

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

2018

# Game Plan for a Healthy City





# Executive Summary

# Game Plan Overview

# About Denverright

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Denverright is a set of community-driven plans that shape Denver's future land use, mobility, parks, recreational resources, and more.



Citywide strategies from Comprehensive Plan 2000, the 2002 Blueprint Denver land use and transportation plan and the 2003 Game Plan for parks and recreation have served Denver well for the last decade and a half. They have guided our transportation choices; promoted new mixed-use development; created and enhanced parks, trails and recreation centers; and catalyzed areas of change while preserving the character of stable neighborhoods.

But a lot has changed since those plans were adopted.

RTD's FasTracks system has added significant new transit options to the region. Our population has experienced rapid growth. We've learned smarter and more modern ways to plan for the future of our city with inclusivity and climate change in mind.

**Denverright.**  
Blueprint Denver

**Denverright.**  
Denver Moves: Transit

**Denverright.**  
Parks & Recreation Game Plan

**Denverright.**  
Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails

## Your Vision for Denver

You helped planners create six “vision elements” that serve as the basis for Comprehensive Plan 2040 and drive each plan’s goals.

Equitable,  
Affordable and  
Inclusive



Economically  
Diverse and  
Vibrant



Environmentally  
Resilient



Connected,  
Safe and  
Accessible Places



Healthy and  
Active



Strong and  
Authentic  
Neighborhoods



## Your Voice

Thousands of Denverites shared their unique perspectives on what makes Denver great and how it can evolve to be even better. You shared your voice in many ways — by attending meetings and workshops; taking online map-based surveys; talking with the Denveright street team at festivals, community events and transit stations; joining a Community Think Tank; and more. Through coordinated Denveright outreach and the individual plans’ efforts, there were limitless opportunities to help shape our city’s future.



# Denverright.

Your Voice. Our Future.

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Denverright represents an unprecedented opportunity to align citywide plans to guide future investments so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Denverright strategies come straight from the community, and are designed to help the city prepare for and deliver a future that is responsive to their goals, visions and priorities. Denverright includes 5 coordinated planning efforts, including the *Game Plan*:

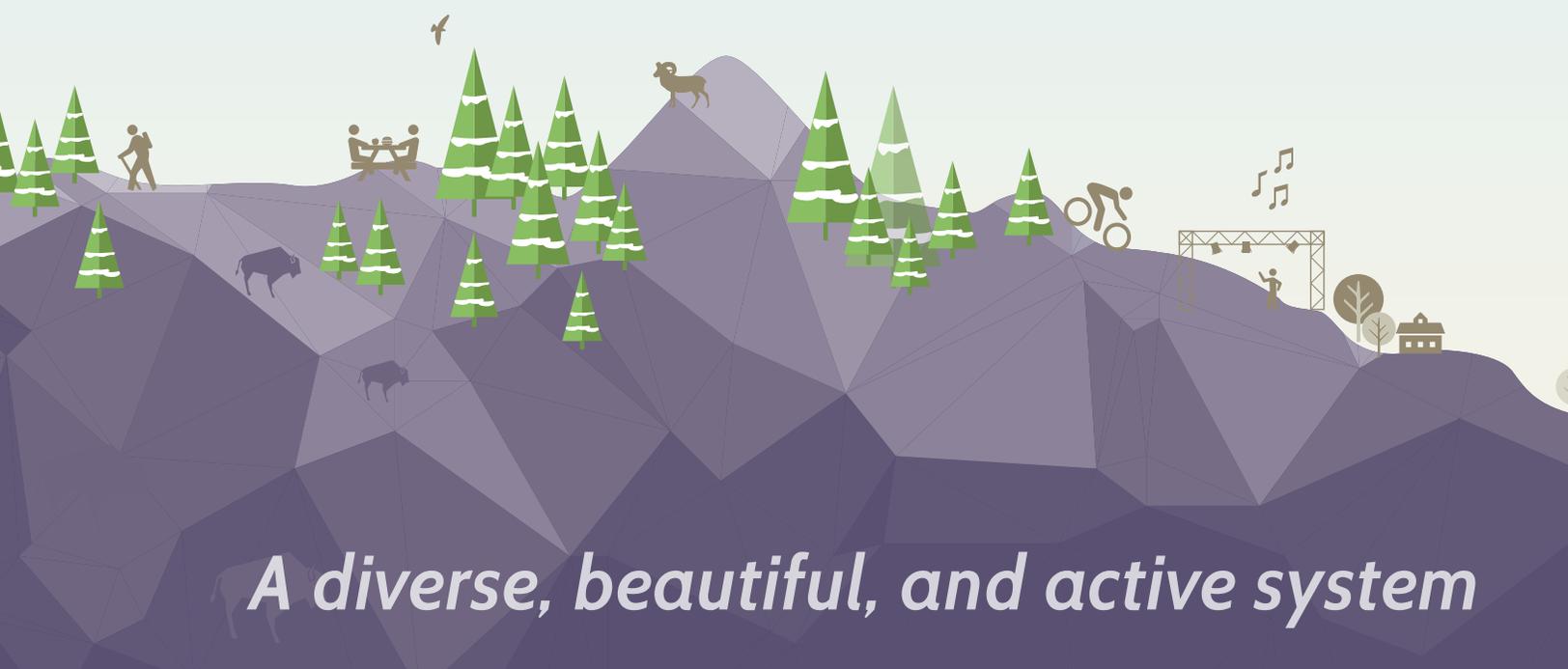
Blueprint  
Denver

Game Plan  
for a  
Healthy City

Denver Moves:  
Transit

Denver Moves:  
Pedestrians  
and Trails

Comprehensive  
Plan 2040



*A diverse, beautiful, and active system*

***Game Plan for a Healthy City*** is a citywide parks and recreation plan for the next 20 years that proclaims easy access to parks and open space is a basic right for all residents. Built from input from more than 6,000 residents, stakeholders, and staff members, the Game Plan provides a roadmap for our parks, recreation programs, and urban forest to serve the needs of all Denverites in the face of population growth and climate change.



*spanning from the mountains to the plains*

# Why Plan Now?

We have a system that is incredibly diverse and works well in many ways. However, it is facing unprecedented challenges environmentally and economically, and it is not fully meeting the needs of all of our neighborhoods. Action today is critical to growing a Healthy City with park and recreation access for all.

Here is a snapshot of the challenges we are facing:



## DROUGHT & FLOODING

11% (\$2.7M) of park's annual operating budget goes towards irrigation. Droughts and flooding are both projected to increase in the future.



## PARKS NOT KEEPING UP WITH GROWTH

From 2010-2016 the city experienced an 11% growth while park space only grew by 1%. Denver's park access of 9 acres per thousand residents is well below the national average of 13.



## GROWING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Deferred maintenance totals \$119 million and nearly 1 in 6 park assets is in poor condition. Expenses are significantly outpacing funding growth.



## THREATENED URBAN FOREST

Denver's urban tree canopy is one of the lowest in ranked cities and every 1 in 6 trees are threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer.



## OBESITY IS RISING

Nearly 1 in 6 children is obese, and 52% of Denver's residential parcels are not with a 10 minute walk of a playground.



## LIMITED ACCESS TO NATURE

Many neighborhoods do not have walking access to places to experience nature, and the mountain parks are difficult to access for families without a car.

# A Healthy City

## Parks, recreation, and the urban forest are vital infrastructure to our city's health.

Trees and vegetation in our parks as well as along our parkways and streets help clean the air we breathe and provide shade that decreases the cooling load on our energy infrastructure during our hot months. Our parks and urban forests hold, clean, and infiltrate stormwater, decreasing the load on our storm sewer system. Bikeways create important mobility conduits that promote fitness and relieve commuter traffic on congested streets. Investment in parks and recreation infrastructure has a positive ripple effect of benefits throughout our city. Collaboration—both internally with the City and externally with other organizations, volunteers, and the private sector—is a key ingredient; let's work together to grow a Healthy City!



## Every Drop

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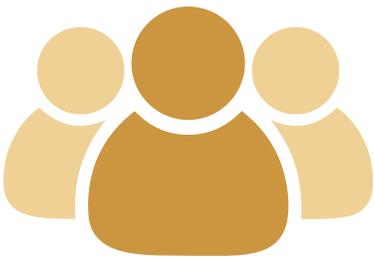
*Make the parks system more resilient and environmentally sustainable.*

To do this, we must adapt to the changing climate and limited resources.

Implementation strategies for Every Drop focus on:

- Expanding resilient and low-water landscapes
  - Protecting and expanding our urban forest
  - Conserving energy and resources use
  - Fire management in the mountain forests
  - Improving health of our waterways
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## THE VISION IS SUPPORTED THROUGH FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:



### Every Person

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*Ensure equity in the distribution of parks and park resources and programming so that all residents have the opportunity to improve their personal health and well-being.*

To do this, we must diversify and grow parks and recreation opportunities and access.

Implementation strategies for Every Person focus on:

- Growing parks and improving access so all neighborhoods have a park within a 10 minute walk
  - Diversifying recreation offerings
  - Promoting equity within the system, especially by investing in neighborhoods with highest unmet needs
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### Every Dollar

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*Manage resources to ensure long term economic and operational health of the parks system.*

To do this, we reinvest in Denver’s parks and recreation resources and people.

Implementation strategies for Every Dollar focus on:

- Growing collaborations internally and with nonprofits, private sector, and sponsors
  - Identifying ways for new development to contribute to meeting the park and recreation needs of new residents
  - Supporting staff development and professional growth
  - Improving technology and upgrading facilities
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### Uniquely Denver

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*Provide parks and programming that reflect Denver’s community and cultural identity.*

To do this, we must increase opportunities to connect to Denver’s nature and culture.

Implementation strategies for Uniquely Denver focus on:

- Protecting and expanding our parkway system
  - Planning for historic and cultural resources
  - Expanding access to the mountain parks and increasing places to experience nature in our city
  - Collaborating with agencies and organizations to activate parks
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# Game Plan at a Glance

Connecting principles to implementation strategies

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## Guiding Principles

Aspirations describing how we desire the system to be

## Goals

The desired result in support of the principles



### Every Drop

1. Protect water quality and manage water use.
2. Protect and expand the urban forest.
3. Protect and restore healthy wildlife habitats and functional ecosystems.
4. Employ best sustainable practices for operational resilience.
5. Increase opportunities for people to experience and connect to nature.



### Every Person

6. Ensure that parks, facilities, programs, and staff contribute to a high-quality, safe, and meaningful experience for park users and program participants.
7. Achieve equitable access for underserved communities to parks and recreation amenities for all members of the community.
8. Make decisions informed by an understanding of community perspectives.
9. Provide quality programs and places that respond to Denver's evolving needs.
10. Foster a work culture that embraces teamwork, increases job satisfaction, and creates successful ambassadors to the community.



### Every Dollar

11. Explore alternative and additional funding options for park, trail, and recreation needs.
12. Broaden system investments and services with allied individuals, agencies, and organizations.
13. Increase the supply of parks, facilities, and resources relative to Denver's population growth.
14. Deliver high-quality service efficiently and effectively to all sectors of the city.
15. Recognize parks and public spaces as vital elements of urban infrastructure for the city.



### Uniquely Denver

16. Protect and enhance Denver's legacy pathways: its parkways, greenways, and trails.
17. Highlight and protect the system's unique historic, social, and cultural resources.
18. Celebrate the breadth of Denver's diverse ecological system, spanning from the prairie to the tundra.
19. Design parks, facilities, and programs that reflect Denver's distinct places and neighborhood identities.
20. Provide opportunities to expand Denver's healthy, outdoor lifestyle to all.

# Vision: A HEALTHY CITY

The overall aspiration for the future of our parks and recreation system; what we are working towards

## Pillars

Underlying focus areas to implement the vision

## Strategies

The approach and recommendations to accomplish the goals.

## Implementation

### Recommendations

Provide implementation guidance and directions for the Action Plan.

### Action Plan

The priority action steps, summarized in the 3 Year Action Plan.

- Action 1
  - Action 2
  - Action 3
  - Action 4
  - Action 5
  - Action 6
- Each action identifies:
- Lead Department
  - Supporting Department
  - External Partners
  - 3 Year Milestone

### Metrics

Measurements that are monitored over to time to track improvements in the health of our parks, recreation, and urban forest.

-  Metric 1
-  Metric 2
-  Metric 3
-  Metric 4
-  Metric 5
-  Metric 6

**ADAPT**  
to the Changing Climate and Limited Resources

- Water Use
- Stormwater and Waterway Health
- Urban Trees and Mountain Forests
- Energy and Resource Use

**DIVERSIFY**  
Parks and Recreation Services

- Parks and Recreation Programming
- Engagement, Outreach, and Communications

**GROW**  
the Park System and Recreation Access

- Park, Facility, and Program Expansion
- Mobility and Access

**REINVEST**  
in Denver's Parks and Recreation Resources and People

- Equity
- Funding, Operations, and Staff
- Partnerships
- Collaboration With the Private Sector

**CONNECT**  
to Denver's Nature and Culture

- Parkways, Tree-Lined Streets, and Trails
- Arts, Culture, and History
- Innovative Parks and Recreation
- Nature and Outdoor Recreation