

OVERVIEW



South Platte River

The following section presents an overview of Adams County and the planning process. It includes:

- Plan Purpose
- Plan Values
- Planning Process
- Plan Vision
- Concentration Areas
- Adams County Context
- Role of the Department
- Previous Plans Review
- Plan Successes since 2012

PLAN PURPOSE

Planning for the entirety of Adams County is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to envision how the County will improve the quality of life for its residents in terms of land use, transportation and parks and open space. The vision needs to be comprehensive and innovative enough to address the defining challenges of the times, yet flexible enough to be adapted in the future.

Adams County Park, Open Space and Trails Master Plan reflects the mission and goals of the Adams County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Arts Department (ADCO POSCA) for planning, managing and maintaining natural and outdoor recreation amenities of regional significance. ADCO POSCA creates and plans for an interconnected and growing system of parks, trails, open space and facilities that:

- Preserve and maintain areas with ecological, cultural, agricultural, and historical significance;
- Balance resource stewardship with quality customer service and visitor experience; and
- Promote inter-jurisdictional cooperation to create a seamless system of parks, open space, trails, and facilities in all of Adams County.

The plan establishes the foundation for the County’s decision making related to open space. The role of the County is to support parks, open space and trails projects that have clear public value, protect public interest and provide public

access to desired, needed and well-designed facilities. Land acquisitions are viewed with a priority lens that support development, operation and/or maintenance facilities for parks and open space. The County can only acquire land from willing landowners.

The County Open Space Sales Tax, first approved by voters in 1999 and renewed by voters in 2020 indefinitely, provides a means for the County to support the recommendations of the Master Plan. The tax proceeds are used solely to:

- Preserve land that protects water quality;
- Protect wildlife areas, wetlands, rivers, and streams;
- Preserve farmland and associated water rights;
- Protect open space in order to limit sprawl and create/enhance community buffering; and
- Create, improve and maintain parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

The tax provides a great financial resource for all municipalities within the county, however, as it is currently set up, there is not enough funding to support department operational and capital plans at this time.

UPDATE TO THE 2012 PLAN

The last Open Space, Parks and Trails Master Plan, adopted in 2012, was a strong plan that has guided the department’s work for the last eight years. Many of the parks, open space and trails issues noted in that plan continue to be relevant today, including the continued need for trail

connectivity, regional partnerships, farmland preservation, open space acquisition and development. The current plan will continue to explore these themes while also taking a cue from the Adams County Vision to be the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses. It will ensure that the latest technology available will be used to manage the County’s vast park and open space properties and wildlife habitats. In addition, this plan will also focus on equitable park distribution and provide the County with data which will help determine what access to parks and open space amenities looks like for all Adams County residents.

PLAN VALUES

As part of the initial work on Advancing Adams, three initial core value lenses have emerged. These will ultimately guide the final Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan, and Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan and are included in this Existing Conditions report. Each analysis step, recommendation and policy will be evaluated for alignment with these values.

1. EQUITY

The vibrance and strength of a community emerges from diversity and equity. Equity can be measured through distribution of resources, affordability and access to services and experiences, as well as balancing land uses with environmental justice. Adams County will celebrate and



Figure 1: Core Value Lenses

leverage a diverse community through equitable land planning as the region continues to grow in population and various ethnicities and identities.

2. SUSTAINABILITY

By committing to improved internal operations and property maintenance methods (e.g. efficient irrigation, water-wise landscapes) as well as conservation and enhancement of natural resources, sustainability will be part of Adams County's identity.

3. LIVABILITY

Parks, open space and trails are major contributors to the quality of life in Adams County, and livability is enhanced through provision of these places within close proximity and easy access to where people live, work, and go to school. This plan will help to further enhance livability through the thoughtful integration of artful placemaking strategies, cultural events/programs and parks design best practices that celebrate the culture of Adams County and further contribute to livability.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Advancing Adams is inspired and informed by residents, stakeholders, and County and City staff. Moving forward together, these groups shared their concerns, visions and goals for the County as a whole, for its transportation system, and its parks, open spaces and trails throughout the planning process. Engagement

is divided into two distinct phases – Phase 1: Grounding and Phase 2: Plan for the Future. During Phase 1, the project team prepared a public education campaign to inform residents about the plan updates, listened to community members to get a strong understanding of existing conditions, and facilitated activities that allowed residents and stakeholders to analyze and discuss opportunities for the future. Input from these activities informed and helped guide the plan direction.

Taking place in 2020, engagement was directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual engagement was used throughout the process and in-person meetings were only held when, and if, appropriate.

PLANNING PROCESS

Advancing Adams: Planning for a Shared Future is a planning effort that includes the update of three plans simultaneously:

- **Comprehensive Plan**
- **Transportation Master Plan (TMP)**
- **Parks, Open Space & Trails Master Plan (POST)**

These updates will create a coordinated vision, comprehensive set of policy goals, recommendations and strategies that work together to encourage sensitive development, robust economic development, a connected and efficient multi-modal transportation network, and parks, open spaces and trails that are used

by all residents all the time. Planned thoughtfully, these updates will help to ensure Adams County will remain “the most innovative and inclusive county in America.” Advancing Adams will lead to a safer, resilient, more equitable and more prosperous county. Adams County will integrate equity, sustainability and livability into each plan to ensure residents of today and future generations will benefit from a shared vision to Advance Adams.

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan will serve as an overarching policy and operations tool to guide our County toward the vision of being “the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses.” It will set the tone for improving all aspects of quality of life. The plan will be an overarching and implementable

document that addresses future development and land use needs, engaging the entire community, addressing economic development, equity and sustainability.

This is the “big picture” plan that lays the groundwork and provides direction for the TMP and POST updates. At the same time, work on these two plans will also help inform goals and recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan. The integration of the TMP and Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the connection between land use and transportation. The Comprehensive Plan sets a vision for an equitable, vital, and sustainable County through future development and code needs. These policies, standards, and zoning will shape, and are shaped, by existing and future transportation infrastructure, programs, and policies. Specifically, along five strategic corridors, these

ADVANCING ADAMS PLANNING FOR A SHARED FUTURE



Figure 2: Advancing Adams Planning for a Shared Future Branding

plans are closely integrated in order to create a comfortable and functional character and user experience that is developed holistically.

This is the plan that will help us “holistically improve quality of life.”

Transportation Master Plan

The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) will set the foundation to drive short and long-term transportation and transit investments. Through the planning process, projects, programs and policies will be identified that help create a successful multi-modal transportation network for people of all ages and abilities. It will be a network that is connected, efficient, comfortable, easy to navigate and convenient. Creating an attractive transportation system will ensure Adams County remains one of the top places to live, work and play in the Denver metro region.

This is the plan that will “get us moving”.

SCHEDULE

The plan updates are organized in two distinct phases. Phase 1 started in August 2020, and Phase 2 will conclude in December 2021.

PHASE 1: GROUNDING (EXISTING CONDITIONS & ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES)

Phase I is an existing conditions analysis, and for the Park, Open Space and Trail Master Plan, an update to information and goals explored in the 2012 Master Plan. The plan will also have a focus on five study corridors, (Federal Boulevard, Pecos Street, Washington Street, 104th Avenue, and 120th Avenue), aligning with the focus areas of the Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

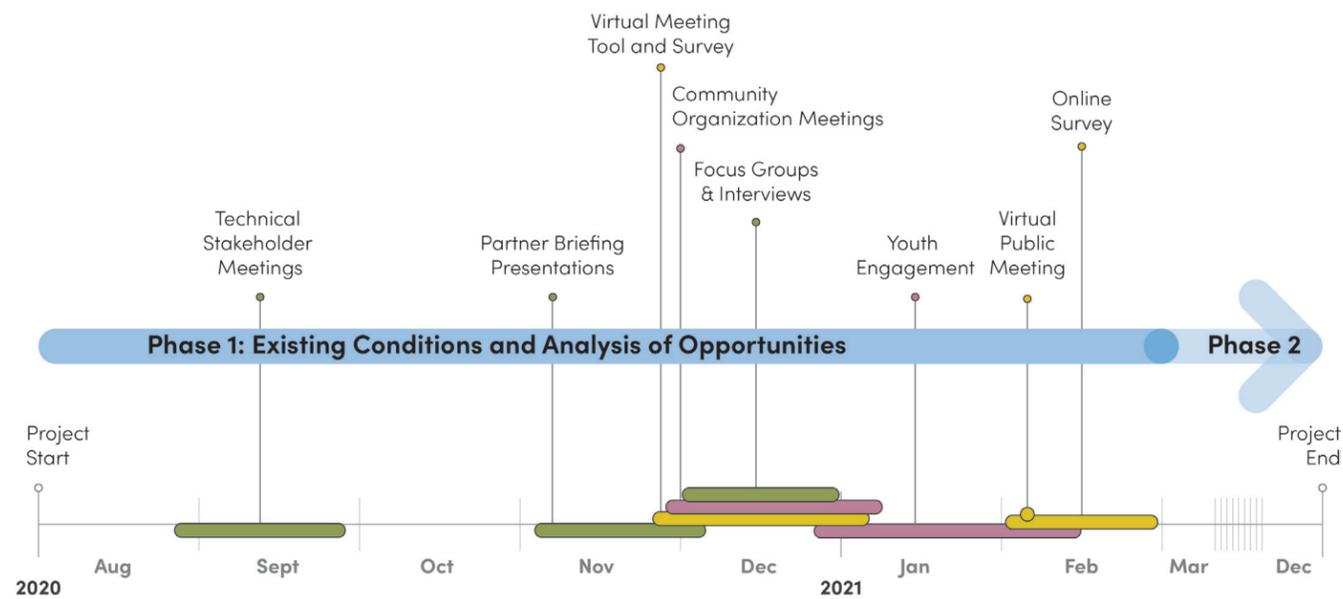


Figure 3: Advancing Adams Plans Schedule (Comprehensive, POST and Transportation Master Plans)

REACHING OUT

During the entire phase, several outreach methods were used to get the word out to the community and “meet people where they are.” A dedicated project website with an introductory video was launched at the end of November 2020, press releases were provided to local media, flyers were posted in strategic locations in English, Spanish and Burmese, local morning radio programs interviewed key project partners, social media posts were posted periodically, and email messages were sent to project partners, who in turn shared the information with their networks.

INSURING INCLUSIVITY

During the Winter of 2020, community group meetings were held to inform those who have not been as involved in these types of planning processes historically about Advancing Adams. These meetings were held in Spanish and English with stakeholders representing community development, housing, economic development organizations, faith-based groups, aging adult advocates, youth representatives, among others. The team also facilitated briefing presentations with various Boards and organizations representing a variety of interests. Key partners included the Community Resource Network, Tri-County Health, Adelante Community Development, local faith organizations, RISE Colorado, Cultivando, Village Exchange Center, and CREA Results.

These conversations reached over 2000 underrepresented individuals in Adams County – educating about Advancing Adams and inviting them to get engaged in the process.

Youth engagement was an important component of this process. For Phase 1, the project team shared an interactive youth activity workbook with school districts and youth program partners so that young residents can share their ideas to provide a vision for the future that younger generations will support and champion.

DEEP LISTENING

In December 2020, the project team conducted technical focus groups with staff, regional partners, representational business owners and other stakeholders throughout the County. With over 150 attendees total, these sessions covered topics including Agriculture, Economic Development, Outdoor Recreation and Programming, Housing, Open Space Funding, the Pecos Street corridor, and the Federal Boulevard corridor. Fifteen deep dive individual stakeholder interviews were also conducted to understand the specific concerns of those involved with economic growth, recent development, multi-modal transportation, concurrent planning efforts, sustainability, and recreation.

ENGAGING ALL

In November 2020, the first community-wide bilingual public survey was posted online utilizing

an interactive dashboard which let the public explore the process and existing conditions in depth. Over 1000 people have engaged with the dashboard to date, and this interactive dashboard will remain live to continue educating residents about the existing conditions of the County.

In February 2021, a virtual public meeting was held in English and Spanish to give the public an update on the planning process and provide an opportunity for residents to share their thoughts on plan topic areas with County staff and the project team. Nearly fifty members of the public gave their input via live polling during the meeting and engaged with the project team during the Q&A portion of the meeting. These recordings were then posted online with the second community-wide bilingual public survey.

KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Through the variety of outreach and engagement methods mentioned above, the project team was able to receive valuable input to integrate into the existing conditions reports for each of the three plans. While some feedback was specific to each individual plan, other comments were applicable to Advancing Adams as a whole. Below are some key engagement findings sorted by theme that were heard by multiple stakeholder groups over the last four months.

- Adams County Today and Tomorrow:
 - » When asked what one word best describes Adams County today, popular responses were: growing, diverse, and progressing. These words capture the spirit of Advancing Adams: Planning for a Shared Future as this planning process aims to plan for the growing and diversifying population of the County with innovative recommendations. As the population of Adams County continues to grow, residents and stakeholders feel that the top considerations that should be used in future decision-making include inclusivity, affordability, equity, and resiliency. These are not only reflected in the three value lenses of the plans (Equity, Livability, and Sustainability) but also key ideas addressed in each individual plan.
- Outdoor Recreation and Trails:
 - » Providing equitable access to recreation and parks is a priority for many. Some suggestions heard multiple times on how this could be achieved include expanding program options, working with partners, and addressing the quantity and quality of facilities in all areas.
 - » Trails should better serve transportation and recreation purposes, and therefore also better connect to community locations like schools, libraries, residential areas, etc.
 - » Riparian areas and other critical habitats are a notable County asset. The opportunity to combine preservation with recreation should be considered.

- Agriculture:
 - » Zoning and development considerations will be important in order to incentivize sustainable agricultural practices.
 - » Partnerships in the County could expand opportunities for urban food access and agritourism.
- Arts and Culture:
 - » Diversity in Adams County deserves to be celebrated with more cultural experiences, a highlight on local art and music, and recognition of the rich history of the County.
- Housing:
 - » Housing needs to be better developed concurrently with transportation so residents can utilize transit to commute.
 - » Diversity of housing type is paramount when discussing affordable housing options.

Engagement Summary Findings

AGRICULTURE

The Agriculture focus group identified several agricultural technologies and innovations including carbon sequestration, turning waste (especially food waste) into energy, agritourism, regenerative agriculture, STEM and agricultural education, and food hubs for local producers that would advance agriculture within the county. The suggestions that were presented to encourage these trends involved revisiting zoning regulations to provide a greater support for certain programs and practices, collaborating with providers such as the CSU Extension and the National

Western Center, connecting agriculture to urban living, encouraging agritourism especially along Highway 84 and the Historic Splendid Valley, and allowing farms to better market their goods.

Some big ideas generated included a cultural trail concept at the fairgrounds, integrating art into areas by reflecting culture through design, and promoting the strategic development for a certified Colorado Creative District. The latter could include presenting agricultural products (like culinary, wine, cheese production, etc.) as a creative industry; developing a warehouse district to embrace Hispanic culture; and creating a district that is walkable, and preserves the buildings and historical integrity to emphasize strong economies and community wealth-building through the lens of agricultural heritage.

OPEN SPACE FUNDING

The Open Space Funding focus group began with an assessment of the County's open space grant program and a celebration of its voter approved extension. One of the successes of the current grant program that the focus groups outlined was having funds available to invest in regional outdoor amenities, including regional parks and trail connections, as well as investing with local cities in their parks and outdoor spaces. Even when projects were not an obvious fit for the grant, the County was successful in expanding its reach

and looking to other agencies for funding, such as GOCO and CWCB.

The priorities for open space conservation included providing recreational access to biking opportunities, skills courses closer to residences, and water-based recreation activities. Public access along waterways like Clear Creek should also be considered at a greater level, as well as consideration of conserving cultural landscapes and scenic views. The focus group defined areas of high scenic and cultural value as inclusive of farmlands, local food production, waterways, and trails.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TRAILS

The Outdoor Recreation focus group discussed current recreation trends in the region. The activities that are rising in popularity include opportunities to participate in water sports (paddleboard, canoe, kayak, and fishing), skateboarding (in non-traditional skate parks), active field sports (a greater demand for soccer fields and year-round lighted fields), pickleball, geocaching, and horseback rentals (at Barr Lake). More and diverse playgrounds (inclusive and nature playgrounds) and better connectivity of trails were also mentioned. A listening session on the topic of Access to Recreation, Trails and Parks indicated the need for trail resources that are accessible, serve transportation and recreation, and are well-maintained and safe for users. Connectivity to open spaces and other trails is important.

Suggestions to better serve underrepresented groups included providing Wi-Fi in public spaces, developing more walking clubs for seniors, creating more opportunities for expression and creativity, lowering fees for existing programs like soccer, and working with nonprofits like ViVe Wellness.

According to the participants, the facilities that Adams County needs more of to fill certain gaps are mountain bike trails, inclusive playgrounds, rural parks, bilingual signage, camping opportunities, pump tracks, active sports fields, trail amenities, introductory camping facilities, and urban farming. Community members that participated in a virtual meeting indicated they would like to see more local park opportunities, investments in park or nature experiences within a 10-minute walk of their homes, equitable maintenance and offerings in existing parks and open spaces and partnering with community organizations to provide more inclusive outreach and recreation activities. The County also needs to address the quantity and quality of its facilities, as well as develop better connections to regional assets like the South Platte River Trail, National Western Center and Riverdale Regional Park.

PHASE 2: PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Phase II takes the findings from Phase I and with public input and projections,

and synthesizes the vision for the Master Plan. Strategies to address the plan themes and recommended actions will be outlined in this forthcoming phase and final plan document.

PLAN VISION

The vision for the 2021 Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan encompasses Adams County's objectives for providing outdoor and recreation services to its residents and visitors, while protecting and preserving natural resources for future generations.

The vision statement includes elements from the successful 2012 plan and new elements that provide a more encompassing vision. The 2012 plan vision statement highlighted an integrated system, conservation of agricultural lands, wildlife habitats and corridors and the protection of natural and scenic resources. These areas of focus continue to be essential for the County and this new plan. Equity, sustainability, and livability reflect County and broad community values and are important to highlight today, as are acknowledging the County's recreational opportunities, including trails.



WHAT IS ADAMS COUNTY'S VISION STATEMENT FOR THE 2021 POST MASTER PLAN?

WE WILL CULTIVATE AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM THAT ENSURES EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES; IDENTIFIES AREAS FOR FUTURE GROWTH; PRESERVES AND ENHANCES IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITATS AND CORRIDORS, NATURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES, AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS; EXPANDS TRAIL CONNECTIONS; AND BROADENS RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

KEY THEMES AND GOALS

This plan is organized around five key themes that support the Plan Vision. They inform future recommendations, strategies, and action steps created in phase two of the plan development. The five key themes are:

1. NATURAL RESOURCE, AGRICULTURAL LAND AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION AND RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

Residents want the County to protect, conserve and enhance natural resources, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and riparian areas. These lands create a balance of systems that are unique to the character of Adams County and contribute greatly to the health and stability of its ecosystem.



Figure 4: Pelican Ponds

Table 1: Key Theme No. 1 - Natural Resource, Agricultural Land and Wildlife Habitat Protection and Riparian Enhancement

	ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUE LENSES		
	EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
» Protect and enhance important ecological and scenic resources such as riparian areas, wetlands, floodplains, prairie grasslands and unique landforms.		✓	✓
» Protect and enhance important and existing wildlife habitats and corridors, provide for species movement through the County.		✓	
» Provide for adequate land around riparian habitats to ensure a sustainable species richness and to prevent the diminution of critical wildlife habitat.		✓	
» Create habitat linkages to regional open spaces for species of importance, such as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Barr Lake State Park, and river corridors.		✓	
» Improve water quantity and quality to assure a continuing quality of life in Adams County by implementing stormwater management best practices to minimize runoff and encourage infiltration, protecting and enhancing wetland habitats and riparian zones.		✓	✓
» Buffer development impacts from water resources including rivers, lakes, and streams and their adjacent riparian habitats.		✓	
» Protect, in as natural a state as possible, floodplains and flood hazard areas for flood event conveyance and storage. Enhance these corridors with vegetation to reduce erosion and siltation.		✓	
» Restore and enhance disturbed lands in and around river, creek and drainage corridors.		✓	
» Utilize water aesthetically and sustainably. Create opportunities for people to learn about this important resource.		✓	✓
» Preserve and protect the viability and character of high-quality agricultural lands in the County.		✓	✓
» Maintain the integrity of sensitive agricultural lands by keeping recreational or other potentially disturbing uses separate where necessary.		✓	
» Consider agricultural lands and their viability to serve as natural area protection.		✓	
» Consolidate land conservation to avoid fragmentation of agricultural practices and conflict of urban and rural activities.		✓	✓
» The South Platte River and Clear Creek Corridors are important natural resources, scenic amenities, and recreational assets within the County. Cultivate management and safety measures to promote healthy ecological conditions and greater public use and experiences along these corridors and at the confluence of the two rivers.	✓	✓	✓
» Support / Enhance Community Buffers		✓	✓
» Preserve lands (and water rights) that provide local food production and opportunities for people to learn about agricultural practices	✓	✓	✓

Note: A check mark indicates a relationship between the goal's content and the plan value lenses (equity, sustainability and livability). Details of this relationship will be further evaluated during Phase 2 of the planning process and plan creation.



Figure 5: Playground in Adams County

2. DIVERSE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND CREATIVE GATHERING PLACES

Embracing regional arts and culture will help create equitable and diverse opportunities for county residents to access outdoor recreation and imbue the unique characteristics of the county into those experiences.

Table 2: Key Theme No. 2 – Diverse Outdoor Recreation and Creative Gathering Places

	ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUE LENSES		
	EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
» Utilize the park and open space system to support a range of recreational experiences from larger regional parks to community level parks as well as serving a variety of age groups and user-types year-round.	✓		✓
» Provide sensitive and unobtrusive trail development and a mix of well-balanced recreational activities within the open space system while preserving and enhancing the natural characteristics of the County.		✓	✓
» Provide parks, open space, and trails which meet the needs of county residents.	✓		✓
» Provide public access to these places close to where people live, work, attend school, near community centers, and transportation hubs so they are convenient for people to experience every day.	✓		✓
» Interpret the natural, cultural and historic resources located within parks, open space sites, and into neighboring areas.		✓	✓
» Provide recreation infrastructure such as fields and courts to meet recreation demands within the County. (soccer, pickleball, etc.)	✓		✓
» Utilize parks, open space and trails resources to highlight and promote regional arts and culture throughout the County.			✓
» Provide platforms for people to connect to people through the design of public spaces, as well as the programming of activities within them.	✓		✓
» Provide “Colorado Experiences” through supporting recreation infrastructure that allows users to build confidence and skills in adventure sports in controlled, close to home locations. (such as water sports, mountain biking and nature play).	✓		✓
» Provide events of cultural significance that bring the community together and work to enhance the County Fair to be a more inclusive and culturally significant event.	✓		✓
» Create special outdoor gathering places that embrace science and culture.			✓

Note: A check mark indicates a relationship between the goal's content and the plan value lenses (equity, sustainability and livability). Details of this relationship will be further evaluated during Phase 2 of the planning process and plan creation.

3. PARTNERSHIPS, REGIONAL COORDINATION AND STEWARDSHIP

approaches for environmental education and stewardship.

Collaboration and cooperation among County departments, regional entities, and land managers will help build unified visions for conservation, align philosophies on management, create opportunities for programming and budget efficiencies, and outline

Table 3: Key Theme No. 3 – Partnerships, Regional Coordination and Stewardship

	ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUE LENSES		
	EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY	LIVABILITY
» Encourage partnerships between departments within Adams County including Planning, Public Works, Sustainability, Community and Economic Development, and Neighborhood Services for a more collaborative approach that promotes environmental considerations for all county projects.		✓	✓
» Enhance and create partnerships between municipal parks departments, neighboring county open space and parks departments, the private sector, nonprofit sector, schools and universities, other agencies like flood districts, land and water conservation organizations to cultivate stewardship and environmental education.		✓	✓
» Pursue joint conservation efforts between neighboring counties to save resource dollars and provide more efficient conservation of agricultural lands that cross County boundaries.		✓	✓
» Identify a series of creative land protection strategies that benefit both landowners, the County and the community at large, and the region.		✓	✓
» Fund and provide for environmental education and interpretation to help residents, students and open space users learn to appreciate the wealth of natural, cultural and scenic resources.	✓	✓	✓
» Educate users of parks and trails to minimize environmental impacts.	✓	✓	
» Support educational efforts that engage citizens in their role as stewards of our natural and cultural resources.	✓	✓	✓
» Work with regional coalitions to develop unified visions for natural resources, such as the South Platte River Corridor and Clear Creek Corridor.		✓	✓
» Seek partnerships with pertinent agencies to gain efficiencies in the areas of maintenance, education, enforcement and support services to the community.			✓

Note: A check mark indicates a relationship between the goal's content and the plan value lenses (equity, sustainability and livability). Details of this relationship will be further evaluated during Phase 2 of the planning process and plan creation.



Figure 7: Clear Creek Trail

4. DYNAMIC TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Improving connectivity, linkages and safety throughout the county's trail resources will create a dynamic system that is user friendly and offers a variety of trail experiences.

Table 4: Key Theme No. 4 - Dynamic Trail Connections

	ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUE LENSES		
	 EQUITY	 SUSTAINABILITY	 LIVABILITY
» Improve the trail network to better serve as both a place to recreate and for non-motorized transportation. Develop opportunities and facilities for a variety of trail experiences such as hiking, walking, cycling, and equestrian use. Ensure these developments accommodate all ability levels and interests from beginner to expert users.	✓	✓	✓
» Work to ensure that the Open Space system is linked together through a robust trail system including not only County properties but open space properties owned by other agencies.			✓
» Provide trail and open space linkages and connections where essential, along and across major vehicular circulation rights-of-way. When possible provide for grade separated trail crossings of major roadways to ensure user ease and safety.	✓		✓
» When possible, provide pedestrian, equestrian, and bikes routes separate from traffic to promote a quality experience for trail users. Otherwise, when in proximity and direct interaction with vehicular routes, ensure users' safety is well accounted for in the development of parks, open space, trails, and recreation elements.	✓		✓
» The South Platte River Trail and Clear Creek Trail are important regional trail spines through the County. Promote healthy ecologies within riparian corridor areas while providing quality trail user experiences.		✓	✓
» Coordinate trail recommendations with the Transportation Plan, linking access to transit and multimodal transportation.	✓	✓	✓
» Promote partnerships to make thoughtful connections.	✓	✓	✓
» Develop infrastructure to address the overwhelmed transportation corridors' increasing capacity through parallel multimodal transit features.		✓	✓

Note: A check mark indicates a relationship between the goal's content and the plan value lenses (equity, sustainability and livability). Details of this relationship will be further evaluated during Phase 2 of the planning process and plan creation.

5. EQUITABLE PARK OFFERINGS

Equitable park offerings means "ensuring everyone receives the appropriate investment for where they are", understanding that "some communities need more investment because they have historically been underserved" (NRPA 2020 equity definition).



Figure 8: Rotella Park

Table 5: Key Theme No. 5 - Equitable Park Offerings

	ALIGNMENT WITH PLAN VALUE LENSES		
	 EQUITY	 SUSTAINABILITY	 LIVABILITY
» Evaluate equity for park investment, quality, and offerings	✓		✓
» Inclusively engage surrounding residents in planning for parks or their improvements.	✓		✓
» Infill local park opportunities in unincorporated areas to provide opportunities within areas facing service gaps, embracing a goal of a park within a 10-minute walk of all non-rural residences.	✓	✓	✓
» Provide inclusive playgrounds and nature playgrounds at county facilities including Riverdale Regional Park.	✓		✓
» Address internal operations and practices of the department regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.	✓		✓
» Strengthen partnerships with community organizations that inclusively provide outreach, programs, and recreation offerings to diverse populations.	✓		✓
» Encourage Adams County's staff to stay in touch with current trends and new concepts in the industry.	✓	✓	✓
» Partner with other municipal agencies and special districts, such as Hyland Hills, to provide increased access to recreation facilities and programming.	✓		✓

Note: A check mark indicates a relationship between the goal's content and the plan value lenses (equity, sustainability and livability). Details of this relationship will be further evaluated during Phase 2 of the planning process and plan creation.

CONCENTRATION AREAS

Four areas of concentration have been identified for this update.

CLEAR CREEK AND THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER CORRIDORS

The South Platte and Clear Creek river corridors are important natural resources for the County, providing diverse ecological systems and critical wildlife habitat, scenic amenities, recreational and mobility assets, and opportunities for economic development and restoration. This master plan will explore current conditions, management recommendations, and techniques to apply to the river corridors for more efficient operations and maintenance for habitat restoration and increased public safety. It will also assess the river corridors for increased trail connections and access to parks, open spaces, and recreational opportunities.

RIVERDALE REGIONAL PARK

Riverdale Regional Park is approximately 1,197 acres in size and contains the County fairground facilities, two 18-hole golf courses, park facilities, and 233 total surface acres of ponds and lakes. A master plan was adopted in 2018, promoting a vision forward and building momentum for the future of this asset. The County has acquired several parcels in close proximity or adjacent to the park including Riverdale Bluffs, Willow Bay and Van Scoyk parcels, providing great opportunities for holistic inclusion of these assets into the overall Parks, Open Space and Trails master plan update. Partnerships with Todd Creek Metropolitan District and South Adams County Water & Sanitation District for Mann Lakes have been established and there are other further planned developments south of Henderson Road and west of the South Platte.

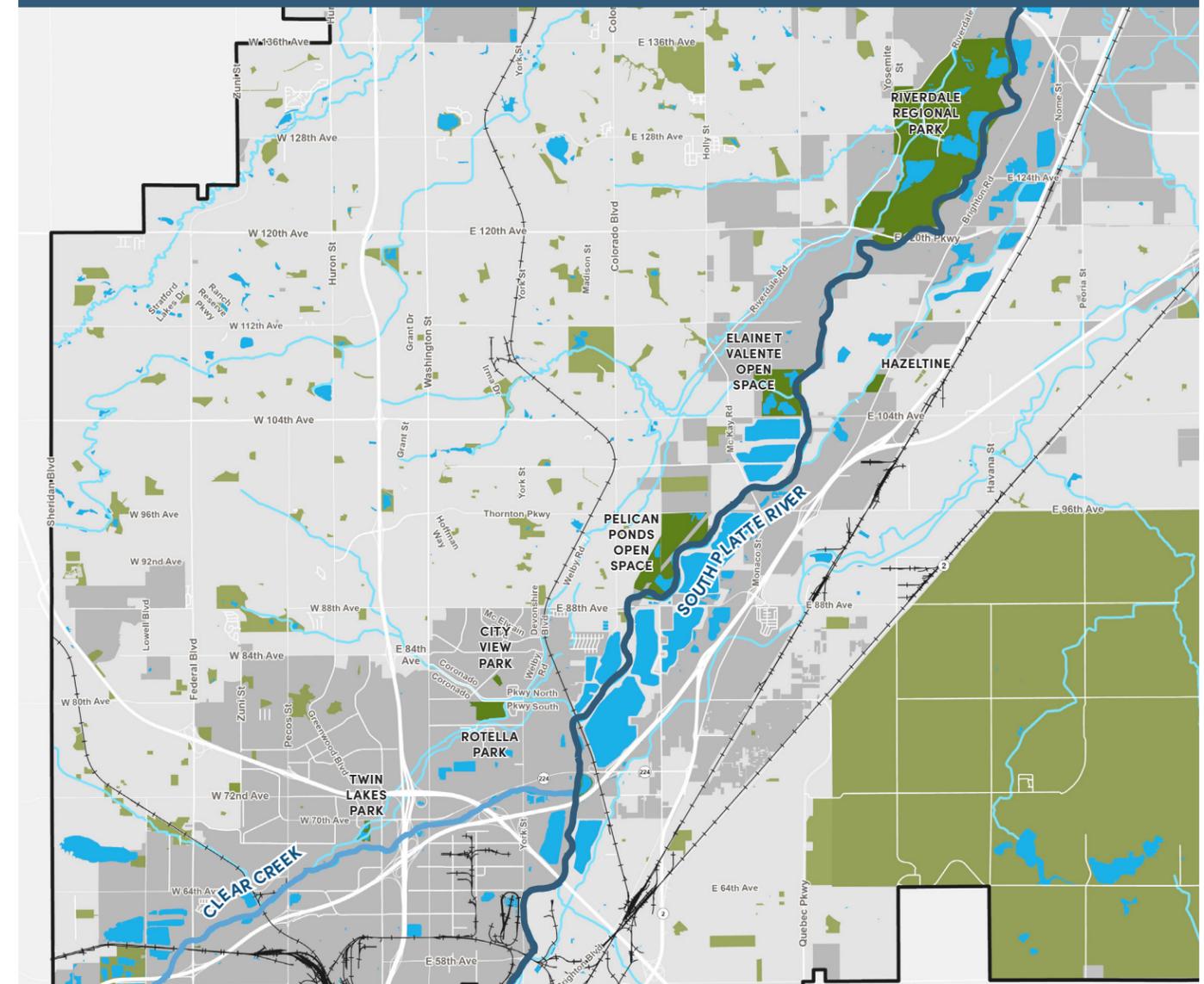
EXISTING PARKS IN URBAN AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS

Some of the county's unincorporated communities have not been able to keep pace with the provision of parks and accessible open spaces for their growing populations. This master plan will analyze access to parks and distribution in the County to identify gaps and opportunities for infill projects, as well as ways to mitigate existing mobility barriers to access.



Figure 9: South Platte River

MAP 1: CONCENTRATION AREAS



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- Adams County Parks
- Municipal/Other Jurisdiction Parks
- Unincorporated Adams County
- Lakes and Streams
- South Platte River
- Clear Creek
- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Roads

Key Plan

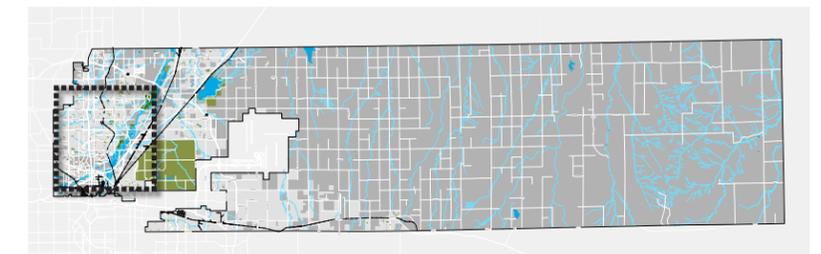




Figure 10: Riverdale Regional Park



Figure 11: Fishing Access



Figure 12: Playground and Community Amenities

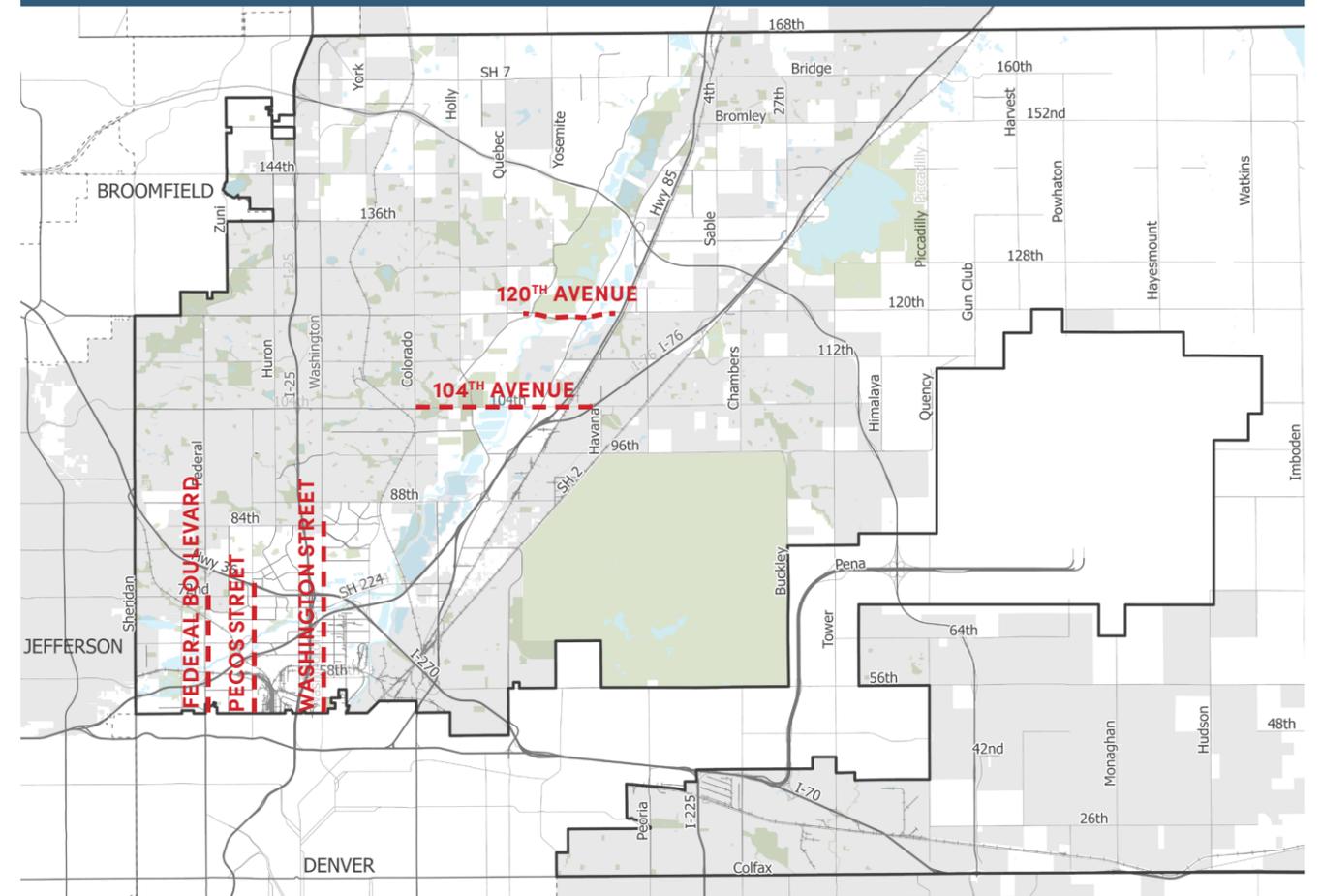
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Adams County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Arts Department intends to focus on more passive outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, biking, fishing and water access (the "Colorado Experience"). This master plan will explore recreation opportunities, including athletic fields, playgrounds, bicycle facilities, outdoor event spaces, and water-based sport access to fill needs throughout the county. A focus of recreational opportunities will look at connecting visitors and residents to a true "Colorado Experience" close to home. While the recreation focus is not directly on active elements like team sports, athletics, recreation center offerings and swimming pools, the County will look for opportunities to provide recreational infrastructure and amenities to support the services and programming of partner agencies, municipal recreation departments and special districts.

5 STRATEGIC CORRIDORS

In addition, this master plan aligns with concurrent planning efforts that focus on five strategic corridors that are located in a section of this document. This plan evaluates the corridors and identifies opportunities for open space, parks, and trails enhancement within the corridors of Federal Boulevard, Pecos Street, Washington Street, 104th Avenue and 120th Avenue as shown in Map 2.

MAP 2: FIVE STRATEGIC CORRIDORS KEY PLAN



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- - - Corridor Locations
- Adams County Boundary
- Municipal Area
- Railroads
- Parks and Open Space
- Roads
- Lakes and Streams

ADAMS COUNTY CONTEXT

This Master Plan update reflects the ever-evolving conditions of Adams County, addressing the evolution of the community make-up, changing development and environmental conditions, and the celebration of achievements and progress forward since past plans.

LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE

Adams County covers 1,182 square miles, located in the northeast quadrant of the state along the Colorado Front Range. The county is northeast of Denver, with dense metropolitan development defining

the western portion of the County and rural agricultural areas dominating the eastern plains. The Denver International Airport (DIA) extends into Adams County's agricultural lands just east of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, however DIA is not located within the County's boundary.

The county abuts seven adjacent counties: Broomfield County, Weld County, Morgan County, Washington County, Arapahoe County, Denver County and Jefferson County. It includes 20 communities - eight cities, 10 are census-designated places, one town and one statutory town.

LEGEND

City Boundaries

- Arvada
- Aurora
- Bennett
- Brighton
- Commerce City
- Federal Heights
- Lochbuie
- Northglenn
- Thornton
- Westminster

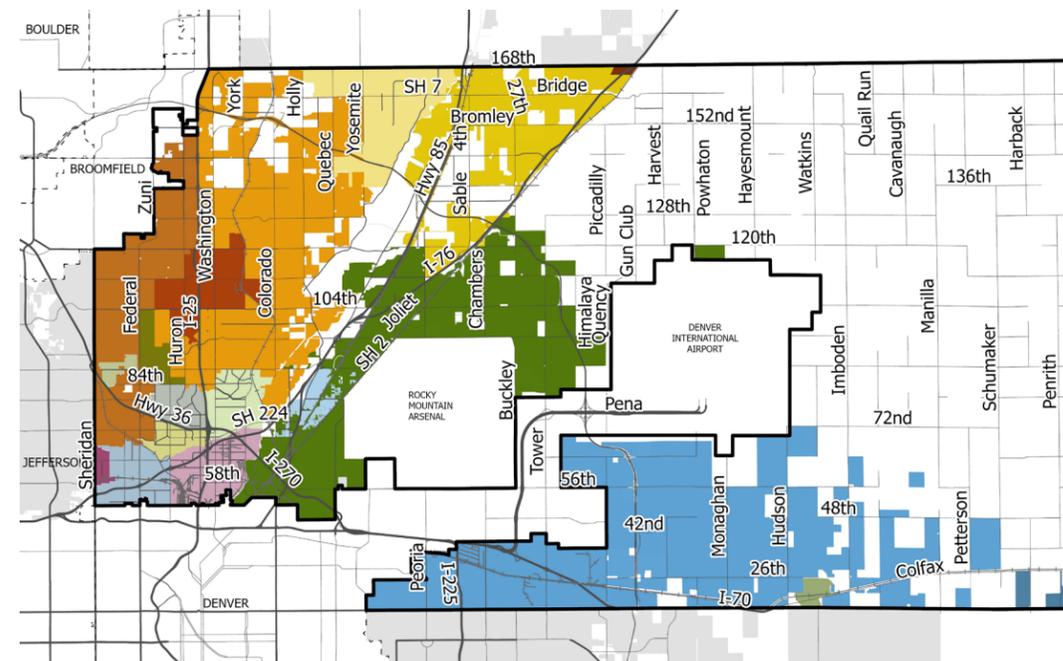
Census Designated Places

- Berkley
- Derby
- North Washington
- Shaw Heights
- Sherrelwood
- Strasburg
- Todd Creek
- Twin Lakes
- Watkins
- Welby

- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Roads
- Municipal Boundaries

NOT TO SCALE

MAP 3: MUNICIPALITIES AND PLACES

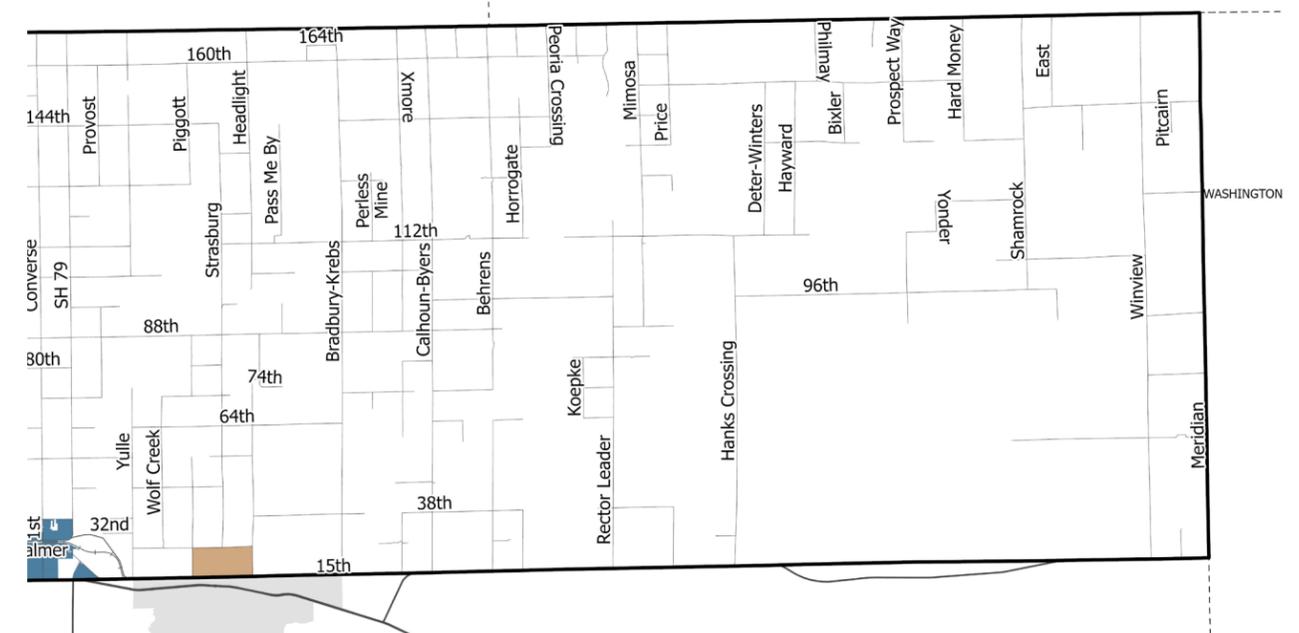


Data Source: Adams County, CDPHE, DRCOG

Table 6: Communities and Jurisdictions in Adams County

COMMUNITY	TYPE
Arvada	City
Aurora	City
Bennett	Town
Berkley	Census-designated place
Brighton	City (County seat)
Commerce City	City
Derby	Census-designated place
Federal Heights	City
Lochbuie	Statutory Town
Northglenn	City
North Washington	Census-designated place
Shaw Heights	Census-designated place
Sherrelwood	Census-designated place
Strasburg	Census-designated place
Thornton	City
Todd Creek	Census-designated place
Twin Lakes	Census-designated place
Watkins	Census-designated place
Welby	Census-designated place
Westminster	City

Adams County is greatly influenced by development and agricultural practices. The bulk of the county is vegetated with native or introduced grasses that create the Short Grass Prairie environment, used for grazing or maintained as crop land, with nearly 705,289 acres categorized by the UDSA as "lands in farms". However, over the past 15 years developed area land cover has increased by 28%, agricultural lands have increased by about 2%, and vegetative land cover has decreased by nearly 9%.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Planning for parks, open space and trails requires a strong understanding of the people who use these resources today, and anticipating shifts or changes in the future.

According to 2020 data from the state demographer, Adams County has a total population of 528,857, which is approximately 16.4 percent higher than the 2010 population (1.6% annual growth). Growth is projected to remain steady over the next five years and is expected to occur most significantly and rapidly in the western portions of the County that are closer to Denver and other urban centers. Areas where growth is projected to be concentrated are along the

Platte River Corridor, most notably in the northern portion. The highest growth municipalities are Brighton, Commerce City, and Aurora. These cities currently have some of the highest concentrations of population as shown in MAP 4: Population Density by Census Tract.

Adams County has 177,002 total households, which have grown at almost the same rate as the population and this growth is expected to remain steady over the next five years. As family households account for 70% of total households, the average household size has grown slightly from 2.85 in 2010 to 2.88 in 2020.

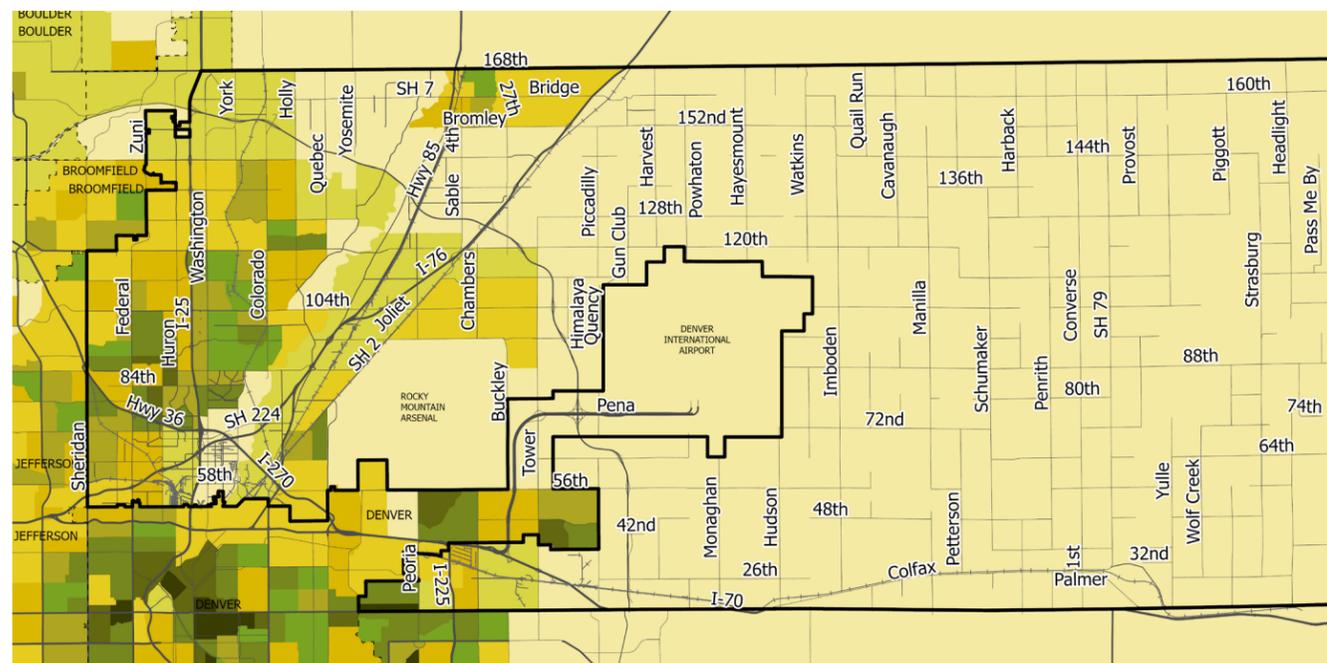
The median age in 2020 was 34.1, up from the 32.4 in 2010, and expected to continue increasing slowly over the next five years. Adults between the age of 25 and 44 account for the largest age segment of the population, at 29.6%. They are followed by children (less than 14 years of age) who represent 23% of the population, a larger portion than the State average. This can be attributed to a larger number of young families. Seniors (65+) account for 11.3% and are expected to grow the fastest of any age segment.

DID YOU KNOW?

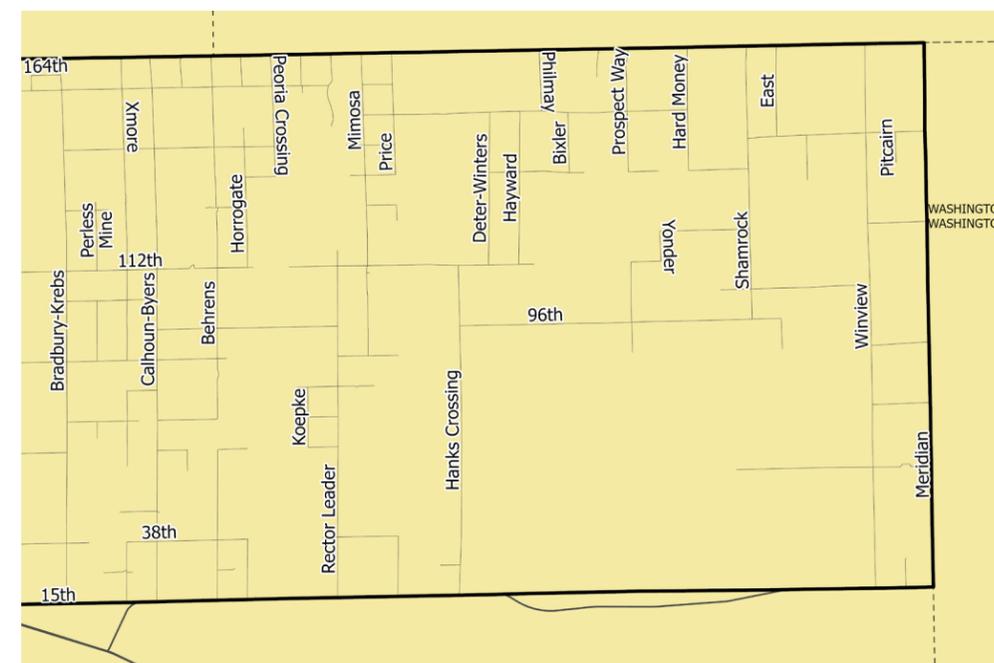
YOUTHFUL ADAMS!

Adams County residents are younger than the surrounding areas with a large segment of young families with children.

MAP 4: POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT



Data Source: Adams County, ESRI - ACS 2020, DRCOG



LEGEND

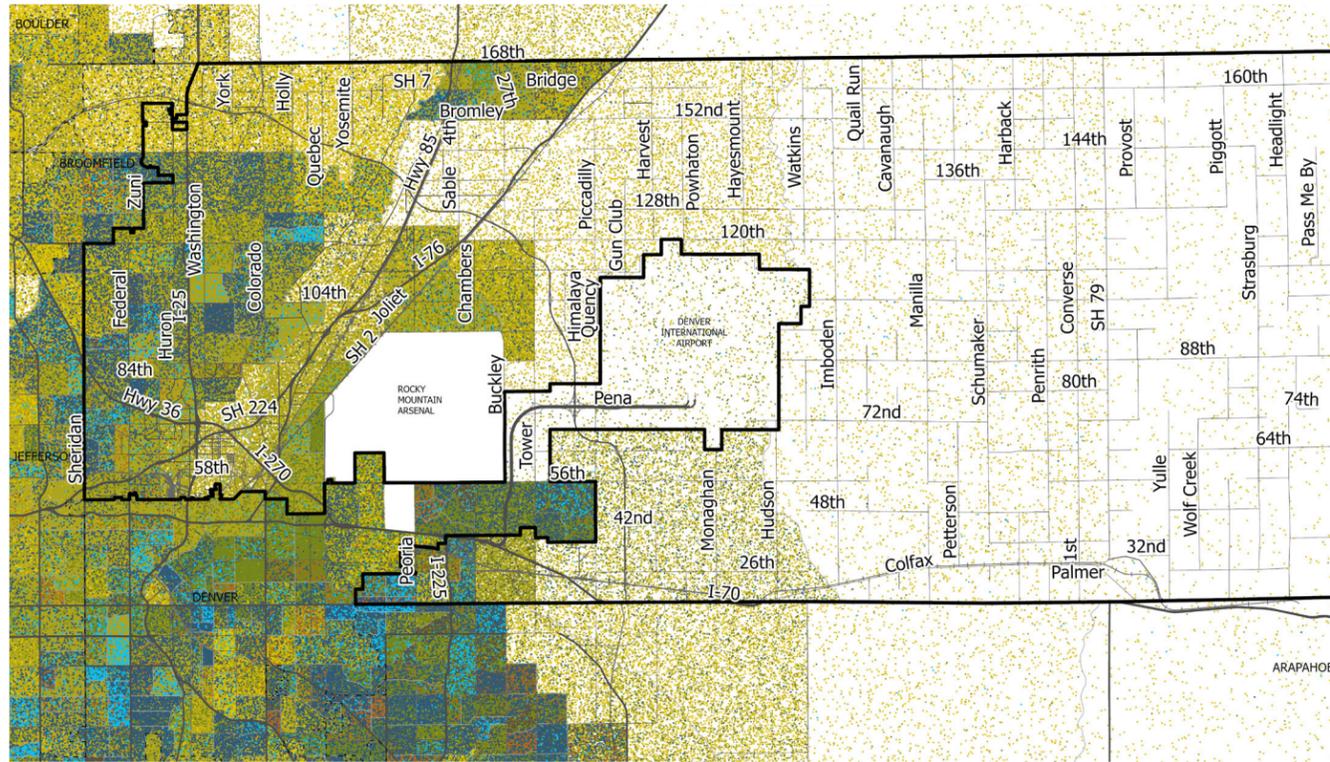
2020 Population Density

- ≤3700/sq. mi
- ≤7300/sq. mi
- ≤11000/sq. mi
- ≤14600/sq. mi
- ≤18300/sq. mi

- Adams County Boundary
- Railroads
- Roads

NOT TO SCALE

MAP 5: RACIAL/ETHNIC SCATTER



Data Source: Adams County, CDPHE, ESRI - ACS 2020, DRCOG

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

2018 Population By Race/Ethnicity. 1 Dot = 1 Person of specified race/ethnicity per tract. The denser the colors/dots, the higher the population within that census tract.

- Adams County Boundary
- ++++ Railroads
- Roads

- White (Non Hispanic)
- Hispanic
- Black (Non Hispanic)
- Native American (Non Hispanic)
- Asian (Non Hispanic)
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (Non Hispanic)
- Other (Non Hispanic)

County residents are predominantly white with 70% of the population reporting being white alone. The Hispanic population is expected to continue growing and account for 41.7% of the population by 2025. Other races/ethnicities make up a small percentage of the population with Black, American Indian and Asians accounting for 3.6%, 1.4%, and 4.2% respectively. The county also has a significant number of non-white residents that is expected to continue growing. This will help Adams County become more diverse over the next five years, taking the current diversity index from 73.8 to 75.1 by 2025. MAP 5: Racial/Ethnic Scatter demonstrates how a greater diversity of ethnicities is

currently concentrated in the western portion of the County.

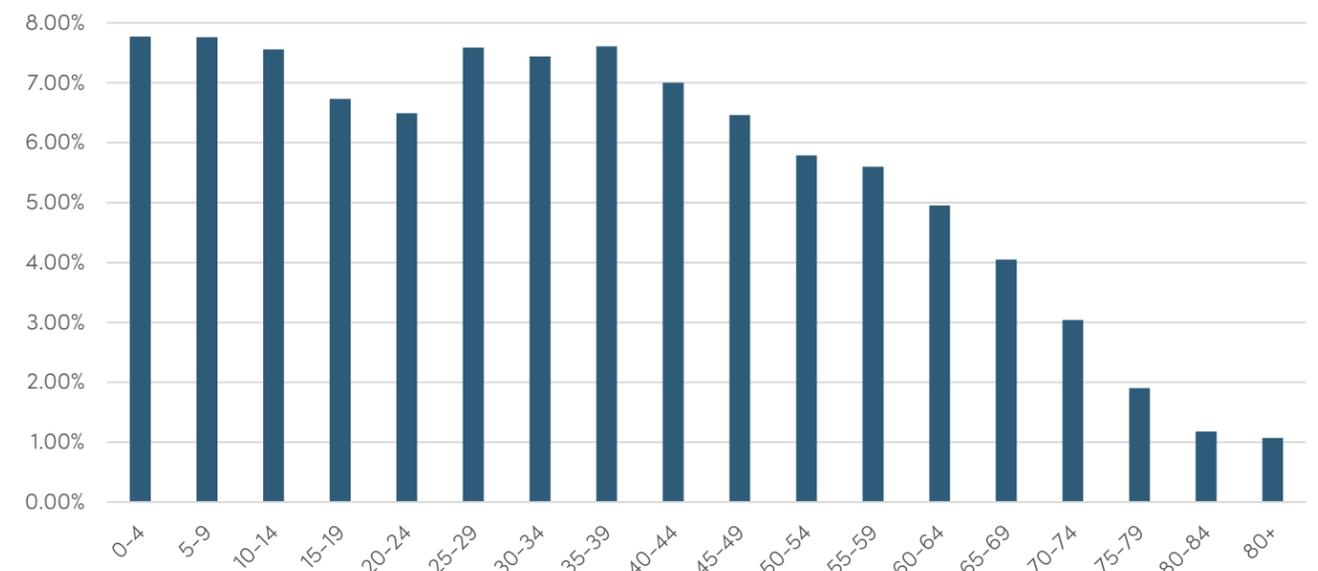
Twenty-four percent of households have at least one person with a disability, compared to 22% of households in the State of Colorado. Currently, 10 percent of households receive food stamps and 10 percent are below the poverty line in Adams County, compared to 8 percent and 11 percent respectively in the State of Colorado. Table 7: Income Distribution by Household further details the spread of income levels within Adams County compared to the state.

Table 7: Income Distribution by Household

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	% OF HOUSEHOLDS ADAMS COUNTY	% OF HOUSEHOLDS COLORADO
<\$15,000	6.3%	7.9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	5.9%	6.9%
\$25,000-\$34,999	7.4%	7.3%
\$35,000-\$49,999	13.2%	11.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	19.9%	17.3%
\$75,000-\$99,999	15.2%	13.6%
\$100,000-\$149,999	19.1%	17.9%
\$150,000-\$199,999	7.4%	8.5%
\$200,000+	5.6%	9.2%

Source: Esri, 2020

Figure 13: Age Distribution in Adams County (2020)



Source: Esri, 2020

AGRICULTURE

Adams County has long boasted an agricultural economy and heritage. The soils are among the best in Colorado for crop production. The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service cites 705,289 acres of “land in farms” which is defined as any place from which \$1,000 or more in agricultural products were produced and sold. This has seen a slight increase of 2% since 2012, as reported in the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture. The number of farms in this timeframe increased by 8%, while the average size of the farm experienced a decrease in acreage by approximately 5%, from 821 acres to 779 acres. There was an overall

County-wide farm acreage increase of about 14,761 acres. Land in farms by use indicate 83% in cropland and 15% in pastureland. 97% of the 905 total farms identify as family farms.¹

These numbers indicate that Adams County is a leader in Front Range agriculture production. The top crop is wheat for grain at 193,026 acres, compared to the next highest acreage of corn for grain at 42,882 acres. Dryland-farmed wheat, concentrated on lands east of Brighton and north of Strasburg, is the County’s dominant yield crop. Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas and wheat are grown in large quantities and represent the bulk of the crops produced in the county.

¹ USDA 2012 and 2017 Census of Agriculture

Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod also comprise a significant portion of sales from Adams County farms.

The agricultural vegetative cover is dominated by dryland crops/fields and rangeland throughout the western three quarters of the county, with irrigated crops/fields throughout. Row crops, irrigated pasture and dry-farm crops are located in the eastern quarter of the County. Soils classified as Prime Farmland of State-Wide Importance cover 7.8% of the county (54,554 acres) while an additional 72% (546,828 acres) are classified as Prime Farmland if Irrigated. The market value of agricultural products sold increased from \$116,464,000 in 2012 to \$126,500,000 in 2017.

Cattle ranches, which are often combined with raising other foods, exist throughout the County, but are concentrated in the east. Cattle is the largest livestock component in Adams County. Dairy farming, which was historically very important in the County, still exists but has exhibited up and down cycles throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Some of the most productive agricultural land in the county borders urban population centers.

MAP 6: SOIL PRODUCTIVITY



Data Source: USDA NRCS



LEGEND

Soil Farmland Classification

- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Local Importance
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Not Prime Farmland

NOT TO SCALE

ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT

The County is responsible for preserving and maintaining areas of significant ecological, cultural, agricultural, and historical significance. The Adams County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department is responsible for planning, management, and maintenance of the County parks system, including developed parks, open spaces, facility rentals and trails. The Department seeks to balance resource stewardship with quality customer service and visitor experiences, and work to promote inter-jurisdictional cooperation to create a well-connected, equitably accessible, and inclusive system of parks, open space and trails resources throughout the county. The Arts and Culture division of the department is dedicated to the growth and evolution of the arts among Adams County's



Figure 14: Pelican Ponds

communities and seeks to provide everyone with the opportunity to enjoy a rich diversity of art and culture experiences.

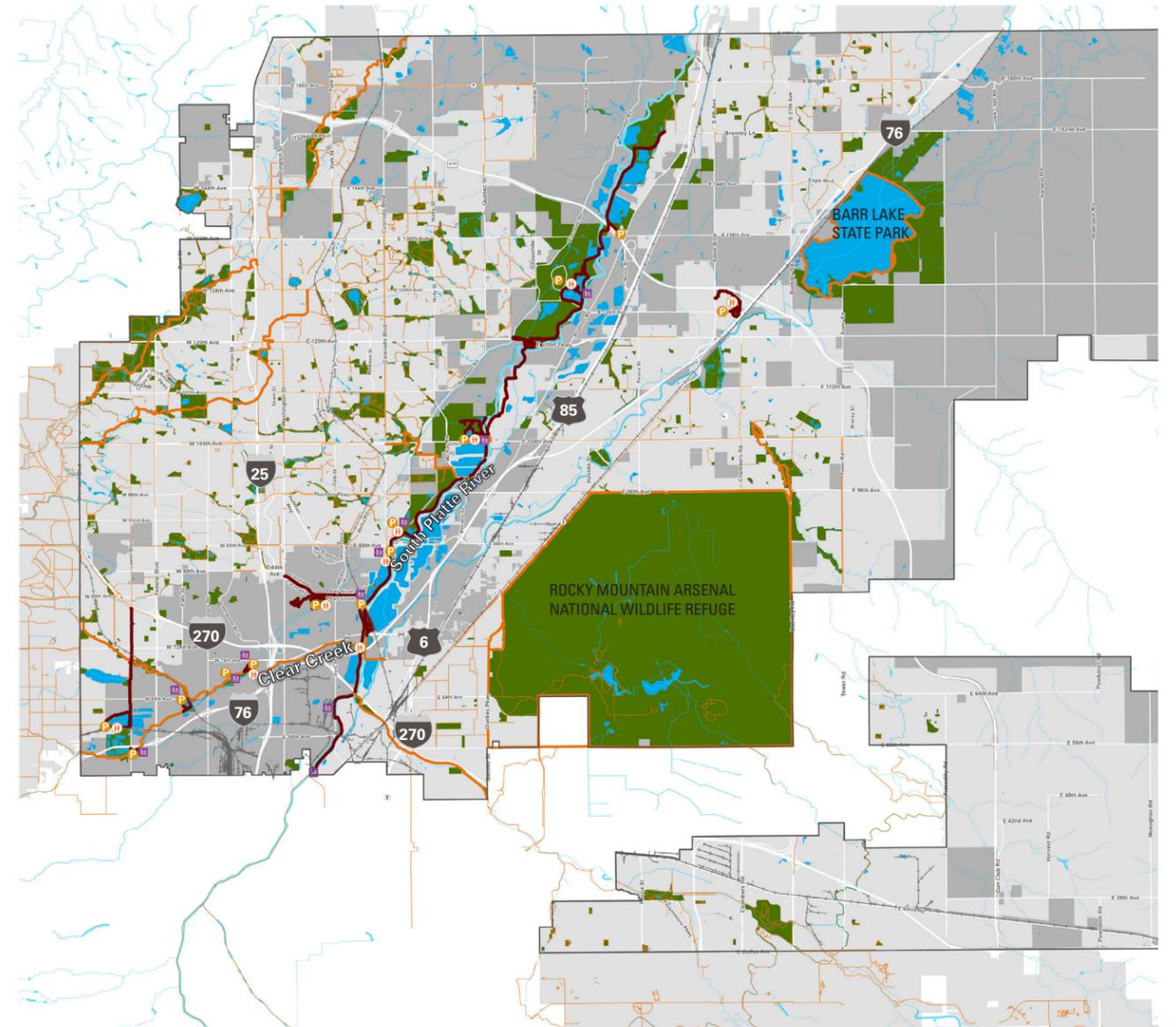
OVERVIEW OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES

There are 772 publicly accessible properties classified as parks, open spaces, and trailheads (dedicated access points to trails) in the county. This amounts to more than 27,000 acres of land.

The County owns and manages 31 of these properties, including four community parks, one regional park, 15 open spaces and 11 trails/trailheads.

Another 735 parks, open spaces and trailheads are owned and managed by a combination of ten municipalities and special recreation districts in the county. Thornton, Westminster, and Commerce City have the highest acreage of publicly accessible parks and open space (roughly between 1,400 and 1,900 acres).

MAP 7: EXISTING PARKS AND PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

LEGEND

Adams County Trails	Parks, Open Space and Trailheads	Adams County Boundary
Regional Trails	Parking	Railroads
Municipal Trails	Restroom	Streams and Lakes
	Trailhead	Municipal Boundaries
		Unincorporated

DID YOU KNOW?



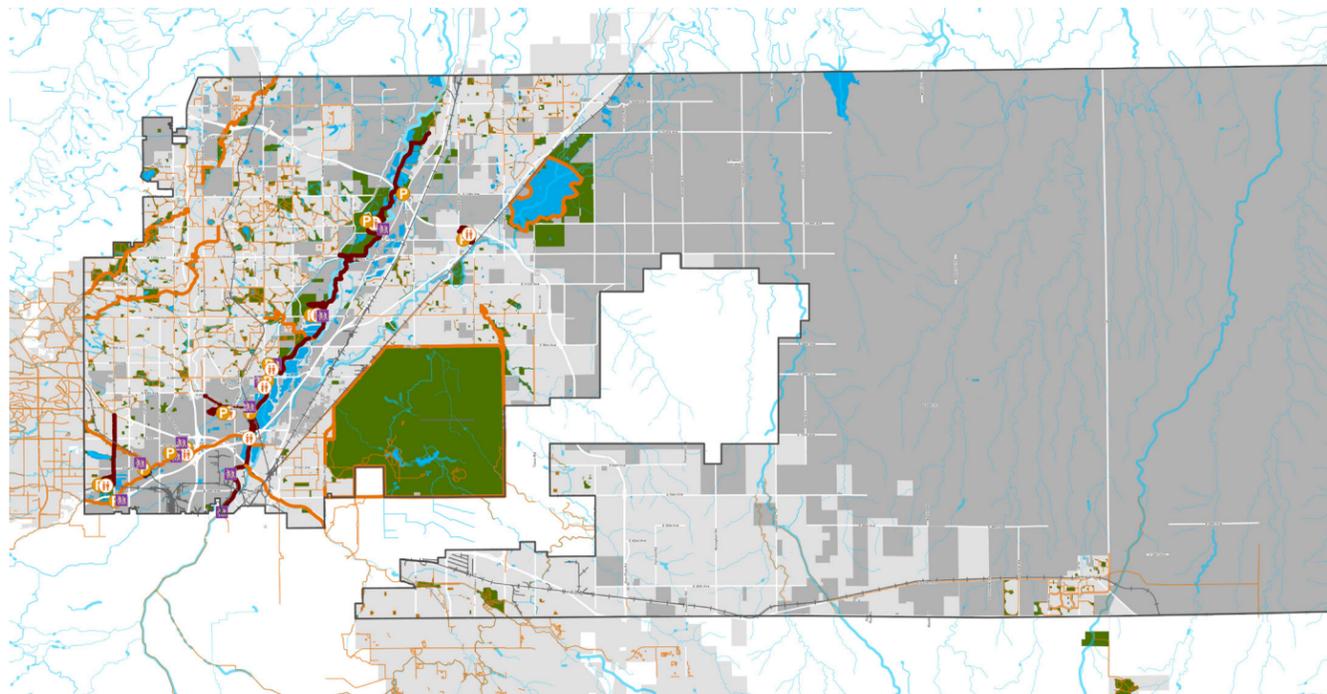
559 MILES OF EXISTING TRAILS IN THE COUNTY

40.7 MILES OF EXISTING REGIONAL RECREATION TRAILS IN UNINCORPORATED ADAMS COUNTY MANAGED BY COUNTY STAFF

TRAILS OVERVIEW

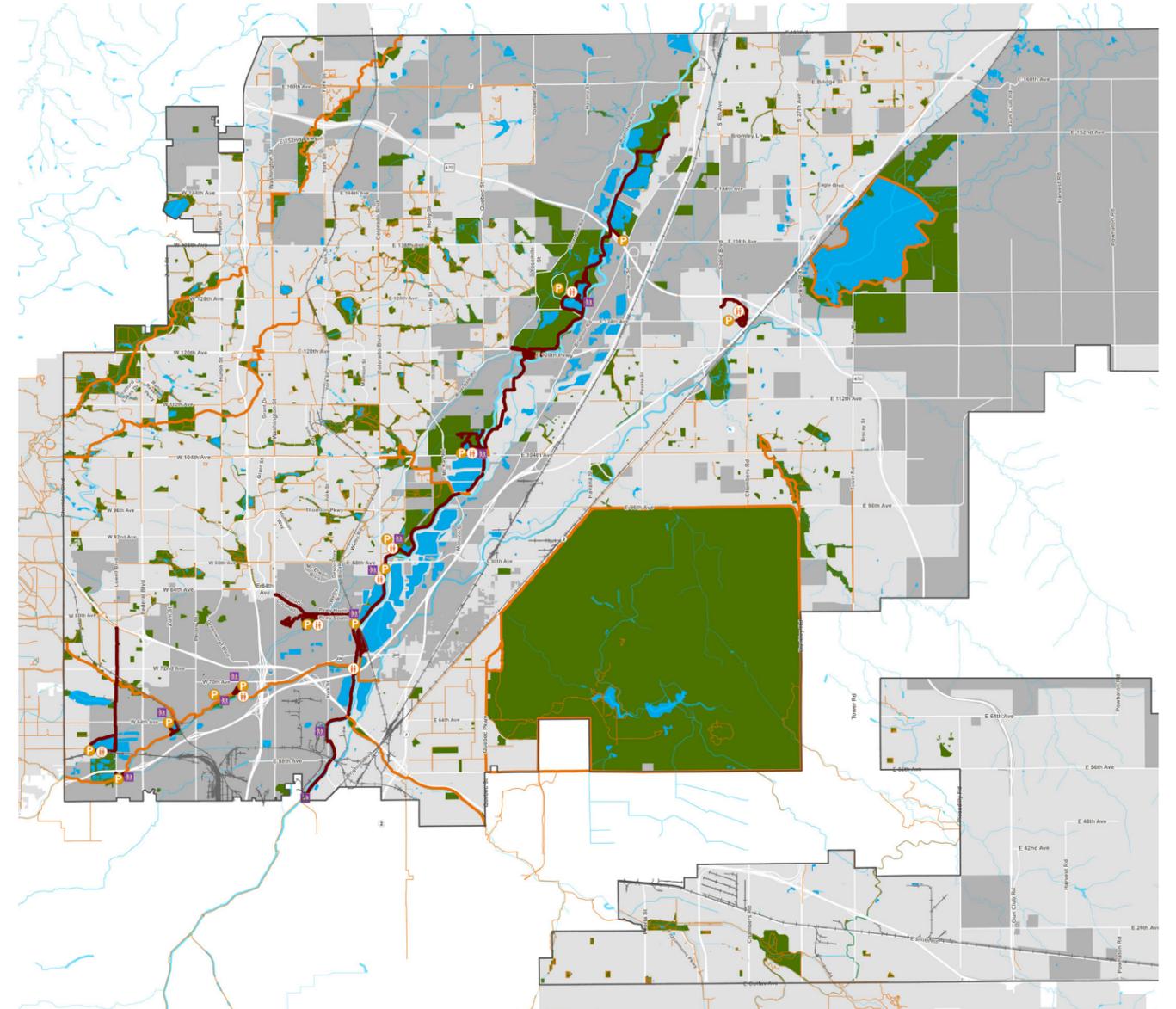
A growing network of paved and unpaved trails for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians stretches through Adams County. While most of the trails are concentrated in the western portion, a few municipal trails expand east beyond Strasburg. The most significant regional trail connectors managed by Adams County include the South Platte River Trail and the Clear Creek Trail. The County would like to create connections to the National Western Complex in the future.

MAP 8: EXISTING RECREATION TRAILS



NOT TO SCALE

MAP 9: EXISTING RECREATION TRAILS



Data Source: Design Workshop, Adams County GIS, Municipal GIS Data, DRCOG

LEGEND

- Priority Planned Trails
- Future Trails (2012 High Priority, County Identified)
- Adams County Trails
- Regional Trails
- Municipal Trails
- Parks, Open Space and Trailheads
- P Parking
- i Restroom
- Trailhead
- Adams County Boundary
- + + + + Railroads
- Streams and Lakes
- Municipal Boundaries
- Zoning Unincorporated

PREVIOUS PLANS REVIEW

The first Master Plan for Adams County Parks and Community Resources Department, Adams County Open Space Plan: A Balanced Environment for the Future, was completed in December 1998. This plan discussed issues, identified goals, and provided an inventory of existing resources specific to agricultural resources, environmental resources,

and regional trails. The most recent update to this process was conducted in 2012. As we look forward to a new Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, it is important to review and understand the planning and decisions leading the County to where it is today. Below is a table of reference plans, followed by a description of the key plans that have relevance for this plan.

Table 8: List of Adams County Plans Reviewed

COMPREHENSIVE PLANS	2017 DRCOG Metro Vision	2015 The Sustainable Adams County 2030
	2016 Making Connections Plan	2012 Comprehensive Plan – Imagine Adams County
	2016 District Plan	
PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS PLANS	2018 Clear Creek Corridor	2016 88th Avenue Open Space Master Plan
	2018 Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan	2012 Adams County Open Space, Parks & Trails Master Plan
OTHER PLANS	2017 Artfully Adams, Adams County Arts & Culture Master Plan	2009 Adams County Regional Park Fairgrounds Master Plan
	2017 Thornton Parks and Open Space Master Plan	2005 Mineral Extraction Plan
	2014 Welby Subarea Plan	2004 South Platte Fishing Lakes and Open Space Action Plan
	2014 Federal Blvd. Framework Plan	2004 Adams County Comprehensive Plan
	2010 Westminster Wildlife and Natural Resource Management Plan for Open Space Properties	2003 City of Thornton Parks and Open Space Master Plan
	2010 Northglenn Open Space Management Plan: A Framework for the Future	2003 The Southwest Adams County Framework Plan
	2009 Adams County Trails Guide (map)	2002 88th Avenue Open Space Plan
	2009 Thornton Parks and Open Space Master Plan	2001 Arvada Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan
	2008 Adams County Regional Park Master Plan "Update South and Northeastern Areas"	2000 Commerce City – Prairieways Open Space Action Plan
	2008 52-85 Trail Master Plan: A Regional Segment of the Colorado Front Range Trail	1999 Adams County Regional Park Master Plan
	2008 Rotella Park Renovations Master Plan	1998 Adams County Open Space Plan
	2008 Berkeley Neighborhood Plan	1997 South Platte River Heritage Corridor Plan
	2005 Second Creek Greenway Master Plan	1996 A Conservation Vision for Barr Lake State Park
	2008 Southwest Adams County Framework for Future Planning	1996 Adams County Transportation Plan
	2005 Riverdale Road Corridor Plan	1990 The Emerald Strands – Cooperative Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan for the Area Surrounding the new Denver International Airport

COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

DRCOG Metro Vision – 2017

The Metro Vision Plan is a regional plan adopted by DRCOG to address the common issues beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of the counties and municipalities of the Denver region. This plan serves as a tool to promote regional cooperation and advise local jurisdictions. The plan is guided by five principles and aims to tackle the plethora of topics shared by the region; two of which are the natural and built environments. A section of the plan is dedicated to the outcome of ensuring the region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails. This section identifies "Ideas for Implementation" relate to collaboration, education, policies and regulation, and investments. Metro Vision recognizes and addresses many challenges and opportunities in the region. The plan incorporates common performance measures for most challenges, as well as sections that highlight their importance, and previous successes in tackling them. A special "making progress together" highlights the benefits and challenges of producing food locally and leveraging agriculture's economic benefits.

Making Connections Plan – 2016

This plan focuses on formulating a sound and rational basis for guiding development, redevelopment and supporting infrastructure for 13,177

acres of unincorporated southwest Adams County. The plan includes projects ideal for multi-jurisdictional partnerships and public-private partnership and investment. The Plan focuses on economic return on investment while being strategic and equitable for the existing community, neighborhoods, and businesses. It includes a section on park and trail improvements bundles which identify new County parks and trails and a set of improvements to the existing properties. The estimated cost is set between \$13.5 to 14 million and highlights 6 bundles, US 36 Connections, Allen Ditch Trail, Welby Neighborhood, Federal to Sheridan, Clear Creek Trail Replacement, and Twin Lakes Park Renovation.

District Plan – 2016

Adams County and the City of Brighton partnered in 2016 to study the feasibility of preserving farmland in southern Brighton that remains valuable for food production, while allowing for a range of development opportunities that consider the most efficient and sustainable use of the land. This plan helps decision-makers guide investment in the area for compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development, as well as farmland conservation, and local food and agritourism promotion.

The plan is focused on the area now referred to as Historic Splendid Valley. The goals of this plan are to preserve agricultural land and heritage, encourage local food production, and promote agritourism.

The Sustainable Adams County 2030 – 2015

The plan identifies four cornerstones of sustainability and sixteen goals that are integral to ensuring the long term environmental, social and fiscal sustainability of Adams County. The cornerstones are Responsible and Innovative Regional Leadership, Waste Management and Reduction, Conservation of Energy and Resources, and Respect for Adams County's Heritage. The document outlines a set of goals, some of which are relevant to parks and open spaces including:

- Promoting the health and wellness of the County's residents through various opportunities

- Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills, energy consumed from non-renewable sources, and the use of potable water at parks
- Maintaining the conservation of acres of high-quality agricultural lands
- Increase residents' access to fresh foods and supporting and promoting farmers markets, farm stands, and community gardens

PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS PLANS

Clear Creek Corridor Plan - 2018

Clear Creek runs approximately seven miles through southwest Adams County from Sheridan Blvd. to the South Platte River Confluence. The County currently owns approximately 178 acres of open space adjacent

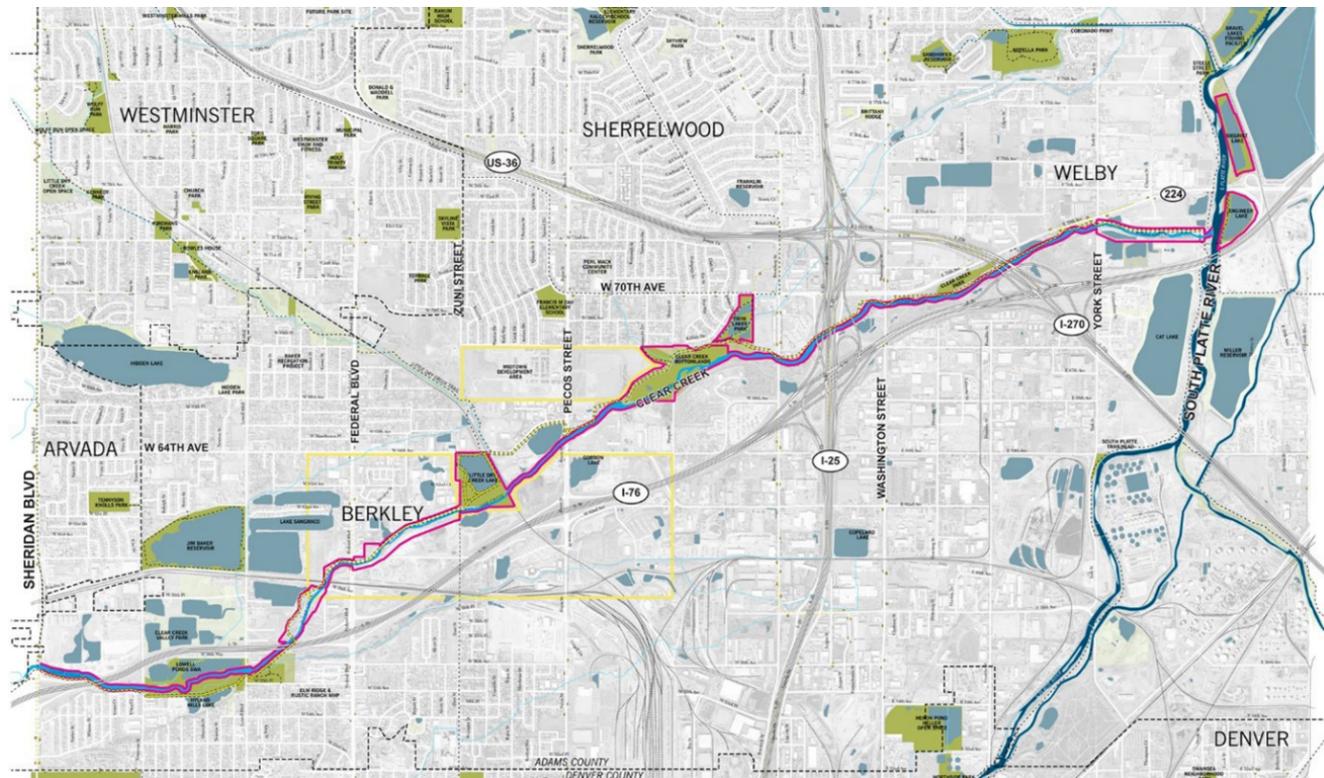


Figure 15: Clear Creek Corridor

to Clear Creek. A regional trail and several trail access points have been developed through this corridor, but currently few other amenities are located along the corridor.

The Clear Creek Corridor Plan will provide a basis for future improvement projects that will provide a variety of recreational amenities while protecting and enhancing the natural systems in the Clear Creek corridor. The goals of the plan include improving safety, making trail connections to surrounding neighborhoods and new transit areas, providing amenities that are lacking in the surrounding neighborhoods, improving habitat and ecological systems, and identifying locations for bank stabilization and restoration projects. Safety and lighting were concerns during the planning process. The need to balance appropriate lighting with environmental (dark sky) habitat considerations was considered.

Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan - 2018

The Adams County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department and a consultant team led by Design Workshop are working together to update the Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan. The park serves as a respite for people, contains an abundance of wildlife, provides a variety of recreational opportunities, and houses the Adams County Fairgrounds, Adams County Museum, and two 18-hole golf courses. The County is trying to meet and balance

the needs of current Regional Park clientele and visitors while looking to the future. Goals include ensuring stewardship of natural resources, meeting recreational demands of a growing regional population, as well as studying the continued marketability and financial viability of the improvements to the regional facility.

Artfully Adams, Adams County Arts & Culture Master Plan - 2017

As part of its mission to become the most inclusive and innovative county in America for all families and business, Adams County released its Artfully Adams Plan to further enhance the area's quality of life. Four indicators were used to mark the progress of the plan: inclusivity, sense of community, opportunities to attend cultural activities, and opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation or enjoy nature. The plan includes a section for implementation as well as an inventory that lists the venues organizations, events, and policies within different areas of the County.

The plan highlights four major goals, each with their own set of strategies:

- Create opportunities for the county's diverse and growing population to engage in art and culture
- Connect artists and art and culture organizations in the county to one another
- Promote the county's artists and arts and culture organizations
- Leverage the county's park and recreation assets by enhancing arts and culture experiences

88th Avenue Open Space Master Plan - 2016

The 88th Avenue Open Space area, located near the South Platte River, has long been an area the County wanted to use for recreational development. The plan proposed improvement projects to restore and enhance surface water, wetlands, groundwater, and riparian and grassland habitat along the South Platte River in Adams County and the City of Thornton. These projects have been completed and the open space is now known as Pelicon Ponds Open Space.

Public accessibility of the restored natural resource areas will increase recreational opportunities, including wildlife viewing, and will enhance the public's understanding of the importance and value of wildlife and the need for restoration to compensate for the fast pace of Front Range development.

Pelican Ponds Open Space has great potential, especially the north and south ponds. Adams County, in partnership with Mile High Flood District, has hired the consultant team to develop this master plan for habitat restoration, adding habitat viability with wetlands, and improvements to riverbank and lake aquatic habitats. Another major scope of this project is recreation-based improvements. They include: trailhead access, a parking lot, restrooms, picnic shelters, fishing access improvements, Nature

Play, primitive trails, education and interpretation.

OTHER PLANS

South Platte River Heritage Corridor Plan

The South Platte River Heritage Corridor Plan played a pivotal role for the County when it came to preserving and enhancing the natural, cultural and recreational qualities of the river corridor. The project focused on a 17-mile stretch of the South Platte from Commerce City to Brighton (the Denver City limits to the Weld County line). The heritage plan outlined:

- A sense of community stewardship for the resource
- A strategic action plan that protects and enhances natural areas
- An environmental education program focusing on the river system
- Key agricultural lands
- New public-private partnerships to foster enhanced restoration and reclamation of gravel mining areas
- New recreational opportunities to the public



Figure 16: Pelican Ponds

PLAN SUCCESSES SINCE 2012

Adams County has achieved significant accomplishments since the 2012 Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan was completed. The greatest areas of progress include the continued allocation of open space grant funds for parks, open spaces, and trails to municipalities and partners throughout the county. Adams County Open Space Sales Tax is celebrating 20 years of success. Over these years, more than 538 projects have received funding, totaling more than \$212 million dollars invested into parks and open space across the county.

The County has created a local food production district with the Splendid Valley and Local District Plan. With the current plan update, open space and agricultural preservation will remain a focus of achieving the vision of the 2012 plan.

The County has created a visioning master plan for Riverdale Regional Park and will continue to focus on implementing aspects of that plan for improving the park and fairground

facilities. The County has acquired Willow Bay near the regional park, along with the Bluffs, and is engaged in long-term planning for those sites as well.

The 2012 plan called for local park infill projects when appropriate. The County has added Gateway Park, Lowell Ponds Open Space, Pelican Ponds Open Space and completed renovations at Twin Lakes and Rotella Park. Finding additional park land throughout the county to address service gaps in unincorporated and disadvantaged areas remains a priority.

The South Platte Trail has expanded from 104th Avenue to Riverdale Regional Park, and now on to Brighton.

The County is also in the process of establishing a Ranger and Naturalist program to include patrolling parks, open space and trails properties to provide visitor safety and resource protection, education, interpretation and ensuring compliance with parks rules and regulations.



Figure 17: Pelican Ponds