

City and County of Denver
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)
Review and Comment on the Proposed 2022 Annual Budget
for the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

COVID-19 and the resulting impact on Denver, its residents and its park system has created challenges and opportunities for DPR in the coming budget year. While the spirit behind the historical call for a bold, fresh approach to needed investments is still present, it is measured by the realities of “zero budget year” for 2022.

PRAB believes in an equitable approach to budgeting and endorses an alignment with the vision and goals outlined in the Game Plan for a Healthy City. In addition the board believes its Black Lives Matter (BLM) statement and input from the community are key drivers in how investments are made in our parks and in our recreation system. All projects, land acquisition, updates on equipment and capital projects should reflect equity, BLM and community.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board strongly encourages Denver Parks and Recreation to prioritize the following high, medium and low investments in its 2022 budget.

High

- Identify and purchase park land, particularly in low income areas of Denver, to move us towards our goal of every resident being within a 10 minute walk/roll to a Denver park as outlined in the Game Plan for a Healthy City.
- Explore funding opportunities to connect low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods with the least amount of park space with Denver’s regional parks through micro-transit or contract service with the Regional Transportation District. We must increase access to our parks and recreation opportunities, especially for our low income residents.
- Increased funding for restrooms in parks, including an update of the master plan that includes a goal of additional permanent restrooms and affordable portalets. Our parks must be accessible to all people and providing basic restroom facilities in parks should be prioritized.

Medium

- Dedicate funding for recovering personnel and services from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increase accessibility to mountain parks. Strengthen relationship with DPS and support more outdoor education and trips to the mountain parks. Provide funding for transportation to Denver Mountain Parks to ensure all Denverites have access to these assets outside of City and County boundaries.
- Expand the newly instituted trash program.

Low

- Explore, plan and study funding opportunities for senior playgrounds in areas of the city with the highest senior populations. With an aging population, we can provide opportunities for folks to remain active and social within our communities, just like we do for youth.

In addition, we ask for consideration of the following:

- Maintain or increase funding for car-free parks improvements.
- Dedicate funding for the 5280 Trail, Westwood Via Verde, the Montbello Fresh-Lo Loop, and the 303 Artway, which will make connections to existing parks.
- Expand funding for the tree canopy program, especially in areas of Denver with the lowest coverage.
- Increase funding for outdoor programming opportunities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Allocate funding for feasibility studies for restoration of historic structures or features.
- Increased funding for pools and recreation centers and prioritize equity when allocating hours.
- Funding to develop a pickle ball master plan.
- Prioritize improvements to parks in Valverde.
- Prioritize addition of green space in Baker.
- Acquire the Denver Police Department Station 6 site for open space.
- Funding for a Governors Park Master Plan.
- Install water bottle filling stations with water fountains at parks.
- Increase funding for rangers and hire more rangers to patrol parks regularly.
- Invest in nature play areas as playgrounds and parks are updated and designed.