



# Master Plan



(nature)



(earth)



(people)



(place)

June 2003

*May the road*

*rise to meet you,*

*May the wind*

*always be at your back,*

*May the sun*

*shine warm upon your face,*

*May the rains*

*fall softly upon your fields...*



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Department of Local Affairs:

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Colorado Division of Wildlife:  
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Melissa Hunter, 11th Grade  
Mike Sparling, 12th Grade  
Rose Garcia, 12th Grade  
Vanessa Gomez, 11th Grade

### Letford Elementary School Student Council:

3rd Grade  
Tyler Trobe – Johnstown, Age 9  
Skylar Gibler- Johnstown, Age 9  
McKenzie Leonard – Johnstown. Age 9  
Elizabeth Velasquez – Milliken, Age 9  
Nathan DePriest – Milliken, Age 9  
Sam Ballard – Johnstown, Age 9  
Mariah Thompson – Johnstown, Age 9  
Scott Gardner – Johnstown, Age 9  
Angel Sanchez – Milliken, Age 9

### 4th Grade

Shelby Placke – Johnstown, Age 10  
Tess Ostermiller – Johnstown, Age 10  
Anna Clow – Johnstown, Age 9  
Ty Murphy – Johnstown, Age 10  
Emily Albright – Johnstown, Age 9  
Rachelle Petersen – Johnstown, Age 10  
Andrea Freehling – Johnstown, Age 10  
Whitney LaNear – Johnstown, Age 9  
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Hannah Lage – Johnstown, Age 9  
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Laura Stewart – Milliken, Age 10  
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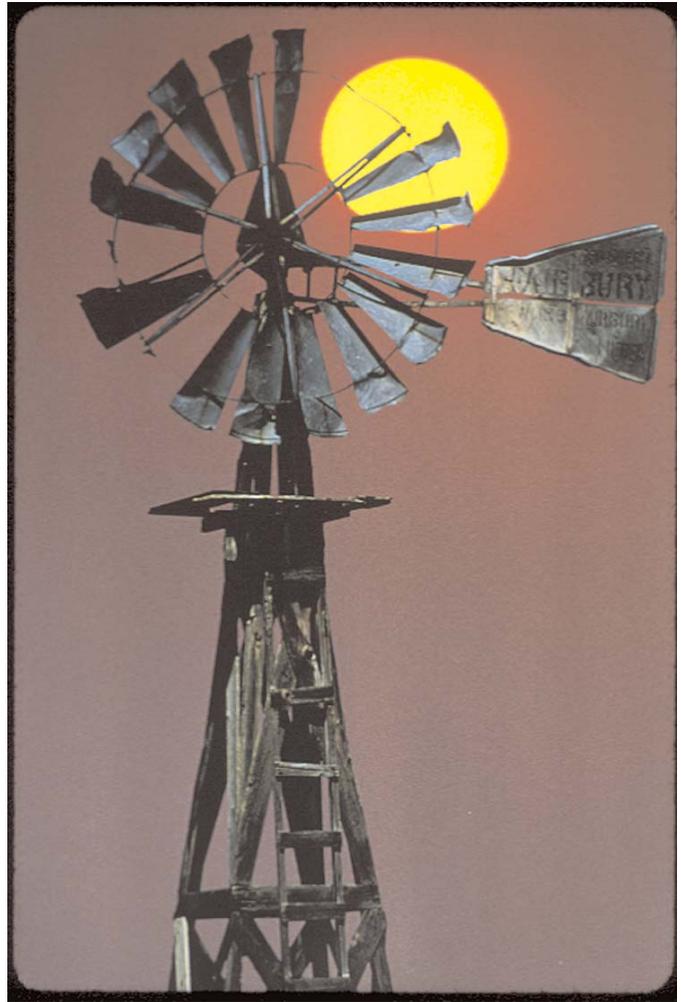
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# SECTION I

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# JOHNSTOWN/MILLIKEN PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

*Leisure, some degree of it is necessary for the health of every man's spirit.*

HARRIETTE MARTINEAU

## INTRODUCTION

### *Purpose of the Master Plan*

Milliken, Johnstown and the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District partnered with Larimer County, Weld County, Weld County School District RE-5J, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Open Lands and Tetra Tech RMC to prepare the *Johnstown/Milliken Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*. This plan sets forth standards for parks, trails and open space. It also maps many of the community's significant resources including: the South Platte, Big Thompson and Little Thompson river corridors, archaeological features, geologic features and wildlife habitat.

The Master Plan identifies general locations of future and existing parks, trails and open space in order to help the community plan for staffing, budgeting, acquisition, construction, and maintenance and avoid duplicating facilities. The Plan will also form the basis for a fee structure that is tied to the planned facilities. This will enable developers to incorporate new parks and trails into the design of their projects and help Johnstown and Milliken ensure all new development is integrated into the community.

The community hopes this plan will help promote collaboration amongst the entities that helped develop the plan, citizens and developers. (Note: the vast majority of citizens who participated in the public workshops view the Milliken/Johnstown area as a single community. The children

especially feel this way. Thus, whenever "community" is mentioned in this plan, it denotes the combined Milliken/Johnstown planning areas.)

Parks, trails and open space provide the foundation for recreational opportunities in the community. They provide the locations and facilities for different types of recreational activities and events. However, the Master Plan is not meant to provide recreational programming. Rather, it is intended to function in conjunction with the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District's (TRPRD) programs. The TRPRD offers a wide variety of sports, crafts, cultural and educational activities for all age groups.

### *Contents of This Plan*

**Introduction:** The introduction presents the purpose and underlying premise of the Master Plan.

**Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Map:** This map illustrates important natural and historical features in the planning area, existing and proposed parks, trails and open space.

**Goals and Objectives:** This section contains the overall goals and objectives for the Parks, Trails, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

**Our Children's Dreams:** This section presents the children's ideas about parks, trails, recreation, and open space.

**Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Design Guidelines:** This element presents general guidelines that should be referred to prior to designing any park or trail.

**Community Setting, Character and Heritage:** This section includes information on the history, demographics and natural resources in the area.

**Resource Assessment:** This section contains design considerations for the natural and cultural resources in Johnstown and Milliken.

**Parks and Recreation:** This section contains an inventory of existing parks, identifies community parks and recreation goals, contains a palette of facilities for each type of park, and defines park standards.

**Trails:** This element defines the community's trail goals and standards and provides criteria for trail design, development and maintenance.

**Open Space:** This section details some of the benefits of open space, lists the community's open space goals, discusses how to manage and maintain open space, defines open space standards, and discusses open space protection methods.



The Master Plan should be reviewed by Johnstown, Milliken, and the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the community and in park, trails, recreation, and open space needs. This plan should be used in conjunction with the Milliken and Johnstown Comprehensive Plans, as together they form the basic framework for the community.

### *How to Use the Master Plan*

This Master Plan sets forth the community's vision for the parks, trails and open space network. This Plan is a tool to help the community ensure that it grows in a manner that is consistent with this vision. The Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Map shows the general locations of future parks and trails as well as potentially sensitive areas and historic areas that should be protected. **Johnstown and Milliken have adopted the Parks Standards, Trails Standards and the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Map by ordinance.** The remainder of the Master Plan is similar to a comprehensive plan. It is important to meet the intent of the document, but there is more flexibility in how that is achieved.

#### **Conflicts:**

If there is a conflict between the intention of the Master Plan and something on the land, the landowner/developer should collaborate with the town to arrive at an appropriate solution. For example, if there is a water line running adjacent to an arterial travel lane making it impossible to plant trees within the right-of-way, the developer might consider planting trees on the opposite side of the trail, in the front yard setback. If there are park/trail location conflicts with developers' plans, discuss an alternative location on the property for the park/trail that meets the intent of the plan.

#### *Citizens*

Use this Master Plan as a guide for what citizens can expect for parks, trails, recreation and open space in the future. The **Overall Goals**

**and Objectives** for the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and the **introductions and goals, policies and strategies** set forth in the Parks and Recreation, Trails and Open Space elements define the community's vision. **Our Children's Dreams** discusses the youths' hopes for the community's parks and trails system. The **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Design Guidelines** express the four key principles that emerge in the Master Plan and discusses design principles that should be used in the design of every park, trail and open space. The **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Map** shows the general location of existing and future parks and trails, sensitive areas and historical areas that citizens identified in the public workshops. If you want to participate in the land development review process, the map and **Park and Trail Standards** help you know what to expect from both the developer and the community. The **Action Plans** show what the towns' priorities are. The **Parks Inventory** lists suggestions for enhancement opportunities for each of the existing parks in the community.

The Master Plan also contains educational information. For example, you can learn about **water conservation, landscaping and xeriscape principles** in the Park Design and Trails Goals sections of the Master Plan. You can refer to the **Plant Lists** in the Parks and Recreation, Trails and Open Space elements to learn about non-toxic plants, native plants and plants with high wildlife values.



## *Town Staff and Town Officials*

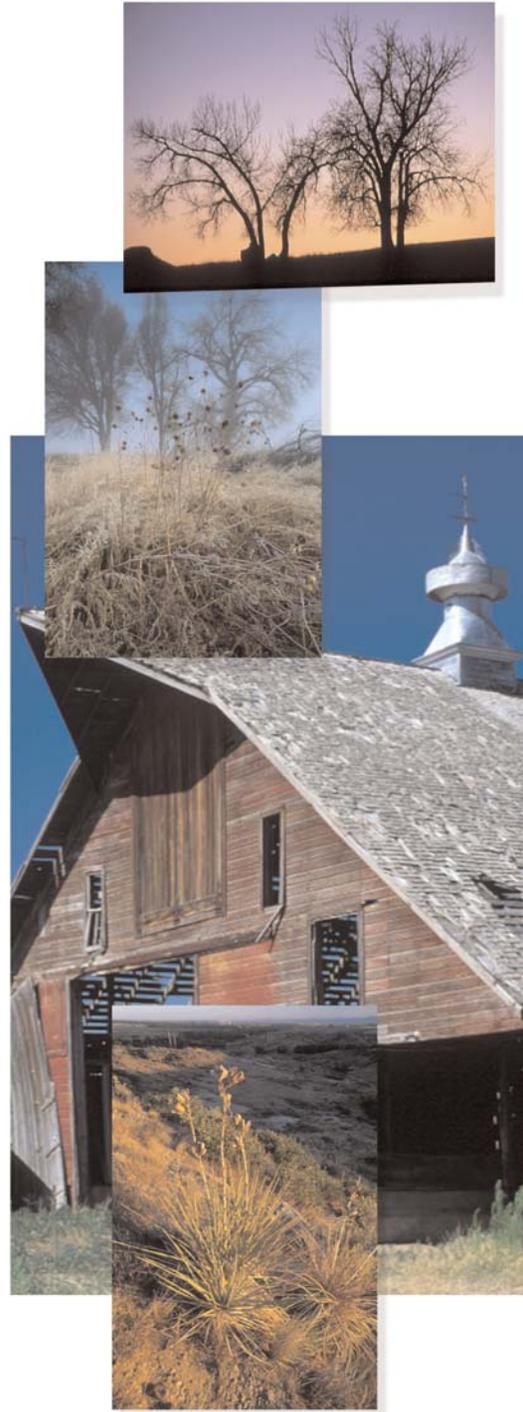
Review the Parks and Recreation, Trails and Open Space **goals, policies and strategies** annually to evaluate the community's progress and to ensure they are still valid. Review the **Action Plan** each year when the community is setting priorities and budgeting for the coming year. Work with the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District and the School District to determine the demand for services in the community. Consider what upgrades are needed in existing parks and for existing trails and open lands (i.e. more barbeque pits, signage, landscaping, etc.). (Note: the **Parks Inventory** lists suggestions for enhancement opportunities for each of the existing parks in the community. There is also a **Community Facilities Plan** in the Parks Design, Development and Maintenance Section.) Identify what has been accomplished, what tasks still need to be completed and add new tasks (prioritize and identify who is responsible for completing each task).

### ***Park, Trail and Open Space Design:***

Review the **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Design Guidelines** and the **Park Design, Development and Maintenance** and **Trails Design, Development and Maintenance** sections for guidance in designing and maintaining new facilities. These sections also contain suggested plant lists. The Open Space element discusses **how to manage and maintain open space** and is a tool to help protect significant open lands that the public does not want to see developed. The appendix contains **conservation tax credit information** and **sample Open Lands Property Evaluation Forms** to help prioritize open space preservation.

### ***Gravel Applications:***

The appendix contains criteria for reviewing Use By Special Review applications for aggregate mining operations.



### ***Development Applications:***

**The Town is responsible for ensuring that the landowners/developers have clearly demonstrated that their development application meets the intent of this Master Plan.**

1. Locate the landowners'/developers' property on the **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Map**. Determine if there are any proposed parks or trails, potentially sensitive areas or historic areas on the property. Note that the map is **conceptual** and is to be used for planning purposes only. Also, pocket parks are not shown on the map. (A minimum of 1 one-acre pocket park is required for every 250 units.)
2. Ensure the landowners/developers have demonstrated that they have identified the site's resources and integrated them into the overall site design. Ensure that they have adequately addressed the design considerations in the **Resource Assessment** section.
3. Ensure that the landowners/developers have demonstrated that park, trail and/or open space design meets the intent of the **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Design Guidelines**.

### ***Parks:***

4. Review the **Parks Standards** with the developers/landowners and determine the park type, size, facilities and landscaping to be installed by the developer, and who will own the park (i.e. the town or the homeowners' association). Note that **the town will determine park locations and sizes in cooperation with the landowner at the time of preliminary plat**. However, the town should discuss general park requirements during the sketch plan process.
5. Ensure the landowners/developers have clearly demonstrated how the proposed

park meets the intent of the **Parks and Recreation Goals, Parks Design, Development and Maintenance** and **Park Design Considerations** sections.

### ***Trails:***

6. Review the Trails Standards with the landowner/developer and determine the trail type, width, materials and landscaping requirements. Note that **the town will determine specific trails requirements in cooperation with the landowner at the time of preliminary plat**. However, the town should discuss general trail requirements during the sketch plan process.
7. Ensure the landowners/developers have clearly demonstrated how they have met the intent of the **Trails Design, Development and Maintenance** and **Trail Design Considerations** sections. Also ensure the application helps the town fulfill applicable trails goals.

### ***Community Green/Open Space:***

8. Review the **Open Space Protection Methods** with the landowner/developer for suggestions on how to protect open areas if the parcel has sensitive areas or is in the area designated as community green/open space area.

Consider contacting a land trust if necessary for assistance in preserving a sensitive area and in developing an **Open Space Management Plan**.

### ***Developers/Landowners***

**It is the developers'/landowners' responsibility to demonstrate that their project has met the intent of this Master Plan in their application materials.**

Locate your property on the *Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Map*. Determine



if there are any proposed parks or trails, potentially sensitive areas or historic areas on your property. Note that the map is conceptual and is to be used for planning purposes only. Also, pocket parks are not shown on the map. (A minimum of 1 one-acre pocket park is required for every 250 units.)

Conduct a site inventory prior to designing your development to identify the resources on a site so they can be integrated into the overall site design. Be sure to describe your effort in your application materials (i.e. subdivision or planned unit development application). Refer to the **Resource Assessment** section for a general description of the area's resources (i.e. soils, water, vegetation, scenic and cultural resources and wildlife) and information on design considerations.

Read the **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Design Guidelines**. These principles should be considered in the design of every park, trail and open space property. This will help unify the community's parks, trails and open space system.

#### **Parks:**

Review the **Parks Standards** with Town Staff and determine the park type, size, facilities and landscaping to be installed by the developer, and who will own the park (i.e. the town or the homeowners' association). Note that the town typically determines specific requirements in cooperation with the landowner at the time of preliminary plat. However, general park requirements should be discussed in the sketch plan process as well. For example, if your property has a neighborhood park designated on it, discuss the proposed park's size, location, access, how the park relates to your plans for the development, park land dedication requirements/cash-in-lieu, types of

improvements the developer/town is responsible for, such as who provides utilities and streets for the park, etc.

Review the **Parks Design, Development and Maintenance, Park Design Considerations, and Non-Toxic Plant Materials for Parks** sections for guidance on designing parks.

#### **Trails:**

Review the **Trails Standards** with the developer/landowner and determine the trail type, width, materials and landscaping requirements. Note that the town will determine specific trail requirements in cooperation with the landowner at the time of preliminary plat. However, the town should discuss general trail requirements with the applicant during the sketch plan process (i.e. trail type, location, width, surface and landscaping requirements).

Review the **Trails Design, Development and Maintenance, Trail Design Considerations, and Native Plant Selection Guide for Trails** sections for guidance on designing trails.

#### **Community Green/Open Space:**

If your parcel has sensitive areas or is in the area designated as community green/open space area, review the **Open Space Protection Methods** for suggestions on how to protect open areas (i.e. land dedication, conservation easement, buffering, etc.).

Refer to the section titled **Open Space Management Plan** for guidelines on developing a management plan if necessary.

## *Planning Process*

*The Johnstown/Milliken Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is the product of the cooperative visioning of the:



- Citizens of Milliken
- Citizens of Johnstown
- Property owners within Johnstown’s Planning Area
- Property owners within Milliken’s Planning Area
- Milliken Planning Commission
- Johnstown Planning Commission
- Johnstown Board of Trustees
- Milliken Board of Trustees
- Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District
- Weld County School District RE-5J

Tetra Tech RMC facilitated the effort to develop this plan. This process was initiated in 2000 with Johnstown, Milliken, and the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District collaborating on a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Planning Grant Application. Other partners included: Weld County School District Re-5, Larimer County, Weld County, Colorado Open Lands and Colorado Division of Wildlife. The grant was awarded funding.

Project team members immediately met with Johnstown and Milliken’s staffs to define the objectives for the Plan and perform a resource inventory. Next, team members researched and analyzed available information. The project team met with the Planning Commissions and Town Boards of Trustees to discuss ideas for the Plan and prepare for the community meetings. In an effort to include everyone in both communities, bilingual notices were sent home with school-age children, notices were published in the Johnstown Breeze, flyers were posted and distributed around the towns, notices were posted on the electronic message board at the bank in Johnstown, a banner was hung on the side of the liquor store in Milliken, notices were broadcast on the local cable channel, and articles were printed in the Johnstown Breeze.

During the fall of 2001, the project team hosted several public participation meetings to obtain citizen input on parks, trails, recreation, open space, community character, heritage, and the environment. High school students attended two of the workshops and worked with young children that attended the workshops with their parents to get their ideas for the plan. The project team also met with the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade student councils at Letford Elementary School. The student council members polled their classmates and shared their ideas and drawings for the community’s master plan.

After the public participation meetings, Tetra Tech RMC compiled the information and prepared a draft document. Next, the Milliken and Johnstown Boards of Trustees and Planning Commissions and the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District Boards and the public were invited to review and comment on the document. The culmination of this effort follows.

### *Update/Amendment Process*

This Master Plan is a citizen-based plan which outlines the community’s vision for Johnstown and Milliken parks, trails and open space. As attitudes change and the community grows, this Master Plan must be able to adapt accordingly. The Planning Commissions, Boards of Trustees and Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District should reevaluate and update the Plan in response to major changes in the community or at least every three to five years. Citizens may also request changes to the Master Plan. Both the written and the graphic elements of the Master Plan may be amended.

Both the Milliken and Johnstown Planning Commissions must review all requests to amend the Plan. If an amendment is suggested, the Boards of Trustees and the Planning Commissions must determine if the suggested change is in the best interests of the community and hold a public



hearing regarding the amendment. An amendment to the Plan must be done by an adopted resolution from both of the Town Boards.

The Master Plan may be amended provided the following criteria are met:

- The amendment improves the implementation of one or more of the goals, policies or strategies of

the Johnstown/Milliken Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

- The amendment will not pose a detrimental impact on existing or planned Town facilities, services or transportation arteries.

## JOHNSTOWN FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	SCHEDULE
Highway 60 Trail	Town and Recreation District	High Priority
Sunrise Ridge Park	Town	High Priority/ On-going
Community Park - Ballpark (Sticker Stadium)	Recreation District	On-going
Johnstown Regional Park (Carlson Acres)	Recreation District	High
Eddie Aragon Skate Park Improvements	Town	On-going
Hillsborough Reservoir District Park	Town and Recreation District	Low Priority
District Park – Reservoir (Rocksbury Ridge)	Town and Recreation District	High Priority
Revisit Land Dedication Requirement and Compensation Policy	Town	On-going
Revisit Fees – Make Sure Fees Cover What Town Wants to Do/Buy	Town	On-going
Hays Park – Additional Amenities	Town	On-going
Eddie Aragon Park – Additional Amenities	Town	On-going
Parish Park – Additional Amenities	Town	On-going



## MILLIKEN FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

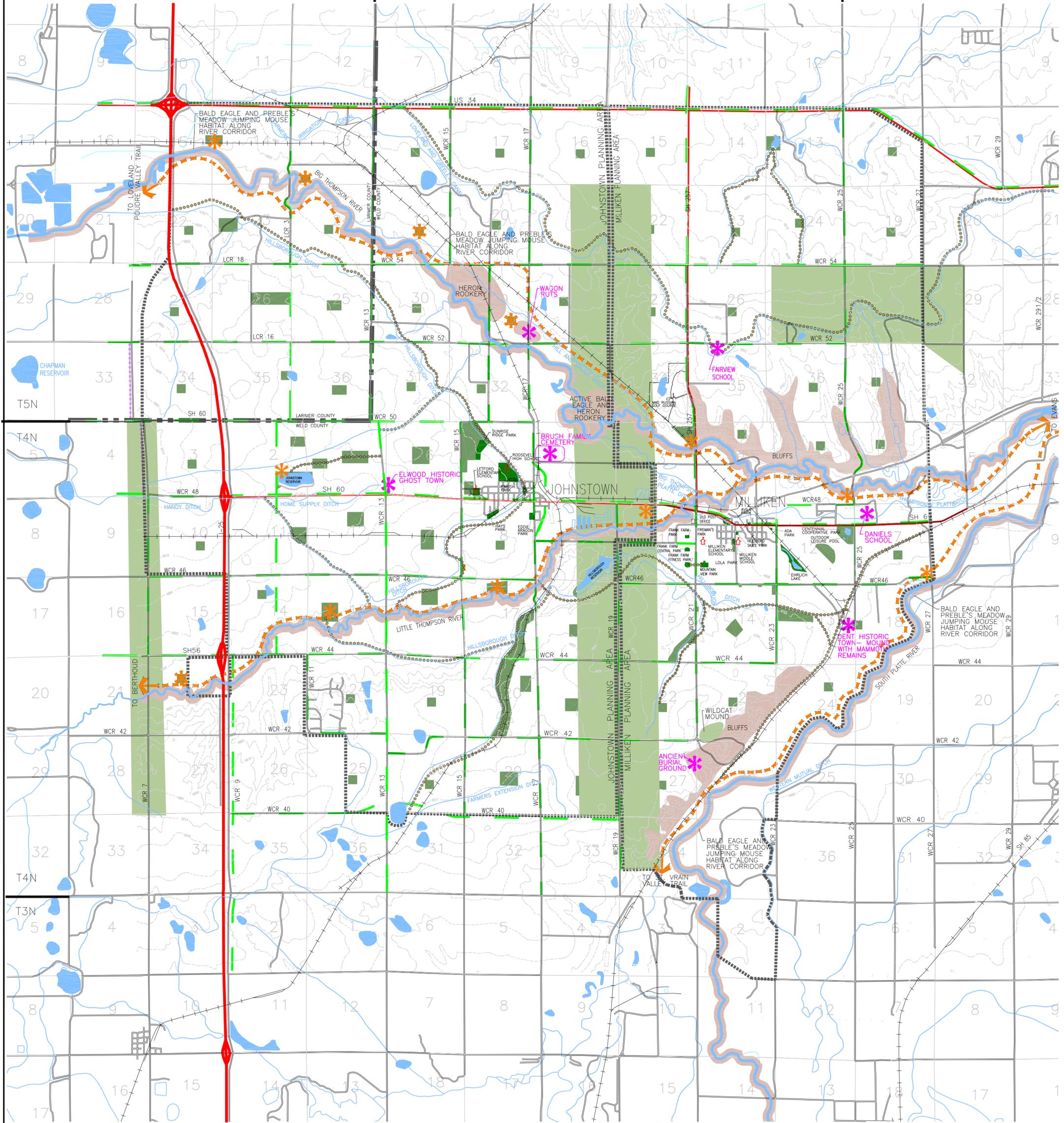
TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	SCHEDULE
Highway 60 Trail	Town of Milliken, TRPRD, Developer, Johnstown	On-going
Outdoor Leisure/Splash Pool	Town of Milliken, Developer	High Priority
Recreation Center and Lap Pool	Town of Milliken, TRPRD, Developer	On-going
Centennial Cooperative Park - Ball Fields	Developer	On-going
Platte Valley Trust Nature Park	Developer	Medium Priority
Hillsborough Ditch Trail Link	Developer	On-going
Hillsborough Skate Park	Town of Milliken, Skate Park Partners	High Priority
Settlers Village Neighborhood Park	Developer	Medium Priority
Lola Park Improvements	Town of Milliken, CANDO	High Priority
Fishing Lake Completion	Developer, Town of Milliken	High Priority
Wildcat Mounds Preservation	Developer, Town of Milliken	On-going
Xeriscape Garden	Town of Milliken	High Priority
Frank Farms Improvements and Signage	Town of Milliken	High Priority
Soccer Fields at Centennial Farms	Town of Milliken, TRPRD	Medium Priority
Park Naming and Inventory Project	Town of Milliken, CANDO	High Priority
Fireman's Park Improvements	Town of Milliken, CANDO	High Priority
Mountain View Park Concessions Stand and Restroom	Town of Milliken	High Priority
Equestrian Center and Fairgrounds	Developer, Town of Milliken	Medium Priority
River Corridor Preservation	Developer, Town of Milliken	On-going



Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Map

# JOHNSTOWN/MILLIKEN PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

R68W R67W JUNE 2003 R67W R66W

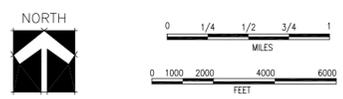


**LEGEND**

POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE AREAS	NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS	HIGHWAYS	PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
RIVER CORRIDOR TRAILS	FUTURE PARKS (INCL. SCHOOL SITES)	EXISTING PARKS	DITCH
HISTORIC AREAS	COMMUNITY GREEN AREA/ OPEN SPACE	EXISTING SCHOOL	1-25 CORRIDOR BICYCLE ROUTE
TRAILHEADS (PROPOSED)	ARTERIAL TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR	32' CONTOUR BASED ON USGS TOPOGRAPHY	COUNTY LINE
		RAILROAD TRACKS	

**NOTES:**

1. TRAIL, PARK AND OPEN SPACE LOCATIONS ARE CONCEPTUAL AND SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH LANDOWNERS. POCKET PARK LOCATIONS ARE NOT SHOWN ON THIS MAP.
2. THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE AREAS, FUTURE PARK SITES, TRAIL LOCATIONS, HISTORIC AREAS AND AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE ARE GENERAL IN NATURE AND ARE NOT ALL-INCLUSIVE. SITE-SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED PRIOR TO DISTURBING ANY SITE.
3. HISTORIC INFORMATION BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH CITIZENS.
4. BALD EAGLE AND HERON HABITAT BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE AND U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICES.
5. ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION: MILLIKEN TRANSPORTATION PLAN, JOHNSTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN, MILLIKEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, CENTENNIAL MASTER PLAN, JOHNSTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS PLAN, US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND THE 1-25 CORRIDOR PLAN.



RECORD	DATE	DESIGNED BY	PARKS, TRAILS, REC. & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN 
ADOPTED	FEB 2001	PREPARED BY	
REVISED	MARCH 2003	CHECKED BY	
FINAL	JUNE 2003		

JOB NO. 80-3267.004.00  
1 of 1



## **OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN:**

**G** **GOAL:** Create a parks, trails, recreation and open space master plan for Milliken and Johnstown to ensure these communities will have a sufficient and unified system of parks, trails and open space to continue the area's high quality of life and provide an equitable, uniform standard for all new development.

## OBJECTIVES

### 1.

*Plan a parks, trails, recreation and open space system that will:*

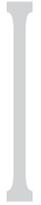
- a. Provide a variety of parks offering recreation opportunities for diverse age groups that draw the community together;
- b. Establish a safe, comprehensive trail system that connects Milliken and Johnstown to the Northern Front Range communities and enables citizens, especially school children, to safely travel to schools, parks, commercial areas and other neighborhoods;
- c. Designate and preserve important wildlife habitat, view corridors and community gateways and create special destinations within each community;
- d. Protect and enhance the integrity and quality of the surrounding natural environment; and
- e. Incorporate opportunities for environmental education in the design of every park, trail, and open space property.

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### 2.

*Ensure implementation of the plan by:*

- a. Including the public in the planning process so citizens are vested and support implementation of the plan;
- b. Prioritizing park, trail, recreation and open space needs and identifying joint funding opportunities and other options to acquire the land and construct the facilities necessary to meet these needs;
- c. Determining general maintenance costs for parks, trails, recreation and open space so that long term funding can be appropriately budgeted;
- d. Maintaining consistency in decision-making among the communities, even when changes in leadership occur, by enacting an intergovernmental agreement among Johnstown, Milliken, Larimer County, Weld County, Weld County School District RE-5J and the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District; and
- e. Updating the plan regularly to ensure it continues to reflect the citizen's goals.



# OUR CHILDREN'S DREAMS

*Geniuses and children share a willingness to explore without thoughts of failure or worries of criticism.*

WAYNE W. DYER

Numerous high school students participated in the public workshops and their input has been integrated into the entire document. This section contains the younger children's ideas. To gather input from the children in the community, Tetra Tech RMC met with the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade student councils at Letford Elementary School. Before visiting the school, Tetra Tech RMC sent a survey to the classes asking the children to:

- Imagine their dream park or play area and describe it;
- Name and describe their favorite park;
- Describe how often they use parks and what they like to do there;
- Indicate whether they liked trails and what they use them for;
- Determine their interest in learning more about wildlife and vegetation; and
- Think of an icon for Milliken and Johnstown.

The student council members polled their classes and reported the results of the survey to Tetra Tech RMC, including some sketches the children had prepared. Tetra Tech RMC met with each of the student councils individually to discuss the results of the poll and to obtain their feedback. The children colored pictures and expanded on some of the responses their classmates provided. Some of their pictures are included in this document. A list of the student council members Tetra Tech RMC

met with is included in the Acknowledgement section.

In addition, several high school students worked with young children that attended the workshops with their parents and discussed their ideas and colored pictures.

The children want:

- A safe trail system for them to bike or walk, including a trail between Johnstown and Milliken with resting stops;
- To learn more about: plants, animals, history of the area, archaeology (dinosaurs), geology and farming in the parks and on trails;
- Places to gather;
- Parks with water fountains, bathrooms with running water, trash cans and benches, age appropriate play equipment (i.e. tot lots and equipment for larger children), trees, pet areas, playing fields for sports;
- Easily accessible parks for the children living in the country;
- A recreation center;
- A public swimming pool; and
- A working farm where they can learn about and participate in farming activities.

Children's ideas for icons included:

- Mr. Parish for Johnstown;



- Two hands shaking; and
- Using the initials of the two communities.

Children currently use trails and roads for bike riding, hiking, traveling around town, visiting friends and skating.

The children really appreciate the parks in town and generally use them quite often.

- Lola Park in Milliken is popular because of its size, the little stream, bridge, and open grassy areas;
- Parish Park in Johnstown is frequented because of its playground equipment and picnic areas;
- Eddie Aragon Park in Johnstown is popular because of the tire swing and place for scooters and rollerblades; and
- Hays Park in Johnstown is used because of the basketball courts, volleyball court, and the room to play.

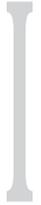
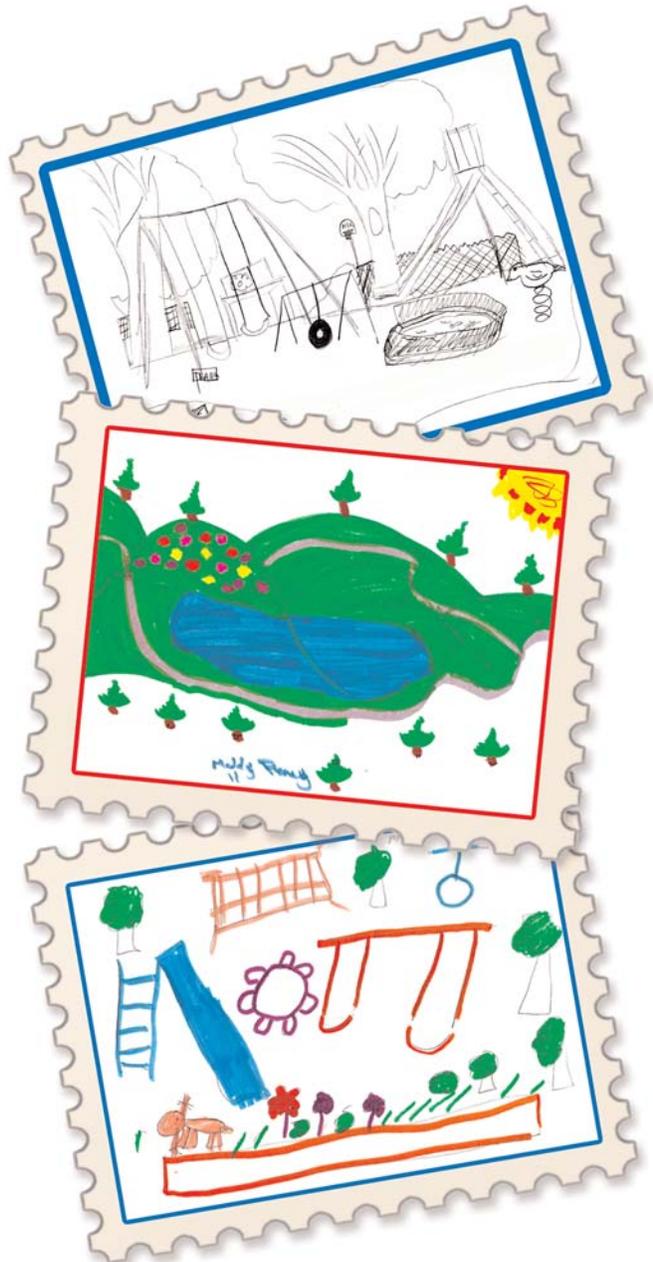
The children enjoyed other parks outside of town for a variety of reasons:

- Loveland Park because of the swim beach at the lake, ducks, climbing dome, sitting areas and the cannon;
- Snake River, Idaho because of the riverfront with a large fountain and nature trail;
- Rocky Mountain National Park because of the trails;
- Island Grove Park in Greeley because of the tire swing;
- Legoland in California because of the playground made of legos and the opportunity to build things;

- Bittersweet Park in Greeley because of tennis courts and play structures;
- Edora Park in Fort Collins because of the rollerblading, mazes, and Frisbee golf. The Epic Center is located in this park.

Children currently use parks:

- At least 3-5 times a week for most children in town;
- Seldom for some children in town and less often for the children in the country.



*Geniuses and children share a willingness  
to explore without thoughts of failure  
or worries of criticism.*

WAYNE W. DYER



# PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE DESIGN GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

Four key principles have emerged in the development of this Master Plan:

**cooperation, connections, environmental sensitivity and education.**

**Cooperation:** it is important that Johnstown, Milliken, the Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District and the School District work together with Weld and Larimer Counties, landowners, developers, citizens and children to design, develop and maintain parks, trails, recreational facilities and open spaces.

**Connections:** the purpose of the Master Plan is to create a unified, interconnected parks, trails, recreation and open space system. Consider how each park, trail, recreational facility and open space is connected to the community with safe pedestrian access.

**Environmental Sensitivity:** it is critical to protect and enhance the integrity and quality of the natural environment. It is important to site parks, trails and recreational facilities in a manner that protects sensitive areas and wildlife habitat. Work with an environmental expert to lessen the impact of new facilities and to enhance the habitat.

**Education:** incorporate educational opportunities in the design of every park, trail and open space property.

The following guidelines shall be considered in the design of every park, trail and open space area. This will help ensure conformance to the Master Plan's overall goals. It will also help unify the parks and trails system. Projects will also be evaluated based on the design considerations for

the particular facility, refer to **Park Standards** (page 30), **Park Design Considerations** (page 45), **Trail Design Considerations** (page 65), and **Open Space Function and Uses** (page 73).

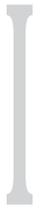
## DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Integrate the elements of **gateway, pathway and destination** into the overall plan for the park and trails system.

**Gateways** are the entries that transition space from one realm to another. In the overall view, as one enters Johnstown or Milliken, the open space in the community reflects a rural, agricultural feel. The open space separates the community from neighboring communities and is valued by citizens. The transition into town comes at the edge of the open land. The following intersections are key gateways into the community:

- Interstate 25 and Highway 60
- Highway 60 and Highway 257
- Highway 60 and County Road 25
- Highway 257 and County Road 52

**Pathways** are the routes that one travels. Historically, travel into the community has come from many directions, primarily following county roads and train routes. This Plan will expand the pathways into Town by providing a trail system for pedestrians, bicyclists and horseback riders.



**Destination** points are the places at the end of the journey. Significant community destinations include the business districts, the cemetery, ponds, local parks, open spaces, recreation facilities and schools.

*Almost every structure, from cathedrals to cottages, uses this triad as an organizing design principle. Because this configuration mirrors the source, journey, and goal of the human spirit's adventure, this elemental pattern shows up whenever we give architectural form to inner stirrings of thought and feeling.*

ANTHONY LAWLOR

- Design all improvements to respond to the community's unique setting, character and heritage.
- Design parks and trails to fit together as a unified whole. Consider the color, texture, scale and context of each element.
- Signage for park entrances, trailheads, trail markers, interpretive information and park and trail safety should be standardized and include either the Johnstown, Milliken or Master Plan logo.
- Include a gateway with a display of flowers at all park entrances and trailheads. This display can be formal or informal, depending on the surrounding improvements. Include both annuals and perennials to ensure that the display will bloom throughout the growing season.
- Integrate flowering plants into the design of all parks and trails. Include native plantings and wildflowers in all trail corridors. Parks should have more formal areas of annuals and perennials.

- Include public art and water features whenever possible. These elements can be man made or natural. They can be designed to look at or play on.
- Design in terms of all three dimensions, keeping in mind the senses. How will you feel when you enter the site, sit on the benches, play on the equipment and walk along the trails? What will you see, hear, smell, touch? Will you feel safe?
- Enhance and preserve open space areas that help form the gateway to the community, contribute to connections throughout the community and create special destinations within the community.
- Design for safety, maintainability, access for all users including the disabled, and in accordance with the Town standards.

These design considerations should help guide decisions when determining which open spaces should be preserved and protected and how parks and trails should be designed and developed.



## SECTION II

### COMMUNITY SETTING, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

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## COMMUNITY SETTING, CHARACTER & HERITAGE

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### *Regional Setting*

Johnstown and Milliken are located along the northern Front Range of Colorado in western Weld County. The towns are situated in a picturesque valley formed by the Big Thompson and Little Thompson Rivers and are surrounded by irrigated farmland. The South Platte River forms the eastern edge of the planning area. The rural, small-town character is something that is prized by residents in both communities.

Larger surrounding cities include Loveland, Fort Collins, and Greeley, which are all employment centers in the region. Both Greeley and Fort Collins have state university campuses. Smaller, primarily agricultural-based surrounding communities include Berthoud, Windsor, Tinmath, Evans, LaSalle, Gilcrest and Platteville. Interstate 25, which runs the entire length of Colorado's Front Range between New Mexico and Wyoming, lies three miles west of downtown Johnstown. Milliken and Johnstown are situated just south of the triangle formed by Loveland, Fort Collins, and Greeley (see regional context map, page 20). Both Larimer and Weld Counties influence them. At present most of the lands surrounding the two towns are in agricultural production. However, the northern Front Range of Colorado is experiencing significant growth, and Johnstown and Milliken are rapidly becoming bedroom communities with booming residential populations.

### *History of the Communities*

Harvey J. Parish, who named the town after his son, John, founded

Johnstown in 1902. The town was incorporated in 1907. Harvey Parish was the town's first mayor and was one of several men instrumental in bringing the Great Western Railroad, Great Western Sugar Company, and many other commercial developments to the area. The sugar factory, now known as Colorado Sweet Gold LLC, is still operating and produces cornstarch for the brewing, food, and paper industries. Johnstown

celebrated its centennial in 2002.

Founded in 1907, Milliken was named after Judge John D. Milliken, a pioneer lawyer who helped

establish the Denver, Laramie and Northwestern Railroad. Milliken's goal was to turn the town into the center of commerce between Wyoming and Denver, but this plan and the railroad did not come to pass. Historically promoted as the "Hub of Northern Colorado," Milliken lies two miles east of Johnstown. Early Milliken thrived until 1911, when a series of fires almost destroyed the town. The town survived, and is now growing again as the Northern Colorado region expands.

For most of their history the economic foundation of the two towns was agriculture and agricultural-related businesses and industries. This began to shift in the late 1970s and 1980s as the computer

software and hardware and film industries became established in the area. A large segment of the work force is now employed at non-agricultural industries in surrounding communities such as Hewlett-Packard and Kodak.



## Population Characteristics

Johnstown had 3,827 people living in the community, and Milliken had 2,888 people, as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. Based on the annexations and development applications that the Towns have approved, Johnstown's population is projected to double every three years for the foreseeable future and Milliken's population is projected to reach 8,000 people by 2005.

The median age was 31.2 years and 27.0 years, in Johnstown and Milliken respectively, compared to 34.3 years statewide. The breakdown of age ranges is informative:

JOHNSTOWN	
Age	% of Total Population
0-19	32.2
20-44	40.7
45-64	19.7
65 +	7.5

MILLIKEN	
Age	% of Total Population
0-19	38.0
20-44	40.1
45-64	16.3
65 +	5.5

Milliken is a younger community than Johnstown, with a higher percentage of the population below age 19. However, about three-fourths of the citizens in both communities are age 44 or less. This suggests a significant number of younger families with children are present in the communities. This trend is expected to continue given the residential development that is taking place in the area.

## Key Trends

The many young families in the area, coupled with the growth that Milliken and Johnstown are experiencing, has resulted in a tremendous demand on existing park and recreational facilities. The Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District and the Weld County RE-5J School District have been sharing facilities to the greatest extent possible. It is not uncommon to have four teams sharing the football field at one time or for basketball practice to begin after 8:30 p.m. on a school night. The Recreation District fears they will have to begin turning kids away from recreation programs if there are not more available facilities in the immediate future. **Citizens (both**

**the adults and children who attended public meetings and workshops) also emphasized the need for additional parks and recreational**



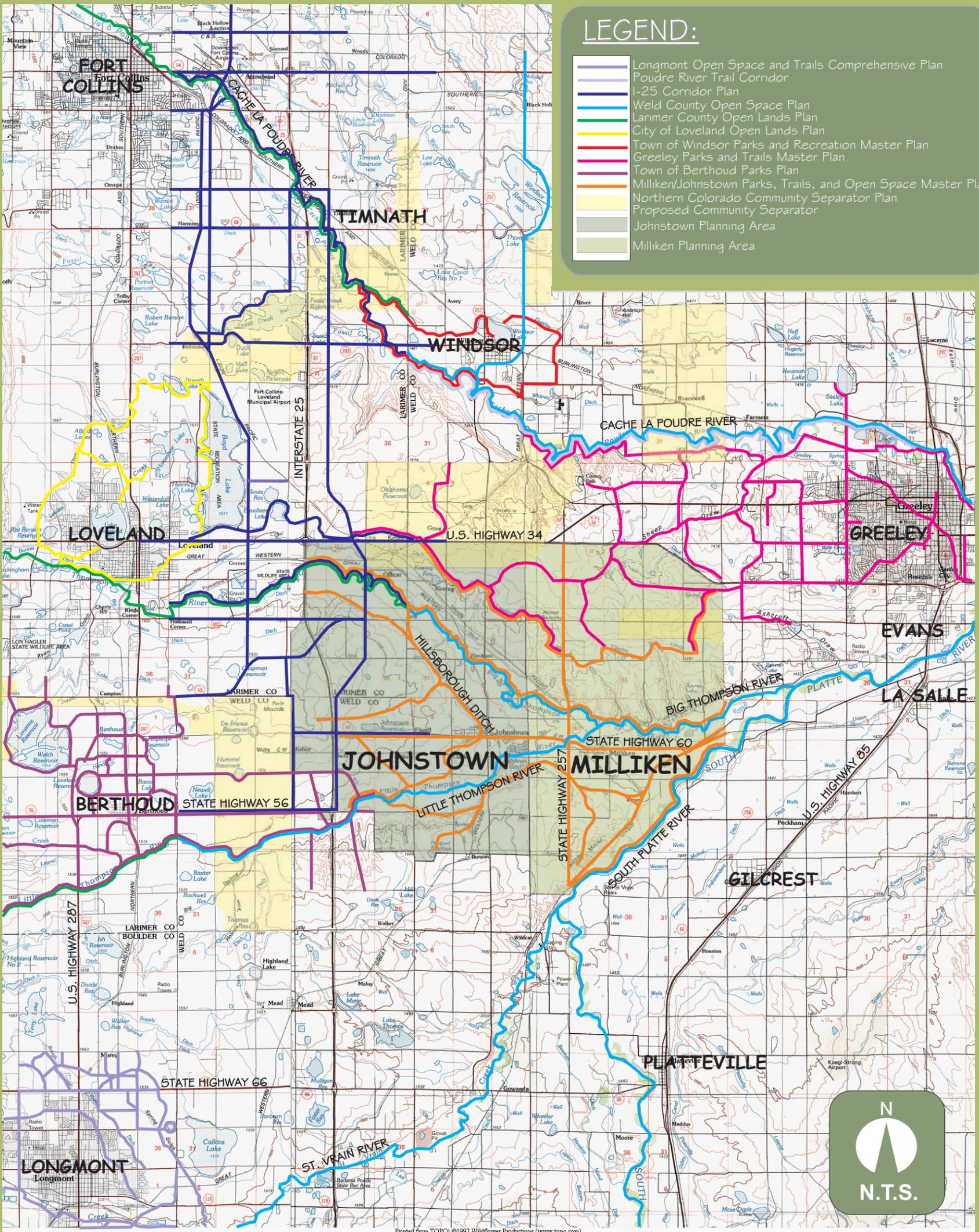
**facilities** (refer to the Parks and Recreation Section for further details). Additional trends include:

- Emphasis on **creating public spaces** and **recreational and educational opportunities** for all age groups within the community;
- **Collaboration** amongst Johnstown, Milliken, the Recreation District, the School District and the counties;
- Greater focus on **open space** planning, preservation of significant riparian areas, agricultural land, wildlife habitat and cultural resources;
- Growing number of **private/public partnerships** to provide public facilities; and
- Increasing **demand for community services** and competition within the community for allocation of limited resources and funds.



Regional Context Map

# MILLIKEN/JOHNSTOWN PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN



REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP  
PREPARED BY: TETRA TECH RMC

## RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

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*Nature is the symbol of the spirit.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

This section of the plan discusses environmental features of the Johnstown/Milliken area that create and influence the natural setting for the two towns. These items come into play when considering scenic resources and unique environments that may be opportunities for parks and trails, places that may deserve protection as open space, or constraints to recreational activities. This inventory is meant to serve as a guideline in identifying sensitive areas that should be preserved.

***It is important to note that the citizens that attended the workshops felt strongly that the special qualities and special places contributing to the high quality of life here be protected for generations to come.*** This includes the water features (rivers, ponds, ditches), agricultural land, scenic views (rolling hills, river corridors, mountains, etc.) and cultural resources (historical sites, ancient burial grounds, archaeological sites). ***Site-specific inventories should be completed prior to approval of any new development or prior to constructing any park, trail or recreational facility. All new site designs should ensure these resources are protected to the maximum extent possible.***

Refer to the *Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Map* in conjunction with this section.



## Soils and Topography

The topography is characterized by flat to gently rolling slopes in most areas. The elevations generally increase to the north and south of the communities with the low-lying flat areas around Milliken and Johnstown. Bluffs are located along the north side of the Big Thompson River (north of Milliken) and northwest of the South Platte River (known as Wildcat Mound).

### Design Considerations

There are several potential geologic considerations that could affect the development of parks, trails or recreation facilities. These include expansive soils, compressible soils, shallow groundwater and erosion. A site-specific geological assessment should be conducted before a facility is constructed.

### Milliken

The surficial soils around Milliken and approximately one mile to the south are comprised of alluvial (river) deposits. The alluvial soils consist of silty and clayey sands overlying sandy gravels and gravelly sands. These soils will compress significantly and are susceptible to erosion. Moving further south, eolian soils (wind deposited) are the major surficial soils. This soil consists of clayey sands and sandy clays. These soils are moderately compressible and will collapse when wetted. These soils are moderately susceptible to accelerated erosion. They are increasingly susceptible to erosion when the vegetative cover is disturbed for development. Expansive swelling clays are found at Wildcat Mound.

Milliken's planning area north of Weld County Road (WCR) 54 drains to the north. The area between WCR 54 and the Big Thompson River drains south-southeasterly towards the Big

Thompson River. The area from Wildcat Mound to the Town drains north-northeasterly towards the Little Thompson and Big Thompson Rivers. The southernmost portion of the planning area drains south into the South Platte River.

### Johnstown

The soils in the Johnstown planning area are comprised of alluvial deposits. The Nunn soils found south and southwest of the existing town generally exhibit severe shrink-swell characteristics and low strength, according to the Soil Survey of Weld County, Colorado, Southern Part.

North of the Big Thompson River, Johnstown's planning area drains to the south-southwest. The portion of the planning area between the Big Thompson River and the existing town drains north-northeast to the Big Thompson River. The area between the existing town and the Little Thompson River drains south-southeast into the Little Thompson River. The planning area south of the Little Thompson River drains northeast to the Little Thompson River.

## Water Resources

*Water is the most critical resource issue of our lifetime and our children's lifetime. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land.*

LUNA LEOPOLD

The Milliken/Johnstown planning area contains three important rivers: The Big Thompson River, the Little Thompson River and the South Platte River. The confluence of the Big and Little Thompson Rivers is in Milliken's planning area. The confluence of the Big Thompson River and the South Platte River is just east of Milliken's planning area. These scenic rivers are tremendous assets to



this arid community. Each river hosts plains cottonwood galleries, willow thickets, forbs, and grasses that provide food, cover and breeding grounds for a variety of wildlife. This includes the endangered Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse that has been trapped at several locations along the Big Thompson River in both Milliken and Johnstown. The rivers also provide routes for animal migration and regional recreational opportunities.

The rivers are also the source of water for the numerous irrigation ditches that course through the community. These ditches include:

- Beeline Ditch;
- Big Thompson and Platte Ditch;
- Farmers Extension Ditch;
- Farmers Irrigation Canal;
- Hill and Brush Ditch;
- Hillsborough Ditch;
- Handy Ditch;
- Home Supply Ditch;
- Johnstown Reservoir; and
- Loveland and Greeley Canal.

The planning area also contains several small ponds and reservoirs, three of which are or will be available for some public use – the fishing ponds in Settler's Village and Colony Pointe in Milliken and Johnstown Reservoir.

### *Design Considerations*

It is important to work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife or a town-approved ecologist when designing trails, parks and recreational facilities. This will help ensure that critical habitat is protected and is not fragmented and will help prevent erosion and impacts to water quality and quantity. It is equally important to work closely with the appropriate ditch company when designing a

facility along or near a ditch. Especially in riparian corridors, the challenge is to minimize impacts from trail construction while still allowing trail users to enjoy and experience being adjacent to a waterway and its associated vegetation.



### *Vegetation*

The majority of the combined planning area is in agricultural production. The most common crops include: corn, sugar beets, beans, onions, alfalfa, wheat and sunflowers. Undeveloped lands that are not cultivated for agriculture include (but are not limited to): Wildcat Mound, the bluffs along the Big Thompson and South Platte Rivers, and riparian corridors.

The bluff areas are dominated by grass species. Common grass species native to the Colorado plains include: foxtail barley, big bluestem, little bluestem, sand bluestem, prairie dropseed, blue grama, green needlegrass, switchgrass, red three-awn, and western wheatgrass.

Riparian ecosystems occur along the banks of rivers, ditches, and other bodies of flowing water.



They include floodplain woodlands and marshes with various types of grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees that depend on a more or less continuous and accessible water supply. These narrow ecosystems represent a transition zone between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems but usually have distinct vegetation and soils. Trees found in the Thompson Rivers and South Platte River riparian corridors include: plains cottonwood, peach-leaved willow, box elder, American elm, green ash, and Russian olive. Several shrubs that flourish are wild plum, hawthorn, currant, wild rose, snowberry, and shrubby willows. Common grasses include saltgrass and sand dropseed.

### *Design Considerations*

It is important to work with the Soil Conservation District or a town-approved landscape architect when designing, developing or maintaining parks, trails, open space and recreational facilities. At a minimum, topics to address include: preservation of existing stands of established grasslands and riparian ecosystems, weed control, removal of invasive species, use of native plants, use of xeriscape principles, proper revegetation of disturbed areas, plantings for multi-seasonal interest and wildlife habitat, fuse of appropriate site specific designs to preserve a sense of place, protection of existing vegetation, buffering/screening techniques, erosion control techniques, maintenance goals, storm drainage issues and safety concerns.

### *Scenic and Cultural Resources*

The entire planning area contains breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains to the west. Rolling hills and acres of open farmland surround Johnstown and Milliken. These hills overlook the South Platte River Valley to the east and south, the Big Thompson River valley to the north and the Rocky Mountains to the west. Citizens also spoke

of many important archaeological and historical features in the area. The *Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Map* illustrates the general locations of the Brush family cemetery, Elwell historic ghost town, and old wagon ruts in Johnstown as well as an Indian burial ground, several old schools and the historic town of Dent (where Woolly Mammoth remains were discovered) in Milliken.

### *Design Considerations*

The Johnstown/Milliken Planning Area includes many unique features that characterize the area. Carefully consider view corridors and obtain a Colorado Historical Society report prior to siting trails or developing a park or recreational facility. The scenic and cultural resources should form the underlying basis for the design.

### *Wildlife*

There is considerable wildlife habitat in the planning area. As mentioned above, the river corridors and ditches provide food, cover and shelter to a host of wildlife. It is critical to protect these corridors because approximately 75% of the wildlife species known or likely to occur in Colorado are dependent on riparian areas during all or a portion of their life cycle. This is especially significant when we realize that riparian areas make up less than 1% of the land mass in Colorado (according to Natural Diversity Information Source, funded by GOCO and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Web address: <http://ndis.nrel.colostate.edu/ndis/riparian/ripwetdef.htm>).

The local wildlife is also dependent on the agricultural land in the area. According to the American Farmland Trust, farmland provides more than 70 percent of the habitat for America's animals. It will become increasingly important to consider preservation of agricultural land for wildlife's benefit as well as for the rural character

of the area. Refer to Appendix for a list of the species that potentially occur in the area and their preferred habitat according to Colorado Distribution Latilong Studies (CDOW, 1981, 1990, 1998). The latilong studies address mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

### *Design Considerations*

Work with Colorado Division of Wildlife or a town-approved ecologist or other environmental expert when developing parks, trails and recreational facilities. The expert can help think of ways to enhance wildlife habitat, lessen the impact of a facility and integrate educational opportunities into the design. For example, include a bird or butterfly garden in a park, align trails so they do not go near sensitive wildlife habitat, or place signs along the trail that discuss local wildlife and stewardship. He or she can also help determine the construction schedule so that it does not disrupt a local species' nesting, breeding or migrating activities.



## SECTION III

### PARKS AND RECREATION

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# PARKS AND RECREATION



*Leap and the net will appear.*

ZEN SAYING

## PARKS AND RECREATION

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### *Introduction*

Residents in Milliken and Johnstown are very proud of the existing park system, as evidenced by its heavy use. For example, the park shelters in Johnstown are so busy that citizens must sign up for them, and by April they are usually booked for the summer. The children really appreciate the parks in town and generally use them quite often. The elementary school student council found that most children who live in Town reported using the parks at least three to five times a week. Families come from throughout the recreation district to enjoy the parks in the older parts of the communities because there are no facilities within walking distance of their homes.

The citizens strongly support the development of new parks. They feel the demand placed on the parks will only continue to grow because the majority of people moving into the area are young families with children. **They feel parks serve as gathering places for community members of all ages and they will help new citizens meet long-time residents.** The Recreation District feels it is important to expand the park system because there are insufficient facilities for practicing sports and playing pick-up games.

The community's highest priority is the need for more recreation opportunities close to home. Many people currently travel to nearby communities for their indoor and outdoor recreation needs. This is true for all ages and user groups. The most commonly requested facilities that citizens would like to have include: additional playing fields (for soccer, football, softball/baseball, and non-organized sports), a gymnasium or field house, classrooms/meeting rooms, an indoor swimming pool, a teen center, and a library. Several people also requested a theater, fishing ponds and a shooting range. The activities most frequently requested by citizens include: competitive youth sports, non-competitive sports for teens, special interest classes for adults and youths (such as photography, nutrition/health, arts and crafts, and dance), adult fitness programs (such as aerobics, kickboxing and weight training) and adult athletics (especially softball and basketball).

It is clear that the current mill levy will not fund new recreational facilities. In order to get support from the community for any sort of tax increase, the proposed facilities would need to benefit people of all ages (not just children). Citizens recommend the following funding options for recreational facilities: corporate sponsorships,

grants, bonds, sales tax (need more commercial uses to make this option work), increase development impact fees, Colorado Rockies for baseball fields, privately funded facilities (i.e. bowling alleys, movie theaters, health clubs).

This plan does not address programming for recreation activities within the community. It will serve as a guide for the development of adequate parks and recreation facilities to support the citizen's programming needs. The Recreation District currently provides the programming and organization of activities. The Towns and the School District develop, own and maintain the facilities. The Towns and the Recreation District cooperate with the School District to share facilities and are still unable to meet the demand. This arrangement will continue to evolve as the communities grow and the demands for services increase with the population.

Cooperation is essential to meet the increasing demand for services. **The citizens want to reinforce and nurture this spirit of cooperation.** It is important to develop partnerships with businesses, service groups and organizations, landowners and developers. For example, teachers, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Future Farmers of America are cooperating with the Town of Johnstown to help build Sunrise Ridge Park. This cooperation helped the community get financial support from a Great Outdoor Colorado grant. The Town of Milliken partnered with Hall-Irwin and Bestway Concrete to develop two fisheries. This cooperation made possible a \$260,000 grant from Colorado Division of Wildlife's Fishing is Fun program to stock the ponds and install trails, parking lots, restrooms and educational signage. Continued support from other State agencies such as the Division of Local Governments and Colorado State University will extend limited resources. By sharing facilities with the School District, maintenance costs can be shared. Cooperation is also a key component of the design process for all parks and recreation facilities. The

community must cooperate with the Recreation District and school districts to identify needs and determine the best location for facilities.

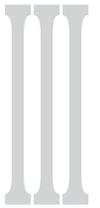
***The citizens of Milliken and Johnstown feel that all parks should:***

- Serve as community gathering spaces to foster strong connections within and between Johnstown and Milliken;
- Provide a variety of activities for different age groups and users;
- Include open areas for group activities and smaller, quiet spaces for individuals;
- Be connected to the community and each other with safe pedestrian access;
- Include grass, shrubs, trees, annuals and perennials, and where possible, water;
- Provide educational opportunities; and
- Be developed as shared, multi-purpose facilities.

*Intent:*

***The purpose of this section is to:***

- Define the community's vision for Milliken/Johnstown's park system;
- Help ensure the parks system will provide adequate facilities to support existing and future recreation opportunities;
- Ensure parks and recreational facilities are available to all citizens and foster both individual and family activities;
- Put standards in place for new development and to help the towns estimate park development costs so



Milliken/Johnstown can more easily explore funding opportunities;

- Ensure each park is a unique, special place and includes education opportunities; and
- Provide design guidelines and development standards that ensure all facilities are sensitive to the environment and context within the community.

### *Function of Parks*

Parks fulfill a variety of needs within the community. They provide opportunities for passive and active recreation. They help reinforce a sense of community by providing places for members of the community to gather and interact. Parks also enhance the community's image and quality of life.

### *Types of Parks*

**Pocket Parks** are small (minimum one acre) sites within walking distance of residential units. They are designed to fit the style and needs of the homes they serve, are installed by the developer and owned and maintained by homeowners' associations. A pocket park for a senior community may include a contemplative garden and a picnic area while a pocket park for a multi-family project with young families may include playground equipment for small children, a picnic area and a basketball or volleyball court. Because pocket parks are within walking distance of most users, restrooms and parking areas are not typically provided.

**Neighborhood Parks** provide places for informal recreation and gathering places within 1/2 mile of most residences in the neighborhood they serve. They often serve more than one type of residential unit,

including single family homes, apartments and senior housing. Neighborhood parks are often linked via the trail system. They are 7 to 10 acres in size and may include multi-use lawn areas, picnic areas, shelters, playground equipment, small court games, restrooms, parking, and community gardens. They are designed to fit the needs of the neighborhood they serve and provide places for both individual and group activities.

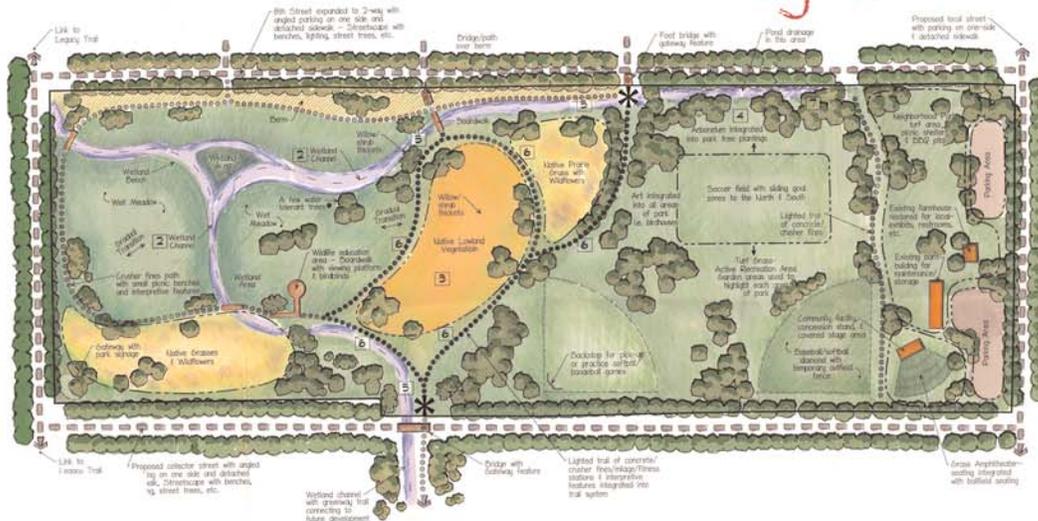
**Community Parks** are larger parks (approximately 25 acres or more) designed to be used by the residents of more than one neighborhood and the community at large. They serve as a focus for community activities and events (i.e. town greens, outdoor concerts, amphitheaters, family gatherings) and typically include many of the amenities in neighborhood parks. They provide places for organized group activities, (could be indoor or outdoor) as well as individual activities and family gatherings. They may also take advantage of unique natural settings and provide recreational facilities compatible with the site (i.e. fishing where there is a pond).

**Regional Parks** will include special places with unique geographic characteristics such as Johnstown Reservoir or the Community Green. They may also include areas that need preservation and limited public access such as the Sparrow property in Milliken.

**Linear Parks** will include the Little Thompson, Big Thompson and South Platte River Corridors. They may also function as links between special places. Please refer to the **Parks Standards** on page 30 for more details about each type of park.



# Community Park



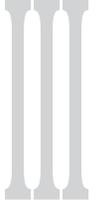
# Neighborhood Park



# Pocket Park

## PARKS STANDARDS

TYPE OF PARK	MINIMUM SIZE	SERVICE AREA	PURPOSE	FACILITIES INSTALLED BY DEVELOPER	COMMENTS
Pocket Park	1 acre	within 1/2 mile without crossing an arterial street (min 1 per 250 units)	Play area for children, grassy area for informal activities such as frisbee. To be based on the needs of the immediate neighborhood.	Trees, flowers, grass, benches, trash receptacle, irrigation system, play equipment, and shelters	Safe access within the neighborhood is critical. Provide access via off-street trail connections, sidewalks and low volume neighborhood streets. Users should not have to cross major streets to access the park. This can be waived if there is a neighborhood park within walking distance (1/2 mile) without crossing arterial streets. Pocket parks are to be owned and maintained by the homeowners association of the neighborhood that they serve.
Neighborhood Park	7 acres (If adjacent to a school this is in addition to the minimum for a school site.)	1/2 mile radius (users should not have to cross an arterial road to get to a neighborhood park)	Serves as the focal point for neighborhood activities. Should provide a balance of opportunities for active and passive recreation and neighborhood gatherings.	Site grading and native grass establishment.  Refer to town ordinances and comprehensive plan regarding park land dedication and park locations.  Developer is encouraged to work with the town to install additional improvements as agreed upon in annexation agreements.	Park should be centrally located within the neighborhood. Provide safe access via off-street trails. Users should be able to access the park without crossing any major streets or other physical barriers. If a neighborhood park is within 1/2 mile, separated by an arterial street, the developer may install a grade separated crossing in lieu of creating an additional park. "Left-over" parcels with physical development constraints (i.e. detention areas and oil and gas facilities) are not desirable and should not be included in minimum acreage calculations unless it can be demonstrated that they are designed to function as open space for the neighborhood. Lighting for security and safety only. Should be sited adjacent to a school whenever possible. Parks should contain restroom and parking facilities. Developers are to stub in utilities to the park wherever possible.



## PARKS STANDARDS (CONTINUED)

TYPE OF PARK	MINIMUM SIZE	SERVICE AREA	PURPOSE	FACILITIES INSTALLED BY DEVELOPER	COMMENTS
Community Park	25 acres (Size may vary depending on the types of activities to be included.)	5 mile radius	Serves several neighborhoods and focuses on the recreational needs of the whole community. Should provide room for organized active recreation, informal active recreation and passive recreation. They should also provide places for community gatherings and activities.	Refer to town ordinances and comprehensive plan regarding park land dedication and park locations.  Developer is encouraged to work with the town to install additional improvements as agreed upon in annexation agreements.	Provide good access via major streets. Consider impacts of park activities on adjacent land uses. Design park to preserve unique natural settings. Include opportunities for wildlife viewing and quiet, isolated areas for quiet walks and contemplation. Create spaces for community events and activities. Community Parks could also be used for day camps and Girl/Boy Scout activities in the summer. Parks should contain restrooms, parking areas, and lighted ballfields.
Regional Park	size will vary	region	Serves the community and region as a whole.	Refer to town ordinances and comprehensive plan regarding park land dedication and park locations.	These parks are typically defined by special physical opportunities and constraints. They can include special areas that require conservation and limited assess or unique areas such as lakes. Access, activities and design elements will be determined on a case by case basis and will respond to the unique setting and character of each site.



## PARKS STANDARDS (CONTINUED)

TYPE OF PARK	MINIMUM SIZE	SERVICE AREA	PURPOSE	FACILITIES INSTALLED BY DEVELOPER **	COMMENTS
Linear Park	size will vary	communities	Provide links along river corridors and/or between special places within the communities.	Developer to design and install trail, necessary trail crossings, landscaping, and all other required improvements per town ordinances.  Refer to town ordinances for trail land dedication requirements.	Width and facilities will vary. Sites will be evaluated on a case by case basis at the time of annexation and again during the preliminary plat process to determine appropriate facilities and improvements.

Park locations and sizes will be determined in cooperation with land owners at the time of preliminary plat.



## *Parks and Recreation Goals, Policies and Strategies*

### *GOAL P1:*

Provide a comprehensive parks and recreation system that provides for a variety of activities and serves all age groups.

#### Policy P1.1:

Develop and maintain pocket parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks and linear parks to serve the present and future needs of Milliken/Johnstown residents. All parks shall be multi-purpose, safe and accessible to all citizens.

##### Strategy P1.1.1:

Locate parks in accordance with the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Map and the Milliken and Johnstown comprehensive plans.

##### Strategy P1.1.2:

Ensure that all new parks comply with the design standards, parks standards and community facilities plan set forth in this section of the Plan.

##### Strategy P1.1.3:

Develop parks as integral parts of other public facilities such as schools to avoid duplicating services.

##### Strategy P1.1.4:

Include trailheads in parks located near neighborhood and river corridor trails.

##### Strategy P1.1.5:

Design all parks and recreation areas in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

#### Policy P1.2:

Work with local governments, the land development community and government agencies to develop parks and recreation facilities.

##### Strategy P1.2.1:

Work with Larimer and Weld Counties to plan and construct strategically located regional and linear parks along the Big Thompson, Little Thompson and South Platte River corridors.

##### Strategy P1.2.2:

Cooperate with the Weld County RE-5J and Thompson RE-5J School Districts to allow joint use of existing facilities and to develop new facilities.

##### Strategy P1.2.3:

Cooperate with landowners and Weld County to incorporate community gathering spaces in the area identified as the community green between Johnstown and Milliken.

##### Strategy P1.2.4:

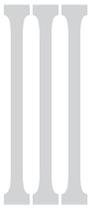
Cooperate with State and Federal agencies to develop and enhance fisheries in existing and future ponds and along the river corridors where appropriate.

##### Strategy P1.2.5:

Require the development community to design and install drainage facilities that will also function for informal activities and practice fields.

##### Strategy P1.2.6:

Investigate the potential for cooperative agreements with developers to install needed facilities.



## GOAL P2:

Develop a comprehensive network of multi-purpose recreation facilities to expand recreation opportunities for the community.

### Policy P2.1:

Cooperate with the Recreation District and various activity groups to plan, fund and develop a recreation center or centers to serve the recreation needs of the community.

#### Strategy P2.1.1:

Build a multi-purpose field house that can function for indoor sports, special interest classes for youth and adults, and fitness/exercise programs.

#### Strategy P2.1.2:

Cooperate with the school districts to build an indoor swimming pool.

### Policy P2.2:

Cooperate with the Recreation District and various activity groups to plan, fund and build additional recreation facilities throughout the community.

#### Strategy P2.2.1:

Cooperate with the Weld County Library District to expand library facilities.

#### Strategy P2.2.2:

Investigate ways to develop new facilities and expand use of existing community facilities for classrooms and meeting rooms.

#### Strategy P2.2.3:

Cooperate to fund, build and operate a teen center.

#### Strategy P2.2.4:

Incorporate a community theater into one of the planned or existing facilities.

#### Strategy P2.2.5:

Continue to support senior centers and expand recreation opportunities for seniors.

#### Strategy P2.2.6:

Cooperate to fund and build athletic fields to meet the needs of local organized sports groups.

## GOAL P3:

Use parks to enhance the quality of life in Milliken and Johnstown.

### Policy P3.1:

Design parks to draw the members of the community together by providing locations for community activities.

#### Strategy P3.1.1:

Develop a multi-purpose pavilion to allow for concerts and movies in the park, a farmer's market, a place for festivals, large group picnics and other community events and activities.

#### Strategy P3.1.2:

Ensure that every park has at least one trail connection and is easily accessible by residents. Include trailheads in park design as appropriate.

### Policy P3.2:

Design all parks to reflect Milliken and Johnstown's unique character and context.





Strategy P3.2.1:  
Obtain neighborhood and community input when designing parks to determine individual park components. Be sure to encourage children to participate in this process.

Strategy P3.2.2:  
Ensure that proposed parks address the design elements outlined in the parks design, development and maintenance standards section of this Plan.

Policy P3.3:  
Integrate oil and gas facility setbacks into the parks and open space network.

Strategy P3.3.1:  
Work with oil and gas companies to locate new facilities to limit impacts on parks, open space and environmental resources.

Strategy P3.3.2:  
Work with oil and gas companies and developers to locate new facilities in residential areas so that the well setback can function within the neighborhood until the well is capped and abandoned.

Strategy P3.3.3:  
Work with the oil and gas companies to ensure that facilities within residential neighborhoods are fenced and screened to increase safety and limit visual impacts.

Policy P3.4:  
Continue to foster the spirit of cooperation that allows for shared facilities and the provision of services.

Strategy P3.4.1:  
Continue quarterly summit meetings with the Weld County Re-5J School District, Thompson Rivers Parks and Recreation District, Milliken and Johnstown. Invite the Thompson Valley School District to attend the meetings.

Strategy P3.4.2:  
Include language regarding shared facilities in the Intergovernmental Agreement between the entities.

Strategy P3.4.3:  
Design and locate facilities so that they are spread throughout both



communities and are accessible to all residents.

Strategy P3.4.4:

Continue to involve the public in discussions regarding the provision of parks and recreation facilities.



### *Parks Inventory*

Existing parks are described below with a list of enhancement opportunities for each site. A complete inventory of each park is included in the appendix.



### *Milliken Parks*

#### **Frank Farms #1**

Lilac Street and Rachel Court

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Install a xeriscape demonstration garden and home idea garden. Provide bird habitat for bird watching, a picnic area, and possibly a trailhead.

- Design the area within the oil and gas setback to function as a pocket park. At a minimum, seed the area and install street trees.

#### **Frank Farms #2**

Between Rachel Avenue and Tamara Avenue

#### Enhancement Opportunities



- Install trash receptacles, restroom facility, lighting, picnic structure, and additional plantings.
- Incorporate activity areas for older children.
- Add more imaginative play areas using natural materials and interesting spaces created with plants and structures.





### Lola Park

Irene and Forest to Josephine and Forest

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Install a more prominent park identification sign.
- Install additional trash receptacles.
- Plant additional trees on the east side of the park.
- Coordinate with middle school regarding educational elements that could be incorporated and used by the children.
- Transition the elevation of the sidewalk onto turf more smoothly.



### Mountain View Park

Juneberry and Olive Street

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Install trash receptacles, bathroom facilities, barbecue grills, trees and two park identification signs with entrance plantings for Katsura and Juneberry access.



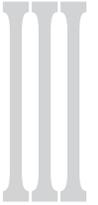
- Install landscaping between the different areas to identify the separate uses.
- Install street trees along Katsura Street.
- Install educational signage about the pipeline running through the park.

### ADA Park

Aragon Court

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Install additional trash receptacles.
- Install a metal picnic table to replace the existing damaged table.
- Install a park identification sign and a sign indicating park rules.
- Add landscaping throughout the park, including street trees along the edge.



- Install flowering shrubs and perennials to add color to the park.



### Avila Park

Adjacent to Town Hall on Grace Avenue

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Install landscaping such as canopy trees along the side of the park to screen the side of Town Hall and the parking lot from the park.
- Install security lighting (perhaps foot lighting would be effective).
- Install trash receptacles and a barbeque grill.

## Johnstown Parks

### Parish Park

Raymond Place and Charlotte Street

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Create a gateway by installing plantings and signage at the intersection of Raymond and Charlotte streets.
- Separate uses by planting trees along the west edge of the volleyball court and the west end of the picnic shelters.

- Install enclosures for dumpster and port-a-let.
- Install additional picnic tables.
- Install smaller trees to begin regenerating the tree canopy layer.
- Create outdoor rooms within the park by planting more small trees and shrubs to define distinct spaces.
- Control volunteer seedlings of White Poplar trees.
- Add alternative activity features to playground equipment, taking inspiration from nature and the history of the town to inspire more imaginative play.

### Hays Park

Country Acres Drive

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Install additional plantings to create a theme and define spaces within the park.
- Build enclosures for trash dumpsters.



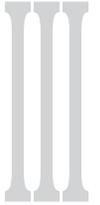
- Install a walking path around the perimeter of the park or within the park to get from one activity area to the next.
- Define an entrance with a park sign and landscaping.
- Install barbeque grills for the eastern picnic shelter.
- Incorporate interpretation of agriculture (i.e. corn or sunflower plantings) into an educational element in the park.
- Install additional street trees.

### **Eddie Aragon Park**

Weld County Road 17 and Johnstown Center Drive

#### Enhancement Opportunities

- Repaint the wood benches in the picnic structure.
- Provide trash receptacles.
- Repair the skating rink sign.
- Add plantings and maintain the park identification sign.
- Use xeriscaping principles and zone the irrigation so that it isn't the same in all places. Install low water plants rather than Aspen trees to match the other plants.
- Plant more shade trees along the perimeter to help define the spaces within the park.



*PARK DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE*

*Park Design*

Each park in Milliken/Johnstown contributes to the community wide parks and recreation system.

An overall Community Facilities Plan is described below. The Community Facilities Plan serves as a guide to ensure that facilities will be distributed throughout the parks and recreation system to provide the widest range of activities for citizens. Not all parks will have all facilities. It is important to work with the Recreation District to ensure that there are

adequate facilities throughout the community to meet the District’s programming needs. Additional facilities, not included on the list may be considered for specific parks within the system.

Specific facilities to be included in each park will vary and will be determined through the design process in cooperation with the Recreation District and the neighborhood at the time of development. Public participation should be included in the initial program development for the facility as well as the preliminary design process to ensure that each park meets residents’ needs and expectations.



**COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**

ACTIVITY/ FACILITY	SERVICE RADIUS	LOCATION NOTES
Basketball	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Safe pedestrian or bike access, may be included in neighborhood or community parks.
Tennis	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Best if sited in groups of 2 to 4 courts, may be located in neighborhood or community parks or adjacent to a school site.
Volleyball	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Safe pedestrian or bike access, may be included in neighborhood or community parks.
Baseball/Softball	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Consider access and adjacent neighborhood. Best located in community parks, no lighted facilities in neighborhood parks.
Football/Soccer	15 minutes travel time	Usually part of sports complex in community park or adjacent to high school. May also include practice fields and youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to neighborhood parks.
Hard-Surfaced Recreation Court (Roller Bladers / Skateboarders)	1-2 miles	May be included in either a neighborhood or community park.
Swimming	15 minutes travel time	Swimming pools may be included in recreation center or other community parks. Not appropriate for neighborhood parks.

## Site Selection



Park design and development begins with the selection of a site. The Master Plan Map identifies the general location of potential park sites within the Milliken/Johnstown Planning Area. One neighborhood park is required in every section. Specific park locations will be determined as each neighborhood develops. The size and location of each park will be determined by the community in cooperation with the landowner at the time of preliminary plat for the neighborhood that the park will serve.

*...each site has its own special qualities of stone and earth and water, of leaf and blossom, of architectural context, of sun and shade and of sounds and scents and breezes. Seek these out and you will discover promises of formal order or artful naturalism - the beginnings of your garden.*

THE POETICS OF GARDENS

## Site Analysis

Each park must be designed in the context of the unique opportunities and constraints associated with its site. Existing topography, water resources, vegetation, drainage patterns, views, surrounding land use, proximity to utilities and other facilities, roads, and access must be

inventoried and evaluated to determine the types of facilities that the site can support. See resource assessment section page 21.

## Recreation Analysis

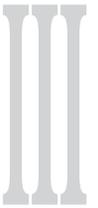
Once the site has been evaluated, determine recreational demands of the park's service area in cooperation with the residents and the Recreation District. This can be best accomplished through a neighborhood workshop. Encourage children of all ages to participate in this



process. In addition, consider facilities available at nearby schools and parks and the physical attributes of the site to help determine the type of facilities for the park.

## Preliminary Design

The next step in the design process is preliminary design development. During



this process, specific activities and facilities are organized on the site. Another community workshop or design charrette should be included at this point in the process.

At a minimum, each park site should have a distinct entry, destinations within the facility and pathways connecting the activities. Include trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials, and grass or appropriate ground cover in every park. Park design considerations are outlined on page 45. Each park within Milliken/Johnstown will have a unique context, site attributes, and user groups. The design and development of each facility should reflect this unique set of circumstances.

Consider long term maintenance in the design process. The types of materials selected for site furnishings, the extent of irrigated turf, types of plant materials, and the transition from one material to the next can all have a significant impact on the overall costs of maintaining park facilities.

All park improvements should be sensitive to the setting and minimize potential impacts to environmental resources.



Include water conservative landscaping which incorporates the following xeriscape principles in the design of all parks.

- Turf Alternatives: Consider alternatives to turf grass such as native and low water-use plantings. Native turf grasses should be used in areas where intense traffic is not anticipated.
- Mulches: Use mulches to cover the soil, minimize evaporation, reduce weed growth and slow erosion.
- Zoning of Plants: Group plantings based on their water use and locate them to take advantage of microclimates and their specific needs.
- Soil Improvements: Prior to planting, enhance soils with organic matter to allow for better water absorption and improved water holding capacity.
- Appropriate Maintenance: Apply water according to plant needs rather than a schedule; prune, weed and fertilize as necessary to further water savings.

### *Park Development*

From this preliminary design, construction drawings detailing all park components can be completed. Once complete plans have been developed and reviewed by the Town, site development can begin. Construct facilities that are consistent with all applicable town, state and federal standards in place at the time of development.

Construction of park facilities may be accomplished in phases. Develop phasing plans in the context of the surrounding land use and create interim plans for the site.



Carefully consider the impacts of future improvements on initial improvements. This will help to avoid additional costs due to damage to existing improvements when future phases are constructed.

The community is willing to participate in both the design and construction of park facilities.

**Include public participation at several points**

**in the process.** For example, a community group could be responsible for planting the flower beds in the park or a community work day could be organized to help install a piece of equipment. The graphic below illustrates how the Girl Scouts helped design the butterfly garden in Sunrise Ridge Park, a project funded in cooperation with GOCO.



## Butterfly garden

**During the first workshop everyone worked together to understand the issues and to brainstorm ideas for the garden...**

**The girl scouts worked on individual designs to practice their design skills and test their creativity...**

**After two workshops we were able to come up with a design everyone was happy with....**

**This design was then finalized and presented to the Johnstown Park Staff to begin construction...**

**The Girl Scouts will help the Park Staff plant the garden. When completed, a ceremony will be held to dedicate the peace pole and the butterfly garden that the whole community will enjoy!**

- Key
- - Spectral
- - Peace pole
- - Small park
- - Water
- - Flowers
- - Trees
- - Shrubs
- - path or road
- - Amphibian
- - Butterfly
- - Peace Pole

## Park Maintenance

Consider park maintenance during design and development of the facility. Design facilities to minimize long term maintenance obligations. For ease of maintenance, address grading, drainage, types of materials, and access in the design process.

Develop an operations and maintenance program for each park in conjunction with the design of the facility. Consider things like repair and replacement of



equipment and site furnishings, irrigation and mowing requirements, water resource management, and on-going site cleanup and security. This will allow the community to understand the long term costs associated with each facility at the time of development and allocate resources accordingly.

Maintenance of park facilities is a community responsibility (except pocket parks, which are to be maintained in perpetuity by the homeowners' associations). Interim maintenance of park facilities may be accomplished through an agreement with a land developer or homeowners' association. However, the community should work toward public ownership and maintenance of public park facilities.

Educate park users to ensure they are sensitive to the care of the facilities and aware of their impact on the park. Establish park hours to help minimize user impact. Locate trash receptacles to make it easy for users to keep the park clean.

Maintenance of parks will vary with the type of facility according to the level and types of activity in each park. A park designed as a natural area with a fishing pond will have different maintenance requirements than a sports complex.



## PARK DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS



ISSUE	THINGS TO CONSIDER
Access	Is there adequate vehicular access for users and maintenance equipment? Will traffic from the park have a negative impact on adjacent land uses? Are the facilities visible from adjacent streets and properties for security purposes? What is the level of activity and capacity of adjacent streets to handle traffic? Can emergency vehicles access the park?
Community Garden	Is there an opportunity to include a space for a community garden within the park? Is the area easily accessible for all age groups? Will weed seeds from adjacent properties blow into the garden? What will the space look like during the dormant season? What are the garden's irrigation needs?
Connections	Are there safe, accessible trail connections to the site and other facilities in the neighborhood and the community? Are all elements of the park tied together with a comprehensive system of pathways and walks? Do the trail links through the property contribute to the overall trails network for the community?
Context	How will the design impact adjacent land uses, views, environmental resources, nearby utilities and other community facilities? Does the orientation of park components reduce the impact of elements and exposure on the park site? Will the land uses adjacent to the site have a positive or negative effect on anticipated use of the facilities?
Character/Heritage	How could the community's heritage and character be integrated into the park's features?
General User Groups	Who will use the park? Do the park facilities respond to all age groups? Are there activities for groups and individuals? Is the park accessible to all users? Will people feel safe while in the park?
Landscaping	Do landscape improvements consider context, anticipated activities, maintenance and environmental resources? Do the plant materials compliment the setting and anticipated activity areas? Is there a variety of colors, textures, fragrances and seasonal interest? Are native plantings incorporated where possible? Are there areas that will benefit from a wind break or additional shade or sun? Does the landscaping incorporate xeriscape design principles? If the site is adjacent to undeveloped land or open space, is there a native transition area between the park and the adjacent property? Does the landscaping enhance opportunities for wildlife habitat (i.e. food, cover, water) which may expand viewing opportunities for park users? Does the entry invite people into the park while providing a sense of security and enclosure for park visitors?
Maintenance	Have the maintenance requirements of all components been considered? Are the anticipated operational and maintenance requirements for the park reasonable? Is there any special equipment required to maintain facilities? What are the overall maintenance and irrigation demands? Have you selected equipment and site furnishings that will be durable, difficult to damage and easy to maintain?

## PARK DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)



ISSUE	THINGS TO CONSIDER
Overall Site Design	Do all of the elements fit together into a unified whole? Has the design integrated the elements of gateway, pathway and destination into the overall plan for the park? Does the design respond to the town's unique setting, character and heritage? Is the design consistent with the goals and policies and standards outlined in the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and all other town rules and regulations? Does the design work in terms of all three dimensions? Does the site respond to the senses? How will you feel when you enter the site, sit on the benches, play on the equipment and walk along the trails? What will you see, hear, smell, touch? Will you feel safe or exposed? Will you know that you are in Johnstown or Milliken, Colorado?
Park Entry	Does the entrance to the park create an distinctive gateway to the facility and encourage entry? Is there a gateway with an entry feature, signage and plantings? Consider developing a signature park entry structure (i.e. pillar, arch).
Physical Characteristics	What are the physical opportunities and constraints (i.e. size, topography, drainage, vegetation, soils, water resources)? Can the site accommodate the intended uses? What are the physical constraints that will limit the types of activities that can be accommodated in the park or present unique opportunities for special activities (i.e. is there a protected east-facing slope that could accommodate a sledding hill; is there enough level area for an open play area for softball or soccer)?
Playground Equipment	Will the playground equipment serve all age groups? Is the equipment safe, sturdy, and durable? What are the maintenance requirements for the equipment? Does the equipment provide a variety of activities for a variety of age groups? Does the equipment meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards? Have natural features been incorporated as play elements (i.e. shrub maze or rocks)?
Public Art	Is there an opportunity to include public art in the park? Can the public interact with the art? Is there a location for public art within the park that will also be visible to people passing by the park on a trail or street? Can the art be climbed on or played in without damage?
Safety	Do all improvements conform to Consumer Product Safety Commission Standards, American Society for Testing and Materials Standards, Americans with Disabilities Act standards, and all Federal, State, and local ordinances? Think about possible safety issues: what happens when kids chase a ball, will the ball roll all the way to the street or will something keep it within the park; is there a maintenance plan for de-icing the sidewalks in the winter; is the park safe at night; is there appropriate safety surfaces under all equipment; are the plants non-toxic and thornless?

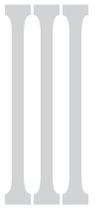
## PARK DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)



ISSUE	THINGS TO CONSIDER
Signage	Does signage address safety, education, park rules? Is the signage integrated into the overall design of the park? Consider developing signature signage for all of the community's parks. Does the signage incorporate the town's logo? Is the signage durable and relatively low maintenance?
Site Furnishings	What site furnishings should be included within the facility (i.e. benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, light fixtures, drinking fountains, restrooms)? Do they serve the needs of the anticipated users? Are the furnishings located to compliment different activities? For example, does the placement of benches encourage conversation in some areas and allow for quiet contemplation in others?
Special User Groups	Have the needs of special user groups (i.e. little league, roller bladers, school children, etc.) been addressed? Have you determined users in cooperation with the neighborhood or community?
Trailheads	Can a trailhead for the community trail system be integrated into the site? Is the signage, parking and access consistent with the overall intention of the community trail system? Is the location appropriate relative to the park, neighborhood and overall trail system? Have the impacts of trailhead activity on the park and neighborhood been mitigated?
Types of Activities	What types of activities should take place in the park? Is the park to focus on the needs of the immediate neighborhood or the community as a whole? Are there any activities that would be especially well-suited to the site? Are there any activities that would have a negative impact on the site or the surrounding neighborhood? How will park activities impact adjacent land uses? How will adjacent activities impact park users (i.e. is there traffic noise from an adjacent street)?
Utilities	What utilities are available to the site? Are water, sewer, electric, and gas easily extended to the site? What facilities can be accommodated with the available utilities?
Visual Complexity	Does the design incorporate a variety of forms, colors, and textures as well as reflect the unique setting and context? Does the design incorporate views, vistas and connections to the natural environment? Do the park elements work as a whole? Have color, texture, scale and context of each element been considered as they relates to the site and other elements of the park and community?
Water	Is there an opportunity to include water-based activities in the park? Is the quality and quantity of available water sufficient to maintain a fishery, develop a swimming facility or include some other type of water feature? Will water-based activities have a negative impact on the water resource? (This may limit types of uses allowed – i.e. no motorized boats on a particular lake, limit access to portions of the shoreline, etc.)

## NON-TOXIC PLANT SELECTION GUIDE FOR PARKS

Select plant materials that are thornless and nontoxic for all parks. Below is a plant list intended to act as a selection guide. Additional plantings may be considered if they do not pose a hazard to park users.



BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
<b>Trees:</b>	
<i>Acer</i> species (no rubrum)	Maple varieties
<i>Aesculus octandra</i>	Yellow Buckeye
<i>Betula platphylla</i> 'Whitespire'	Whitespire Birch
<i>Cercus canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud
<i>Fraxinus</i> species	Ash varieties
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> var. <i>inermis</i> species	Honeylocust varieties
<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Golden Rain Tree
<i>Pinus</i> species	Pine varieties
<i>Quercus gambelli</i>	Gambel Oak
<i>Syringa reticulata</i>	Japanese Lilac Tree
<i>Tilia</i> species	Linden varieties
<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	Rocky Mountain Juniper
<b>Shrubs:</b>	
<i>Amorpha</i> species	Leadplant varieties
<i>Artemisia</i> species	Sagebrush varieties
<i>Buddleja davidii</i> species	Butterfly Bush varieties
<i>Caragana</i> species	Peashrub varieties
<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>	Bluemist Spirea
<i>Cerocarpus</i> species	Mahogany varieties
<i>Cornus</i> species	Dogwood varieties
<i>Cytisus</i> x 'Lena'	Lena Broom
<i>Euonymus alata</i> species	Burning Bush varieties
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i> species	Euonymus varieties
<i>Euonymus klautschovica</i> 'Manhattan'	Manhattan Euonymus
<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	Apache Plume
<i>Neomexicana forestiera</i> species (no <i>savina</i> )	New Mexico Privet

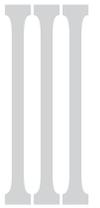
## NON-TOXIC PLANT SELECTION GUIDE FOR PARKS (CONTINUED)



BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
<b>Shrubs (continued)</b>	
<i>Juniperus</i> species	Juniper varieties
<i>Lonicera</i> species (no <i>tatarica</i> or <i>xylosteum</i> )	Honeysuckle varieties
<i>Philadelphus</i> species	Mockorange varieties
<i>Pinus</i> species	Pine varieties
<i>Prunus americana</i>	Wild Plum
<i>Prunus besseyi</i>	Western Sand Cherry
<i>Prunus tomentosa</i>	Nanking Cherry
<i>Ribes</i> species	Currant varieties
<i>Salix</i> species	Willow varieties
<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	Buffaloberry
<i>Spiraea</i> species	Spiraea varieties
<i>Syringa</i> species	Lilac varieties
<i>Viburnum</i> species (no <i>opulus</i> )	Viburnum varieties
<b>Perennials:</b>	
<i>Achillea</i> species	Yarrow varieties
<i>Agastache cana</i>	Double Bubble Mint
<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	Poppy Mallow
<i>Coreopsis</i> species	Coreopsis varieties
<i>Gallardia</i> species	Blanket Flower varieties
<i>Gallium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff
<i>Geranium</i> species	Cranesbill varieties
<i>Hemerocallis</i> species	Daylily varieties
<i>Liatris</i> species	Gayfeather varieties
<i>Penstemon</i> species	Penstemon varieties
<i>Phlox paniculata</i> species	Phlox varieties
<i>Salvia</i> species	Salvia varieties
<i>Sedum</i> species	Sedum varieties
<i>Silene laciniata</i>	Indian Pink

## NON-TOXIC PLANT SELECTION GUIDE FOR PARKS (CONTINUED)

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
<b>Perennials (continued)</b>	
<i>Stachys byzantina</i>	Lamb's Ear
<i>Thymus serpyllum citroides</i>	Lemon Thyme
<i>Vinca minor</i>	Periwinkle
<i>Zauschneria californica latifolia</i>	Hummingbird Flower
<b>Ornamental Grasses:</b>	
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Sideoats Grama
<i>Calamagrostis acutifolia strictus</i>	Feather Reed Grass
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Northern Sea Oats
<i>Erianthus ravannae</i>	Plume Grass
<i>Helictotrichon sempervirens</i>	Blue Avena
<i>Miscanthus sinensis species</i>	Maiden Grass varieties



## SECTION IV

### TRAILS

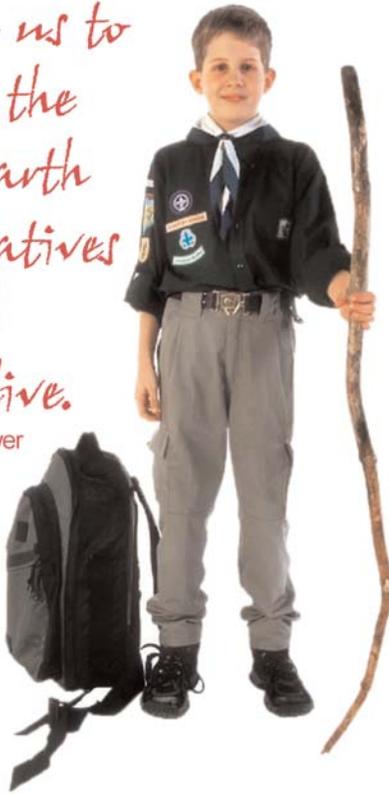
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# TRAILS



Teach us to  
walk the  
soft earth  
as relatives  
to all  
that live.

Lakota Prayer



*The citizens of Johnstown and Milliken feel that trails should:*

- Provide safe links to destinations within the community (i.e.: parks, schools, civic facilities, shopping, housing, employment centers);
- Allow two-way traffic on a wide surface that will accommodate a full range of users;
- Connect to the regional trails system;
- Be located with respect for the environment and adjacent landowners;
- Educate trail users about the environment and the history of the community;
- Link the old with the new and reinforce the community's small town character;
- Include amenities tailored to the trail location and type of path surface (i.e.: directional and interpretive signage, maps at trailheads, mileage markers, trash receptacles, benches);
- Be located, designed and constructed through cooperative efforts; and
- Respect private property rights.

## TRAILS

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### INTRODUCTION

Milliken and Johnstown are linked together through a shared agricultural heritage and school system. **The citizens expressed a strong desire to strengthen this tie, nurturing the social and economic connection by providing a safe, integrated physical connection via a trail system.**

The community is excited about expanding the limited trail system. The citizens' top priority is to install an off-street trail adjacent to Highway 60 to connect Johnstown and Milliken. Currently, children are walking and riding their bikes along this busy highway to get to and from school. Thus, grade-separated crossings of Highway 60 in each community are also very important.

**Cooperation will be essential to develop the comprehensive trails network.** Trails will generally follow the arterial streets, rivers, and irrigation ditches. The plan set forth will develop over time. Many of the neighborhood trails will be developed in conjunction with adjacent land development. Landowners, ditch companies, utility companies, Colorado Department of Transportation, and Weld and Larimer Counties must be involved in the site

selection and design process so that the new neighborhoods can be linked together. It may be possible to share a right-of way with a ditch or utility company to limit the amount of land necessary for a trail to provide those links. Cooperation will also be essential to fund and maintain the trails.

*Intent*

This section of the Master Plan provides a framework for good planning and design of community trails to ensure that Milliken and Johnstown develop a safe, interconnected trail network. It should serve as a reference to guide future trail-related decisions.



*Function of Trails*

Trails have numerous important functions:

- Trails form a cohesive community network by connecting residential neighborhoods, community facilities, shopping, parks, employment centers, recreational facilities and open space;
- They allow for safe movement between and throughout the communities and provide an

alternative to automobile transportation;

- They link important places and activities in the community and out-of-town destinations by connecting to regional trail networks;
- They provide outdoor recreational opportunities and enhance the area’s quality of life;
- They enhance property values and strengthen neighborhoods; and
- They provide an opportunity to communicate the community’s history and value of its natural resources through interpretive educational signage.

*Trail Types*

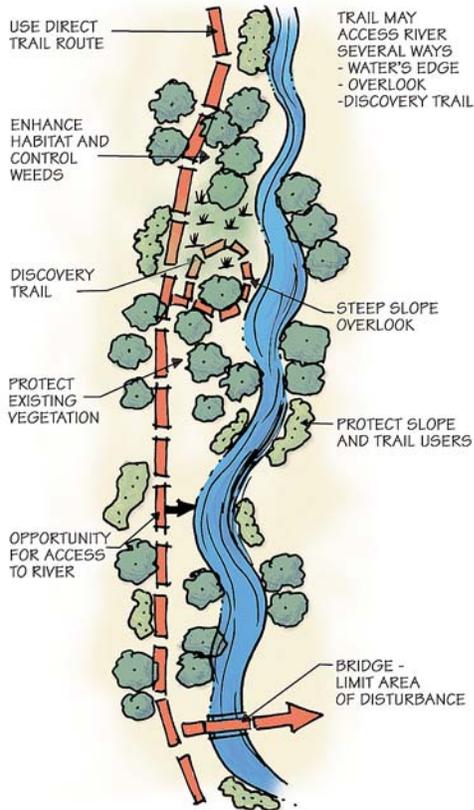
The trail system in Milliken/Johnstown will include the following types of trails (see trail cross-sections on page 55).

Arterial Transportation Corridor Trail

Arterial Transportation Corridor trails will facilitate commuting between the communities and across town for non-vehicular modes of transportation. These trails will be within the right-of-way adjacent to major arterials (streets). Highway 60 and Weld County Road 46 1/2 will provide the main east - west connections between Johnstown and Milliken. The remainder of the arterial street network generally follows the existing county road network and will be improved over time in association with adjacent development. Coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation will be required during the design and construction process. Typical activities on

regional transportation corridors include biking, rollerblading, and walking. With the exception of trail maintenance, motorized vehicles will not be permitted on any type of trail in Milliken/Johnstown.

### River Corridor Trail



RIVER CORRIDOR TRAIL

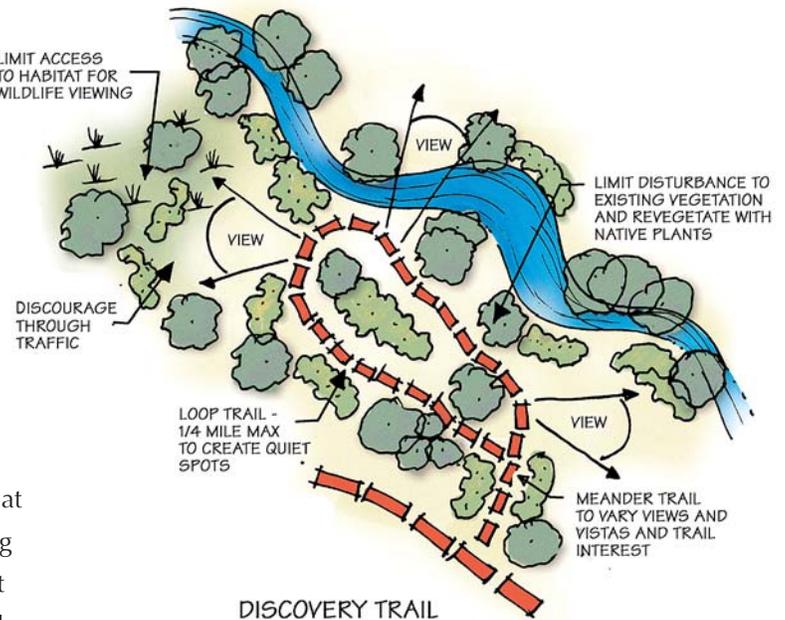
River Corridor trails will be developed to allow people to enjoy the riparian corridors and to facilitate safe travel between and within the communities (riparian areas are lands that are adjacent to and influenced by flowing water). These trails will provide off-street connections to major destinations in each town, tie Johnstown and Milliken together and connect the community to the regional trail systems in Weld and Larimer Counties (see Regional Context Map on page 20). These trails will generally follow the Big Thompson, Little Thompson and South Platte rivers. In addition to biking, walking, jogging and skating, portions of

these trails may allow for horseback riding.

### Neighborhood Trail

Neighborhood trails will help form cohesive community trail networks by linking parks, community facilities, neighborhoods, schools, shopping, employment centers and the regional trail system. **These trails will be located through cooperative efforts with landowners and developers during the preliminary plat process or in conjunction with trail development programs initiated by the community.** Typical activities on these trails may include walking, jogging, rollerblading and biking. Neighborhood trails should be accessible to all ages and types of activities.

### Discovery Trail



DISCOVERY TRAIL

Discovery trails are short, narrow paths that allow limited access to sensitive areas in a manner that will not damage the habitat. This may include a trail up to the edge of a wetland or access to the water's

edge in sensitive areas. Typical activities on these trails include passive activities such as bird watching, photography or quiet observation of the area's natural character. Access is limited to pedestrians and wheelchairs.

### Trailheads

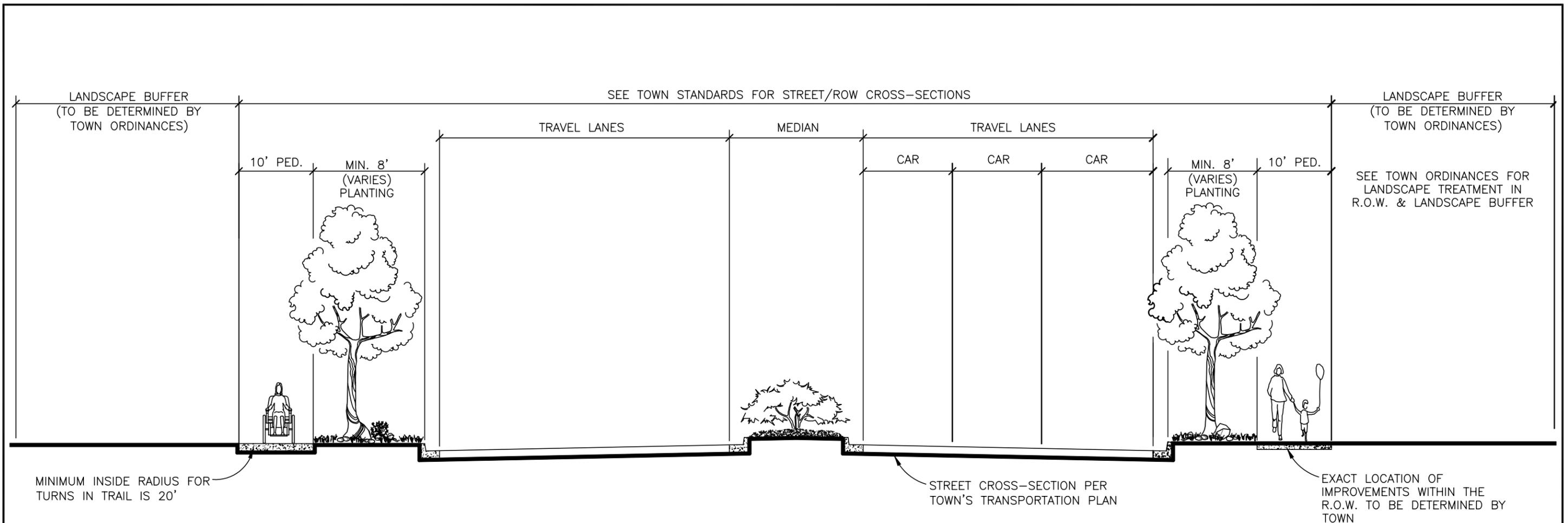
Trailheads are the gateways of the trail network. Trailheads will be located within all neighborhood, community, and regional parks. They may also be strategically located in the linear parks system to provide access to river corridor trails. The goal is to distribute trailheads throughout the parks and trails system so that they provide access to the trails system for each neighborhood and are available approximately every two miles along the river corridor trails. Each trailhead should have a parking area, a drinking fountain, a trash receptacle and appropriate signage. Trailheads should be incorporated into other community facilities whenever possible (i.e. museum, library, schools).

### Trail Amenities

All trails will provide an opportunity to educate users about the history of Milliken, Johnstown, the surrounding landscape, trail safety and etiquette. Amenities will be tailored to the trail location and type of trail. For example, a nature trail may include a viewing blind while a neighborhood trail in a residential subdivision could include fitness stations. Interpretive and directional signage, benches, picnic areas, trash receptacles, and plantings will be integrated into the trail corridors as appropriate.



Arterial Transportation Corridor Trail Cross Section



## ARTERIAL TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR TRAIL

**Purpose:**

Provide safe pedestrian & bicycle access adjacent to major arterial streets.

**Activities:**

Commuting, walking, biking, wheelchair, jogging.

**Materials:**

Min. 4" thick concrete.

**Landscape:**

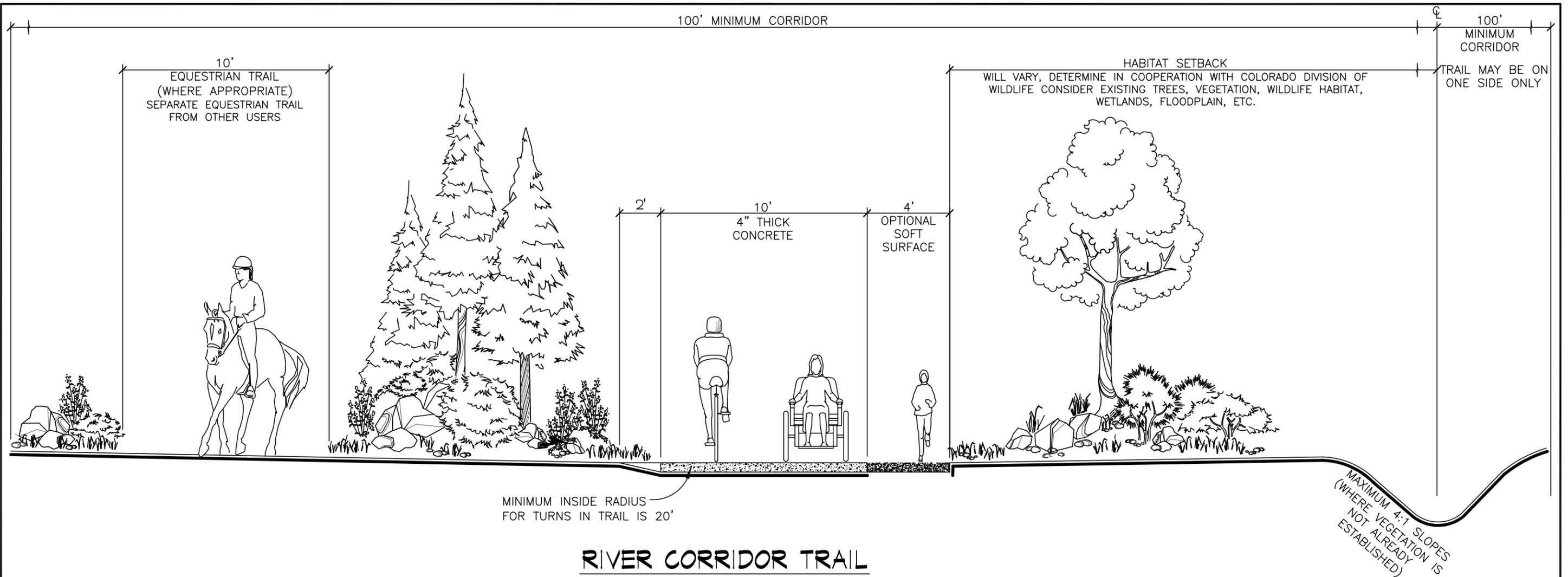
Consider adjacent land use when determining appropriate materials.

**Developer Requirements:**

Town will determine the minimum grading, trail and landscape improvements to be installed by developer at the time of preliminary plat.

W

River Corridor Trail Cross Section



## RIVER CORRIDOR TRAIL

### Purpose:

Separate pedestrian and other users from sensitive habitat, auto traffic, provide routes to activity centers and regional connections.

### Activities:

Biking, jogging, wheelchair, roller blading, skateboarding, fitness trail, mountain biking, cross country skiing, horseback riding in some locations.

### Materials:

- Use 4" thick concrete for primary trail, 8" thick crusher fines for soft surface and 6" thick compacted road base for horse trails.
- Install benches, trash receptacles, and landscaping for shade along trail corridor at a minimum of 1/2 mile spacing.

### Landscape:

Landscape with native plant materials. Use native wildflowers wherever possible. Strategically locate resting areas within shady areas along corridor. Temporary irrigation will be requested to establish the vegetation. Trees shall be a minimum of 6' from the edge of trail.

### Trail Alignment:

- Keep trail as far from trees as possible, at 6' away, least out of drip line.
- Shoulders (2' min.) must allow for unobstructed maintenance of path (i.e. snow blades).
- Consider impacts to adjacent land use when locating trail.
- Pedestrian crossing on 1/2 mile maximum spacing.
- Location of trail to be determined at time of preliminary plat.

### Soft Surface:

- If concrete path is separated from the soft surface, maintain 2' shoulder for maintenance and 10' minimum between trails.
- Soft surface may be relocated if corridor width allows.
- May be excluded in internal neighborhood trail systems.

### Developer Requirements:

Town will determine the minimum grading, trail and landscape improvements to be installed by developer at the time of preliminary plat.

JOB NO. 80-3267.004.00

JOHNSTOWN/MILLIKEN PARKS, TRAILS,  
RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

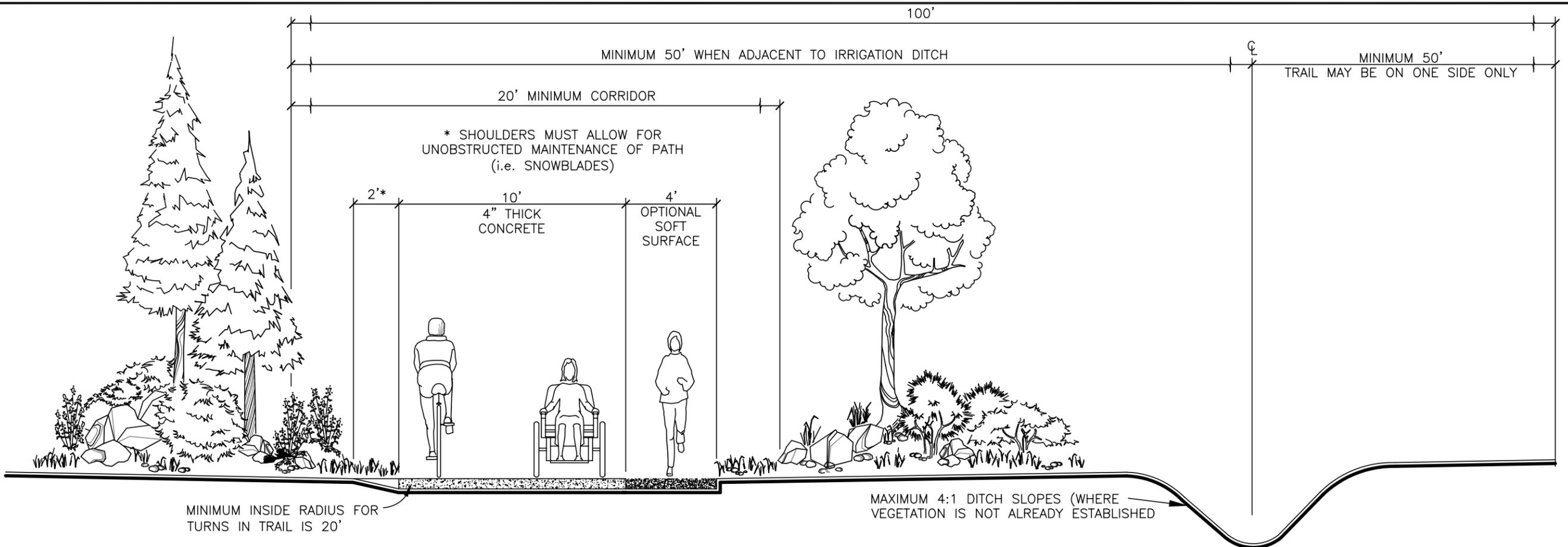


RIVER CORRIDOR TRAIL

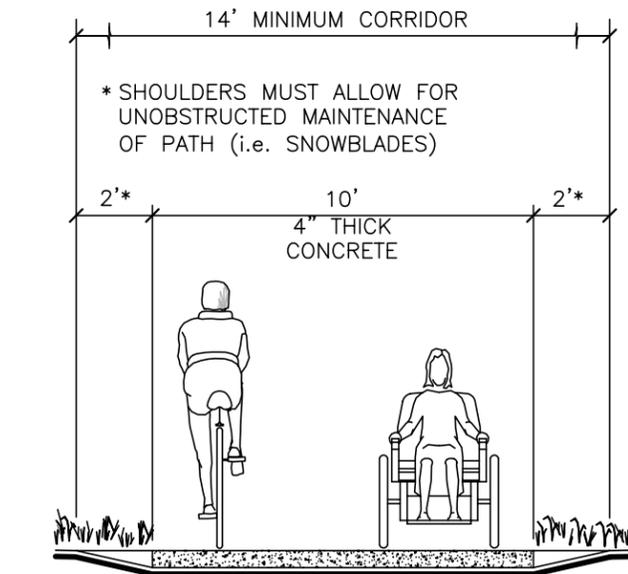
FIGURE:

2 of 4

Neighborhood Trail Cross Section



### NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL



### NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION TO TRAILS

**Purpose:**

Provide safe access, separate from auto traffic, provide direct routes to activity centers, community facilities, neighborhoods, schools and the regional trail system.

**Activities:**

Biking, jogging, wheelchair, roller blading, skateboarding, fitness trail, mountain biking, cross country skiing.

**Materials:**

- Use min. 4" thick concrete on 10' trail, 8" thick crusher fines on parallel 4' trail.
- Install benches and trash receptacles along trail corridor a minimum of 1/2 mile spacing.

See town ordinances for specific requirements

**Landscape:**

Landscape with native plant materials. Use native wildflowers where possible.

**Trail Alignment:**

- In non-residential areas the width and location of trail may vary.
- Specific trail location to be determined in cooperation with the Town at the time of preliminary plat.
- Consider impacts to adjacent land uses when locating trail.
- Pedestrian crossing on 1/2 mile maximum spacing.
- Shoulders (2' minimum) must allow for unobstructed maintenance of path (i.e. snow blades).

**Soft Surface:**

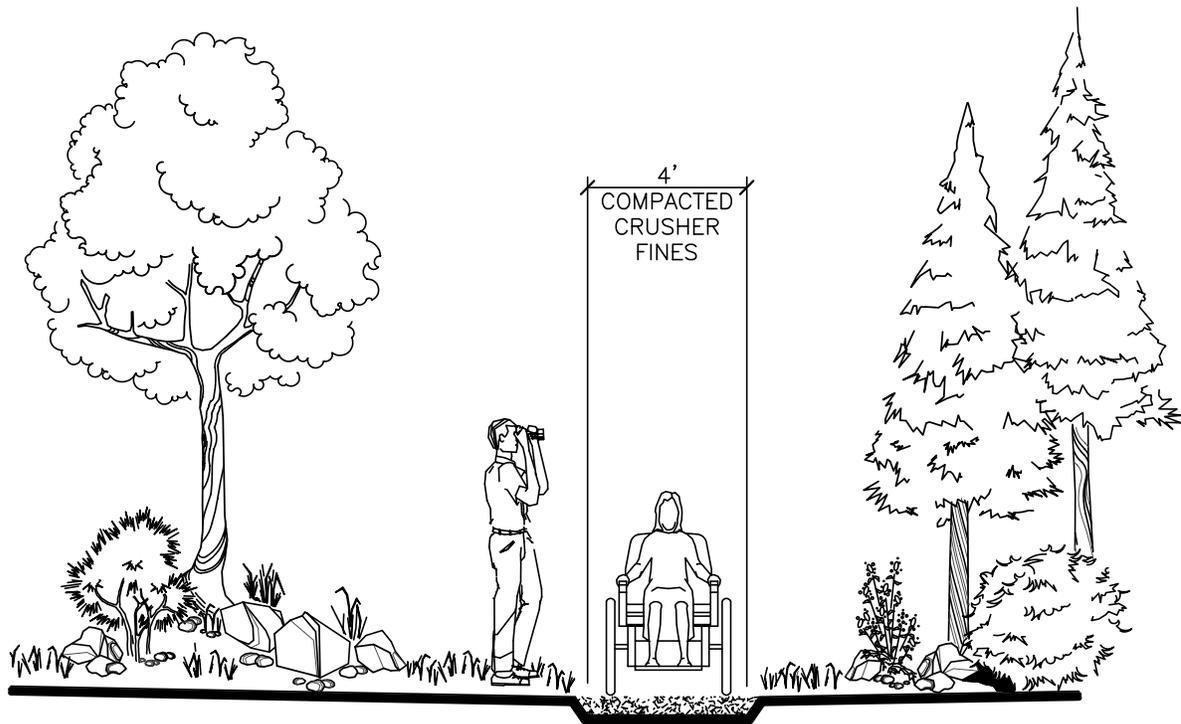
- If concrete path is separated from the soft surface, maintain 2' shoulder for maintenance and 10' minimum between trails.
- Soft surface may be relocated if corridor width allows.
- May be excluded in internal neighborhood trail systems.

**Developer Requirements:**

Town will determine the minimum grading, trail and landscape improvements to be installed by developer at the time of preliminary plat.

JOB NO. 80-3267.004.00

Discovery trail



## DISCOVERY TRAIL

**Purpose:**

Provide limited public access (pedestrian and wheelchair only) to sensitive areas.

**Activities:**

Passive activities only such as bird watching, photography, plant identification, or quiet observation of the area's character.

**Materials:**

Use 8" thick crusher fines.

**Landscaping:**

Limit disturbance and revegetate with appropriate native materials (see Native Plant Materials Selection Guide).

**Special:**

Discourage through traffic by designing trail to loop back to point of origin, maximum 1/4 mile length. Design trail to encourage traveler to slow down and notice surroundings.

JOB NO. 80-3267.004.00

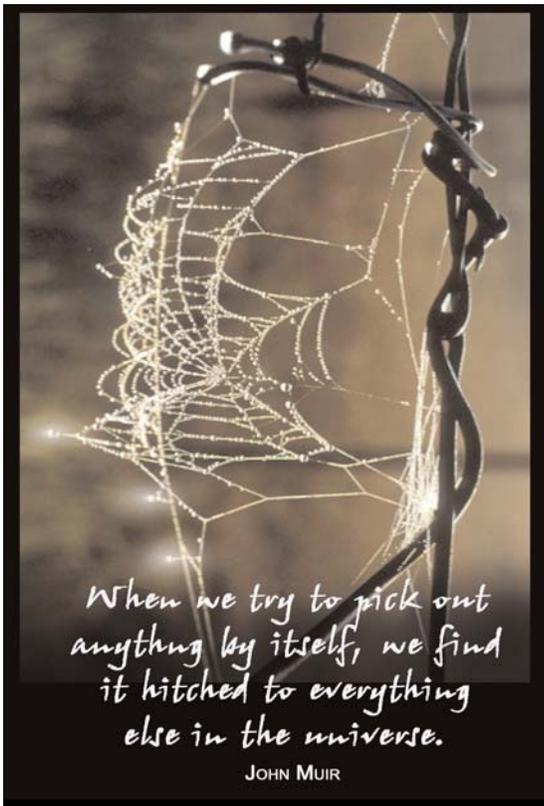
JOHNSTOWN/MILLIKEN PARKS, TRAILS,  
RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN



**DISCOVERY TRAIL**

FIGURE:

**4 of 4**



*When we try to pick out  
anything by itself, we find  
it hitched to everything  
else in the universe.*

JOHN MUIR

### GOAL T1:

Build a safe, multi-purpose, comprehensive trail network in Milliken and Johnstown.

Policy T1.1: Link the towns, neighborhoods, parks, schools, open spaces, employment centers, community facilities and adjacent communities with a multi-purpose trail system.

Strategy T1.1.1: Make the trails wide enough to minimize conflict among trail users. See trail cross-sections on pages 55 to 58.

Strategy T1.1.2: Include access for equestrians where appropriate throughout the trail system. Work with the neighborhood and Town when designing the trail to determine if there is a need for equestrian access and if it will be compatible with the adjacent land use.

Strategy T1.1.3: Encourage preservation of the railroad rights-of-way for commuter rail and trails.

Strategy T1.1.4: Work with the ditch companies to preserve existing ditch corridors for irrigation purposes and as trail corridors.

Policy T1.2: Develop on- and off-street pedestrian and bicycle trails that provide safe access throughout the communities. The general location of the trail network is shown on the Master Plan Map on page 9.

Strategy T1.2.1: Develop streets in accordance with Johnstown's and Milliken's adopted transportation plans to ensure streets are bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.

Strategy T1.2.2: Work with the development community to provide bikeways and sidewalks in new developments. New developments shall follow the standards set forth in this plan to ensure the ultimate trail system is consistent and connected.



Strategy T1.2.3: Require all trails to comply with American Disability Act (ADA) standards for accessibility.

Strategy T1.2.4: Design different types of trails to come together at strategic points to allow travelers several different choices to reach a desired location.

Policy T1.3: Develop trailheads so they are distributed throughout the park and trail system, are available every two miles along river corridor trails, and provide access to every neighborhood.

Strategy T1.3.1: Strategically locate trailheads in areas that are centrally located (i.e. they are easily accessible from neighborhoods, parks, schools, other trails).

Strategy T1.3.2: Include trailheads in every neighborhood, community and regional park.

## GOAL T2:

All trails should be sensitive to the environment.

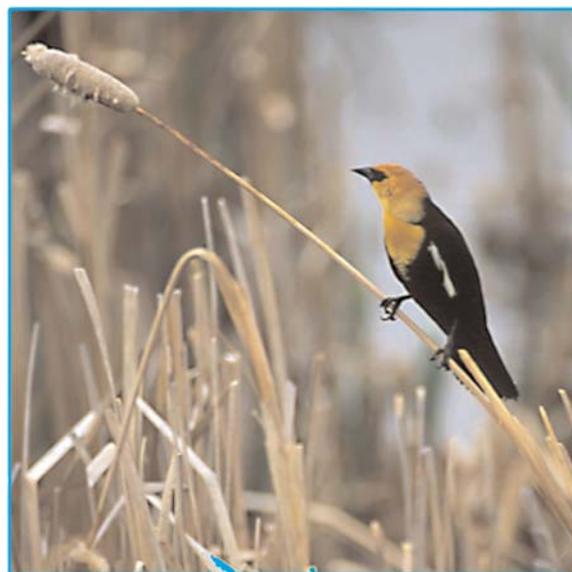
Policy T2.1: When siting trails, avoid sensitive areas and minimize impacts to wildlife and wetlands.

Strategy T2.1.1: Use appropriate setbacks from riparian corridors, valuable habitat and other sensitive areas. Work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife or qualified ecologist to determine appropriate setbacks (see resource assessment section on page 21 and trail cross sections on pages 55 to 58).



Strategy T2.1.2: Site trails in areas that have already been disturbed or are less sensitive (i.e. on an abandoned farm road or through an upland area instead of through a wetland).

Strategy T2.1.3: Close portions of trails in sensitive habitat areas as necessary during periods when species are extra sensitive to human encroachment (such as nesting season).



Strategy T2.1.4: Enlist the help of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, local conservation groups and ecologists when planning and designing trails.

Strategy T2.1.5: Educate trail users on the importance of “leaving no trace” and staying on trails through signage at trailheads, educational curriculum at the local schools and articles in the local paper.

Policy T2.2: Design trail improvements to fit into the natural environment.

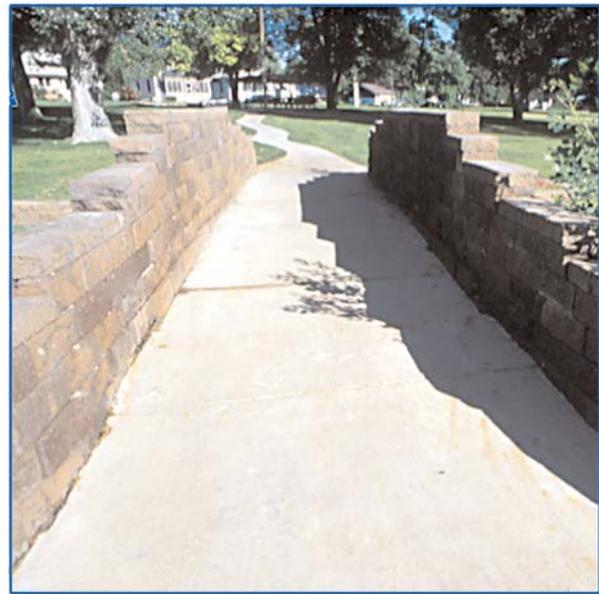
Strategy T2.2.1: Design new trails in a manner that responds to the natural environment, fits into the setting and protects scenic view corridors. Consider issues such as topography, erosion, natural drainage, view corridors, sensitive areas and the transition between the trail and the surrounding landscape.

Strategy T2.2.2: Design trails to take advantage of the diversity in the landscape through which they pass. As the landscape changes, ensure that dominant features can be clearly seen from the paths. Locate trails to take advantage of good views and vistas toward landmarks.

Policy T2.3: Use native, drought-tolerant species for landscaping whenever possible.

Strategy T2.3.1: Incorporate the following xeriscape principles in trail design:

- Turf Alternatives: Consider alternatives to turf such as native and low water-use plantings. Native turf should be used in areas where intense traffic is not anticipated.
- Mulches: Use mulches to cover the soil, minimize evaporation, reduce weed growth and slow erosion.



- Zoning of Plants: Group plantings based on their water use and locate them to take advantage of microclimates and their specific needs.
- Soil Improvements: Prior to planting, enhance soils with organic matter to allow for better water absorption and improved water holding capacity.
- Appropriate Maintenance: Apply water according to plant needs rather than a schedule; prune, weed and fertilize as necessary to further water savings.

## GOAL T3:

Pursue trail development with a spirit of cooperation.

Policy T3.1: Cooperate with federal, state and local governments, private landowners, developers, the school districts, the Recreation District, non-profit organizations and citizens to facilitate trail connections and to acquire funding.

Strategy T3.1.1: Work with Weld and Larimer Counties and neighboring municipalities to link communities, facilitate land acquisition, pursue funding opportunities and construct trails.

Strategy T3.1.2: Monitor trail initiatives within the planning area and adjacent communities to maximize potential for connections and cooperative funding (see Regional Context Map on page 20 for current status of planned trails within the planning area).

Strategy T3.1.3: Develop cooperative agreements with ditch companies regarding joint use of ditch rights-of-way for trails. Address safety, maintenance and liability issues in the agreements.

Policy T3.2: Acquire right-of-way through negotiation and consensus.

Strategy T3.2.1: Work with landowners to determine appropriate locations for trails.

Strategy T3.2.2: Keep the public informed of decisions regarding trail design and location.

Policy T3.3: Encourage community participation in trail design, development and management.

Strategy T3.3.1: Work with the Recreation District, the school districts, teachers, and citizens to create educational trails near the schools and integrate educational elements into the trail corridors.

Strategy T3.3.2: Cooperate with the Weld County Youth Conservation Corps to hire local youth to help build and maintain the trails.

Strategy T3.3.3: Host community events such as community walks and guided nature walks (with volunteer naturalists).

## GOAL T4:

Use trails to enhance the quality of life in Milliken/Johnstown.

Policy T4.1: Design all trails to reflect Johnstown/Milliken's unique character.

Strategy T4.1.1: Ensure that proposed trails reflect the design elements (for materials, signage, benches, landscaping, trailheads, rural character, etc.) outlined in the **Trail Design Considerations** section of this plan (pages 65 and 66).

## TRAIL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Site trails in Milliken and Johnstown as the communities grow according to the purpose that they will serve within the overall trail system. The trail corridors are identified on the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Map. The

W

map depicts general locations of the trail corridors. Specific locations will be determined in cooperation with the landowner after the resources along the corridor have been evaluated (see resource assessment section on page 21).

Following are a basic design process and general design considerations for developing a trail.

## *1. Site Inventory*

Identify the resources, unique features, opportunities and constraints that the proposed site offers. The inventory will likely address:

- **Neighborhood and Community Context** – Note adjacent land uses and identify possible trail locations that provide convenient access to neighborhoods and other community destinations. Minimize conflicts between trails and incompatible uses. For example, if the trail is planned to go through the heart of sensitive habitat or near people’s homes, identify alternative routes or buffer the trail from the habitat/homes as necessary.
- **Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat** – Map habitat types and determine how sensitive each area is to human intrusion. Also determine where there are opportunities to improve habitat quality in conjunction with trail development.
- **Aesthetic Characteristics** – Note both immediate and distant views from the proposed trail area (i.e junkyard 100 yards away versus tremendous view of mountains), the quality of the natural environment, and adjacent land uses. Also note the overall character of the

proposed site. The trail should fit into the existing landscape (i.e. more formal design adjacent to a residential subdivision versus a nature trail along a river corridor).

- **Accessibility** – Consider how people will be able to enter the trail corridor from adjacent properties, other trails and nearby roads.
- **Floodplains** – Identify the limits of the floodplain on the proposed site and what precautions may be necessary (i.e. flood gates to close trail during events, bridges, bank stabilization) when laying out the trail.
- **Topography** – Note the topography and opportunities and constraints it may pose.
- **Water Resources** – Evaluate river or ditch hydrology, water quality and bank stability as necessary.



- **Property Ownership** – If the town does not own the proposed portion of the trail corridor, coordinate with property owners for trail right-of-way acquisition.

- Unique Features – Map special areas such as interesting geologic formations, historic sites, or wetlands and determine how sensitive these areas are to human intrusion.
- Hazardous Areas – Map areas that pose safety or environmental hazards.

## *II. Site Analysis*

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Evaluate the site inventory and make recommendations to improve the area, minimize conflicts and maximize trail benefits.

## *III. Site Design*

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Site the trail taking the site inventory and analysis into consideration. Design the trail to fit within the natural environment and take advantage of the diversity in the landscape through which it passes. Design the trail to reflect Milliken/Johnstown’s unique character (refer to **Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Design Guidelines** for information regarding Milliken/Johnstown’s character). Consider who will use the trail and what type of experience the user will have when determining the type of trail materials and amenities to be placed along the trail. Develop an operations and maintenance (O&M) plan at the time of site design to facilitate the allocation of resources. Address necessary equipment, anticipated maintenance tasks (i.e. mowing, snow removal, trash removal, weed management, trail repair and replacement) and discuss who will be responsible for each task.

Involve the public. Citizens are interested in participating in trail construction. This involvement will lead toward a feeling of connection to the community and evoke a positive attitude towards the trails system.

## *IV. Site Development*

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Consider the development parameters outlined on the following page prior to designing the site. Develop a construction cost estimate to establish a preliminary budget for the design and development of the trail.

## *V. Maintenance*

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Consider trail maintenance during site design. Design trails to minimize long term maintenance obligations. Educate trail users to respect the community’s trail network and invoke a “leave no trace” ethic.



## TRAIL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS



ITEM	DESIGN CONSIDERATION									
Access	Consider the proposed trail's relationship to planned trailheads and streets to facilitate maintenance. Consider how people will be able to enter the trail corridor from adjacent properties, other trails and nearby roads. All trails should meet the ADA standards.									
Aesthetics	Note both immediate and distant views from the proposed trail area (i.e. junkyard 100 yards away vs. tremendous view of mountains), the quality of the natural environment, etc.									
Alignment	Align the trail to take advantage of land forms and other features. Install landscaping at appropriate locations to create interest along the corridor. Curves in trail should be smooth and respond to land forms, landscaping and other features along the trail.									
Clearance	<p>Think of the trail design in all three dimensions. Trails should be clear of tree limbs and trunks, rocks and brush.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Trail</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Horizontal Clearance</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Vertical Clearance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Crusher fines</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2' for limbs, logs, &amp; brush</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7' - 8'</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Horse / Bike</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6' for trees &amp; rock ledges 3' for limbs &amp; logs</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10'</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Trail	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Crusher fines	2' for limbs, logs, & brush	7' - 8'	Horse / Bike	6' for trees & rock ledges 3' for limbs & logs	10'
Trail	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance								
Crusher fines	2' for limbs, logs, & brush	7' - 8'								
Horse / Bike	6' for trees & rock ledges 3' for limbs & logs	10'								
Connectivity	Use trails to connect homes and businesses to destinations within neighborhoods and throughout the community. Cross creeks and ditches in strategic locations to connect neighborhoods and destinations within the community. Maximum distance between ditch and river crossings to be 1/2 mile. Town to review type of crossing at preliminary plat to determine if a pedestrian or maintenance vehicle crossing will be required.									
Context	Note adjacent land uses and site the trail to provide convenient access to neighborhoods, and other community destinations and to minimize conflicts.									
Drainage	The edge of the trail should match the adjacent ground. Provide appropriate conveyance for drainage that crosses the trail corridor to allow nuisance flows over the trail where possible. Piping run off under trails is not preferable as it will add maintenance. Establish minimum grades to assure proper drainage.									
Education	Integrate opportunities for education to the maximum extent possible along the trail corridors. Install interpretive signage to educate trail users about the community and the environment (i.e.: native plants, history, agriculture, birds, sensitive habitat).									
Facilities	Place picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles along River Corridors with a maximum spacing of 1/2 mile. Choose furnishings that are long lasting, durable, and compliment the natural environment.									
Floodplain	Identify what portions of the proposed trail will be in the floodplain and what precautions are necessary. Install signage and gates to limit access to flooded trails during storm events.									
Landscaping	Use native materials outlined on the plant list in this plan when ever possible. Strategically locate resting areas near shade with maximum spacing of 1/4 mile between rest areas. Avoid winter shade on the walk where possible. Use a variety of colors, textures, fragrances and provide visual interest for all seasons.									
Maintenance	Design trails considering the ease in which they may be maintained. Limit pesticide and herbicide use. Do not apply de-icing materials to the trail.									
Orientation	Orient trails so that the user's relationship with the sun and the surrounding landscape varies as he/she travels.									

## TRAIL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)



ITEM	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS
Overall Trail Design	Ensure that all of the trail elements fit together into a unified whole. The design should respond to the area's unique setting, character and heritage.
Phasing	Build trails in logical places from one connection point to the next. Consider using interim connections such as streets to avoid dead ends.
Public Art	Incorporate public art throughout the trail system. Choose locations that are visible to people both on and near the trail.
Setbacks	Please refer to trail cross-sections for appropriate setback guidelines. Work with an ecologist or Colorado Division of Wildlife to determine appropriate setbacks from existing vegetation and wildlife habitat. Keep trail as far away from existing trees as possible – at least out of drip line.
Slope	Consider both linear grade and cross-slope when developing trail. Maximum 1% cross-slope; maximum 5% grade (may need handrail for roller bladers), try to keep grade below 5%. All trails should meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards.
Special Areas	Locate overlooks, discovery trails and rest stops to take advantage of unique landmarks and features.
Trailheads	Combine trailheads with parks and other community facilities where ever possible. Every neighborhood, community and regional park shall contain a trailhead. River Corridor trails should have trailheads every two miles unless a trailhead in an adjacent park will provide this access. Locate trailheads with access to major streets. Amenities should include: parking (with adequate room for horse trailers if horses are allowed), signage (trail rules, directional and interpretive), bicycle racks, garbage cans, plastic bags (to encourage dog and horse manure removal) signature plantings that are appropriate for the area. Also consider providing water fountains, trail maps and restrooms.
Trail Safety	Provide adequate shoulders to ensure there is a sufficient fall zone (at least 4'). Avoid blind curves. Place protective railing in areas with steep slopes and on bridges. Prune dead and damaged trees to protect trail users.
Turning Radius	Turns should be wide enough to accommodate maintenance vehicles (minimum inside radius 20'). Avoid blind curves.
Vegetation	Evaluate existing vegetation along trail prior to trail construction. Limit disturbance to high quality vegetative cover (i.e. cottonwoods, willows, cherry and plum trees, grassy areas). Prune dead and damaged trees to protect trail users.
Visibility	Ensure visibility is adequate from adjacent land uses so people feel safe on trails.
Visual Complexity	Design trails to take advantage of the diversity in the landscape through which they pass. As the landscape changes, ensure that dominant features can be clearly seen from the paths. Create good views and vistas to landmarks.
Water Resources	When crossing ditches and drainage areas minimize disturbances by using bridges and boardwalks where possible rather than regrading the site to accommodate the trail.
Wildlife	Take appropriate measures to protect habitat areas while building the trail. Site and build trails away from sensitive habitat. Try to construct trails between September 1st and April 30th if nesting birds are in close proximity.

## NATIVE PLANT SELECTION GUIDE FOR TRAILS



COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HEIGHT	SPREAD	PLANTING SIZE	WATER REQUIREMENTS	SUN REQUIREMENTS
<b>Shrubs</b>						
American Plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>	15'	10'	5 gallon	low	full sun
Apache Plume	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	3' to 5'	3' to 5'	5 gallon	low	full sun
Big Western Sage	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>	3' to 4'	3' to 4'	5 gallon	low to moderate	full sun
Boulder Raspberry	<i>Rubus deliciosus</i>	3' to 6'	3' to 6'	5 gallon	adaptable to low	sun
Buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia sorbifolia</i>	8' to 15'	6' to 12'	5 gallon	low	sun
Coyote Willow	<i>Salix exigua</i>	6' to 12'	4' to 8'	5 gallon	high to adaptable	sun
Cranberrybush Viburnum	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	10'	6'	5 gallon	low to moderate	full sun
Fernbrush	<i>Chamaebatiaria millefolium</i>	3' to 5'	3' to 5'	5 gallon	low	full sun
Four-wing Saltbush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	4' to 5'	3' to 4'	5 gallon	very low to low	full sun
Golden Current	<i>Ribes aureum</i>	2' to 5'	2' to 4'	5 gallon	moderate	full sun to full shade
Horizontal Juniper	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	1' to 2'	4' to 8'	5 gallon	adaptable to low	full sun to filtered shade
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	to 4'	to 4'	2 gallon	low to moderate	full sun
Lewis's Mockorange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	6' to 8'	5' to 6'	5 gallon	moderate	full sun to full shade
Mountain Mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>	4' to 6'	4' to 6'	5 gallon	low	sun to filtered shade
New Mexico Privet	<i>Forestiera neomexicana</i>	10' to 15'	10'	5 gallon	moderate	full sun to part shade
Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	5' to 10'	6-10'	5 gallon	adaptable	full sun to part shade
Rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	2' to 4'	2' to 4'	5 gallon	low	full sun
Red Coralberry	<i>Symphoricarpos orbiculatus</i>	3' to 6'	3' to 6'	5 gallon	adaptable	filtered shade
Redtwig Dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	8' to 10'	8' to 10'	5 gallon	high	full sun to full shade
Rocky Mountain Sumac	<i>Rhus glabra cismontana</i>	2' to 3'	2' to 3'	5 gallon	adaptable to low	full sun to filtered shade
Shrubby Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	2' to 4'	2' to 3'	5 gallon	moderate to high	full sun to full shade
Three-leaf Sumac	<i>Rhus trilobata</i>	2' to 5'	to 25'	5 gallon	low to moderate	full sun to full shade
Western Sand Cherry	<i>Prunus besseyi</i>	4' to 6'	4' to 6'	5 gallon	adaptable to low	sun
White Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	3' to 4'	3' to 5'	5 gallon	adaptable	shade
Woods Rose	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	3' to 6'	3' to 6'	5 gallon	adaptable to low	full sun

## NATIVE PLANT SELECTION GUIDE FOR TRAILS (CONTINUED)

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HEIGHT	SPREAD	PLANTING SIZE	WATER REQUIREMENTS	SUN REQUIREMENTS
<b>Trees</b>						
Bristlecone Pine	<i>Pinus aristata</i>	20' to 40'	20' to 40'	5' and 7'	adaptable to low	sun to part shade
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	70' to 80'	70' to 80'	2.0"	moderate	full sun
Colorado Spruce	<i>Picea pungens</i>	30' to 60'	20' to 30'	6'	moderate to high	full sun
Common Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	50' to 60'	50'	2.0"	moderate to high	full sun
Downy Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	20' to 25'	20' to 25'	2.5"	adaptable to low	sun
Green Ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	35' to 75'	15' to 35'	2.5"	moderate to high	full sun
Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos F. inermis</i>	30' to 70'	30' to 70'	2.0"	moderate to high	full sun
Kentucky Coffee Tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	50-60'	40-50'	2.0"	low	sun
Lanceleaf Cottonwood	<i>Populus x accuminata</i>	40' to 60'	30' to 40'	2.5"	adaptable	full sun
Narrowleaf Cottonwood	<i>Populus angustifolia</i>	30' to 50'	20' to 30'	2.5"	adaptable	full sun
Pinon Pine	<i>Pinus edulis</i>	20' to 30'	20' to 25'	5' and 7'	very low to low	full sun
Plains Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>	75' to 100'	50' to 75'	2.0"	moderate to high	full sun to part shade
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	60' to 100'	25' to 30'	5' and 7'	adaptable	full sun
Rocky Mt. Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	15' to 20'	15' to 20'	15 gal and 6'	very low to low	full sun
Saskatoon Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	6' to 12'	6' to 12'	6.0' clump	low to moderate	sun to part shade
Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus crus-galli 'inermis'</i>	15' to 25'	15' to 20'	2.0"	adaptable	sun



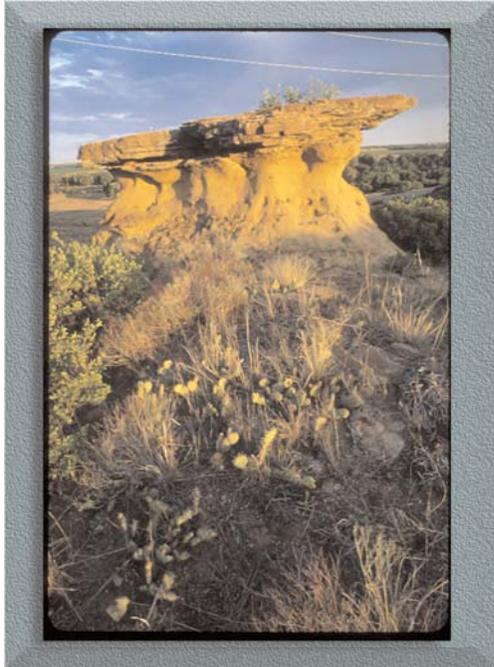
## SECTION V

### OPEN SPACE

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# OPEN SPACE



## OPEN SPACE

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*The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.*

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

### Introduction

The citizens of Johnstown and Milliken wish to leave a legacy for the community. They wish to protect the special qualities and special places that contribute to the high quality of life here for generations to come. This includes (but is certainly not limited to) the:

- Big Thompson, Little Thompson and South Platte River Corridors;
- Lands that reflect the region's agricultural heritage;

- Sandstone bluffs along the Big Thompson River;
- Stunning views of the Rocky Mountains, the rolling hills and agricultural land;
- Cultural resources such as the ancient burial grounds near Wildcat Mound, the old schools and barns, the Pioneer Cemetery and the railroad;
- Wildlife habitat and significant trees and vegetation;
- Large, open expanses of undeveloped land; and
- Opportunities to reconnect with nature.

Both Johnstown and Milliken are growing rapidly. Based on current development applications, Milliken is projecting 1,000 people will be added to the population annually for the foreseeable future and Johnstown projects the population will likely double every three years. As the number of people living in the area increases, so does the importance of an open space program. This was evident in the community workshops. **The citizens repeatedly stressed the importance of protecting the area's valuable resources listed above. They feel open space will play a vital role in preserving the character of the community.**

### Open Space Protection

The local residents also realize that both towns have limited resources and they emphasized the importance of forging partnerships and thinking creatively to preserve special places. The majority of participants believed that it

will be important to use a combination of both regulatory methods (i.e. open space dedication requirements, limiting development in the floodplains, requiring setbacks from sensitive areas) and financial incentives (i.e. grants, conservation easements, impact fees, leasing land back to farmers, etc.) to meet the citizens' goals. They felt it was reasonable to strengthen the floodplain regulations to protect the open areas because the rivers were well known for their periodic flooding. The citizens repeatedly emphasized the **importance of respecting landowners' property rights** and that all open space preservation plans must be **cooperative efforts** with the landowners.

### *Public Accessibility*

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When asked if open space should be publically accessible, the majority of citizens believed that **some access is typically desirable**. Currently, the vast majority of open lands are privately owned and thus, inaccessible to the general public. In addition, the citizens (including the school children) emphasized their strong desire to learn more about the area's history, geology, agricultural heritage and plant and animal communities. **They want every open area the community protects to contain an educational component** – even if it is merely an informative sign at the perimeter of farmland. They also felt that access should be based on the site's sensitivity and that it is important to restrict the uses allowed on open lands.

### *Prioritizing Open Space Preservation*

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Many participants want to protect all of the open lands and felt it was difficult to prioritize what should be protected. They agreed that the more qualities a site had, the better. For example, agricultural land along the Big Thompson River with good wildlife habitat and view corridors would receive priority over

agricultural land that is surrounded by development. Several residents (many of whom were farmers) voiced their concerns about the increasing conflicts between development and agriculture and the likelihood that it may not always be feasible to farm and ranch in the area. Most people felt strongly about protecting significant natural areas, wildlife habitat and "irreplaceable things" such as bald eagle roosts and fossils. The citizens encouraged Tetra Tech RMC to include examples of Open Lands Property Evaluation Forms in this Master Plan (refer to Appendix for Larimer County's and the City of Longmont's forms).

### *Community Buffer*

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**The vast majority of participants view the Johnstown/Milliken area as a single community.** They stated they're working very hard to make it this way. The children especially feel this way. Many people disliked the term "community buffer". They do not want to see continuous development as one travels down Highway 60. Rather, they wish to have a "community green area" between the towns that would serve as a community gathering place.

### *Intent*

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The purpose of this section is to:

- Define the benefits of open space protection;
- Document the community's open space goals and provide strategies to help the towns achieve them;
- Help the towns employ creative protection techniques to preserve and protect the community's significant resources;

- Set forth proposed tools and protection strategies that Johnstown and Milliken may use to accomplish open space protection goals;
- List guidelines for management and stewardship of open lands; and
- Provide contact information for assistance in open space preservation.

### *The Benefits of Open Space*

This section prepared by Colorado Open Lands and taken in part from “The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space”, © 1999, Trust for Public Land.

Colorado Open Lands (COL) attended a community workshop in Johnstown and a community workshop in Milliken to educate citizens about open space benefits and preservation methods and to help document the citizens’ vision for open space. COL’s mission is to “*preserve the significant open lands and diminishing natural heritage of Colorado through private and public partnerships, innovative land conservation techniques, and strategic leadership*”.

COL discussed the following benefits of open space at each workshop. Open space preservation provides:

#### **Environmental Benefits**

- Recharge aquifers (water quantity) – particularly important in arid climates like ours;
- Protect water quality by filtering runoff and pollutants;

- Moderate climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide;
- Control soil erosion;
- Maintain or improve air quality; and
- Protect wildlife habitat and ecological and genetic diversity.

#### **Human Benefits**

- Prevent flood damage by protecting floodplains;
- Provide recreational opportunities;
- Maintain the quality of life and community character;
- Preserve valuable views that often contribute to a community’s identity; and
- Provide relief from nearby development.

#### **Economic Benefits**

- Protect agricultural lands and safeguard the future of farming economies and communities;
- Increase the value of nearby residential properties;
- Lower infrastructure costs;
- Save tax dollars – the cost of supporting growth can be greater than tax revenues (when one considers the cost of providing infrastructure such as roads and utility lines and the cost of providing public services such as schools, recreational facilities, libraries, emergency services and police and fire protection);



- Protect water quality which is less expensive than treating contaminated water (New York City is spending \$1.5 billion to protect 80,000 acres of its watershed; the alternative is to spend \$8 billion on a water filtration plant and incur \$300 million annually to operate the plant);
- Boost local economies by attracting tourists and supporting outdoor recreation; and
- Improve the quality of life and thus attract tax-paying businesses and residents to a community.



*Conservation  
is humanity  
caring for  
the future.*

NANCY NEWHALL



## OPEN SPACE FUNCTION AND USES

TYPE OF OPEN SPACE	PURPOSE	POSSIBLE RECREATIONAL USES	POTENTIAL FACILITIES	COMMENTS
<b>Environmentally Significant</b> (grasslands, wetlands, riparian areas)	Protect valuable wildlife habitat or travel corridors, riparian/wetlands, encourage a diversity of plant and animal types, improve water quality or protect unique natural features.	Uses will vary based on the site's sensitivity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental education</li> <li>• Plant and wildlife identification/ observation</li> <li>• Photography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discovery trail around edge of habitat</li> <li>• Observation blinds</li> <li>• If public access is allowed, integrate a trailhead with parking into the design</li> </ul>	Emphasis on preservation of resources. Restrict public access and grazing (as appropriate) to minimize erosion and disturbance to wildlife. Ensure adequate setbacks and buffers from trails and adjacent land development.
<b>Water Feature Area</b> (Rivers, ponds, reservoirs)	These lands will likely have recreational values, as well as agricultural and environmental values.	Water-based recreation with an emphasis on resource preservation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-motorized boating</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Environmental education</li> <li>• Nature observation</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Picnicking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park along portion</li> <li>• Recreational trail/discovery trail</li> <li>• Dock</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Observation blinds</li> <li>• Restrooms</li> <li>• Benches</li> <li>• Trailhead with parking</li> </ul>	Protect ecosystem functions and provide adequate setbacks and buffers from sensitive areas.
<b>Community Character/ Heritage Land</b>	Protect lands that are important to citizens because of their historical or archaeological value.	Uses will vary based on the site's sensitivity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education/ interpretation</li> <li>• Nature observation</li> <li>• Photography</li> </ul>	Depends on use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discovery trail</li> <li>• Restrooms</li> <li>• Benches</li> <li>• Trailhead with parking</li> </ul>	Work with local and state historical groups to develop a management plan. Stabilize landmarks to prevent deterioration and protect landmarks from vandalism.
<b>Agricultural Land</b> (Pastures, crop land)	Provides economic benefits and preserves the area's rural character. May also help preserve view corridors and habitat and buffer development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education on the perimeter of the site</li> </ul>	Minimal	Emphasis on agricultural preservation and continued agricultural operations. Restrict public access. Ensure adequate setbacks and buffers from trails and adjacent land development.



## Open Space Goals, Policies and Strategies



*When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.*

**ALDO LEOPOLD**

### *Goal OS1:*

Create an interconnected open space network that protects the special qualities and special places that contribute to the high quality of life in the area for generations to come.

Policy OS1.1: Form creative public-private partnerships to preserve and enhance the significant natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational areas within Milliken and Johnstown Planning Areas.

Strategy OS1.1.1: Use the Master Plan Map to create a long-term plan for protecting the special areas the community has identified.

Strategy OS1.1.2: Work cooperatively with landowners to preserve and enhance the sensitive areas shown on the Master Plan Map.

Strategy OS 1.1.3: Utilize the protection methods outlined in this Plan and work with Larimer County, Weld County, Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Open Lands, the American Farm Land Trust, Legacy Land Trust, Colorado Historical Society, etc. to protect environmentally significant areas, community character/heritage lands and agricultural lands.

Policy OS 1.2: Follow the open space management and maintenance guidelines set forth in this plan.

Strategy OS 1.2.1: Cooperate with landowners, Larimer County and Weld County to control noxious weeds and other exotic plant species.

Policy OS 1.3: Follow best management practices (BMPs) to minimize or avoid negative impacts to open lands. (Some BMPs are included in the appendix of this document.)

Policy OS 1.4: Encourage a growth pattern that preserves natural areas, special places and the small-town character of the area.

Strategy OS 1.4.1: Adopt a compact urban growth policy to encourage and direct development close to the core community, maximize the funds invested in public utilities and services, and to preserve open lands, particularly in the peripheries of the towns.

Strategy OS 1.4.2: Encourage clustered development and subdivisions which preserve and manage the majority of the property as open space for land

outside of urban areas to enable conservation of open lands.

Strategy OS 1.4.3: Update Milliken and Johnstown land use regulations to encourage open space preservation. For example, require special resources, wildlife habitat, archaeological/historically significant areas, etc. to be identified and discussed at the initial stages of development applications.

Policy OS 1.5: Work with Colorado Division of Wildlife and other town-approved experts to ensure there is an adequate buffer between development and natural areas, water bodies, wetlands, and floodplains.

Strategy OS 1.5.1: Review Johnstown and Milliken floodplain regulations to ensure they sufficiently limit the amount a floodplain can be modified.

Strategy OS 1.5.2: Encourage new development along Interstate 25, Highway 60, Highway 257 and in highly visible areas (i.e. on rolling hills) to provide view corridors and fit within the character of the area.

Strategy OS 1.5.3: Prevent major alterations to the natural landscape and protect natural landforms whenever possible to maintain rural character. For example, preserve significant wildlife habitat, require major trees to be preserved, limit grading, prevent major alterations to floodplains, etc.

Policy OS 1.6: Integrate areas that have been impacted by oil and gas development into the open space network.

Strategy OS 1.6.1: Develop screening and buffering standards for existing and proposed facilities in cooperation with landowners and oil and gas companies.

Policy OS 1.7: Require oil and gas companies to revegetate disturbed areas and control weeds.

## HOW TO MANAGE AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE

Open space can vary in appearance, function and size. It may protect important environmental resources such as wildlife habitat and water. It may have prominent view corridors, it may help contribute to the community's special qualities such as its agricultural and railroad heritage, or it may perform a combination of these functions.

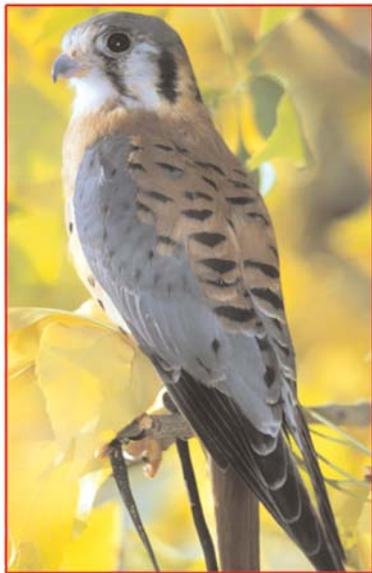
Each parcel of open space is unique and may perform numerous functions. Proper land stewardship will help ensure that our rich natural heritage is passed on to future generations. To facilitate good stewardship, we have classified Johnstown/Milliken open space into four categories:

- environmentally significant lands;
- water feature areas;
- community character/heritage lands; and
- agricultural lands.

Please note that these are general guidelines and each parcel should have its own management plan, objectives and educational component. Also included are several recommended best management practices (BMP's) in the appendix. These BMP's are economically feasible guidelines for land and water management measures that minimize or avoid impacts to chemical, physical and biological characteristics of wetlands, agricultural lands and reservoirs.

### *Environmentally Significant Lands*

Environmentally Significant Lands are areas that contain valuable wildlife habitat or travel corridors, help encourage a diversity of plant and animal types, help improve water quality or have unique natural features.



Throughout the public input process for this Master Plan, Johnstown/Milliken residents said that protecting wildlife habitat is a very important value provided by open space. As the area's population grows, its open space program becomes an important component in preserving wildlife -- not just for residents' enjoyment but also to ensure the long-term viability of local species such as raptors, herons, song birds, foxes and other mammals.

Open lands are also important for vegetation. Native plants provide the basic structure and food source for natural communities. And a diversity of plant species supports wildlife diversity. Open space properties enhance biological diversity by allowing natural processes to function. This element of the Master Plan will help the Town manage and ultimately improve the quality of plant community conditions through integrated natural resource management.

For the purpose of this Plan, we have classified environmentally significant lands into two categories: grasslands and wetlands/riparian areas.

### **Grasslands**

Grasslands are herbaceous plant communities dominated by grasses but with forbs (flowering plants) present and sometimes locally dominant. Trees are absent except for local sites, such as along water courses.



Typical management considerations may include using an integrated approach to maintain healthy grassland ecosystems through grazing, weed management, and reclamation techniques as necessary.



### ***Wetlands/Riparian Lands***

Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water for long enough during the growing season to support vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Riparian areas are lands that are adjacent to and influenced by flowing water.

Typical management considerations for wetlands and riparian areas may include:

- minimizing disruption of water (both in quantity and quality);
- weed control;
- restrict public access and grazing to minimize erosion and disturbance of wildlife;
- ensure adequate setbacks and/or buffers from trails and adjacent land development to prevent water quality impacts, erosion and wildlife habitat degradation; and
- enhance and/or maintain riparian cottonwood and willow communities.

## ***Water Features***

This element includes canals, ditches, ponds and reservoirs. These lands will likely have recreational values as well as agricultural and environmental values. For example, it may be possible to fish, hike, bike, canoe or ride horses on/around a reservoir. Management costs may be somewhat higher for a property that receives recreational use because it may be necessary to provide amenities such as restrooms, parking, garbage collection, picnic tables, boat docks, etc.



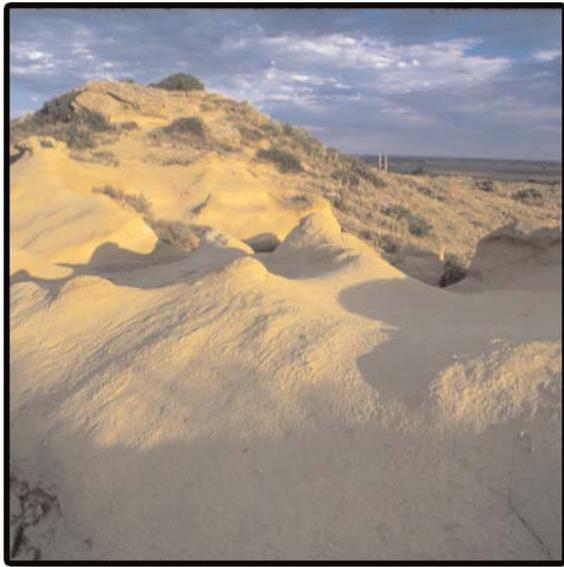
**Canals and Ditches** – Typical management considerations include working with adjacent landowners to limit impacts to water quality from adjacent areas, cooperating with ditch companies to limit the removal of trees and shrubs along canals and ditches, managing weeds, and keeping ditches, canals and banks free of trash and debris.

**Reservoirs and Ponds** – Management issues may include maintaining water quality and adequate water levels to support aquatic life, fish management, controlling weeds and using best management practices to minimize

erosion and sedimentation into the bodies of water.

### Community Character and Heritage Lands

This category includes lands that are important to citizens because of their historical or archaeological value. For example, both Milliken and Johnstown citizens spoke about the significance of Wildcat Mound to the community. Wildcat Mound has archaeological significance – it contains a sandstone panel



with Indian petroglyph motifs and historic signatures, numerous stone tools have been found there, it has fossilized sea shells, and it contained human burials that have dated from 145 B.C. to 1240 A.D. (and have been excavated). It has geologic significance – the mound is underlain by the Fox Hill sandstone which has formed several pedestal or mushroom rock features. It also has scenic qualities – the mound slopes down to the South Platte River and offers tremendous views of the river corridor, rolling agricultural land and the Rocky Mountains.

Management considerations for community character and heritage lands include working with landowners and local and state historical

groups to develop a management plan, stabilizing landmarks to prevent deterioration, educating citizens about stewardship, and protecting landmarks from vandalism.

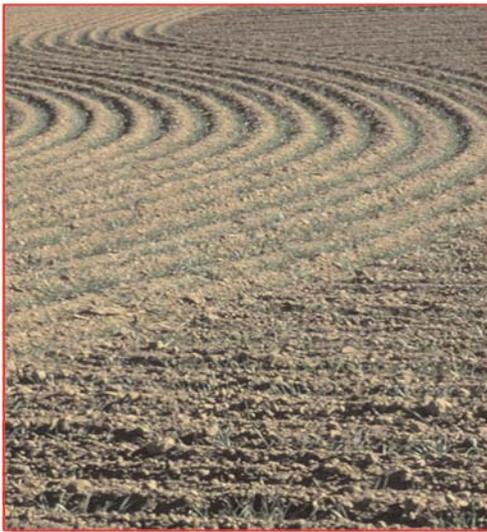
### Agricultural Lands

Agricultural lands include pastures, irrigated cropland and dryland. Agricultural lands are an important part of the community's heritage and quality of life. These lands are valued for their open, natural and productive landscapes and the rural character they give to the area. Keeping these lands open may provide additional benefits like preserving scenic vistas, buffering between neighboring communities and preserving wetlands and wildlife habitat. Typical management costs may include pasture and irrigation system inspection, weed management, and costs associated with managing farming or grazing leases. These costs will be offset with revenue generated from leasing land for farming.



**Pasture Land** – Typical management considerations for pasture land may include preventing overgrazing, maintaining healthy forage production by ensuring adequate water supply and delivery, managing weeds, resting, and rotating grazing activities as necessary.

**Crop Land** – A sample of management considerations include using appropriate crop rotation, tillage techniques to minimize topsoil loss and erosion, managing weeds, minimizing chemical usage to avoid impacts to water quality and maintaining ditches so they efficiently deliver water.



### Open Space Management Plan

It is likely that any parcel of open space will have multiple management objectives. For example, a reservoir's management plan may have several objectives which help balance recreation, environmental protection, and land management while preserving its scenic qualities.

Following is a general outline of the process to develop a management plan for a specific parcel.

#### I. Identify and Map Resources

Document the property's features and conservation values using photographs, maps and a detailed on-site evaluation. The evaluation should identify plant

communities, wildlife habitat values, recreational values, agricultural values, cultural values, geologic features, safety hazards, water resources, views, scenic qualities, adjacent land uses and other important opportunities and constraints on the property.

#### II. Define Management Objectives

These objectives should address the purpose of acquisition and anticipated uses. Objectives should be clearly stated and should be based on the findings in step 1. Following is a sample of management objectives. Examples of how to implement the objectives are included in parentheses.

1. **Protect the parcel's scenic quality.** (i.e. Limit development to areas that would minimize visual impacts and preserve the view corridor.)
2. **Protect ecosystem functions.** (i.e. Minimize fragmentation of the ecosystem, maintain ecosystem integrity by minimizing disturbances and using best management practices.)
3. **Protect and properly manage significant plant and animal communities and rare plants and animals.** (i.e. Maintain adequately sized parcels of land to allow for plant dispersal and animal migration, allow grazing where appropriate, and limit public access in sensitive areas.)
4. **Maintain the property's agricultural productivity.** (i.e. Provide the rancher/farmer opportunities to continue agricultural practices by

ensuring adequate facilities -- access, water delivery, fencing, etc. -- are available to facilitate farming.)

5. **Preserve the cultural, geological and archaeological integrity of the area.**  
(i.e. Develop an interpretive trail system, involve local and state historical societies in site design, development and maintenance.)
6. **Where appropriate, provide safe, passive recreational opportunities that are compatible with preservation objectives.** (i.e. Provide buffers and setbacks when developing trails and site trails away from sensitive areas.)
7. **Restore and enhance degraded areas.**  
(i.e. Plant native species, control the invasion and spread of undesirable non-native plants.)
8. **Manage conflicts between people and the natural areas through the design of public use areas, public education and habitat manipulation.** (i.e. Site trail accesses away from sensitive areas and include signage to call attention to preservation efforts.)
9. **Provide educational opportunities.**  
(i.e. Install educational signage and educational trails.)

Achieving the management objectives will require a strong commitment from the Johnstown/Milliken community. Development and management of open space should be an inclusive, cooperative process. Coordinate with local officials, community organizations, land owners, local businesses and individual volunteers to develop and implement the action plan.

Citizen involvement may evoke a more positive attitude toward the community and lead to a feeling of responsibility and connection to the community.

### III. Develop Site Management Plan

The site management plan should discuss methods to accomplish the management objectives and define site needs. Issues may include:

**Access** – Discuss access both to the site and throughout the site. Where (if anywhere) will public access be appropriate? Is the site handicap accessible?

**Security** – Where is fencing needed? How will the site be secured? Does the site have adequate police and fire protection?

**Visual Aesthetics** – How can visual aesthetics be protected or enhanced?

**Wildlife** – What wildlife management actions are needed to preserve and enhance wildlife use of the site? For example, are there threatened and endangered species on the site or prairie dog issues?

**Plant Communities** – What is the weed management plan for the site? What areas need to be revegetated, enhanced or protected?

**Agriculture** – Who will manage the property? How will the site be managed (discussion may include crop selection, use of fertilizers, harvesting, grazing, irrigation, pasture management, etc.)?



**Water** – Are there water rights or well permits associated with the property? How does this impact the management plan?

**Character and Heritage** – Are there any restoration or enhancement projects? How can unobtrusive interpretive information be included?

**Recreation** – What recreational activities are appropriate? Where should these activities take place? (Be sure to address dogs and horses.) What provisions need to be made to ensure resources are protected and users have safe, pleasant experiences?

**Facilities** – What facilities are necessary on site (i.e. information kiosks, shelters, picnic tables, trash cans, parking facilities, signage, storage facilities, water fountains, etc.)?

**Legal Issues** – What legal issues need to be considered?

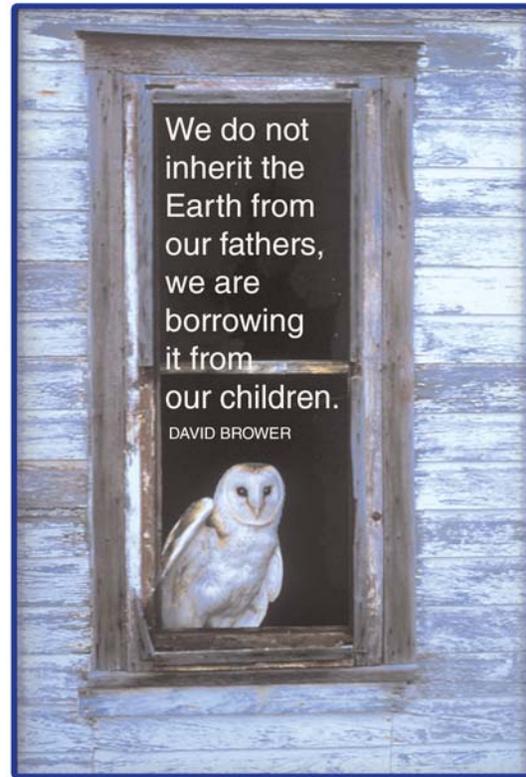
**Education** – How can the public be enlightened about the values and benefits of preserving open space? How can the public be educated to help provide a safe environment for wildlife and humans and to minimize conflicts between people and natural areas? Is it possible to coordinate with local schools for outdoor education?

**Maintenance** – What maintenance activities are necessary to properly maintain the site? Who will perform these activities?

#### **IV. Action Plan**

Devise an action plan to meet the parcel's management objectives. The plan

should prioritize activities, estimate costs, state who will be responsible for performing tasks and propose an implementation schedule.



### *Open Space Protection Methods*

The citizens agreed that it will be critical to the community's quality of life to protect some of the open land in the area. Everyone understood that the towns have limited resources available for open space protection. All groups felt strongly that the community should:

- be as creative as possible in finding ways to protect open space;
- form partnerships amongst the towns, Weld County, Larimer County, land trusts and landowners; and
- use a combination of regulatory and market-driven methods to help protect open space.

Following are some suggestions on how to protect open space. This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather a starting point for creative ideas.

### *Annexation*

The towns should negotiate with landowners at the time of annexation to identify and protect valuable open space resources.

### *Environmental Hazard Areas*

Both Johnstown and Milliken have floodplain regulations which limit development in floodplains. The community should also strongly discourage modifications to the floodplains so that these areas remain protected.

### *Planned Development*

It may be possible to protect open space and allow limited development by clustering and carefully siting structures on the property. This should be done in conjunction with deed restrictions or public dedications that sufficiently protect the open space features of a property. The Planned Development regulations can be used to encourage development patterns that foster continued agricultural use and protect the area's rural character and open space while meeting development expectations.

### *Conservation Easement*

Conservation easements are legal documents that permanently limit a property's uses in order to protect its open space values. The landowner and the easement holder (typically a land trust or government entity) determine the conditions and value of the easement together. The landowner would continue to

hold the title to the property and retain all rights to use the land for any purpose that is not prohibited by the terms of the easement. For example, an easement on land containing significant wildlife habitat might prohibit development and public access, while one on agricultural land might allow farming or grazing and the construction of agricultural buildings. In addition, the easement may be written to apply to an entire property or a portion of a property.

Landowners who donate conservation easements may receive the following tax benefits:

- federal income tax deduction (qualified conservation contributions may be treated as charitable gifts);
- state income tax credit - 100% of the first \$100,000 and 40% of the next \$400,000 may be applied to taxes, for up to a 20 year period or sold to the Conservation Tax Credit Exchange (for more details refer to Appendix); and
- estate tax benefits - 40% of the value of land subject to a qualifying conservation easement may be excluded from a taxable estate. This is in addition to the reduction in value of the land as a result of the easement (for more details refer to Appendix).

### *Obtain Partial Interest In Property*

If none of the above tools sufficiently protect a parcel's open space values, consider purchasing a conservation easement or a partial interest in the property to protect its open space values.



## Acquisition

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Town Officials may determine that the above tools do not sufficiently protect the open space values of a property. If the open space values are so special that they should be protected, work in conjunction with the property owner to determine the best method and most advantageous terms for purchasing a partial interest (i.e. buy development rights, water rights, access rights or mineral rights) or the fee simple purchase of the property.

## Contact Information

For assistance in preserving open space contact:

### Legacy Land Trust

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**Mission:** *The Legacy Land Trust facilitates the preservation of open space, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands that are important for present and future generations.*

236 Linden Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524-2424  
Phone: (970) 266-1711 Fax: (970) 407-1356

**Area of Operation:** Larimer, Jackson and Weld Counties

Founded: 1993  
Email: [llt@frii.com](mailto:llt@frii.com)  
Webpage: [www.legacylandtrust.org](http://www.legacylandtrust.org)

### Colorado Open Lands

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**Mission:** *To preserve the significant open lands and diminishing natural heritage of Colorado through private and public partnerships, innovative land conservation techniques, and strategic leadership.*

274 Union Boulevard, Suite 320  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228  
Phone: (303) 988-2373 Fax: (303) 988-2383

**Area of Operation:** Colorado

Founded: 1982  
E-mail: [info@coloradoopenlands.org](mailto:info@coloradoopenlands.org)  
Webpage: [www.coloradoopenlands.org](http://www.coloradoopenlands.org)

### American Farmland Trust

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**Mission:** *American Farmland Trust is the only nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting agricultural resources. Founded by a group of concerned farmers in 1980, AFT's mission is to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment.*

Fort Collins Office  
P. O. Box 1417236  
Linden Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524  
Phone: 970-484-8988 Fax: (970) 407-1356

### Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust

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**Mission:** *To help Colorado's ranchers and farmers protect their agricultural lands and encourage continuing agricultural production for the benefit of themselves, their families and all of Colorado's citizens.*

8833 Ralston Road  
Arvada CO 80002  
Phone: (303) 431-6422 Fax: (303) 431-6446

Agricultural lands throughout the state

Founded: 1995  
E-mail: [ccaglt@aol.com](mailto:ccaglt@aol.com)  
Webpage: [cca.beef.org/pages/ccalt-home.htm](http://cca.beef.org/pages/ccalt-home.htm)

## PLANT MATERIALS SELECTION GUIDE FOR OPEN SPACE (PLANT SPECIES WITH HIGH WILDLIFE VALUE)

SPECIES	HYDROLOGIC REGIME	HEIGHT
<b>Wetland Benches (water's edge to 12' depth)</b>		
Common Cattail ( <i>Typha latifolia</i> )	Prefers water 6" to 18" deep, will grow in water to 2.5' deep.	up to 6'
Hardstem Bulrush ( <i>Scirpus acutus</i> )	Prefers 6" to 18" deep, will grow in drier/wetter areas once established, can withstand temporary draw downs.	up to 6"
Giant Burreed ( <i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i> )	Prefers water from 6" to 12" deep, but will grow in drier or wetter areas once established	24" to 48"
Nebraska Sedge ( <i>Carex nebraskensis</i> )	Prefers soils that are saturated early in the growing season. Sites should be wet but not deep. Generally occurs on margins of streams and lakes.	10" to 24"
Torrey's Rush ( <i>Juncus torreyi</i> )	Prefers saturated conditions but can tolerate a wide range of hydrologic conditions. Water should always be within 12" of surface.	6" to 18"
Three-Square Bulrush ( <i>Scirpus americanus</i> )	Prefers water up to 6" to 18" deep, but will grow in drier or wetter areas once established. Can withstand temporary draw downs.	24" to 36"
Creeping Spike Rush ( <i>Eleocharis palustris</i> )	Prefers wet sites to 6" deep. Water should always be within 12" of surface.	6" to 30"
Arrowhead ( <i>Sagittaria latifolia</i> )	Grows in water from 6" to 12" deep. Water should always be within 12" of surface.	6" to 18"
<b>Wetland Fringe (Lake bank transition from water's edge to terrestrial areas)</b>		
American Mannagrass ( <i>Glyceria striata</i> )	Can withstand seasonal flooding to shallow standing water. Intermediate to marginal tolerance to drought.	24" to 36"
Prairie Cordgrass ( <i>Spartina pectinata</i> )	Can withstand seasonal flooding to saturated soils. Good tolerance to drought.	36" to 60"
Fowl Bluegrass ( <i>Poa palustris</i> )	Grows in saturated soil conditions. Will tolerate dry periods but needs periodic irrigation.	12" to 18"
Wild Iris ( <i>Iris missouriensis</i> )	Prefers sites that have summer dry period with temporary flooding. Intermediate tolerance to drought.	18" to 24"
Sandbar/Coyote Willow ( <i>Salix exigua</i> )	Requires Irregular flooding. Good tolerance to drought.	15'



**PLANT MATERIALS SELECTION GUIDE FOR OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)**  
**(PLANT SPECIES WITH HIGH WILDLIFE VALUE)**

SPECIES	HYDROLOGIC REGIME	HEIGHT
Peachleaf Willow ( <i>Salix amygdaloides</i> )	Requires seasonal flooding. Intermediate tolerance to drought.	30'
Whiplash Willow ( <i>Salix lasiandra</i> )	Requires seasonal flooding. Marginal tolerance to drought.	45'
Plains Cottonwood ( <i>Populus deltoides</i> )	Requires seasonal flooding. Good tolerance to drought.	80'
Narrow-leaf Cottonwood ( <i>Populus angustifolia</i> )	Requires seasonal flooding. Intermediate tolerance to drought.	50'
Common Chokecherry ( <i>Prunus virginiana</i> )	Moist soils. Good tolerance to drought.	30' to 50'
Red-osier Dogwood ( <i>Cornus sericea</i> )	Moist soils. Intermediate tolerance to drought.	10'
Golden Current ( <i>Ribes aureum</i> )	Seasonal saturation. Intermediate tolerance to drought.	5'
Leadplant ( <i>Amorpha fruticosa</i> )	Irregular flooding. Good tolerance to drought.	5'
<b>Upland Areas (riparian/wetland fringe to terrestrial areas)</b>		
American Plum ( <i>Prunus americana</i> )	Dry to moist soils. Good tolerance to drought.	12'
Wax Current ( <i>Ribes cereum</i> )	Mesic to dry soils. Intermediate tolerance to drought - needs periodic irrigation.	2' to 5'
Silver Buffaloberry ( <i>Shepherdia argentea</i> )	Mesic to dry soils. Good tolerance to drought.	4' to 20'
Threeleaf Sumac ( <i>Rhus trilobata</i> )	Mesic to dry soils. Excellent tolerance to drought.	2' to 8'
Western Snowberry ( <i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i> )	Moist to dry soils. Good tolerance to drought.	3'
Common Snowberry ( <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> )	Moist to dry soils. Good tolerance to drought.	3'
Western Sand Cherry ( <i>Prunus besseyi/P. pumila</i> )	Dry to moist soils. Excellent tolerance to drought.	4' to 6'
Woods Rose ( <i>Rosa woodsii</i> )	Seasonal moisture. Good tolerance to drought.	2' to 8'



**PLANT MATERIALS SELECTION GUIDE FOR OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)  
(PLANT SPECIES WITH HIGH WILDLIFE VALUE)**

PROPOSED SEED MIXES				
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	VARIETY	% OF MIX	PLS APPLICATION RATE (LBS/ACRE)
<b>Upland Areas</b>				
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	Arriba, Barton	20%	3.00
Green Needlegrass	<i>Stipa viridula</i>	Lodorm	15%	2.25
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>		15%	2.25
Indian Ricegrass	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	Nezpar/Paloma	10%	1.50
Sideoats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Vaughn/Butte	10%	1.50
Big Bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Kaw	10%	1.50
Sand Bluestem	<i>Andropogon hallii</i>		10%	1.50
Purple Prairieclover	<i>Dalea purpurea</i>		5%	0.75
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracillis</i>	Lovington/Hachita	5%	0.75
TOTAL lb/ac				15.0
<b>Wetland Areas</b>				
Prairie Cordgrass	<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	native	25%	4.0
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	Arriba, Barton	20%	3.2
Fowl Bluegrass	<i>Poa palustris</i>		15%	2.4
Mannagrass	<i>Glyceria striata</i>		10%	1.6
Alkali Sacaton	<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>		10%	1.6
American Sloughgrass	<i>Beckmannia syzigachne</i>		10%	1.6
Blue Vervain	<i>Verbana hastata</i>		5%	0.8
Marsh Sunflower	<i>Helianthus nuttallii</i>		5%	0.7
TOTAL lbs/ac				15.9





*Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.*

**RACHEL CARSON**