

## **Pocket Parks (Private Open Space) Versus Public Parks**

### **Background**

The “parking lot” issue states:

*Discuss the issue and relationship of pocket parks (private open space) and public parks (neighborhood and perhaps community?) that serve neighborhood residents. The timing of constructing neighborhood parks is a community issue that may warrant further discussion depending upon the outcome of City Council’s discussion that will occur this year before the 2004-2008 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process begins.*

Three issues have been identified concerning pocket parks and public parks. The first issue is the timing of neighborhood parks construction relative to development. The City’s park standard is 2.5 acres of neighborhood park land for each 1,000 residents. This standard was last analyzed as part of the benchmarks. Since development fees fund new neighborhood parks, there will be a park land deficit until the Longmont Planning Area (LPA) is built out. As a footnote, changes in the LACP to reduce housing units, but not park facilities, will require park fees to be increased to meet the park standards.

The second issue concerns the amount of open space required in residential developments. In January 2003, City Council amended the Land Development Code (LDC) to increase the amount of private open space required in non-planned unit development (PUD) residential subdivisions from 2.5% and 5% to 10%. The effects of this change are not yet evident. Of the last 35 major single family residential subdivisions in Longmont, 23 were processed as PUD’s. These subdivisions all conformed to the 20% common open space requirement (or 15% if approved prior to 1998).

The third issue concerns Longmont’s transition to a maturing city. As Longmont grows, vacant land within the City limits will more likely develop. Pocket parks in new developments located within established neighborhood planning areas (where neighborhood parks are not so prevalent as in newer areas) may provide open space for residents of surrounding subdivisions and augment recreational demand on other open space areas, e.g., school playgrounds, parking lots, vacant lots. Some undeveloped parcels seen as “backfill” neighborhood park opportunities in established neighborhood planning areas include the Yeager and Bohn farms.

### **Outcomes**

Since putting this item in the “parking lot”, the issue appears to have been sufficiently addressed at this time through CIP discussions, LDC amendments, and budget discussions regarding higher park fees and maintenance costs.

### **Community Involvement**

Since this item appears to be on the “back burner” at this time, no community involvement activities are proposed for this topic.

### **Resources**

Since this item appears to be on the “back burner” at this time, no resources (staff time, budget, consultants) are detailed for this topic.