

OPEN SPACE/PARKS/TRAILS/RECREATION GOALS/STRATEGIES

Cherry Hills Village is a living environment that offers low density development, open areas, public scenic vistas, public trails and public parks. This environment is a key factor in why many residents choose to live in the Village. The amenities that support this environment make the community unique and contribute to sustainable long term land value and to quality of life. Historically, the protection and promotion of these amenities have been important to Village residents.

"The legacy of open space in Cherry Hills Village is our present source of inspiration and creates in us all a responsibility to protect and preserve our meadows, trails, wetlands and mountain vistas." – 2005 Blue Ribbon Panel Report

The following principles guide the development of goals and strategies to protect and promote these amenities:

1. As the Village becomes more developed, it should explore new ways to acquire public open space and encourage private protection of open areas – ways that are achievable both practically and economically.
2. Ways to encourage the use of energy efficient technologies and reduce environmental impacts through site design should be incorporated into the actions and regulations of the Village.
3. The Open Space, Parks, Trails and Recreation system in the Village should be compatible with the natural landscape and be designed to take into account the ecological functions of the particular locale, e.g., flood damage minimization, erosion control, water quality protection and wildlife habitat.
4. Preservation of open areas and scenic views on private lands, in cooperation with willing owners, is generally preferred to public ownership and management.
5. Park and recreation and other public facilities should be designed and developed to meet the requirements of a cross section of the Village residents.

OPEN AREAS AND SCENIC TREASURES

Open areas are decreasing in the Village as land development continues within the limits of the applicable zoning. Open Space means those land areas that are formally protected from future development either by land owner consent or by public acquisition or both.

Scenic treasures are exceptionally beautiful, natural spaces and scenic vistas within the Village that all can enjoy. They include the High Line Canal, Woodie Hollow Park, Blackmer Common, Three Pond Park, Little Dry Creek and its tributaries, and the East-West Wetland Corridor and the view corridors along Quincy Avenue, Colorado Boulevard, Holly Street and Cherry Lane Drive.

Goal: *Increase and protect the amount of Village owned open space and identify and protect key scenic treasures.*

Strategies:

1. Encourage open area preservation and open space acquisition through conservation easements, deed restrictions, recreational easements and other land use restrictions.

2. Develop an inventory of potential open space sites, historic properties, scenic areas and scenic vistas in the Village that can be preserved both practically and economically and that provide public value in that they contribute to openness, provide scenic views or support the preservation of public trails, natural open spaces, wetlands and wildlife habitats.
3. Establish the necessary Village processes, including a process of working with landowners, to fund, acquire and protect open space, scenic areas and scenic vistas.
4. Develop design standards for structures and facilities in public areas that encourage blending into the natural setting and that minimize impact on the environment and on scenic vistas.
5. Develop a positive working relationship with the Denver Water Board regarding the use, care and long-term future of the Highline Canal trail and open space.

NATURAL RESOURCE INFRASTRUCTURE

The natural resource infrastructure in the Village is comprised of the undeveloped areas including fields, pastures, creeks and the High Line Canal. These areas are both publicly and privately owned and often serve ecological functions such as natural storm water drainage protection, vegetation support and wildlife habitat.

Goal: Enhance and preserve the natural storm water absorption capacity of lands and waterways so as to minimize personal and property damage and threat of erosion.

Strategies:

1. Evaluate the adequacy of floodplain and wetland area designations.
2. Encourage establishing City designated wetlands areas and the development of applicable regulations.
3. Identify and prioritize potential natural resource infrastructure areas based on their capability to reduce erosion, help cleanse stormwater run-off and provide wildlife habitat.
4. Explore alternatives for protecting natural resource infrastructure areas such as cooperative agreements, additional regulation and acquisition.

Goal: Identify and preserve land and water areas that are important to natural vegetation and to wildlife habitat.

Strategies:

1. Develop guidelines for the identification and protection of areas on public lands that are important to vegetation and wildlife environments.
2. Develop incentives that the Village can provide to private and institutional landowners that will encourage the protection of land and water areas that are important to natural vegetation and to wildlife habitat.
3. Work cooperatively with institutions and large parcel owners to protect land and water areas that are important to natural vegetation and to wildlife habitat.

TRAILS

The Village trail system provides places for daily exercise, transportation, social interaction and enjoyment of open spaces and natural features. The system provides both on-street and off-street facilities and accommodates equestrian and pedestrian use and bike traffic. The system includes both formal shared-use

pathways with paved or crusher fine surfaces as well as informal pathways with a simple grass or dirt surface.

Goal: *Preserve the existing Village trail system and design and pursue opportunities to enhance and expand the trail system that are practically and economically achievable.*

Strategies:

1. Evaluate the existing trail system in terms of
 - a. safe and convenient access for all Village residents
 - b. varieties of viable usage (walkers/runners, hikers, horse-back riders, dog walkers, bicyclists)
 - c. the impact of the trail use, including parking, on its surroundings (neighborhoods, individual homeowners, streets)
2. Identify and investigate opportunities to fill in gaps in the trail system and to increase connectivity with open space and with Village parks, especially the City Center and John Meade Park.
3. Complete the trail system around the Village perimeter and explore opportunities for additional regional trail connections.
4. Implement consistent, functional design standards for trail markers, signage, bridges and installed (manmade) elements such as trash cans, sign posts and benches.
5. Develop ways for the Parks, Trails and Recreation Department to set and adhere to consistently high standards in maintaining the trails system.
6. Consider the privacy and safety of residents in locating and maintaining trailheads.
7. Identify land and funding sources in order to improve and expand the trail system and enhance wildlife habitat within the trail system.
8. Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to improve pedestrian and bike path amenities on state-controlled roadways.
9. Provide for safe trail crossings across University Boulevard, Belleview Avenue, Quincy Avenue, Colorado Boulevard, Holly Street and Hampden Avenue.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks are an important amenity in Cherry Hills Village and should be preserved, maintained and enhanced.

Residents have access to a broad choice of established recreational facilities throughout the surrounding communities. In addition, the 13-acre John Meade Park is the primary active recreation park in the Village. Some neighborhoods have expressed a desire for smaller parks with largely passive amenities that reflect the character and needs of the particular neighborhood.

Goal: *Improve John Meade Park to become an active community recreational park and meeting place that offers different kinds of recreational activities and can host outdoor organized events.*

Strategies:

1. Install play equipment and facilities that would accommodate special events.
2. Evaluate infrastructure needs for the park such as an equestrian ring, small playing field, pond area, xeriscaped area, public seating, low key lighting (for safety) and parking.
3. Utilize energy efficient techniques and environmentally sensitive site design in developing the park and its infrastructure.

Goal: *Maintain and improve the current system of parks.*

Strategies:

1. Develop natural, sustainable and low water consuming landscapes in Village parks through energy efficient and other innovative technologies and environmentally sensitive site design.
2. Encourage maintenance of equestrian parks.

Goal: *Identify opportunities to establish new parks through land dedication, donation and acquisition.*

Strategies:

1. Establish parks that are dedicated to preservation of views, wildlife corridors, and water habitats.
2. Establish neighborhood parks with recreational opportunities and amenities appropriate to the neighborhood.
3. Identify ideal locations for new parks with characteristics that take advantage of existing topography, views, vehicular access and adjacent school facilities.

Goal: *Continue to meet field sport and active recreation needs through cooperative arrangements using facilities inside and outside the Village.*

Strategies:

1. Consider continuing to provide the Village recreation reimbursement program.
2. Continue to pursue opportunities for use of practice fields at educational institutions within the Village.

Goal: *Provide for and encourage recreational use of Village parks and trails and the Village Center for volunteer-led programs and special events.*

Strategies:

1. Work with Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission and Public Works staff and Cherry Hills Village citizen volunteers to develop opportunities for residents to engage in special events that promote and benefit Village parks and trail resources.
2. Consider providing space for public gatherings in the Village Center.

COMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDING

Goal: *Effectively communicate with Village residents concerning parks, trails and recreation opportunities.*

Strategy:

1. Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission should have responsibility for frequent public communication concerning special events and news and should utilize the full range of communication resources available to the Village.

Goal: Maintain the ability of the Village to serve the parks, trails and recreation system, facilitate the public use of that system and support the acquisition of land areas for parks, trails and open space and improvements thereto.

Strategy:

1. Consider the development of a variety of viable public and private funding sources that may include the following:
 - a. Proceeds from City-sponsored special events,
 - b. Cash dedicated as part of a successful land subdivision,
 - c. Arapahoe County use tax funds,
 - d. Recreational reimbursement funds directed by homeowners to the City's Open Space Fund,
 - e. Matching funds,
 - f. Private or foundation grants, and
 - g. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) or other public grants.