



## CHAPTER FOUR MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a discussion of the integration of this plan with other community planning efforts, the role of the Clear Creek corridor in the community, and specific project recommendations that are needed to meet existing and future recreation, park, and trail needs in the City of Golden. A master plan map is also included that graphically depicts the locations of specific project recommendations. These recommendations include ways to address existing deficiencies, projected needs, changes in recreational habits, and other issues identified through the inventory and needs assessment.

### A. Mission, Vision, Goals, and Policies

As part of the process of providing insight, advice, and guidance in developing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board developed specific goals and objectives to guide the future direction of the city. The mission, vision, goals, and objectives directly support the city's vision as defined in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The vision defines the desired outcome of the community in its provision of parks and recreation. The mission defines how the Parks and Recreation Department will achieve that vision. Goals and objectives provide specific direction to the community and its governing body in support of the vision, and provide the policy basis from which decisions can be made. Through these goals and objectives, the City of Golden is making the statement that its commitment to parks, recreation, and trails in the community is one that will make it one of the best parks and recreation systems in the country.



*Fully accessible play area at Discovery Park*

### Vision

Golden will be recognized as a national leader in the provision of high quality parks, trails and recreation facilities.

### Mission

To promote and provide safe and comprehensive community facilities, programs, and services that will enrich the quality of life for all residents and visitors.

### Goals

- 1. The city will provide a balanced system of parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities that is equitably distributed and accessible to all residents.**

### Objectives

- Provide 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland and 5.5 acres of community parkland for every 1,000 residents.
- Locate neighborhood parks within 0.5 mile of the neighbors they are intended to serve, and in locations that are comfortably and safely accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Develop additional lands to provide appropriately sized neighborhood parks in existing underserved neighborhoods. Where additional land is not feasible, provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicyclist access to the nearest neighborhood park through construction of sidewalks, improved crossings of roadways, and grade-separated crossings of barriers, where feasible.
- Ensure that future demands are met through redevelopment and the development of new facilities and services where necessary.
- Provide accessible facilities and rehabilitate existing facilities to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



*Soft surface trail at Tony Grampas Park*

- Provide community parks within one to two miles of residential areas, and on sites that are accessible by trails, bike lanes, and major roadways.
- Centrally locate recreation centers, community centers, and other facilities that are heavily used by youth, adults, and seniors on sites with visual and vehicular access from major roadways, with public transit access and with direct trail connections.
- Identify parcels in parkland inventory that provide no park or recreation value and adversely impact maintenance costs; give consideration to future disposal of these properties.

- Periodically update park design standards in subdivision, zoning, and other land use and development regulations to incorporate the Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations.

## **2. The city's parks, trails, open space, and recreation system will serve the diverse needs of the community, including health promotion, and environmental, economic, and social sustainability.**

### *Objectives*

- Keep abreast of current trends and changing demands for recreational activities by periodically conducting a communitywide survey and updating the master plan.



*Golden Cliffs Preserve*

- Develop new facilities and services, as well as upgrade existing facilities, to ensure that all existing residents are adequately served.
- Design parks to provide a variety of experiences that appeal to a broad range of interests, abilities, and ages.
- Locate multipurpose practice fields for youth sports in neighborhood parks as well as community parks. Size



neighborhood parks adequately to allow for such uses.

- Periodically assess satisfaction levels of residents and survey the population to determine park and recreation needs and desires.
- Be responsive to specialized needs of citizens, such as those activities that could be enjoyed by the elderly, the very young, and the disabled.
- Place greater emphasis on the use of nonirrigated landscapes, native species, and low water-requiring plant materials.
- Remove irrigated turf in areas of parks that are nonusable or along steep slopes, and replace with native landscapes.
- Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when locating developed facilities.
- Protect water quality through implementation of “Best Management Practices” in the design of stormwater conveyance and detention facilities.
- Use permeable pavements, recycled materials, locally manufactured products, locally available materials, and low energy-requiring facilities and technologies to the greatest extent practicable.
- Provide Golden residents with information on the benefits of sustainable landscapes through demonstration gardens, backyard wildlife programs, and interpretive signage.
- Implement area-specific resource management plans for natural areas that define the appropriate level of public use and ecosystem management strategies.
- Seasonally close areas as warranted to protect sensitive resources.
- Provide for integrated pest management where/when necessary.

**3. The city’s parks, trails, and open space system will promote tourism in the city, serving to attract visitors to the community through the provision of recreational opportunities that are unique to Golden and the surrounding environment.**

*Objectives*

- Integrate with other overall city planning efforts.
- Provide festival and performance spaces.
- Strengthen connections between the Clear Creek Corridor and downtown.
- Improve connections to regional trail corridors.
- Design parks with high quality materials and features that leave a positive and memorable impression.

**4. Preservation and improvement of the natural environment, including the surrounding foothills, waterways, and mountain backdrop, are vitally important to Golden’s character.**

*Objectives*

- Partner with Jefferson County to protect additional areas near the community, especially remaining areas of the mountain backdrop north and west of the city.
- Restore degraded areas.
- Utilize the development review process to avoid development of sensitive areas.
- Integrate native landscapes with irrigated turf areas, where appropriate, in existing and future parks to amplify the beauty and character of the surrounding regional natural landscape.



**5. The city will develop a safe, comprehensive, and multipurpose trail system that promotes walking and other forms of nonmotorized travel.**

*Objectives*

- Provide a multipurpose, communitywide core trail system that connects major destinations (e.g., regional and community parks, large conservation lands, recreation centers, shopping districts, employment districts, major event centers, etc.) and provides opportunities for trail loops with areas of interest along the route.
- Connect neighborhood parks and neighborhood schools to a communitywide trail system with other neighborhood connector trails (where feasible and appropriate in the context of the neighborhood design) and on-street bike lanes and routes.
- Integrate bike and pedestrian improvements into roadway designs.
- Provide both paved and nonpaved trails to accommodate a variety of users.
- Provide support facilities and amenities along trails, including informational and interpretive signage, resting areas, and other facilities as appropriate.
- Complete links to Front Range and other regional trails.
- Give priority to providing grade-separated crossings at major roadways and other barriers.

**6. The Clear Creek Corridor will be celebrated as one of the community's most important assets. The corridor is a healthy aquatic resource that serves a variety of ecological functions while also serving to attract visitors to the city, contributing to the vitality of the downtown and providing a variety of recreational opportunities for Golden residents and visitors.**

*Objectives*

- Create a linear park district extending along both sides of the corridor between Highway 6 and Vanover Park.
- Evaluate existing recreational use areas and other public lands to determine if they are consistent with the purposes of a park district and represent the best use of the land.
- Address trail user conflicts.
- Provide a variety of recreational opportunities.
- Improve aesthetic quality of the corridor through landscape improvements, screening, and restoration of disturbed areas.
- The Clear Creek Corridor will serve as a world class recreation and leisure amenity that encourages complementary private redevelopment and development. Future development adjacent to or near Clear Creek or other natural and conservation areas will be complementary to and shall not compromise the natural values, integrity, character, and recreation experience of the area.



**7. The city will conserve heritage resources that represent the community's identity and uniqueness. The city will also support cultural and heritage preservation through interpretation, education, and incentives.**

*Objectives*

- Incorporate historic resources into new parks, where applicable, and protect and preserve those resources.
- Support events and activities that celebrate important historical activities, events, or people from the area.
- Encourage partnerships between organizations in the private sector and engage the community in a heritage education plan.

**8. Develop an adequate level of funding to achieve the vision and goals of this master plan.**

*Objectives*

- Ensure that new residential development contributes its fair share for park and recreation facilities to the extent allowed by state law.
- Seek public-private partnerships where mutually beneficial and appropriate.
- Aggressively seek grants from available sources.
- Coordinate with other agencies, and seek partnerships with these agencies to leverage available funding.
- Support funding for additional park and recreation staff positions as the park and recreation system grows.
- Use residential special improvement districts for park acquisition, development, and/or maintenance when other means do not exist. Typical components of a SID are a boundary defining the improvement district, the levy to be assessed, and a sunset clause providing that once all projects are completed, the SID and any associated

taxes will be abolished. This tool may be appropriate to fund park and recreation improvements associated with specific subareas of the community.

- Clearly define developer responsibilities.

**B. Integration with Communitywide Planning**

Over the last several years, the City of Golden has been moving forward with ambitious planning efforts to re-energize its downtown area. As these efforts proceed, such as the Downtown Character Plan, it is critical that this Parks and Recreation Master Plan be closely coordinated with them to ensure consistency and continuity in vision. Community leaders have taken steps to outline a vision for the city that will move it forward in the 21st century. These broad based planning efforts have been examining everything from traffic to housing. They are also fully considering the important role that parks, recreation, and trails play in the overall fabric of the community. There is broad consensus in the community that the parks, recreation, and trails system, in conjunction with neighboring open space, is the heart and soul of Golden. Residents and civic leaders alike agree that unique resources, such as the Clear Creek Corridor, Community Center, and diverse parks, in addition to the unique history and character, are what attract both residents and visitors and make Golden such a wonderful place to work, play, and live. It is for these reasons that civic leaders in Golden should continue to fully incorporate this Parks and Recreation Master Plan into all other community planning efforts.

**C. Role of Clear Creek Corridor in the Community**

Ask any resident of Golden to name one thing they love about their community and more often than not, the answer relates to the presence of Clear Creek in the middle of their city. Time and again, residents consider Clear Creek and the adjacent park and recreation opportunities, as well as the close proximity of downtown, to be a



great asset in the community. It is also something that is identifiable with Golden and sets it apart from other communities. In addition to park and recreation opportunities, the Clear Creek Corridor offers a natural attraction for residents and visitors to come downtown. It is, in itself, an economic draw and incubator for the city. When people come to play and recreate along the river, they also enjoy the wide variety of restaurants, shops, and other retail establishments. Visitors also stay overnight at hotels, further injecting activity and revenue to the area. The city has recognized this and made a concerted effort to use this natural resource as an anchor for mixed-use redevelopment projects. This interconnected green infrastructure, with a vibrant commercial and residential area, has become an increasingly important and valuable component of Golden's community planning. The draw of people who desire to be close to and recreate along Clear Creek has been a powerful incentive for businesses to locate here.



*Clear Creek Corridor*

However, community leaders also recognize that more could be done to further improve this area and make it truly a world class destination to visit and home to live in. Efforts to more fully integrate the Clear Creek Corridor with the surrounding business and residential areas should continue. Part of this effort should be full incorporation of Clear Creek and other adjacent

park and recreation resources into one cohesive and connected park district that is fully accessible via trails and attractive to those of all ages. With broad concepts and progressive solutions, this idea is more fully explained later in this chapter.

## D. Park Projects

Currently the City of Golden is providing community parkland well above the existing standard. The city is providing neighborhood parkland at just below the existing standard. Compared to other cities on the Front Range and NRPA Gold Medal winning communities in the same population range, Golden is providing slightly less neighborhood park acreage than the average. However, the overall distribution of neighborhood parkland throughout the community is very good. There are only a few select areas that are currently underserved. Providing neighborhood parks in these areas will both serve underserved populations as well as increase the overall level of service to where it would meet or exceed the existing standard. Any future residential development that may occur in the community should provide adequate parkland to serve its residents, or provide access to nearby parks and fees-in-lieu of parkland so that the city can acquire such land.

### New Parkland

Map 4, Master Plan, shows target areas for new parkland that will help to enhance service to current residential areas that are underserved. Following is a description of each location and suggested park developments.

#### **North Golden**

Residents in the area north of Highway 58, east of North Ford Street, and south of 1st Street currently do not have adequate access to a neighborhood park. While there is little vacant land available in the area for park development, the city does own land along Tucker Gulch



Map 4: Master Plan





where the existing Tucker Gulch Trail lies. Although linear in nature, it is possible to incorporate various neighborhood park elements into portions of this property near the underserved area. Additionally, there is an informal park located in this area called Homemade Park. There are no traditional park features here besides a couple of benches. Although located on city land, this park is currently maintained by volunteers. This would be an ideal location and opportunity for the city property and to develop it into a park that would provide the surrounding neighborhood with more traditional park amenities. Although there is not adequate land to accommodate a playfield, the park should contain a playground, picnic facilities, benches, and other park features such as minor skate elements. The park would be strategically located along the Tucker Gulch Trail and could also be the location of a small trailhead.



*Tucker Gulch Trail*

**Central Golden**

Residents in the area east of Ford Street, north of Sunset Drive, and south of 17th Street currently do not have adequate access to a neighborhood park. In an effort to address this problem, the city should pursue acquisition of property in order to provide these residents with the needed facilities. If acquisition of property is not possible, then other options should be pursued. Any park provided should contain all typical neighborhood amenities, including a

playground, picnic shelter, restroom, shade structures, and a multipurpose playfield if the site is suitable in size. It would also be advisable for any future neighborhood park to be connected to a dedicated bike trail or bike route, such as the one along Ford Street.

**South Golden**

Residents in the area south of Highway 6, north of Highway 40, east of County Road 93, and west of Johnson Road do not have adequate access to a neighborhood park. The city currently owns a parcel of land on the corner of Zeta Street and Highway 40; however, the parcel is not adequate to accommodate a full-scale neighborhood park. In an effort to address this problem, the city should pursue acquisition of other vacant property in the vicinity to provide these residents with the needed facilities. An option might be a possible land swap with a developer for another parcel, and the acquisition of other vacant land that is more suitable for park development. Any park provided should contain all typical neighborhood amenities, including a playground, picnic shelter, restroom, shade structures, and a multipurpose playfield if the site is suitable in size. It would also be advisable for any future neighborhood park to be connected to a dedicated bike trail or bike route, such as the existing one along Johnson Road or along County Road 93.



*Vacant city land in south Golden*



### ***Downtown Golden***

Consideration should be given to the development of public space in the downtown area near Washington Avenue that would provide a multifunctional amenity, maintain a small town character, and enhance downtown vitality. The area could include open grassy areas, benches and landscaping, and make a good location for community gatherings. The specific location of such a public space should not interfere or detract from other downtown amenities, including without limitation, the availability of convenient public parking.

### **Major Park Improvements**

Map 4, Proposed Master Plan, identifies parklands that are proposed for major improvements or redesign, which will help them function more efficiently and better serve residents in providing parkland and recreational amenities. Following is a description of each location and suggested park developments.

#### ***Tony Grampsas Park***

Tony Grampsas Park is widely appreciated and well used; however, the lack of consistency in the type and manner in which amenities have been added to the park over time have left the park with no sense of clear organization or central core. Although highly popular, park elements are not visually appealing and there is a need within the community to better utilize space in the park for other recreational amenities. As described in Chapters Two and Three, there are several issues with Tony Grampsas Park that could be solved through a complete redesign of the park.



*Ballfields at Tony Grampsas Park*

The primary goal of redesigning Tony Grampsas would be to more fully utilize the available park topography to accommodate additional uses while maintaining portions in a naturalized state. Overall, the park is in marginal condition. Although there are several unique features of this park that are popular with the community, such as the archery range, dog park, and natural setting, most of the park does not function adequately. Upon a redesign, these popular features should be reincorporated into the park. A multifield ball complex should be added to the park along with accompanying seating, permanent restrooms, and concessions. This would provide the community with the larger-sized fields that it is currently lacking. Two of these fields should have baselines of a minimum of 340 feet and a centerfield with a minimum distance of 400 feet.

Due to the popularity of the park for large group events, such as family gatherings and corporate events, other elements should be added so the park would better accommodate this use. This should include a larger picnic pavilion with electric service and access to water. Other additions to the park that should be considered include a disc golf course, playground, and other communitywide amenities such as horseshoes and sand volleyball courts. The park also has marginal ADA accessibility that should be improved in conjunction with a redesign.

Lastly, the park has serious drainage problems that could be addressed with a complete redesign. Certain areas of the park receive seepage from the irrigation canal that runs through the site, thus creating a major maintenance problem for the Parks and Recreation Department. Redesigning the park from scratch would allow for this problem to be fully addressed.

#### ***Ulysses Park***

Due to its central location adjacent to Bell Middle School and the presence of sports facilities, Ulysses Park is heavily used in the community. However, the park does not fully function as a community park but more as a sports complex, and certain amenities are



outdated or not to contemporary standards. Ulysses Park also offers a great location from which to view both the foothills as well as downtown Golden. Many improvements could be made to the park to provide more spaces for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the views, as well as observe the athletic events taking place at the park. The city should make select improvements to the overall design and functionality of this park so it will more effectively serve as a community park to the southern portion of the city. Minor landscape improvements throughout the park and along walking paths are also recommended. Any major changes or reshaping of this park should go through a thorough public design process to ensure that the concerns and interests of all citizens are being addressed.

Another major problem currently facing Ulysses Park is that much of the usable park area is not ADA accessible, including the picnic areas, restrooms, concessions, and dog park; access to the fields is also not accessible. In addition, many of these facilities are outdated, deteriorating in appearance, and should be renovated or replaced. Ideally, the entire core area of the park should be redesigned to improve its function, aesthetics, and feel. Methods for more directly connecting the parking to the core area of the park should be explored, including improved ADA accessibility. Another improvement that could be made at the park is upgrading and enhancing the dog park. The skatepark should be more directly connected to the core areas of the park and upgraded with some permanent, poured concrete elements to make an overall better skating experience.

The current outfield distances of some of the fields at Ulysses Park are short by today's standards, and enlarging these fields might help to increase their overall usability to more user groups. Specific field improvements that are suggested include converting field number one at Ulysses Park for softball use and beginning to utilize movable fencing on field number three so the outfields would be regulation distance. Options should also be investigated for the

possibility of bringing field numbers four and five up to regulation size as well. Associated with the ballfield enhancements, major upgrades to the existing concession facility should also take place.

Lastly, the establishment of a designated sledding hill should be examined at Ulysses Park. Although east-facing, the hill below the ballfield that leads to the adjacent track at Bell Middle School may serve this purpose appropriately. A joint-use agreement should be pursued with Jefferson County R-1 School District for this project.

### **Park Enhancements**

Map 4, Master Plan, identifies parks that are in need of minor enhancement or upgrades to help them function more efficiently and better serve residents in adjoining neighborhoods. Following is a brief description of each location and suggested improvements.

#### ***Beverly Heights Park***

Beverly Heights Park is a neighborhood park located in west Golden near the gateway to the Denver Mountain Parks. The overall condition of the park is good, but some minor updating could improve the park. Updated site furnishings (picnic tables, benches and trash receptacles) and improvements to the off-street parking lot would enhance the user experience. Additional benches along the walking trails for people to sit and enjoy the views are also recommended. Lastly, artistic delineation between the native and turf-oriented landscapes could also improve maintenance and create a transition into the native character of the hillside landscape. New plantings at the entry sign would also make the park more inviting.

#### ***Clear Creek History Park***

The Clear Creek History Park is centrally located on the south side of Clear Creek in downtown Golden. The park is popular with school groups that come to experience and learn about local Colorado history in a hands-on fashion. Circulation within the park should be better defined to limit compaction and





History Park



Cressman Park

degradation to turf areas. Paths should remain natural and informal, yet guide visitors more clearly and be fully ADA accessible. Additional landscaping and features that would represent the time periods depicted at the park could also be added, such as a small vegetable garden, fruit trees, horse tie-ups, outhouse, etc. Informal seating areas could be added as well to provide small outdoor classroom spaces and areas to rest. Create additional turf areas for picnics and gatherings which will incorporate park space into the history. These should not be standard park furniture, but could be hay bales or halved logs. There have also been requests that the park be open and available to the general public on a more regular basis.

The vacant lot west of the History Park should be evaluated during planning of the Clear Creek Park District to determine its best use. Some possibilities are an expansion of the History Park, trailhead, or passive park use. Parking for school buses should be accommodated, with an appropriate location identified that does not negatively impact the adjacent residential neighborhood.

#### **Cressman Park**

Cressman Park is located in north Golden and serves the surrounding neighborhood. This park is currently in good condition, but could use updated benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles. It also needs bike parking as it is a popular stopping point for users of the Tucker Gulch Trail. The entry sign from Washington

Street should be enhanced with attractive landscaping to highlight the park.

#### **Golden Heights Park**

Golden Heights Park is located in southeast Golden adjacent to I-70. This park contains one of two skateparks within the city. The park was constructed 20 years ago. Although it was recently expanded and updated, it could use some additional refreshing and updating. I-70 is very visible from within the park and screening along the fence would enhance a sense of security and enclosure within the park. The picnic shelter, picnic tables, benches, and other site furnishings are dated and need updating. Seating areas for people to watch the skateboarders should be added a safe distance, yet near the skatepark. Any upgrades to the shelter and other furnishings should be done with the same character and customized design of the existing ones. They are unique to this park and different from those in other parks. Lastly, sound mitigation measures should be pursued with CDOT to mitigate the noise coming from I-70.

The parking lots could be enhanced with trees to provide shade and the entry could be refreshed with new, attractive landscaping. Additional landscaping within the park, such as along the residential fence, could provide more shade and screening.



### ***Heritage Dells***

Heritage Dells Park is located in south Golden in a hilly residential area. This park is unique with its steep topography. The park was constructed 20 years ago and, while attractive and well-maintained, could use updating. The playground and site furnishings are old and need replacing. A small picnic shelter could also be considered for the park. Accessibility into the park appears marginal at best, and should be evaluated to determine if an accessible route can be provided to the picnic and playground area. Other improvements might include the removal of turf grass in favor of native landscapes in unusable areas, and steep slopes to help give this park a stronger foothills character.

### ***Hockeystop Park***

Hockeystop Park was constructed in 2001 and is centrally located near Golden Road and adjacent to Southridge Park. The park consists of an inline hockey rink. The facility is still fairly new and the overall condition good. The park could use the addition of a drinking fountain, bleachers, and score board. The original design for the park included lighting, and the feasibility of adding lighting should be explored to determine if it would be an added benefit with little negative impact on the surrounding area.

### ***Lions Park and Ballfields***

Lions Park and the Ballfields were built in the 1960s by the Golden Lions Club. The central location in downtown Golden, adjacent to Clear Creek and as the home of the Golden Community Center, makes this a very popular park. The popularity of the park is evident by the number of people there on any day of the week. Recommendations for Lions Park include updating some features as well as some larger-scale enhancements. Any changes to Lions Park should be done with consideration to the Clear Creek Park District as a whole. Additional picnic shelters should be added to the park as the existing shelters are frequently reserved. Site furnishings, such as picnic tables, should be updated. The pond is often a concern for park users due to the large number of geese that frequent the park. The pond edge should be cleaned up and made

more attractive. Furthermore, the specific uses of the pond should be identified, and associated water quality objectives to match these uses should be established.

A pedestrian-friendly design should be explored for 10th Street through the park that maintains access to the RV park and parking lots. The upper shops area is an opportunity for new, expanded park uses. The ponds at the upper shops area should be protected with attractive fencing and the pond edges cleaned up to be more aesthetic. ADA accessibility throughout the park is marginal and should be enhanced with additional trails, accessible playground, access to the pond, and safe access across 10th Street.



*Upper Shops Area*

Clear Creek Whitewater Park is within the Lions Park area. Appropriate kayak put-in / take-out locations should be identified and constructed to limit stream bank erosion. Designating these areas will also ease some of the user conflicts along the trail where kayakers, bicyclists, and pedestrians vie for the same narrow trail space. The changing dynamics of the creek and whitewater course should be monitored and any necessary modifications as a result of these changes should be made accordingly. Additionally, in order to keep pace with the high use and associated issues that occur at the whitewater course, the city should enlist the assistance of local paddling groups to help improve the course and modify it as necessary.



The possibility of locating the ballfields to another area of Golden should be explored to create a multipurpose green and to alleviate the pinched trail between the ballfields and the creek. Lastly, the parcel of city property located on the northeast corner of Highways 93 and 58, called Magpie Gulch, should be formalized into a community gateway. This is a well travelled route for people coming into the city and is located near the heart of the community – downtown and the Clear Creek corridor. This parcel would make an ideal formalized gateway announcing the entrance to the city.

#### ***New Loveland Mine Park***

New Loveland Mine Park is just over 10 years old and located in west central Golden, not too far from downtown. This neighborhood park is in good condition and does not need much updating. Additional trees would provide more enclosure and shade to the park. Trees along the parking lot and attractive planting at the entry would enhance the park.

#### ***Norman D. Park***

Norman D. Park is located in north Golden along Tucker Gulch. This neighborhood park is older, built in 1978, with some updated features. The mature trees provide a comfortable setting along with the natural character of the gulch. The turf adjacent to the trail is worn, indicating that the trail may need to be widened to accommodate more users. The center of the park has an unusual depression with a concrete pipe protruding into it and rock edging. This feature should be removed. Other recommendations are updating some of the older benches, adding additional bike parking for users of the trail, and adding attractive planting at the entry sign. Possibilities of enhancing the recreational qualities of the park through a public process that includes all constituents should also be explored.

#### ***Parfet Park***

Parfet Park should be evaluated in the context of planning for the Clear Creek Park District, but some specific recommendations are included here. This older park in the heart of downtown Golden is very popular with the community and is highly visible to visitors as it is located across

the street from the Golden Visitor Center. This park could become an iconic jewel of the downtown area that promotes the civic and gathering functions of the community. Ideas related to this include removing the sand volleyball court and putting a performance plaza in its place, and placing additional lighting, seating areas and plantings throughout the park. In the past, the idea of locating a permanent bandshell in this park was explored and had generated a great deal of public support. Prior to any park renovation, this study should be resurrected and a public process organized to determine the size and scope of the venue. Drainage in the park should be improved to remove ponding of water on the turf. An ADA accessible paved path should connect the west and east sides of the park and connect to the river overlook area. Picnic tables, benches, and other site furnishings should be updated.



*Parfet Park*

#### ***Southridge Park***

This centrally located park is adjacent to Hockeystop Park. It has recently had updates to the playground and trails and does not need improvements at this time. Due to its centralized location, however, consideration should be given to placing a fully accessible playground in this park.

#### ***Vanover Park***

Vanover Park is at the eastern edge of the Clear Creek Park District and should be evaluated in the planning of the district. Similar to Parfet Park, Vanover Park is one of the city's



premier parks in the downtown area and the only park where turf grass extends all the way to the shoreline of Clear Creek. This unique feature creates a setting that is almost beach-like, and provides an excellent take-out point for boaters. This small park is 10 years old and in generally good condition. Recommendations for improvements include connecting the trail on the north side of the creek that currently dead-ends at the water. The creek edge should be enhanced and the boat take-out evaluated to see if it is needed. The stump of the old cottonwood tree should be removed or incorporated into an interactive play area. New lighting and additional, updated benches should be added to enhance the use of the park. A bicycle and pedestrian connection to Parfet Park should also be provided. Lastly, the portion of the park east of the bike trail and bridge is in a naturalized state. The existing landscaping creates a screening that hides this part of the park, thus making it underutilized. Options for activating this part of the park might include the addition of a playground.

#### **White Ash Mine Park**

White Ash Mine Park is in north Golden and is nearly 10 years old. A primary recommendation is to landscape the berm near the basketball courts to enhance aesthetics. The entry should be enhanced with attractive planting. A small skatepark could be added to this park to serve north Golden and could utilize part of the large berm. The addition of bike parking for trail users would also be advisable.



*Berm at White Ash Mine Park*

#### **E. Clear Creek Park District (CCPD)**

This plan recommends the establishment of a Clear Creek Park District (CCPD). While innovative and progressive, the intent of the CCPD is to create a unified park experience along Clear Creek in downtown Golden. It is also meant to more fully integrate public spaces into the overall fabric of the community and be fully integrated with the larger land use plan. More than simply a park, the CCPD would seamlessly mesh with complementary land uses in the area, providing residents a truly unique multi-use area in which to recreate, shop and work; one that promotes synergy with the downtown environment and surrounding neighborhoods. It would also offer additional opportunities for downtown businesses to capitalize on the large number of people who frequent the area for a variety of activities. The CCPD should be a world class design statement that sets Golden apart from any other community along the Front Range, one that is identifiable and unique. The CCPD incorporates Lions, History, Parfet, and Vanover Parks, and the areas between these parks along the creek into one seamless park, recreation and leisure experience. As the crown jewel of parks within Golden, the CCPD brings many different users and a wide variety of activities together in one location. The design and planning for the CCPD should go through a rigorous public planning process that includes stakeholders, community leaders, elected and appointed public officials, and the community at large. When considering improvements to any of the individual parks, the district as a whole should be evaluated.

Connections between parks should be created or enhanced, and connections from adjacent neighborhoods to the CCPD should be enhanced. Gateways at key locations along the district edge should also be created to announce the entries.





*Clear Creek Corridor*

Described below is the broad vision for the CCPD and subsequent goals to help realize this vision. Below each goal is a series of concepts and ideas to consider that will help to make the vision and goals for CCPD a reality. Figure 1, Clear Creek Park District, shows these concepts in detail.

### **Vision Statement**

Clear Creek will have a continuous corridor of public parkland, trails, and varied recreational opportunities that are complementary to and enhance public enjoyment of the creek, and that provide for individual, group, and community activities gatherings, festivals, and events.

#### **1. Create a continuous, publicly accessible linear park that has a distinct character and identity.**

- Create a CCPD master plan that involves diverse stakeholders in the decision making.
- Explore alternative uses for the RV park site that provides access for all residents and that complements creek uses.

- Ensure that civic facilities are designed to fit within and complement the CCPD. Minimize their physical footprint to maximize parkland.
- Delineate the CCPD edges with unique signage, lighting, and landscape gateways.
- Consider strategic acquisition of land or public easements to increase the corridor width between Parfet and Vanover Parks, and potentially further east towards the Coors Brewery.

#### **2. Provide a variety of public recreational opportunities along the Clear Creek Corridor.**

- Provide zones that differ in their character, from more urban on the east end to more natural on the west end.
- Address conflicts between tubers, kayakers, and fishermen.
- Enhance the History Park site and provide wayfinding and interpretive signage throughout the CCPD.



*Multiple use in Whitewater Park*



### Figure 1 - Clear Creek Park District Concepts





### 3. Identify locations for vehicular circulation and parking that are convenient to activities, yet do not occupy prime locations along the corridor.

- Evaluate existing parking lots for better accessibility, safety, and capacity.
- Consider downsizing existing parking areas and establishing new parking further away from the creek in order to maximize area for parkland adjacent to the creek.
- Provide convenient access to the creek for people with physical disabilities.
- Establish a road connection to the recreation center from the north.
- Consider reconfiguration/redesign of 10th Street through the CCPD to ensure slow traffic speeds and safe pedestrian environments.
- Identify locations for bus parking for school groups.

### 4. Improve trail connectivity within and pedestrian/bicycle access to the CCPD.

- Connect Parfet and Vanover Parks with a multipurpose paved trail and other landscape improvements to establish a connection between the two sites



Connection needed between Parfet and Vanover Parks

- Identify a location for a pedestrian bridge across Clear Creek on the west end to create a looped trail and better connectivity to north-south trails.
- Enhance the north-south connections from the neighborhoods on both sides of Clear Creek to the river.
- Consider creating a trailhead and passive park at the vacant lot east of the History Park.
- Pursue options for direct trail connectivity to Coors, which could become an important trail destination.
- Connect Clear Creek Trail and associated parkland to the west with the Jefferson County Open Space trail up Clear Creek canyon in order to provide a full range of recreational opportunities, ranging from urban to backcountry.

### 5. Improve the quality and type of existing parkland and recreation facilities.

- Explore options for additional kayak drops.
- Consider improvements to Vanover Park to create more of a destination.
- Consider addition of a splash pad in Parfet Park, and possibly combining this with a performance plaza.
- Improve the landscape buffer between the police/fire station and the trail.
- Improve the stream bank on the north side of the creek by Gold Apartments, and enhance landscaping throughout the corridor.
- Improve the water quality of the Lions Park pond.
- 

### 6. Address trail user conflicts along Clear Creek.

- Explore options for widening the trail.





*Stream bank near Gold Apartments*

- Develop a new south side trail.
- Evaluate separating trail uses, (e.g., bicycles on the south side trail, pedestrians on the north side trail.)
- Evaluate locations for formal kayak put-in/take-out locations and staging areas to minimize user conflicts and stream bank erosion.

#### **7. Improve the corridor's function for community gatherings, festivals, performances, and events.**

- The relationship of the CCPD and adjacent land uses should be examined from a broad perspective that includes more than park and recreation uses. Complementary uses, such as retail, entertainment, dining, and cultural, should be encouraged.
- Identify appropriate locations for performance spaces and the facilities that are necessary (e.g., bandshell, performance plaza, temporary or permanent covers.) Ensure that performance spaces function well as attractive, everyday use areas.
- Consideration should be given to the development of public space in the downtown area near Washington Avenue that would provide a multifunctional amenity, maintain a small

- town character and enhance downtown vitality. The area could include open grassy areas, benches and landscaping, and make a good location for community gatherings. The specific location of such a public space should not interfere or detract from other downtown amenities, including without limitation, the availability of convenient public parking.
- Explore options to create an adequately sized, multipurpose green along the creek for everyday use by residents and visitors, group picnics, staging kayak competitions, and other events.
- Evaluate the desirability of relocating the Lions Park ballfields and at least one tennis court to establish a multipurpose playfield / community green, as well as improve the trail and corridor experience.

#### **8. Evaluate alternative uses for the upper shops location.**

- Consider alternative, destination-type uses, such as a dog park, skatepark, etc., for the shops area and RV park.
- Select uses that are compatible with the access, security, and water quality requirements of the adjacent water treatment plant.

### **F. Communitywide Improvements and Facilities**

#### **Improvements**

In addition to the specific park and recreation facility projects described above, there are communitywide improvements that would help improve the park and recreation experience in Golden. First, although the existing signs in the parks are standard in their appearance, they appear dated and look like many other park systems. This plan recommends upgrading all parks signs to a more modern look – one that is unique to the culture and heritage of the City of



Golden. In conjunction with this, the Parks and Recreation Department may want to consider using site furnishings from the same family for all parks that are not signature parks, such as Discovery Park. Although there is a desire to have unique and identifiable parks, several of them could contain similar furnishings. From a maintenance standpoint, it is often more cost effective to provide site furnishings that are uniform and from the same manufacturer. Additionally, not every park in the city has adequate bike parking. The city should ensure that each park and recreation facility in the community has adequate bike parking to serve the population.

Lastly, the city should conduct a systemwide ADA audit to specifically determine which parks need accessibility improvements. Although many parks provide adequate accessibility, there are some that do not. This would also present an opportunity to identify the best location for a fully accessible playground to be provided in Golden.

## Facilities

As part of the effort to become and remain one of the best and most unique park and recreation systems in the country, there are certain facilities that Golden should consider providing. The first of these is a leisure ice rink in the downtown area. While a full-size ice facility is not recommended at this time, a smaller leisure rink would make a nice addition to the overall character of downtown Golden.

The City of Golden is lacking a public disc golf course. As the sport of disc golf has become highly popular both in the U.S. and in Colorado, the City of Golden should be providing at least one of these facilities. These are communitywide resources that require enough space to adequately accommodate their layout. Users also prefer some type of challenging topography. Although a specific site has not been determined, strong consideration should be given to including it at a redesigned Tony Grampsas Park.

Currently, both skateparks in Golden are located in the southern portion of the city. Given the popular nature of these facilities, and that no facility exists in north Golden, efforts should be made to provide more skate features in this area. While a dedicated skatepark may not be necessary, it is recommended that additional skate features be placed in existing parks in north Golden. One potential location is at White Ash Mine Park where the existing earthen berm could be utilized for this purpose.



*Skatepark at Ulysses Park*

There have been numerous requests for a dedicated sledding hill in the City of Golden. While such a facility is weather dependent, it would provide a unique recreation experience to residents during snowy periods. Such a facility should be centrally located, supervised, and be of an adequate grade, but not too steep. Although no specific location has been identified, one possibility is the hill on the south side of Ulysses Park that slopes down towards Bell Middle School. A joint-use agreement should be pursued with Jefferson County R-1 School District for this project. Other locations should also be investigated.

Another communitywide resource that should be considered for provision in Golden is a splash park. These have become highly popular amenities throughout the country and would greatly benefit the community. Potential locations for a splash park include Parfet Park or future public spaces in the downtown area. These amenities can also be added to urban parks such as community squares.





*Possible location for splash pad or performance venue at Parfet Park*

Golden is one of the few places along the Front Range where hang gliders and paragliders can access a launch point so close to town.

Watching this activity is also popular among residents and visitors alike. The city should make every effort to identify a suitable location for a dedicated landing area that does not encroach on CDOT or private land. While a specific site has not been identified, the city should work in conjunction with Jefferson County and the Colorado School of Mines to find an area that would suit these needs. Although there are currently two dog parks in Golden, there has been strong support for an additional dog park with water features. While a specific location has not been identified, the city should consider the provision of one if a suitable location can be found.

Lastly, other unique ideas that the city should consider adding to the parks system to provide more diversity in activities and make Golden a unique place include designated bocce ball courts, a high ropes course, and a model car/airplane park. The city should also establish a community garden that residents can use and maintain.

## G. Trail Projects and Crossing Enhancements

While the trail system in Golden is extensive and interconnected, there are a few critical connections, extensions, and crossing enhancements that are necessary. Additionally, in 2003 Colorado State Parks initiated the Colorado Front Range Trail project (CFRT). The 876-mile trail will link diverse communities, scenic landscapes, cultural and historic points, parks, open space, and other attractions along Colorado's Front Range. The CFRT is also intended as a unique legacy that will enrich Colorado's tourism and recreation resources, as well as heritage and health. To date, over 270 miles of the CFRT have been finished – one-third of the total corridor. Within the City of Golden, the trail will generally follow the Fairmont Trail near Tony Grampas Park to the Clear Creek Trail, then along 6th Avenue to Rooney Road where it will connect with the C-470 Trail. Only a few sections have yet to be constructed. These include a connection from the Fairmont Trail to the Clear Creek Trail; south from the Clear Creek Trail to 19th Street along 6th Avenue; and from Johnson Road to the C-470 Trail along Rooney Road.



*Fairmont Trail*



Other critical trail connections, extensions, and road crossings that are necessary to make a fully comprehensive trail system in Golden include:

- South side of Clear Creek from 6th Avenue to History Park.
- North side of Clear Creek connecting Vanover Park and Parfet Park.
- At-grade crossing improvements along 19<sup>th</sup> Street over 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Interface of Clear Creek Trail west of Highway 6 with future JeffCo Open Space trail plans.
- Missing connections along Highway 93 north of Golden Gate Road as residential development occurs.
- Connection from Iowa Street to Washington Street on west side of Highway 93, through undeveloped parts of White Ash Mine Park.
- Connection on west side of Highway 6 from 19<sup>th</sup> Street to the Kinney Run Trail.

The city should begin determining the most prudent course of action to ensure that these connections, extensions, and crossings are completed in the near future. Once complete, the City of Golden will have a trail system that will allow people to safely and efficiently travel throughout the community.

Lastly, the city needs to make some small improvements related to signage and wayfinding along existing trails in the downtown area and along Clear Creek. Specific improvements would be improving wayfinding from the Clear Creek Trail in downtown along the trail, as it leaves the city to the east past Coors Brewery. Another difficult area to navigate for visitors of the History Park is getting from there to Lions Park.



*Intersection of Tucker Gulch Trail and Clear Creek Trailhead heading east*

