SPECIAL THANKS

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To review the complete Englewood Parks & Recreation Master Plan visit: www.EnglewoodRec.org
Centennial Park
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Englewood is a community that highly values its public parks, trails, and recreation services. These assets and services greatly contribute to residents’ quality of life, physical and mental wellbeing, neighborhood identity, and attractiveness to employers. This 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan replaces the 2006 plan and identifies priorities and actions to be used as a guide by elected and appointed officials, and city staff, for the next 10 years. The recommendations are based on the findings that some facilities need renovations, recreation trends and demographics are changing, existing residents would like some new amenities in their parks and recreation centers, and there are limits to what Englewood can afford.
NEED FOR THIS PLAN

The City’s population is growing. After decades of a nearly stable population, the City has added nearly 3,000 residents since 2010 for a total of approximately 32,000, and is projected to add an additional 6,000 residents in the next 25 years, representing a total increase of 30%. In a community with little vacant land and bounded by other municipalities, obtaining large tracts of new park land to maintain an equivalent amount of parkland per resident as the population grows is not financially feasible. As such, the City must take advantage of opportunities in underserved areas as they emerge, require residential development that increases the population to assist with the provision of facilities, lands and services, and make all of Englewood existing parklands and recreation assets function as effectively as possible to meet the needs of all residents.

The public input process was extensive, and included: a community-wide mail
and on-line survey; booths at Pirates Cove Family Aquatic Park (Pirates Cove), Broken Tee Golf Course, and the summer concert series at the Englewood City Center outdoor amphitheater; and open houses and ice cream socials at the Englewood Recreation Center, Belleview Park and Cushing Park. These events reached out to more than 600 people. City leaders were also involved throughout, including the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council.

The needs for facility renovations were developed by the planning team and city staff, and additional suggestions were identified by the users. A specific study regarding Pirates Cove was performed, and workshops with staff were conducted to identify potential changes to the provision of recreation programs and services using SDscorecard™. Major themes emerged through the process, which are described in the key recommendations below.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations outline key improvements to Englewood’s parks, open spaces, greenways, and facilities. These recommendations strive to meet the needs and issues of the community in the next 10 years. Input from the public process was used to guide the recommendations along with the need to consider identified level of service, standards, and best practices. They are not listed in any order of priority.

Renovate Existing Park and Recreation Assets

Revamp Our Parks

A few major projects recommended in the 2006 plan were accomplished with high marks from the community, such as Duncan Park renovation (via acquisition of underutilized Englewood School District property) and River Run Trailhead (thanks to Englewood’s leadership and the joint efforts of the South Platte Working Group members). Other recent improvements include the Northwest Greenbelt playground, Hosanna softball and turf field, Centennial Lakes Trail, River Run Trailhead, and the Orphan Property Trailhead. But most of the facility replacements and upgrades recommended in the 2006 Plan remain top priorities, such as ADA upgrades, shelters, restrooms, and paths, and irrigation upgrades across many of the neighborhood parks.

Cushing and Jason Parks require major renovations to improve safety, functionality and user experience. Miller Field has been identified as an ideal location for a multi-purpose festival park in the heart of the City - a function that is currently missing – and one that is vital to strengthening community bonds and providing local entertainment and fun. Centennial Park should be improved with better facilities on the west side and paths to the north, and Belleview Park needs facility replacements to fulfill several unmet community needs. In addition to these major park redesigns, continued adequate maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities should be a priority and additional funding for maintenance is needed.

Update Our Greenways

Little Dry Creek along Hampden Avenue was developed as a national model for urban greenways almost 30 years ago, and it is time to renovate this amazing asset through the center of the City so that it is more attractive, visible, fun and safe. Redevelopment of Little Dry Creek in this area should be done in conjunction with a comprehensive downtown plan, and portions of the project may be possible through partnerships with developers. Relatively short trail gaps occur in various locations throughout Englewood, with a high priority segment located across the street from Cushing Park along Little Dry Creek.

Eighty-five percent of Englewood residents use the City’s parks, and 80% have used Englewood’s recreation centers.
Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) highlighted Duncan Park with a 2015 Starburst Community Award for creative re-use of school district land, genuine community engagement, and wise use of funds.

River Run Trailhead is a great example of unified cooperation and the first of several river enhancement projects along 7 miles of the South Platte River. Photo source: https://halogear.com/
Pirates Cove potential replacement of children’s water splash area

Potential Facility Improvements: A multi-participant attraction and surfing simulator
Grow Our Recreation Centers

The Englewood Recreation Center needs improvements for ADA access throughout the facility, including an elevator to the second floor and changes to the entry area to accommodate it. Other improvements include moving some interior walls and repurposing existing spaces within the building to accommodate new program and administrative needs. The Malley Senior Recreation Center can better serve active adults and seniors through renovation of some underutilized spaces, as well as the main visitor contact area at the front of the building. As opportunities arise in the future for expanding the public lands adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of these centers, the City should consider acquiring them as a land bank for recreational or park uses, or potential facility expansion needs in the future.

Improve Pirates Cove Water Park

Pirates Cove is an enterprise and generates revenue in excess of expenses that are returned to the General Fund. To continue attracting families and to stay competitive with other Metro area water parks, Pirates Cove needs an exciting, multiple-participant attraction and replacement of the children’s play structure. It would also benefit from adding a climbing wall in the pool area and a surfing simulator. Shade structures, group rental pavilions, seating and upgrades to the children’s water splash area are needed as well. These Pirates Cove improvements were developed concurrent with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The results of the expansion feasibility study are found in a separate report.
Resolve Conflicts at “Dog-Privileged” Parks

Englewood is the only city in Colorado that allows dog owners to let dogs off-leash in specific urban parks at designated times of the day. The practice has become very popular – so much so that Englewood now attracts dog owners from throughout the metro area – resulting in user conflicts when dogs are released into a multiple use environment and some dog owners fail to follow the regulations. There are maintenance, enforcement, and funding models employed by other communities that should be evaluated, and a public process conducted in order to define how the community should proceed in the future. The plan recommends some solutions, including consideration of new designated, fenced dog parks and the possibility of licensing to ensure safety and compliance with off-leash rules. License fees might be sufficient to pay for a part-time Park Ranger to help with education and enforcement.

Enhance Recreational Services

The Parks and Recreation Department has evaluated every class, every event, every rental, and every service they offer against an alignment with the City’s vision and mission, the department’s purpose, financial viability, market potential, and competitive position relative to other existing or potential providers, and the benefits the service brings to the community. Staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission will utilize SDscorecard© for the next three years to help determine what types of recreation programs and services to offer at a specified level of cost recovery and monitor the results. These efforts will determine if the City will invest in growing the service area, collaborate or partner with others, provide low or higher financial subsidies, or discontinue the provision of the service.
Englewood's Canine Corral at Belleview Park

Romans Park

Englewood's Canine Corral at Belleview Park

Jason Park Off-Lease Park signage

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES-9
Create New Parks for Existing and Future Residents

The immediate priority is to improve the existing parks so that they can withstand additional use pressure from a growing population and interest in an active lifestyle. Several neighborhoods are located in park deserts (where the closest park is more than a ½ mile walk), and Englewood has not kept pace in adding new parks. The addition of new park space should only be considered if funds for long-term maintenance are secured. These areas require a concerted effort to assemble properties on a willing-seller basis, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing parks, and working with developers to provide recreation amenities that are available to the general public. Further collaboration with schools should be explored. Park features would need to be enhanced at most schools, including providing public restrooms and enhanced maintenance.
IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

Finding adequate and consistent long-term funding for land acquisition, capital projects, capital replacement, and operations and maintenance remains a concern. The City has traditionally relied heavily on sales taxes, with additional revenues from Great Outdoors Colorado grants, prorated lottery proceeds from the Conservation Trust Fund, Arapahoe County Open Space share back funds and grants, and fees for services. But these funding streams were found to be inadequate in the 2006 Plan, and have not improved, resulting in further deterioration of facilities and increased maintenance backlogs over the 10 years since the last plan was adopted. To complicate matters further, maintenance and infrastructure improvements are increasingly necessary and increasingly expensive.

City Council will evaluate potential funding sources and the prioritized actions for each initiative in their annual budgeting process, with input from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Update Development Policies

City Code Section 16-8-5 recognizes that new residences generate additional demands and burdens on the City’s existing parks and trails system, and that the necessity for, and cost of, new or expanded parks and trails should be properly attributed to new residential development. Therefore, developers must dedicate land commensurate with specified acres per new resident, or pay the fair market price for the land in fees (“fee-in-lieu of”) that can be used by the City to develop additional parkland for new residents.

Currently, this is the only land dedication requirement, which is not consistently collected. A new park development impact fee should be explored to cover the cost of park improvements associated with the needs of new residents.