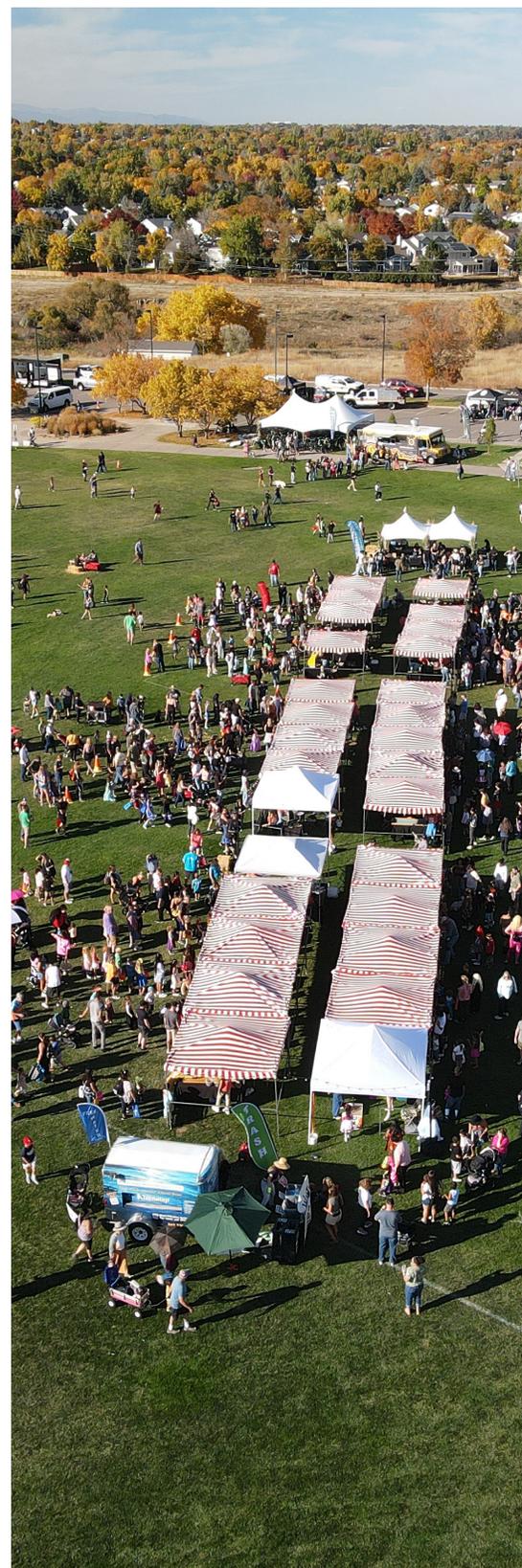
The PRL Department is already aggressive in its pursuit of earned revenues to offset its operational expenses. It has currently operated at an average of 35% cost recovery of its expenditures through earned revenues over the last five years. Based on national averages, this is far above the median for communities the size of Westminster (22%), and very close to the upper quartile of like agencies (38%). Golf course operations are already on track to be at full cost recovery by 2026. It is recommended that the Department base a budgetary strategy to grow its resources on a target cost recovery level that better resources the agency as opposed to keeping operations in a defensive position by limiting resources. Pursuing too aggressive a cost recovery target often comes at the expense of pushing operational resources to become increasingly strained over time. While there are many aspects of parks and recreation that closely resemble a retail service, PRL is a critical public service that directly improves overall quality of life, health and wellness of its residents, and economic prosperity.

Based on its current financial performance and in alignment with existing revenue projections over the next five years, the Department should adopt a **29%-32% cost recovery target** based on the 2024 budget as a baseline. Planning efforts should not overlook that the cost of doing business increases every year especially for public agencies that are heavily dependent on material costs, supply chain availability, and contract services. Appendix G includes expenditure and revenue projections through 2029 based on a 32% cost recovery target and 29% cost recovery target in the case that revenue targets are not fully met.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND LIFECYCLE REPLACEMENT**

### *Total System Cost*

Westminster has an extensive system of parks, recreation and library assets. Based on the asset inventory and lifecycle analysis completed in this planning process, it





is estimated that the value of Westminster’s PRL system is nearly \$1.29 billion in assets alone, including buildings, facilities, park amenities, park infrastructure, and recreational amenities but not including land values. Much of this infrastructure was developed from 1970 to 1990 and is now rapidly aging after decades of heavy use. Aside from typical wear and tear due to the age of these facilities, they are well maintained within the means and capacity of the Department.

Westminster should be proud of an extensive system of parks, recreation, and library facilities. Maintaining an extensive system over time is a significant responsibility that often outpaces the financial resources of an agency to progressively address site and facility conditions within its means. This should always be the underpinning of capital investment planning as repair and replacement of existing infrastructure is at the heart of long-term capital planning. See Appendix G for total asset inventory, lifespan, and estimated asset value based in 2023 cost estimates.

### ***Asset Lifecycle Replacement***

Based upon the total asset value and its estimated lifespan, potentially as much as 24.3% of the total current assets may need to be replaced within the next 10 years. That equates to a potential capital investment of nearly \$313 million over the next decade just to maintain what is already in the system. While it is unrealistic to assume that the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of the City of Westminster can support these investments over the next 10 years, this information should help inform the long-range planning of major capital repair and replacement projects in subsequent years. The CIP presented in the following section includes addressing many lifecycle replacement needs, as well as those of newly-identified PRL assets.

### ***Vision Plan Capital Improvement Scenarios***

The Vision Plan CIP was developed from the findings of many analyses, community engagement, and prioritization conducted as a part of the planning process. Potential capital projects were identified and recommended based on the following data:

1. Current site and facility conditions
2. Community priorities and needs as identified in engagement results
3. Results of the Needs Assessment Analyses (Chapter 2)

The Vision Plan CIP is presented in addition to the existing approved five-year CIP of the Department. It does not incorporate the already-approved 2025 – 2029 CIP. Project costs are based on local and regional historical cost data. Improvements were organized into a three-tier plan, with examples of projects in the categories that follow.

### ***Improving Existing Parks***

Capital improvements that strategically enhance and renovate existing parks and facilities:

- Updating / upgrading existing amenities such as pavilions, playgrounds, sports courts, and restroom facilities
- Updating / upgrading existing infrastructure such as parking, lighting, irrigation, and signage
- Adding new amenities to improve visitor experiences
- Improving connectivity, accessibility, and usability of the parks

### ***Expanding the System***

These are capital improvements that expand the existing parks and recreation system through significant improvements to current parks or development of new facilities. These mid- to long-term projects include:

- Adding new amenities to existing parks that meet community needs
- Developing new recreational sites and features that meet current and emerging community needs
- Addressing current gaps in service to better meet community needs

### ***Visionary Projects***

Visionary projects meet demands and emerging needs of City residents, potentially provide significant improvements in quality of life and economic development opportunities, and help to distinguish Westminster as a destination of high-quality parks and recreation facilities. These projects are typically associated with the highest costs of development, require longer time frames to realize, and often may require strategic partnerships in both capital development and operations. These projects include:

1. Development of an outdoor aquatics facility
2. Development of an additional multipurpose indoor recreation facility
3. Development of an additional library facility

### Summary

The table below summarizes the long-term CIP as identified through this Vision Plan process. Projects listed below do not include land acquisitions costs. Costs presented are general estimates based on a general order of magnitude deemed appropriate for Westminster. Each project would need to be independently scoped to determine actual costs.

**Table 8.** Long Term CIP Projects

Capital Development Category	Project Category	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Improving the Existing System	Updated restroom facilities	\$500,000	\$750,000
	Updating pavilions/shelters	\$350,000	\$500,000
	Updating existing recreational facilities	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000
	Restoration of existing open spaces	\$1,250,000	\$1,500,000
	Existing trail improvements	\$850,000	\$1,150,000
	Existing library improvements	\$1,250,000	\$1,500,000
	New disc golf course	\$54,000	\$64,000
	Updating existing maintenance facilities	\$2,500,000	\$2,750,000
	Asset lifecycle maintenance needs	\$6,000,000	\$8,000,000
<b>Total Improvements</b>		<b>\$14,254,000</b>	<b>\$18,214,000</b>
Expanding the System	ADA accessibility and inclusivity elements	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000
	Public art in parks	\$650,000	\$850,000
	General recreational expansions	\$1,250,000	\$1,500,000
<b>Total Expansions</b>		<b>\$3,400,000</b>	<b>\$4,350,000</b>
Visionary Projects	New outdoor aquatic facility	\$30,000,000	\$37,000,000
	New multipurpose indoor recreation facility	\$75,000,000	\$85,000,000
	New bike park	\$350,000	\$450,000
	New library branch	\$8,000,000	\$12,000,000
	New neighborhood parks	\$8,000,000	\$10,500,000
<b>Total Visionary Projects</b>		<b>\$121,350,000</b>	<b>\$144,950,000</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$139,004,000</b>	<b>\$167,514,000</b>

\*Cost estimates do not include land acquisition

## FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

Westminster PRL currently receives funding from nine sources: Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Fund, the Conservation Trust Fund, Golf Enterprise Funds, General Fund allocations, Water Fund (Standley Lake), program fees, facility rental fees, developer fees, and grants. For a brief description of current funding sources, see the Planning Context Report (Appendix A).

Successful implementation of this plan will require identifying new reliable and consistent funding sources and partnerships in addition to those listed above to realize many of the projects and system improvements described in this plan. Below are possible strategies to consider through future studies.

### RECOMMENDED FUNDING STRATEGIES

Based on an understanding of the City's capabilities and operating circumstances, the following funding strategies are the most suitable as options for increasing PRL funding over the next 10 years. Some of these strategies are already employed by the City but could be expanded or revised to generate additional revenue. Other strategies are entirely new to Westminster but have a track record of demonstrated success in other cities. Appendix G includes an expanded list of other potential funding strategies.

- The expanded use of **Corporate Sponsorships** to support more facilities and programs beyond special and community events as currently utilized. The value of these sponsorships can be quantified based on annual "impressions" that are derived from overall visitation and participation levels. The value should be calculated on \$0.35 to \$0.50 per impression point on an annual basis. This could also be considered a form of Advertising Sales as well.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) within Urban Renewal Areas (URA):** Westminster's Economic Development Authority has established seven URAs within the City for the purpose of planning and financing revitalization and redevelopment projects within defined urban renewal areas. Within established URAs, tax increment financing is used to levy incremental increases in property taxes over a 20-to-25-year period to pay for or reimburse initial development costs such as investment in existing or planned PRL facilities. This investment often serves as a catalyst for subsequent redevelopment.



- A **Public Land Dedication Fee (PLD)** is currently employed by the City. As new developments are planned and constructed, private developers are required to dedicate a certain amount of land for public purposes or pay a fee-in-lieu. While the PLD is often used for park development, it is not explicitly dedicated for PRL use and may be used for other public land needs, such as a fire station. The Public Land Dedication and Fee Assessment report prepared as part of this Vision Plan (Appendix I) contains specific recommendations for optimizing this dedication and fee to better serve PRL needs such as revising the fee calculation method, tracking fees by City quadrant, and establishing defined criteria for when a developer is permitted to waive the fee.
- **Developer Impact Fees** are used to support neighborhood park development in the property near or in their development. In Westminster, a developer pays an impact fee for Park Development based on the number of residential units in the development. The Public Land Dedication and Fee Assessment report prepared as part of this Vision Plan recommends that the City further study combining the Public Land Dedication Fee-in-lieu, Park Development Fee, and Public Art Fee to create a composite Capital Expansion fee.
- The current **Accommodations Tax** collected in Westminster to support tourism and economic development should have a portion dedicated to parks and recreation needs. Westminster parks and Recreation facilities are major drivers of regional, statewide and national tourism in the area through events, tournaments, and special programs. Dedicated hotel/motel tax funds could strongly support the needs of the system in continuing to do this well.
- The continued utilization of the **Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Sales and Use Tax** that is dedicated to funding parks, open space, recreation, and trails in Westminster is highly recommended as this funding is currently and will continue to be a significant contributor for most of the major park developments over the next 16 years. In 2021, the POST tax was extended to 2041 at its current rate. To catch up with increasing costs of maintenance and PRL service provision, the POST rate should be increased at the next renewal.

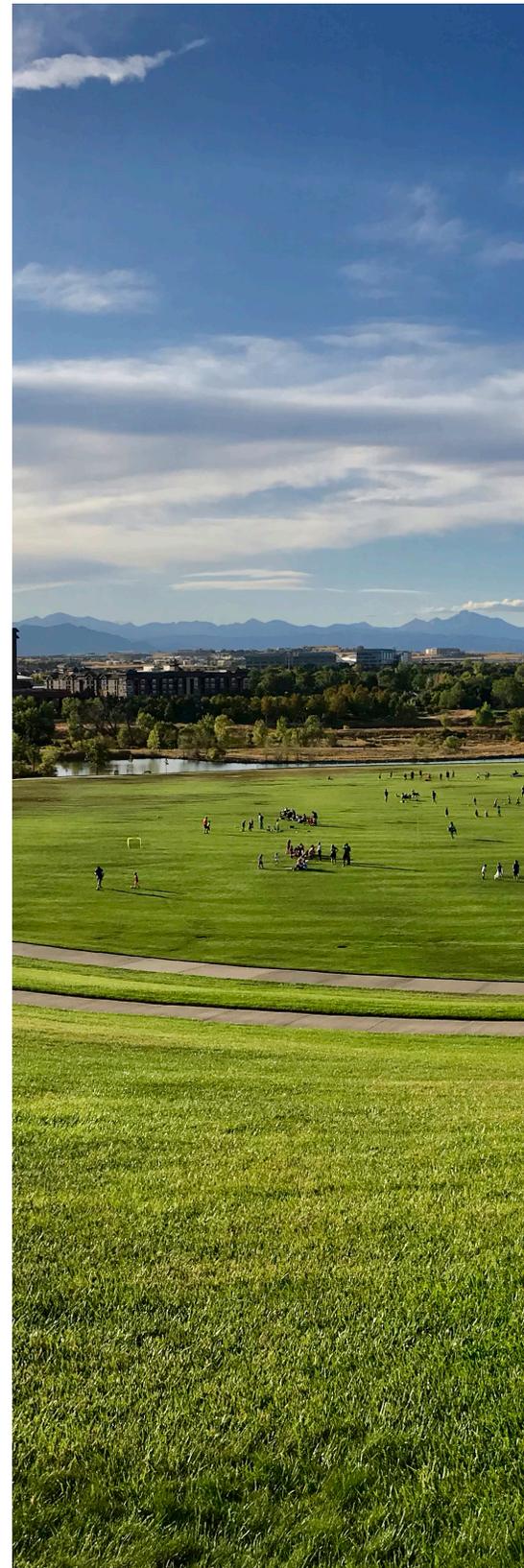
- **Growth of Private Sector Fundraising with a Foundation** is an appropriate revenue source for the Department to consider a closer partnership with the Westminster Community Foundation. The foundation and designated fund can raise money for park-related improvements, programs for disadvantaged users and support the development of new facilities that are needed in the City. It is recommended that the partnership with the current Westminster Community Foundation be enhanced to improve its ability to be a stronger private-sector fundraising partner to the Department.
- **Naming Rights** have already been a very successful strategy Westminster has used to help support capital and/or operational costs of major facilities in the community. Many cities and counties have been successful selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with the improvement.
- **Greenway Utilities** allow options to develop the infrastructure within the trail easement. Terms for notification, minimal impact to users, and replacing/repairing damage caused by utility companies is important. Greenway utilities are used to finance acquisition of greenways and development of the greenways by selling the development rights underground for the buried fiber optic utilities.
- **Lease of Development Rights** below ground specifically along trails have been very successful in many communities to assist with the development costs associated with trail system expansion. This involves leasing the land under or along trails for fiber optics or utilities alongside trails to support capital and maintenance costs.
- **Partnership with a Non-profit Conservancy or Friends Group** for assistance in the management of land, amenities, and programming is commonly a strong methodology for a park agency to significantly leverage its annual operations and maintenance responsibilities. These are organized fundraising and operational groups who raise money for individual signature parks and/or attractions such as conservancies and regional parks. There are over two thousand conservancies in the United States. This could be a helpful strategy for a regional park like Standley Lake or open space lands, generally.





- **Capital Fees** are added to the cost of revenue producing facilities such as golf courses, pools, recreation centers, hospitality centers and sports complexes and are lifted off after the improvement is paid off. The PRL Department could consider this strategy for most or all of the facilities that have rental, admission or membership fees associated with them.
- **Catering Permits and Fees** are licenses to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to the City. Also, many agencies have their own catering service and receive a percentage of dollars off the sale of their food. This could be considered in the future with food trucks servicing special and community events. This also includes the use of **Private Concessionaires** for operating select facilities/ amenities within certain parks or facilities.
- **Grants.** The grant market continues to grow every year, but it is not a stable or predictable source of revenue. The PRL Department regularly pursues and has been successful in securing grants in the past. Viable grants are available from Adams County Open Space, Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Department of Transportation (Community Clean Transportation Assistance Grant – new for trails in 2024 – 2025), Colorado Department of Public Health and Equity, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Colorado Water Conservation Board Turf Conversion, and federal grant sources for trail development. Adequate staffing for special projects and grants administrators is essential to the Department’s successful pursuit of grant funding. Matching dollars are required for most federal grants and many state grants. Even when matching funds are not required, including a percentage match often provides a competitive advantage by demonstrating that the City is invested in project success.

- **Revenue Bonds** are a category of municipal bond supported by the revenue from a specific project, such as a toll bridge, highway, or local stadium. Revenue bonds that finance income-producing projects are thus secured by a specified revenue source. Typically, revenue bonds can be issued by any government agency or fund that is managed in the manner of a business, such as entities having both operating revenues and expenses.
- **Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs)** with the local school districts or other municipalities near the City in particular can dramatically improve both the public accessibility to specific school sites and assets for public recreation, but also improve inequity in a community through increased facility access. These are typically contractual relationships entered into between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities.



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## PLAN MAINTENANCE

Planning for continued success of the City's PRL offerings is an ongoing practice. Department staff should review progress on plan implementation each year when developing the Department's annual report, budget, and CIP.

Staff should regularly monitor progress toward achieving the plan's goals and track implementation of specific actions each year. A full plan update should occur every 10 years to reflect completed actions, respond to new opportunities, identify solutions to unanticipated challenges, and keep current on technological innovations and the emergence of new best-practices in PRL management.



# APPENDICES

**A. Planning Context Report**

**B. Community Engagement Complete Results**

**C. Facility Inventory Assessment**

**D. Needs Assessment Analyses**

**E. Sustainable PRL Maintenance Operations**

**F. Classifications**

**G. Operations, Staff Capacity, Funding Analysis, and Capital Improvements Report**

**H. Prioritization Criteria**

**I. Public Land Dedication and Fee Assessment and Recommendations Report**

**J. Implementation Action Plans**



WESTMINSTER

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