

## City of Longmont Water Principles

### 2009 Legislative Year

- Supports water policies that protect Colorado water resources.
- Supports the constitutional doctrine of prior appropriation and the constitutional priority given to domestic water use.
- Supports the inventorying and protection of Longmont's water rights
- Supports appropriate water conservation efforts by all users and effective long-term water resource management.
- Supports appropriate coordination of municipal water use with agriculture, recreation and open space uses
- Supports federal; and state financial aid programs assisting municipalities with the construction and improvement of water systems to protect and enhance the quality of water supplies to the public and to comply with federal and state mandates.
- Recognizes the special needs of smaller municipalities and encourages the federal government and the state to provide special financial assistance to smaller municipalities for water systems based on financial and health needs.
- All Colorado water users must share in solving Colorado's water resource problems with the costs to meet the water needs of water users being paid solely by those benefiting from the project or effort.
- The State of Colorado should provide assistance, when requested, for local water supply planning and assist in the implementation of consensus-based water resource solutions that respect local authorities, private property and water rights. Proper water supply planning should be required in conjunction with land use planning efforts.
- During the process of planning to meet future needs, water suppliers and utilities should explore full development of existing local water sources, consideration of new water supplies, and demand management.”

***Longmont Principle Discussion:*** *This principle is generally consistent with our Raw Water Policy and administrative practices that calls for the transfer and utilization of the historic water rights in meeting the water demands. The term “transfer” will need to be understood. Staff interprets transfer to refer to the movement of water from one basin to another such as the CBT or Windy Gap projects. Our Master Plan does not contemplate the need to build additional projects to transfer water to meet Longmont's long-term water*

*needs. It will be important to note however that improvement or “firming” of the Windy Gap is an important component to Longmont’s water supply portfolio.*

*Longmont has also worked to avoid the dry-up of agricultural land to meet our water needs. Longmont also strives to make full use of our reuse credits through lease, contract, or exchange. We currently have inter-connections with the Left Hand Water District, although this arrangement has not been used to address water supply issues, nor is it clear how it could. The City has a Water Conservation Plan, and aggressively is pursuing water conservation strategies.*

- Additional water storage should be pursued through the improvement and rehabilitation of existing structures and the development of new structures. These activities should be accomplished with local consensus.
- The right of water rights owners to market their water rights must be protected. Colorado must fully explore flexible, market-based approaches to water supply management, including interruptible water contracts, water banking, in-state water leasing and groundwater recharge management.
- Longmont’s Raw Water Policy calls for the transfer of for municipal use all historic water from lands being annexed to the City. The transfer of agricultural water outside of a City’s planning area should be encouraged to be completed through leases or interruptible water supply contracts in order to preserve agriculture. *Water leases should not preclude, but be in addition to purchases, to meet the water supply needs of municipalities.*
- In the event that agricultural water is transferred, the transaction must adequately address the need for maintaining the existing tax base, protecting the remaining water rights in the area, and maintaining the proper stewardship of the land including revegetation and weed control.
- The need to develop additional water supplies to serve Colorado’s growing population should be weighed against the recreational and environmental benefits served by preservation of instream flows. Longmont holds that the term “balance” should not imply evenly split, but rather is reflective of the specific conditions existing relative to additional water development projects.

***Longmont Principle Discussion:*** *Longmont worked closely with the CWCB and the North St. Vrain Corridor Committee in preserving and enhancing the water flows in the St. Vrain. Longmont has also filed for an in-stream recreation water right on the St. Vrain just east of Main Street for a future kayak course.*

- Adverse economic, environmental, and social impacts of future water projects and water transfers must be minimized; unavoidable adverse impacts must be mitigated, including both the immediate and long-term impacts attributable to water transfers. Locally affected communities must have the opportunity to assist in defining appropriate mitigation for each project. The transfer of water from Northern Colorado to meet the water needs of the Denver metro area is a significant concern for Longmont.

- Future water supply solutions must benefit both the area of origin and the area of use.
- Water conservation measures that do not injure other water rights should be aggressively pursued.
- There must be an ongoing, concerted effort to educate all Coloradans on the importance of water, and the need to conserve, manage, and plan for the needs of this and future generations.