

# LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

How Longmont grows continues to be important to citizens. The form of the City, aesthetic considerations, land use patterns, historic preservation, and community identity all have a direct impact on the quality of growth in the City.

Urban design is the generally accepted name for the process of giving physical design direction to urban growth, conservation, and change. It is understood to include landscape as well as buildings, and both preservation and new construction.

Urban design can be the result of deliberate choices, or it can result from default and inaction. Elements that contribute to a community’s urban design include land use patterns, architecture, historic preservation, design of public spaces and structures, landscaping, signs, art, maintenance, and the mass, height, and setback of structures.

A community’s emphasis on urban design may be citywide or more localized. Public and private actions contribute to it. Planning, implementation, and large- and small-scale decisions define it. Longmont has focused its efforts to improve its aesthetics and urban design and take advantage of opportunities to tie the various elements together.

For example, Longmont has two nationally registered historic districts and numerous structures that are nationally and/or locally designated landmarks. In addition, the City has an Art in Public Places Program that is developing and integrating diverse, quality public art within the City.

## The Neighborhood Planning Areas

Neighborhood planning areas are the basic planning unit in Longmont. They also are the basic social and service unit. The neighborhood planning area, whether it be residential or industrial/commercial, should include a mix of land uses that serves its residents and workforce. The City uses arterial streets, creeks, irrigation ditches, natural drainage boundaries, or other significant features to define neighborhood planning area boundaries. The neighborhood planning areas may contain smaller identifiable neighborhoods such as those defined by registered neighborhood groups.

<b>The 15 established neighborhood planning areas in the City are:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. McIntosh</li> <li>2. Longmont Estates</li> <li>3. Garden Acres</li> <li>4. Loomiller</li> <li>5. Sunset</li> <li>6. Southmoor</li> <li>7. Lanyon</li> <li>8. Clark Centennial</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Kensington</li> <li>10. Central Business</li> <li>11. South Commercial</li> <li>12. North Commercial</li> <li>13. Central Industrial</li> <li>14. South Industrial</li> <li>15. East Industrial</li> </ol>



The City has planned 12 additional neighborhood planning areas in the Longmont Planning Area.

**The 12 planned neighborhood planning areas are:**

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. East Side          | 7. Pike                 |
| 2. Lower Clover Basin | 8. Quail                |
| 3. Schlagel           | 9. Longmont Tech Center |
| 4. West St. Vrain     | 10. Terry Lake          |
| 5. Airport            | 11. McLane              |
| 6. Upper Clover Basin | 12. Westview            |

The City has already annexed some parcels in several of these neighborhood planning areas. When the City records an annexation, it automatically transfers the parcel from the Longmont Planning Area into the Municipal Service Area.

### **Description of the Comprehensive Plan Map**

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the pattern and mix of land uses for the Longmont Planning Area. The Comprehensive Plan Map reflects existing land use patterns, and identifies locations where different land uses may occur within the Longmont Planning Area. The land use table contained at the end of this chapter summarizes each of the land use categories identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map. The table is intended as a quick reference guide. Detailed criteria for the location, density, layout, design, and desired character of each land use category may be found in the corresponding chapter of the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* for residential, commercial, and industrial/economic development land uses.



## Land Use and Urban Design Goals, Policies, and Strategies

**GOAL LUD-1:** Achieve a compact urban form that uses land efficiently, is aesthetically pleasing, and minimizes undesirable impacts to the environment.

**POLICY LUD-1.1:** Use the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* and the City's land use regulations to promote overall moderate-intensity development that is sensitive to natural features and that will visually enhance the community.

**GOAL LUD-2:** Promote a compatible and functional system of land uses.

**POLICY LUD-2.1:** Create a compatible system of land uses.

**Strategy LUD-2.1(a):** Review development regulations on a periodic basis and revise as needed to promote high-quality development.

**Strategy LUD-2.1(b):** Review development regulations on a periodic basis and revise as needed to include new and flexible techniques that facilitate unique and innovative design.

**Strategy LUD-2.1(c):** Encourage developers to address aesthetic considerations in designing and planning their projects.

**Strategy LUD-2.1(d):** Protect significant views by requiring developers to evaluate the visual impact of their projects on existing and future development.

**Strategy LUD-2.1(e):** Protect the City's investment in its wastewater treatment plant by promoting land uses and activities in its proximity that are compatible with it.

**GOAL LUD-3:** Recognize the neighborhood planning area as the basic social and service unit of the City, and as the City's basic unit of urban expansion.

**POLICY LUD-3.1:** Ensure that neighborhood planning areas are readily identifiable and bounded by significant natural or man-made boundaries such as rivers, drainage basin limits, and arterial streets.

**Strategy LUD-3.1(a):** Plan residential neighborhood planning areas that are self-contained, have a sense of place, and are centered around schools, parks, and other services, all within walking distance of the home.

**Strategy LUD-3.1(b):** Plan a mixture of housing types for a population between 4,000 and 8,000 in residential neighborhood planning areas.



**Strategy LUD-3.1(c):** Plan commercial and industrial neighborhood planning areas that are functional, identifiable areas with a positive impact on the City and compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**Strategy LUD-3.1(d):** Minimize land uses that would detract from the function and viability of commercial, industrial, or residential neighborhood planning areas.

**POLICY LUD-3.2:** Recognize that neighborhood planning areas at the edge of the City’s planning area may have unique characteristics that vary from neighborhood planning areas located in the core area of the City.

**Strategy LUD-3.2(a):** Provide for transitions in density and intensity of activity between urban land uses and open space and agricultural areas in neighborhood planning areas at the edge of the City, such as Longmont Tech Center and Terry Lake.

**GOAL LUD-4: Mitigate impacts on neighborhoods.**

**POLICY LUD-4.1:** Use site design techniques to integrate different land uses and to create a separation between communities.

**Strategy LUD-4.1(a):** Encourage appropriate site design techniques to minimize impacts between different land uses, or land uses of different intensities, instead of relying on different land uses for the transition.

**Strategy LUD-4.1(b):** Continue to use public and private open space to keep the City physically separate from neighboring communities.

**Strategy LUD-4.1(c):** Consider the impacts on a neighboring community, including maintenance of its physical separation from Longmont, in determining the size, land use, and configuration of a planned neighborhood planning area.

**Strategy LUD-4.1(d):** Evaluate and mitigate, as appropriate, the cumulative impacts that development within neighborhood planning areas in the Longmont Planning Area has on established neighborhood planning areas.

**POLICY LUD-4.2:** Encourage revitalization and redevelopment of areas showing signs of decline and/or disinvestment.

**Strategy LUD-4.2(a):** Evaluate new and flexible approaches that both encourage redevelopment and infill development and that remain sensitive to the surrounding neighborhoods’ needs.

**Strategy LUD-4.2(b):** Invest in areas that show signs of decline and/or disinvestment in cooperation with other agencies and the private sector.



**Strategy LUD-4.2(c):** Cooperate with other agencies to encourage businesses to locate in areas with significant vacancies in order to foster the redevelopment of commercial and industrial areas.

**Strategy LUD-4.2(d):** Encourage mixed-use development patterns in revitalizing areas as a way of energizing neighborhoods and commercial areas by achieving multiple types of activity (living, working, shopping).

**Goal LUD-5: Develop a mix of interdependent, compatible, and mutually supportive land uses to support multiple means of transportation.**

**POLICY LUD-5.1: Promote a mixed land use pattern.**

**Strategy LUD-5.1(a):** Support development patterns that facilitate the integration of residential and non-residential land uses and that are conducive to transit, pedestrians, and bicycles.

**Strategy LUD-5.1(b):** Develop criteria as part of the Development Standards in the *Land Development Code* that address the integration of mixed-uses in areas of new development, in redevelopment and infill development within existing neighborhoods.

**Strategy LUD-5.1(c):** Promote urban design and site planning in mixed-use areas to make them pedestrian and bicycle-friendly and to incorporate on-site interconnections where appropriate.

**Goal LUD-6: Plan land uses around the City’s major gateways as mixed-use activity corridors.**

**POLICY LUD-6.1: Promote the development of the corridor north of State Highway 66 as a mixed-use activity area.**

**Strategy LUD-6.1(a):** Plan the corridor north of State Highway 66 as a mixed-use activity area, to promote a high-quality gateway environment that is unique to Longmont and includes a balanced mix of uses (entertainment, retail, residential, employment, civic, recreation) and has a strong pedestrian orientation with frequent outdoor gathering spaces.

**Strategy LUD-6.1(b):** Ensure that all development located along the corridor contains generous setbacks and landscaping to reflect the role of the corridor as a gateway to the City.

**Strategy LUD-6.1(c):** Encourage appropriate site design techniques to minimize the impact of urban land uses adjacent to various types of Boulder County open space north of State Highway 66.



**Strategy LUD-6.2(d):** Ensure all development located in the mixed-use corridor within the Terry Lake neighborhood planning area is consistent with the *Highway 66 Mixed Use Corridor Framework Master Plan and Design Guidelines* (August 30, 2006).

**POLICY LUD-6.2:** Consider designating the State Highway 119 corridor east of US Highway 287 as a mixed-use activity area.

**Strategy LUD-6.2(a):** Once the State Highway 119 extension is complete, evaluate opportunities for designating the corridor east of US Highway 287 as a mixed-use activity area.

**Strategy LUD-6.2(b):** Ensure that all development located along the corridor contains generous setbacks and landscaping to reflect the role of the corridor as a gateway to the City.

**Strategy LUD-6.2(c):** Ensure that all development located along the corridor is planned in a manner that maximizes access and orientation to the St Vrain and Lefthand Creek greenways.

**Strategy LUD-6.2(d):** Ensure that all development located along the corridor and in proximity to the City's wastewater treatment plant is compatible with it.

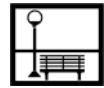
**GOAL LUD-7:** Plan the City's gateways along scenic entryway corridors to provide a sense of entry and arrival, preserve open space, and show high quality unified design.

**POLICY LUD-7.1:** Promote gateways that provide a sense of arrival when coming into Longmont. Key gateways are located at the Longmont Planning Area boundary on US Highway 287, State Highway 66, and State Highway 119.

**Strategy LUD-7.1(a):** Support design and enhancement of right-of-ways to help signal the change from rural to urban and highlight arrival into Longmont. Improvements could include design features such as landscaping, entry signs, or public art.

**Strategy LUD-7.1(b):** Support modifying roadway cross-sections to facilitate lower speeds as motorists transition from a rural to urban environment at the City's gateways.

**Strategy LUD-7.1(c):** Work with Colorado Department of Transportation to design gateways along state and federal highways.



**GOAL LUD-8: Promote community identification and civic pride by preserving Longmont’s historical, cultural, architectural, and geographical heritage.**

**POLICY LUD-8.1: Establish historic districts and designate historic landmarks that meet established criteria.**

**Strategy LUD-8.1(a):** Determine whether any areas meet the criteria for historic districts, and encourage and assist residents in pursuing district designation.

**Strategy LUD-8.1(b):** Consider designating buildings or structures as historic landmarks, both upon application by the owner and upon the Historic Preservation Commission’s recommendation.

**POLICY LUD-8.2: Encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance, and continued use of historic districts and landmarks.**

**Strategy LUD-8.2(a):** Pursue Community Development Block Grants and other funding to use as the financial base for preservation and rehabilitation programs for historic districts and landmarks.

**Strategy LUD-8.2(b):** Cooperate with other organizations to provide information to residents about Longmont’s historic districts and historic landmarks.

**Strategy LUD-8.2(c):** Consider financial and other incentives to encourage the preservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of Longmont’s historic districts and landmarks.

**GOAL LUD-9: Promote an attractive appearance and quality urban design in Longmont.**

**POLICY LUD-9.1: Coordinate and focus efforts to improve the City’s appearance.**

**Strategy LUD-9.1(a):** Develop an urban design program that establishes the scope of the City’s efforts to improve its appearance and prioritizes areas in need of attention.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(b):** Provide staff support to the Art in Public Places Program and designate a percentage of the costs of City construction projects for works of public art.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(c):** Evaluate opportunities in City construction projects for incorporating public art.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(d):** Encourage and sponsor programs that promote the beautification of the City.



**Strategy LUD-9.1(e):** Bury electric main feeder lines consistent with established City priorities.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(f):** Review development regulations on a periodic basis and revise, as appropriate, to foster site design that improves the aesthetic impact a development has on public places, thoroughfares, adjacent uses, and natural land forms.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(g):** Review landscape regulations on a periodic basis and revise, as appropriate, to upgrade the City's appearance and to promote drought-tolerant plant materials.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(h):** Review the sign code on a periodic basis and revise, as appropriate, to encourage the use of sign plans that do not dominate the streetscape, minimize visual competition, and result in attractive signs that provide businesses reasonable identification.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(i):** Review regulations on a periodic basis and revise, as appropriate, to promote maintenance of a quality urban environment and streetscape that is free from unsightly materials such as inoperative vehicles, unscreened outdoor storage, weeds, refuse, and litter.

**Strategy LUD-9.1(j):** Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to develop and maintain the City's scenic entryways.



## Comprehensive Land Use Category Definitions

The following table summarizes each of the land use categories identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map. The table is intended as a quick reference guide to be used in conjunction with the map. Detailed criteria for the location, layout, design, desired character, and size of each land use category are provided in the relevant policy chapters.

### Summary of Land Use Categories

<b>Residential Land Uses</b>			
<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Range of Density</b>	<b>Uses</b>	<b>Locational Criteria</b>
<b>Ultra Low Density Residential</b>	Up to 1 unit per 5 acres. Generally, densities will be lower unless developed as part of a transferred development rights program, in a clustered development pattern.	Ultra low density single-family detached housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas designated for open space, such as urban shaping buffers.</li> <li>▪ Areas with severe physiographic constraints.</li> <li>▪ Clustered to the extent possible.</li> <li>▪ Areas with limited utility capacity.</li> <li>▪ Basic urban services (City wastewater required and City water highly desirable).</li> <li>▪ Areas that may be part of a transferred development rights program.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Low Density Residential</b>	Up to 1 unit per acre.	Very low density single-family detached housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas with physiographic constraints that make higher-density impractical.</li> <li>▪ Areas away from activity centers.</li> <li>▪ Areas with limited utility capacity</li> <li>▪ Full range of urban services required.</li> <li>▪ Clustered to the extent possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	1-6 units per acre.	Low density housing in neighborhoods. May include a mix of housing types and densities and limited neighborhood services as part of a planned residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas that will not be adversely impacted by surrounding land uses.</li> <li>▪ Areas with no physiographic or environmental constraints.</li> <li>▪ Areas suitable as quiet residential neighborhoods.</li> <li>▪ Areas within walking distance of neighborhood or multi-neighborhood shopping, educational, and/or recreational facilities but not requiring proximity to major activity centers.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	Greater than 6 units per acre and up to 12 units per acre.	A variety of residential housing types and densities, including duplexes, tri-plexes, four-plexes, and multi-family housing. May include neighborhood services as part of a planned residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas serving as transitional land use between low and high density residential uses.</li> <li>▪ Areas within one-half mile range of shopping, educational, and recreational facilities.</li> <li>▪ Areas adjacent to arterial or collector streets or accessible to such without passing through less intensive land uses.</li> <li>▪ Areas where medium density residential is</li> </ul>



			<p>compatible with adjacent land uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas served by public transportation.</li> <li>▪ Areas where blight exists and medium density residential is the most appropriate method for revitalizing the area.</li> </ul>
<b>High Density Residential</b>	Greater than 12 units per acre and up to 30 units per acre.	Multi-family residential housing and group living facilities. May include a mix of housing types and densities and neighborhood services as part of a planned residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas adjacent to or within walking distance of schools, parks, and neighborhood and/or multi-neighborhood shopping.</li> <li>▪ Areas in proximity to employment centers.</li> <li>▪ Areas adjacent to arterial streets or accessible to such without passing through less intensive land uses.</li> <li>▪ Areas where high density residential is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.</li> <li>▪ Areas served by public transportation.</li> </ul>

**Commercial Land Uses**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Size and Area Served</b>	<b>Uses</b>	<b>Locational Criteria</b>
<b>Neighborhood Center</b>	2-5 acres, with a trade area of 3/8 to 3/4 of a mile.	<p>Small scale retail, commercial, business and professional offices.</p> <p><i>Also allowed: Mix of higher density housing subject to limits of the Land Development Code.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site having frontage on two collector streets or with frontage on an arterial and a collector street.</li> <li>▪ Access by walk-in trade from a residential or employment area.</li> <li>▪ Certain amenities such as a pedestrian plaza and landscaping as well as sign and access control to create a cohesive development.</li> <li>▪ Impact of new commercial development proposals on existing development.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that neighborhood commercial development is integrated with and enhances the immediate neighborhood.</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-Neighborhood Commercial</b>	Approximately 10-20 acres, with a trade area of 1-2 miles serving a population of 10,000 to 20,000, Typical gross square feet of 85,000 ranging as high as 175,000 square feet.	<p>Retail, commercial, business &amp; professional offices typically anchored by a supermarket or discount drug store.</p> <p><i>Also allowed: Mix of higher density housing subject to limits of the Land Development Code.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site having frontage on two arterial streets at the intersection of three or more neighborhood planning areas.</li> <li>▪ Certain amenities such as a pedestrian plaza and landscaping as well as sign and access control to create a cohesive development.</li> <li>▪ Impact of new commercial development proposals on existing development.</li> <li>▪ Additional multi-neighborhood commercial centers at the intersections of arterial streets where there are existing or future multi-neighborhood commercial centers shown on the <i>Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan</i>, provided that any traffic impacts are mitigated.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that multi-neighborhood commercial</li> </ul>



			development is integrated with and enhances the immediate neighborhoods.
<b>Regional Commercial</b>	A minimum size of 40 acres, with a trade area of 5 miles serving a population of 50,000 or more. A minimum of 350,000 square feet of total gross floor area with at least two major anchors	Retail with national retailers that draw from all of Longmont and the rural areas surrounding the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A location at the intersection of two arterials or an arterial and a highway where such streets and public transportation provide access for the entire City and market service areas outside the City with a minimum impact on less intensive uses.</li> <li>▪ A location where it will not overload, create congestion, or be incompatible with existing and planned public facilities, utilities, or services.</li> </ul>
<b>Central Business District</b>	N/A	Diverse mix of businesses, including specialty goods retail, bars and restaurants, entertainment, offices, cultural facilities, and civic and government facilities as well as supporting residential uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encompasses the downtown area including several blocks on either side of Main Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue on the south to just north of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north.</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian-oriented development.</li> <li>▪ Potential infill development location.</li> </ul>
<b>Strip Commercial</b>	N/A	Developed commercial areas that will gradually redevelop over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generally along Main Street north and south of the central business district in developed areas of the City.</li> <li>▪ Potential redevelopment location.</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed-Use Corridor</b>	Minimum size area of 30 acres, ranging up to 150 acres.	A balanced mix of land uses in the same development, including entertainment, retail, residential, employment, civic, and recreation uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A site having frontage on an arterial street or expressway with opportunities for access from an intersecting arterial or collector street.</li> <li>▪ A location where it will not overload, create congestion, or be incompatible with existing and planned public facilities, utilities, or services.</li> </ul>

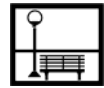


**Employment Land Uses**

Land Use Category	Size	Uses	Locational Criteria
<b>Industrial/ Economic Development</b>	N/A	Low intensity industrial uses, including light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, research and development, and commercial services. Also intended to encourage high quality employment facilities, such as corporate office headquarters and educational facilities in a planned, "campus-like" setting.  <i>Also Allowed: Limited</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large sites with no extraordinary constraints to development.</li> <li>▪ Proximity to major highway and access to arterial streets without the need to travel through less intensive land uses or with direct access to City truck routes for users with high traffic generation.</li> <li>▪ Existing or planned uncommitted utility services: sewer, water, and electricity.</li> <li>▪ Location of heavy industrial uses away from residential areas when the use of site design techniques cannot adequately achieve compatibility with nearby or adjacent residential uses.</li> </ul>
		support services, such as restaurants, supermarkets, specialty stores, professional and medical offices. Residential may be vertically integrated, up to 25% of the total development floor area.	

**Public/Institutional Land Uses**

Land Use Category	Size	Uses	Characteristics/Notes
<b>Public/Quasi-Public</b>	N/A	Lands for schools, government offices, community centers, libraries, hospitals, and cemeteries. Also includes facilities needed for essential public services such as electrical substations, water and wastewater facilities, and other similar uses. Golf courses and fair grounds are included in this category.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided by the City, County, special districts, or by a quasi-public organization.</li> </ul>
<b>Parks, Greenways and Open Space</b>	Size depends on type of facility. Neighborhood Park: 10-20 acres. Community Park: 50-100 acres.	Lands for active and passive recreation uses, natural areas, agriculture, preservation of scenic quality, trails and corridors to connect activity centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intended to provide for the active and passive recreational needs of the community.</li> <li>▪ Conserve cultural and natural areas.</li> <li>▪ Generally provided by public agencies (city, county, state or federal).</li> </ul>



## Land Use and Urban Design Indicators

**Policy Rationale:** The *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan* goals call for a compact urban form that uses land efficiently, is aesthetically pleasing, and minimizes undesirable impacts to the environment.

**Benchmark Standard:** None at this time

**Indicators:**

- A. Acres of vacant land within the Longmont Planning Area
- B. Average density of approved residential and mixed-use developments per year
- C. Number of code violations per year
- D. Number of new dwelling units issued building permits annually in the established neighborhood planning areas
- E. Number of residential building permits for additions issued annually
- F. Number of non-residential square feet issued building permits annually in the established neighborhood planning areas
- G. Number of historic structures with landmark designations

**Methods, Sources:**

- A & B. City of Longmont Planning Division
- C. City of Longmont Building Inspection Division
- D, E, & F. City of Longmont Building Inspection and Planning Divisions
- G. City of Longmont Planning Division