2017 Game Plan Update
Denver Parks and Recreation

Task Force Meeting | 27 October, 2016
7:30-9:30am
PRESENTATION

Blueprint Draft Vision Framework

1. The Game Plan in Context
2. Denver’s Park and Recreation System Today
3. Three Lenses:
   - Environment and Climate
   - Equity and Access
   - Stewardship and Organizational Health
4. Next Steps for Game Plan

ACTIVITY

Brainstorming Activity
1. Major issues facing Game Plan
2. Goals for Game Plan

Report Out
The Game Plan in Context

2000 Denver Comprehensive Plan
- Established a vision for Denver as a city that is livable both now and in the future
- Umbrella under which all other city planning initiatives operate

2003 The Game Plan
- Key vision of “a city in a park”
- Core values:
  - Sustainable Environment
  - Equity in Services
  - Sound Economics
  - Community Engagement

2017 Game Plan Update
- 2017 Blueprint Denver
- 2017 Denver Moves: Transit
- 2017 Denver Moves: Pedestrians + Trails

2008 Play Area Masterplan
2008 Mountain Park Masterplan
“a foundational vision and planning framework that was woven through neighborhoods with destination neighborhood parks and cultural destinations connected by ribbons of parkways”
“a late 19th century plan which identified more than 40,000 acres that could serve as Denver’s open space, stretched to make a coherent system in the nearby mountains”
Reclamation of Waterways

“30 years of public-private leadership and a resulting series of open spaces and greenways have revitalized the South Platte and attracted over $2 billion in reinvestment in adjacent communities.”

- 1974
  South Platte and Cherry Creek revitalization begins

- 2000-2008
  2000- Denver Comprehensive Plan: A vision for Denver and its people
  2002- Department Parks and Recreation creates its First Natural Resource Unit.
  2008- Denver Mountain Parks master plan
  2008- Denver Play Area Master Plan

ASLA Field Guide, 2014
PARK AND BOULEVARD SYSTEM OF DENVER

MOUNTAIN PARK PRELIMINARY PLAN

RECLAMATION OF WATERWAYS

GAME PLAN

The next big vision for Denver’s Park and Recreation System
PHASE 1: UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE

We are here!

PHASE 2: ENVISION AND GOALS

PHASE 3: DRAFT AND ADOPT

2016
- July: Existing Conditions Report
- Aug: Public Forum 1
- Sept: Online Surveys and Information
- Oct: Statistically-valid Survey
- Nov: Task Force Meetings
- Dec: Public Forum 2

2017
- Jan: Draft Plan
- Feb: Public Forum 3
- Mar: Draft Plan
- Apr: Final Plan
- May: Community Events Outreach
- Jun: Public Forum 2
- Jul: Public Forum 3
Public forums throughout the city, Oct 4 +5
Outreach tents

6
DPR All-Staff Meeting

Staff focus groups

1 + 11
618 Responses to Maptionaire

- 54% Age 25-44
- 58% Female
- 70% No children
Denver Parks and Recreation Today
Denver is growing...

682,545
Population of the City & County of Denver (2015)

+21%

832,545
Predicted Population of the City & County of Denver (2025)

Denver is the 5th fastest growing large-city in the nation in 2014.

data from Blueprint Community Profile
Denver is diversifying

Race/Ethnicity

- 53.1% white non-hispanic
- 31.7% hispanic
- 11.1% african american
- 1.3% native american
- 2.8% asian
- 1.3% native american

Data from Blueprint Community Profile

Age Distribution

Median Age of residents in Denver is 34.
Growing populations of Millennials, families with young children and older adults aging in place.

- 25-34: 22.1%
- 35-44: 15.5%
- 45-54: 11.7%
- 55-64: 10.5%
- 65-74: 6.3%
- 75-84: 3.0%
- <5: 6.8%
- 5-14: 11.4%
- 15-24: 11.3%
- 65-74: 6.3%
- 85+: 1.6%
Denver Parks and Recreation is a diverse system, spanning from the mountains to the plains.
72% of Denver park land is in the Mountains, more than 14,000 acres.

>5,000 acres of urban parkland

22 Accessible Parks + 24 Conservation Tracts

224 Urban Parks

28 Recreation Centers
Two healthy herds of Bison
Horseback Riding
Hiking
Skiing
Red Rocks Amphitheater

156 Playgrounds
10 Dog Parks
103 Basketball Courts
148 Tennis Courts
29 Swimming Pools
8 Golf Courses

191 Sports Fields: Soccer, Frisbee, Lacrosse
137 Baseball + Softball Fields
85 Miles regional multi-use trails

Unique Amenities: Skateparks...
Community Gardens

Mountain Parks
Urban Parks and Recreation
BIG Questions for the Future

Denver’s climate is changing...

How does Denver’s environment and climate affect our parks? How do our parks improve the environment?

Denver’s population is growing and diversifying...

How do we ensure that ALL Denver residents can enjoy our park and recreation system equally?

Our budgets and resources are limited...

How can we fund and manage our park and recreation facilities long term?
Environment and Climate
**Underlying Geological Structure**

- **GRANITE**: Formed at the heart of ancient volcanoes, and exposed by glacial erosion.
- **RED ROCKS**: Sedimentary sandstone once at the edge of an ancient ocean has been uplifted and exposed.
- **SANDSTONE**: Sedimentary deposits compressed beneath an ancient ocean.

Diagram:
- **VOLCANIC ACTIVITY**: 10-40 MYO
- **GLACIAL ACTIVITY**: 1 MYO
- **UPLIFT**: 68 MYO
- **OCEAN INUNDATION**: 300-500 MYO
- **Mountains**
- **Prairie**
Mountain Parks are DPR’s most ecologically diverse landscapes.

Ecological Zones in the Mountain Parks:
- Sand prairie: 27%
- Shortgrass: 12%
- Conifer forest: 22%
- Piedmont grass: 22%
- Riparian: 5%
- Sagebrush steppe: 12%

Two healthy herds of Bison live within the Mountain Parks.

Elk

Mountain Goats
WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Mountain Parks

45% of respondents believe conservation vs. public access + amenities should be balanced

“We need public transportation up to the parks”

“...work to ensure nothing detracts from being able to appreciate this natural beauty”

“Most people don’t know about them”

MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS VISIT A MOUNTAIN PARK “A FEW TIMES” PER YEAR
Park Landscape Types (pre-development)

- Conifer Forest and Shrubland: 22% (2,200 acres), 21 parks
- Piedmont Grassland: 22% (2,200 acres), 17 parks
- Riparian: 5% (500 acres), 52 parks
- Sagebrush Steppe: 12% (1,200 acres), 12 parks
- Great Plains Shortgrass Prairie: 12% (1,200 acres), 54 parks
- Great Plains Sand Prairie: 27% (2,700 acres), 175 parks

Number of parks:
- 21 parks (Conifer Forest and Shrubland)
- 17 parks (Piedmont Grassland)
- 52 parks (Riparian)
- 12 parks (Sagebrush Steppe)
- 54 parks (Great Plains Shortgrass Prairie)
- 175 parks (Great Plains Sand Prairie)
Park Landscape Types

- Conifer Forest and Shrubland: 22% (2,900 acres) of pre-development prairie is now an irrigated landscape of turf and trees
- Piedmont Grassland: 22%
- Riparian: 5%
- Sagebrush Steppe: 12%
- Great Plains Shortgrass Prairie: 12%
- Great Plains Sand Prairie: 27%

Number of parks:
- 21
- 17
- 52
- 12
- 54
- 175
BABI YAR PARK: PRAIRIE MEETS LAWN
Denver's Urban Forest
TREE CANOPY

242,155
Trees in Urban Parks + Rights-of-way
*2.2 million trees in Denver overall

19.7%
Average Tree Canopy Coverage in Denver

$129,000
Annual reduction in air pollution through tree and shrub absorption in Denver's Parks
Denver’s Urban Forest

HEAT ISLAND

Heat Island Effect
- Cool
- Warm
- Hot

88% of park acres are in the cool zone

$6.7 million Annual Savings in cooling costs due to the city’s tree canopy
Denver’s Urban Forest
EMERALD ASH BORER

EAB Detection Likelihood
(based on 2013 positives)

Low
Moderate
Moderate High
High

1:6
trees in Denver
are an Ash Tree
WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Urban Environment

91% of respondents believe prairie landscapes are beautiful and appropriate for our parks

“We need to evolve our parks to meet the changing times”

“a more natural landscape is more resilient, connects us to nature and probably lower in maintenance costs”

Need to treat for EAB, and diversify new tree plantings

SHADE TREES ARE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY AMONG MAPSHOTNAIRE RESPONDENTS
Denver’s future summers will be like summers now in Pharr, Texas. 96°F

Denver’s climate is changing...

Hotter, drier summers. More intense winter storms.

WINTER + FALL
10-20% more precipitation

SPRING + SUMMER
-10-20% less precipitation
Cherry Creek
High Line Canal
South Platte River
Downtown
Sand Creek
Cherry Creek
High Line Canal

Hydrology and Stormwater

$804,000
water pollution reduction/cost of treating stormwater in Denver Parks.

18% 85 parks are in a floodplain

85 parks are in a floodplain.

$804,000
water pollution reduction/cost of treating stormwater in Denver Parks.
JOHNSON HABITAT PARK - DESIGNED TO FLOOD ON THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER (2015)
A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS FEEL THAT STORMWATER SHOULD BE MANAGED NATURALLY, CLOSE TO THE SOURCE

WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Climate Change + Stormwater

87% of respondents were highly concerned over the effects climate change will have on Denver’s Park land

“Without a healthy environment, we cannot have a healthy society”

“Lack of water is real”

Plant resilient native species

“We should have beautiful green spaces that deal with stormwater instead of spending massive amounts of money on only piped infrastructure”
Equity and Access
Park Density Relative to Peer Cities

DENVER’S PEER CITIES AND POPULATIONS

DENVER
682,545

MINNEAPOLIS
400,700

RALEIGH
431,746

PORTLAND
609,000

BOSTON
646,000

SEATTLE
652,405

CHARLOTTE
792,800

AUSTIN
885,400
Defining Park and Recreation Need

High Need Neighborhoods
- Barnum West
- Chaffe Park
- Clayton
- Cole
- College View
- East Colfax
- Elyris Swansea
- Globeville
- Goldsmith
- Jefferson Park
- Kennedy
- Lincoln Park
- Mar Lee
- Montbello
- Northeast Park Hill
- Ruby Hill
- Sunnyside
- Sun Valley
- Valverde
- Villa Park
- West Colfax
- Westwood

Factors:
- Ethnic + Racial Diversity
- Lack of Car Access
- Population Density
- Income
- Health (Obesity)
Walking Access

PARKS WITHIN A 10 MIN WALK

No Park
1 park
10 parks
Parks
Non-residential
Walking Access

Number of Residents...

- Residents more than 10 min. from nearest park

...within minutes from the nearest park

- 15%
Demographics of Access

**INCOME**
Lack of park access is substantially the same across all income levels:
- Lower income: People living in households with income <$35K: 15.7%
- Lower income: between $35K and $75K: 16.7%
- Higher income: >$75K: 16.8%

**RACE/ETHNICITY**
White residents are slightly more likely to lack park access than non-white residents:
- White residents only: 16.2%
- Non-white residents: 13.4%
PLANS TO CLAIM PARK SPACE FROM ROW @ 21ST AND WYNKOOP
WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Access

78% of maptionaire respondents visit Denver’s parks and facilities daily or weekly.

“The ability to access open space conveniently helps overall wellness of all citizens”

Many comments on needing better maintenance of facilities and parks in lower income neighborhoods

Many comments on reclaiming under-used spaces, including ROWs to create parks in underserved areas.

ALL RESPONDENTS FEEL THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO LIVE CLOSE TO A PARK OR RECREATION CENTER
Diversity of Amenities

- **156** Playgrounds
- **10** Dog Parks
- **103** Basketball Courts
- **148** Tennis Courts
- **29** Swimming Pools
- **8** Golf Courses

Sports Fields:
- Soccer,
- Frisbee,
- Lacrosse

- **191** Baseball + Softball Fields
- **85** Miles of Regional Multi-Use Trails
- **8** Community Gardens

Unique Amenities:
- Skate Parks, BMX bike course, disc golf,
- horse shoes, outdoor fitness zones, racquetball, pickle ball

Denver Golf offers Lessons!

I use the South Platte River trail to commute

I use the South Platte River trail to commute

Riding my horse along the High Line is how I relax!
Relative Amenities per Capita

-80%  -60%  -40%  -20%  MEDIAN (97 cities)  +20%  +40%  +60%  +80%

Diamonds per 10,000 Residents
   A  C  R  S  B  P  D  M

Hoops per 10,000 Residents
   C  D  A  S  R  M

Disc Golf Courses per 100,000 Residents
SP  C  R  D  B  A

Dog Parks per 100,000 Residents
C  R  D  A  M

Playgrounds per 10,000 Residents
A  C  P  B  D

Rec Centers per 20,000 Residents
CA  P  S  D  B

Pools Per 100,000 Residents
CM  S  D  B  A

Tennis Courts per 10,000 Residents
ABC  P  D  S  R

MEDIAN:
-80%: 2.14
-60%: 2.35
-40%: 4.37
-20%: 0.9
+20%: 0.45
+40%: 2.14
+60%: 2.2
+80%: 4.37
Diversifying with new amenity types

<table>
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<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bike Skills Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skateparks</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dog Parks</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc Golf Courses</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cricket Field</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Play</td>
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</table>
Diverse programming @ Rec Centers

Program Types

- Aquatics: 36%
- Sports: 22%
- Events and trips: 14%
- Fitness and wellness: 8%
- Clubs and games: 2%
- Arts and culture: 12%
- Social enrichment: 1%
- Outdoor Recreation: 1%
- Adaptive recreation: 2%
- After school camps: 2%

Age Segment Distribution

- Early childhood (0-5): 47%
- Youth (4-18): 18%
- Adult (15+): 15%
- Older Adult (50+): 6%
- All Ages: 14%
Access to Recreation Centers

57% of Denver’s youth had a MyDenver card in 2015, granting them free access to Denver’s Recreation Centers and Pools.

20 min bikeride  10 min drive
WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Amenities

45% of respondents identified fitness facilities and aquatics facilities as the most important features of recreation centers.

“Rec centers seem mostly out of date...”

ON AVERAGE, RESPONDENTS ARE ONLY “SOMewhat SATISfied” WITH AMENITIES AND PROGRAMMING PROVIDED BY DPR
Playground Access

- 18% of Denverites are under 18 years old
- 156 playgrounds in Denver
- 52% of Denver residential parcels cannot access a playground within 10 minutes

PLAYGROUNDS WITHIN A 10 MIN WALK
- No Playground
- 1 playground
- 10 playsgrounds
- Parks
- Non-residential
Playground Access

Number of kids within minutes from the nearest playground

- 0
- 5000
- 10000
- 15000
- 20000
- 25000
- 30000

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 15+

Kids more than 10 min. from nearest playground

53%
WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Playgrounds

40% of respondents state they can easily get to a playground from their home.

“More playgrounds and updated playgrounds for adults and kids alike”

Accessibility without a car is an frequently mentioned issue.

“Commit to maintenance”

Need to move away from “classic” playgrounds to “fun” and “innovative” playgrounds.

MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS SEE DENVER’S PLAYGROUNDS AS LOW QUALITY OR NOT ENGAGING TO CHILDREN.
Stewardship
DPR Operational Expenses

- Recreation Division: 33% ($20,952,348)
- Buffalo Bill Museum: 1% ($365,283)
- CSU Cooperative Extension: 0% ($159,400)
- Mountain Parks: 2% ($1,185,446)
- Parks and Recreation Administration: 6% ($3,779,775)
- Urban Parks: 58% ($36,902,969)

Total Parks and Recreation Facilities Budget (2016): $106,536,292

+20% increase in parks and planning spending from 2014-2016

+55% increase in Mountain Parks spending from 2014-2016
Economic Value of Denver’s Parks
Trust for Public Land Report, 2010

$804,000  cost avoided by stormwater benefits of parks

$452,000,000  cost savings to the community by having access to public facilities

$518,000  savings generated due to value of city volunteer programs and events

$48,700,000  collective increase in public wealth due to park proximity
Spending compared to Peer Cities

### DENVER'S PEER CITIES AND POPULATIONS

- **DENVER**: 682,545
- **MINNEAPOLIS**: 400,700
- **RALEIGH**: 431,746
- **PORTLAND**: 609,000
- **BOSTON**: 646,000
- **SEATTLE**: 652,405
- **CHARLOTTE**: 792,800
- **AUSTIN**: 885,400

### MEDIAN (97 cities)

- **Total Spending per Resident**: $91.97
- **Capital Spending per Resident**: $30.26
- **Operating Spending per Resident**: $122.23
- **Total Spending**: $81,147,125
### Funding and Priorities

#### WHAT WE'VE HEARD

18% of maptionaire respondents identify lack of sufficient funding as one of the greatest challenges for parks and recreation.

### What do you think should be Denver Parks and Recreation priorities (choose up to three):

- **Existing park maintenance**
  - 301 votes

- **Increasing park land**
  - 195 votes

- **Access to park and recreation**
  - 153 votes

- **Increase trees**
  - 151 votes

- **Natural resource protection and...**
  - 181 votes

- **Develop additional funding source**
  - 119 votes

- **Outdoor recreational programming**
  - 68 votes

- **Denver Mountain Parks**
  - 81 votes

- **Aquatic facilities and programming**
  - 87 votes

- **Historic and cultural resource**
  - 122 votes

**DENVER RESIDENTS PLACE A HIGH PRIORITY ON MAINTENANCE FOR EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES**
Water and Irrigation

700 acres
land added to urban park system since 2003.

850M gallons
reduction in irrigation water usage since 2003
due to conservation methods

11% of parks annual operating budget is spent on water for irrigation
($2.7 million)
CONIFER GROVE AT WASHINGTON PARK
Recycled water used for irrigation, but salts must be managed.
WHAT WE’VE HEARD

H₂O and Irrigation

71% of respondents believe water conservation in parks is a high priority.

“Denver is in a desert, vegetation should reflect the natural habitat and changing climate of the region.”

“Continue using grey water AND use plant species that require less water.”

MOST RESPONDENTS SEE PARKS AS VERY IMPORTANT TO STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
62 miles of parkway are maintained by DPR
WHAT WE’VE HEARD
Parkway System

87%
Of respondents see parkways as a beautiful asset to the city

“Making sure there are trails along parkways for bikes and pedestrians”

Parkways should be managed and designed for the vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist...

More parkways, especially in the west/northwest

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT PARKWAYS HELP ABSORB STORMWATER AND PROVIDE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
Next Steps
BIG Questions for the Future

Denver’s climate is changing...

How does Denver’s environment and climate affect our parks? How do our parks improve the environment?

Denver’s population is growing and diversifying...

How do we ensure that ALL Denver residents can enjoy our park and recreation system equally?

Our budgets and resources are limited...

How can we fund and manage our park and recreation facilities long term?
**PHASE 1: UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE**

- **We are here!**
- Existing Conditions Report
- Online Surveys and Information
- Statistically-valid Survey
- Task Force Meetings

**PHASE 2: ENVISION AND GOALS**

- Existing Events Outreach
- Community Events Outreach
- Public Forum 1
- Public Forum 2
- Public Forum 3

**PHASE 3: DRAFT AND ADOPT**

- Draft Plan
- Final Plan
- Public Forum 2
- Public Forum 3
- Draft Plan
- Final Plan
Activity
PART 1

What are the key issues that you see facing the park and recreation system today?

Brainstorm first on post-it notes. Fill as many as you like.

Discussion in your three groups.
PART 2

What are the key goals you would like Denver Parks and Recreation to achieve in the next 15-20 years?

Brainstorm first on post-it notes. Fill as many as you like.

Discussion in your three groups. Be prepared to report out.