



The Future

CLIFTON COMMUNITY COMMONS

A VISION FOR CLIFTON'S TREASURED OUTDOOR SPACES

January 2024



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Great Outdoors Colorado.

*Thank you to the partners and stakeholders who contributed
so much time to this effort!*

Partner Team:



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*Mesa County
Mesa County Valley School District 51
Riverside Education Center
One Riverfront
Colorado West Land Trust
MarillacHealth
Wunder Club
Clifton Youth Council*

***This plan is dedicated to the Clifton community and youth whose
passion, creativity, and spirit have inspired this vision for
Clifton's treasured outdoor spaces.***

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*A summer evening
at Rocky Mountain
Elementary Park.
The community
gathers for National
Night Out in August
2018.*



1

WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Welcome to Clifton, a place where the outdoors and nature are a part of our community identity. All of our treasured outdoor spaces reflect our community pride. The Clifton Community Commons is the heart of our community and represents the energy and spirit of our residents. This collection of outdoor spaces connects our community to one another and to the mighty Colorado River. Like the river, Clifton residents are a powerful force, strong and resilient. We welcome you to visit us and connect with our friendly and welcoming community!



The Clifton Community

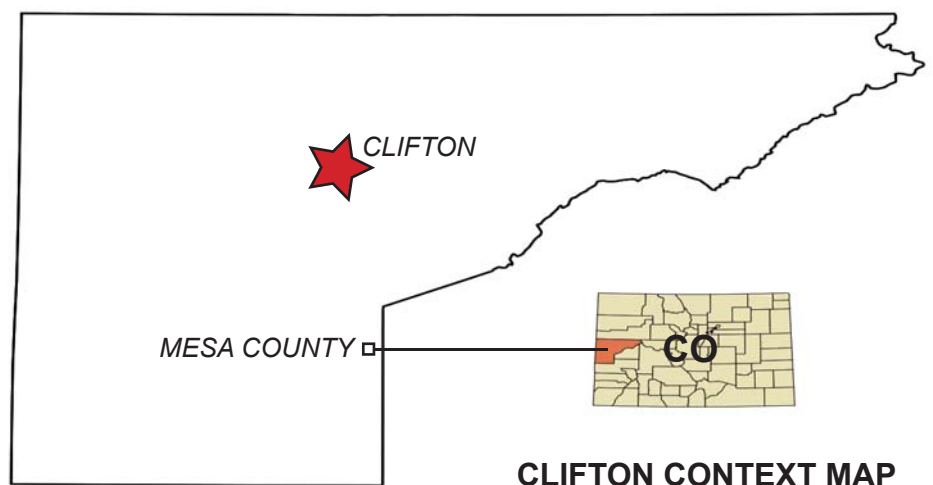
Clifton is a community of approximately 20,000¹ just east of Grand Junction. 26.2% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. With sweeping views of the Grand Mesa and nestled along the Colorado River, Clifton is home to hard-working families who have lived and worked in the agricultural (and more recently the oil and gas extraction industries) for generations as well as newer arrivals who are the backbone of the region's workforce. In recent years, a growing recreation and tourism economy has taken hold across the Grand Valley from Fruita to Palisade.

Although it has the second largest population in Mesa County, Clifton is unincorporated and thus lacks much of the infrastructure that typically supports municipal services, civic engagement, and community ties. More than 77.5% of children receive free or reduced lunch and the median household income is \$49,350. Clifton has a poverty rate of 17.6%. Approximately Once an unbroken expanse of farmland along the Colorado River, much of the area was rapidly sold and developed as dense, low-amenity neighborhoods during the oil shale boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The community has few outdoor spaces reachable by walking, riding, or a short drive - 73% of Palisade and 57% of Grand Junction residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park while only 39.6% of Clifton residents do. Clifton also lacks a consistent source of public funding to support a modern park system, yet parks and safe outdoor spaces have long been identified as a community priority.

Today in Clifton, families travel to parks outside of their community to picnic and celebrate life milestones, and program partners put kids in vans and transport them to trails outside their community. School principals compare

1 Population and statistical information based on zip code 81520 and Clifton 2022 Census data. However, the greater Clifton area includes areas outside of this zip code.

Clifton is located in unincorporated Mesa County between Grand Junction and Palisade and lacks access to quality parks and other public spaces.



The farmland that borders Clifton, the Colorado River and views of the Grand Mesa are examples of some of Clifton's natural beauty. While close to home, these assets are often out of reach and inaccessible to Clifton residents.



their schoolyards to prison yards, and residents have few places where they can gather, connect to one another, and build the social capital that leads to a thriving community. Residents are poised to change this narrative and replace it with one that builds a sense of pride, belonging, and unity through the creation of a valued and sustainable system of parks, trails, and other public spaces. Collectively these places make up the Clifton Community Commons.

Past Planning Efforts

The Community Transformation Group (CTG) is a coalition of more than 30 government and nonprofit agencies, faith communities, and neighborhood residents, formed in 2017 with the vision of creating “a vibrant, caring and connected community where each of us has the relationships and opportunities we need to thrive.” CTG has met monthly since early 2018 to work on community change strategies that strengthen social connections and build community resilience in Clifton. The current focus of this group, to build public support for creating safe community spaces, was determined through community outreach and review of neighborhood-level data, including surveys and interviews done by members of the Clifton resident groups.

Members conducted more than 300 surveys and interviews with Clifton residents of all ages during 2020 to determine their highest priorities for change in Clifton. Among respondents' main concerns were unsafe streets and lack of infrastructure (44%), lack of safe things for kids to do (43%), and unsafe parks (38%).

Students from Colorado Mesa University's Outdoor Recreation Industry Studies program also gathered data as part of their Wright Collegiate Challenge project, which examined convenient and safe access to public trails from Clifton neighborhoods. Nearly half of the 81 Clifton residents surveyed were unaware that the Clifton Nature Park and Colorado Riverfront Trail are located less than a mile from Rocky Mountain Elementary School and a quarter of respondents said they visit those amenities once per year or never. This student-led project resulted in



2017

Community Transformation Group (CTG) formed

2019

Clifton Community Leadership Groups established

2020

Community Surveys

2021

Wright Collegiate Challenge-Connector Trail Prioritized

Trust for Public Land's (TPL) statewide analysis

Clifton Community Campus-Mesa County purchases 26 acres adjacent Rocky Mountain Elementary Park

Clifton Youth Council established

2022

Mesa County Master Plan begins

TPL Community Schoolyard pilots

Clifton Community Campus planning effort

Mesa County secures right-of-way (ROW) for new Trail Connector

GOCO Centennial Grant awarded-CCC Vision process begins

Colorado Health Foundation prioritizes Clifton for playground funding

CCL members complete outreach for a new playground at Rocky Mountain Elementary Park

Construction of Clifton Community Campus begins

One Riverfront prioritizes the completion of the trail connection between Clifton and Palisade

2023

Conservation Finance Technical Assistance Letter signed with TPL

Mesa County receives funds to complete a feasibility study for Riverfront Trail Connection-Clifton to Palisade

Clifton Community Commons Vision Plan completed

Mesa County Master Plan completed

Clifton Community Campus construction completed

New playground installed at Rocky Mountain Elementary Park

2024

Vision Plan completed!

Fig. 1: Past & Concurrent Planning and Project Timeline (*CCC Vision Plan)

the idea of a connector trail between Rocky Mountain Elementary School and the Riverfront Trail as a priority project to enhance the community's access to the river corridor.

Concurrent Planning Efforts

Due to the strength of local leadership both at the County and at the resident level, several efforts to improve Clifton through resident-prioritized projects began to coalesce in 2021. The CTG group focused its efforts on a 26-acre parcel adjacent to Rocky Mountain Elementary School and Park and by October 2021, Mesa County had purchased the property for the Clifton Community Campus, a project that will deliver on multiple community identified needs. This catalytic project also resulted in the purchase of Rocky Mountain Elementary Park (both properties were formerly owned by Mesa County Valley School District 51). Mesa County also began a County Master Plan process with a focus on unincorporated communities, including Clifton.

With the future of the 26-acre property secured, Clifton resident leaders and CTG began to work with partners to further the community's priorities around improving the safety of Clifton's parks and streets. New partners like Trust for Public Land (TPL) were invited to the table and confirmed through rigorous statewide data analysis what residents already knew-Clifton's parks, trails, and schoolyards did not meet the needs of the community (see appendix). With funding to support community schoolyards across the state, resident leaders and the CTG group partnered with TPL and the school district to prioritize and complete two small pilot projects at Clifton Elementary and Rocky Mountain Elementary. These small pilots created the foundation for future schoolyard renovations described in this document. Meanwhile the County secured a right-of-way (ROW) easement for the trail connection to the river. One Riverfront and Colorado West Land Trust continue to explore the connection between Clifton and Palisade, a critical path project that will link Clifton to the greater Grand Valley region.

In 2022, impressed by the momentum of resident organizing, the Colorado Health Foundation invited the community to apply for funding support for a new playground at Rocky Mountain Elementary Park. Outreach efforts to design a playground were quickly completed by resident leaders from Clifton Community Leaders and a new playground that reflects the community's wishes was installed in 2023.

This document builds on past and concurrent efforts with a focus on the Clifton Community Commons which includes Clifton's schoolyards, the Riverfront Trail, on street connections, and an approximately 300-acre contiguous open space that is located in the heart of the community.

Clifton is unincorporated and lacks access to quality parks and other public spaces. Only 39.6% percent of residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park.



com·mons:

2

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Clifton Community Commons will create an expansive outdoor recreation and connected open space network for Clifton residents - especially youth and families - that will build on the growing momentum to enhance Clifton's social fabric, provide a higher quality of life, and ensure safe, positive spaces for all. Through GOCO's Centennial visioning process, the community will develop a long-term vision, strategy, and action plan to engage key partners in connecting and enhancing existing schoolyards and neighborhood parks, improve access to the Colorado Riverfront, develop safe routes, and expand natural open spaces. The Clifton Community Commons will serve not only Clifton residents but also improve connections between their community and the greater Grand Valley region.



Land

or resources belonging to or affecting the whole of a community.

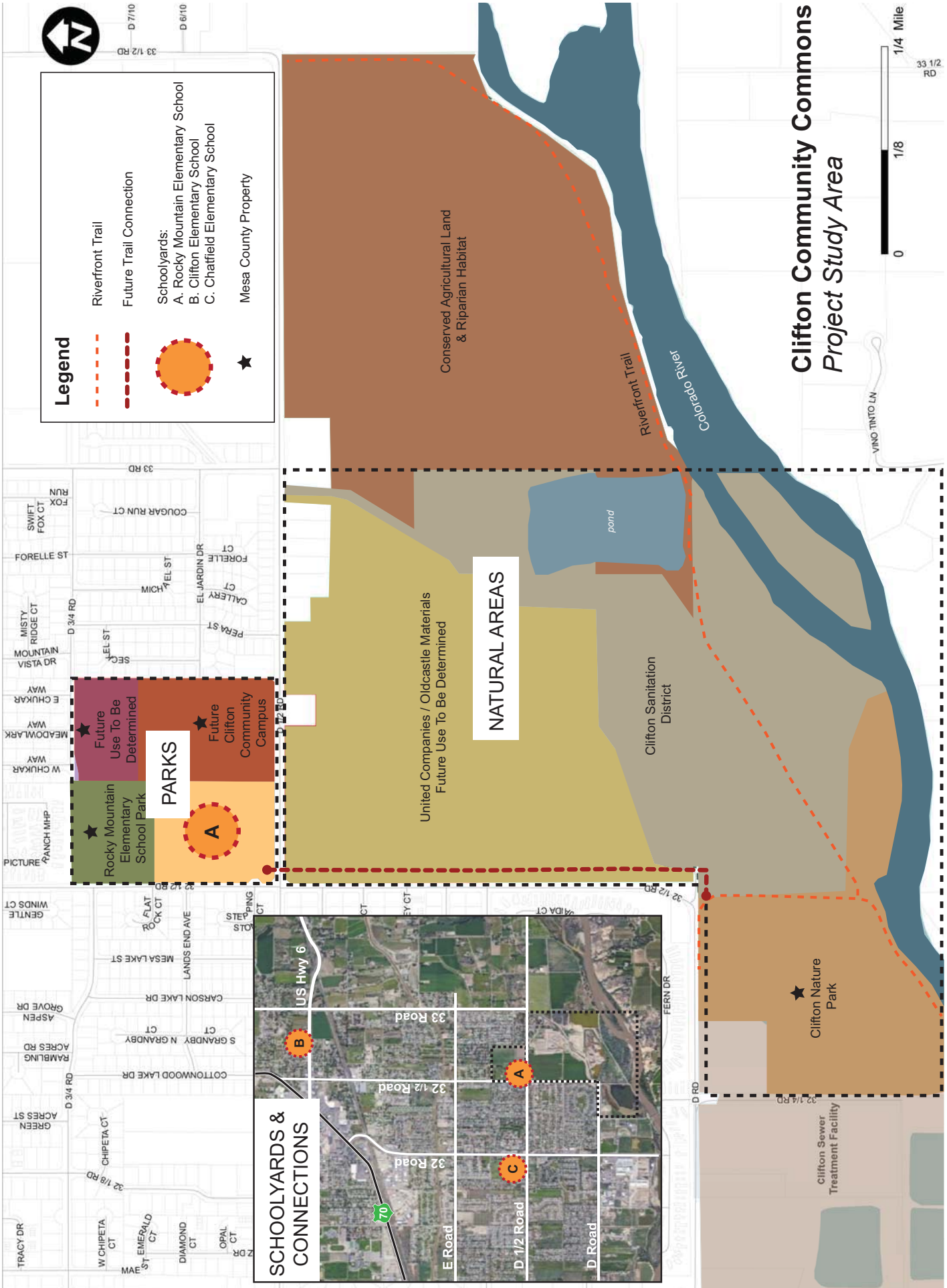


Fig. 2: Clifton Community Commons Area Map



Fig. 3: Project Outcomes-Clifton Community Commons Vision Plan Process

Project Outcomes

The project outcomes were identified at the kick-off meeting for the vision plan and were developed with input from project partners and resident leaders. These outcomes represent our shared goals and were used to inform the outreach process and the action plan described in Chapter 4.

Project outcomes are as important as the physical improvements to the built environment that are reflected in the vision and are critical to the project's success. They serve as guiding principles for all partners involved in this work and center the strengthening of the Clifton community both now and in the future as partners work together to implement the Clifton Community Commons.



Members of the CTG group provided input on the GOCO Centennial application and attended a kick off meeting in April that established the project outcomes (left). Resident leaders from Clifton traveled to Colorado Springs in May to meet resident leaders from RISE Southeast and learn about Panorama Park-a project that has set a new standard for resident-led and community centered design (right).

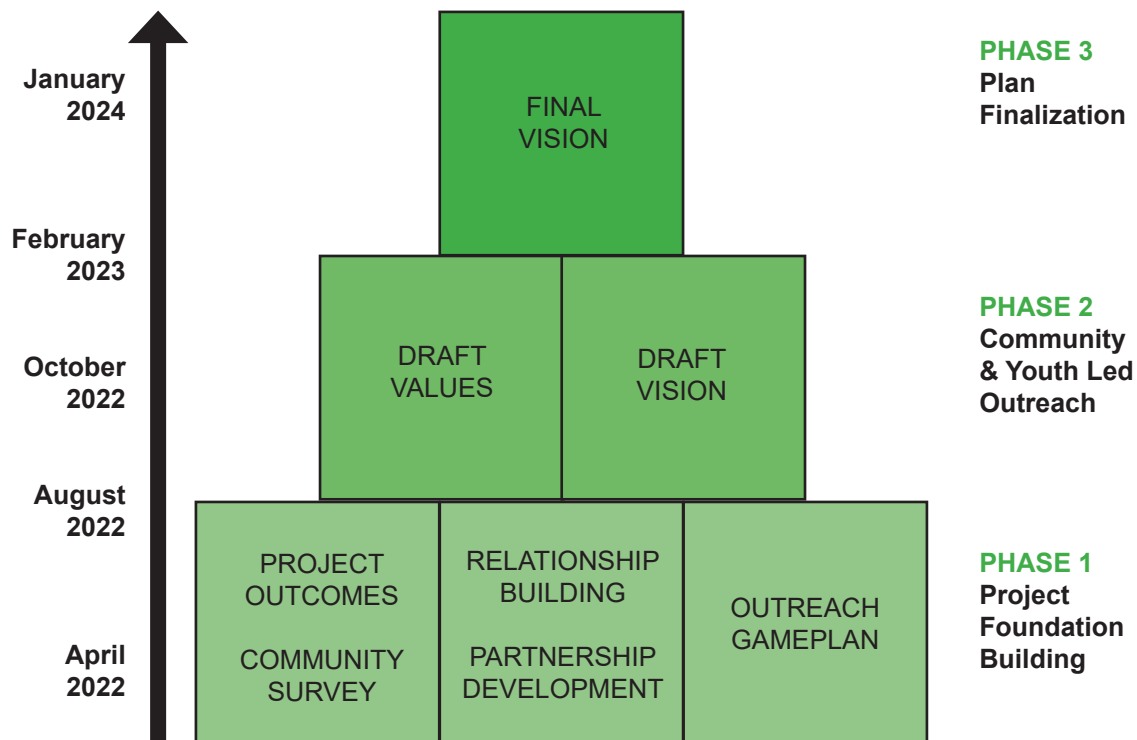


Fig. 4: Timeline and Diagram of Clifton Community Commons Vision Plan Process

*Clifton resident
leaders survey
the community
at National Night
Out in August
2022.*



Planning Process

The planning process utilized a 3-phase flexible timeline and “building block” approach (Fig. 4) to ensure a strong foundation for community and youth leadership and development of the vision plan. 300 surveys (see appendix) were collected by resident leaders and were used to develop the draft project values and vision to ensure they were reflective of the community’s dreams and desires for improving close-to-home outdoor spaces in Clifton.

An outreach gameplan served as a road map for community leaders and youth teams who led the outreach and engagement process in Phase 2. The draft values and vision were vetted through engagement activities led by community and youth leaders during this phase. Their work shaped the final vision and action plan for the Clifton Community Commons in Phase 3.

At key points along the way, feedback was requested from project partners and stakeholders as well as the community to ensure that the vision was reflective of the community’s dreams and desires. The action plan is grounded in the project outcomes (Fig. 3) and helps to ensure that the vision described in this document is not only achievable but will remain centered in community. This planning methodology ensured that the community created the plan shared in this document.

Youth leaders from the Wunder Club were instrumental in helping to develop the vision for the Clifton Community Commons. Established in 2022, the 15 members of the Wunder Club range in age from 10 to 17. Youth leaders receive gift cards for their participation.



3

VALUES & VISION

The vision for the Clifton Community Commons holds the outdoor values of the Clifton community. These values include: Gather, Play, Learn, Explore, and Connect. Each of these values is critical to achieving the vision for the Clifton Community Commons. This chapter will explore how each of these values is expressed across the study area in four categories: Parks, Schoolyards, Natural Areas, and Connections. A total of 11 projects have been identified within the Study Area and are detailed in this chapter. Maps have been provided for additional context but first let's hear from Clifton's youth!





“Nature is the key to a great community”



“All kids deserve to play”



“Treat everyone and everything with respect”



**“Every community deserves nice things”-
The Wunder club**



“Respect our parks”



“Nature depends on us”



“Everyone should get along, no drama”



“Everyone deserves a place”



“Every voice matters”

Fig. 5: Wunder Club youth leaders with the vision boards they created.

Clifton's Outdoor Values:

GATHER

Gathering spaces that support coming together in small and large groups. A place where Clifton residents can come together and celebrate their community.

PLAY

Spaces for everyone (children, teens, and adults) to play, be active and have fun.

LEARN

Safe outdoor spaces that support learning opportunities for all and nurture a spirit of community stewardship.

EXPLORE

Opportunities to develop a sense of adventure and to experience the natural world through activities that take advantage of Clifton's location in the Grand Valley.

CONNECT

Improve walking and bicycle connections to the Clifton Community Commons and to neighboring communities along the Riverfront Trail.

Parks

PARKS

Rocky Mountain Elementary Park

Community Priority:
VERY HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County
Clifton Community Leaders

Possible Implementation
Partners :
Clifton Community Outreach
Great Outdoors Colorado
Colorado Health Foundation
Trust for Public Land

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center
Mesa County Library

Rocky Mountain Elementary Park is a very high priority for the Clifton community. It includes the park and due to its proximity, the connected Rocky Mountain Elementary Schoolyard greenspace (described in detail in the Schoolyard Section). The adjacent development of the 26- acre Clifton Community Campus, which will include a new early childhood center, library, Clifton Community Hall and outdoor play and recreation spaces, also offers important opportunities for the community to fully realize their vision for parks in Clifton. The vision for this area maximizes these adjacent relationships and shared use to take full advantage of the contiguous greenspace. Importantly, the values identified in this section can also be applied to other parks in Clifton not included in the study area, such as Kimwood Park and Candalwood Park.

Rocky Mountain Elementary Park

This 8 acre park is considered by Clifton residents to be their “central park.” It hosts community events and is an important gathering space for the community. In 2022, Mesa County purchased the park from Mesa County Valley School District 51 as part of the purchase of the adjacent 26-acre Clifton Community Campus. This change in ownership signaled that Mesa County, which previously had an agreement with the school district to maintain the property, could work with the community to improve the park so that it would better meet the needs of Clifton residents.

Soon after, the Colorado Health Foundation invited a proposal from Clifton Community Leaders to improve the park’s playground. Clifton leaders worked with neighborhood youth to gather input from the community on the playground’s redesign. The groundbreaking for the playground was held on May 6, 2023 and the new community designed playground was opened to the community in September 2023. While the playground is a significant and exciting project, the community has also identified several other priority park improvements that will further increase the community’s use and enjoyment of the park. For example, activities and amenities for older youth such as basketball, soccer, and skate features are a critical part of the community’s vision for the park since there are currently no safe outdoor spaces designed for older kids and teens in the community.

The park also represents an important gathering space for the community and should be improved with additional amenities to help support large events such as an improved multi-purpose lawn, pavilion, shade trees,

PARKS



Not to Scale



Legend



Clifton Community Campus



Funded Project (Completed or In Progress)
a. Playground

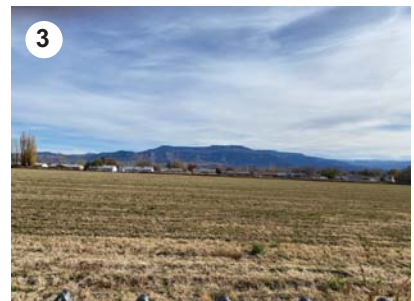
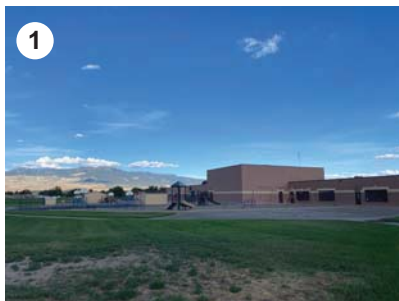
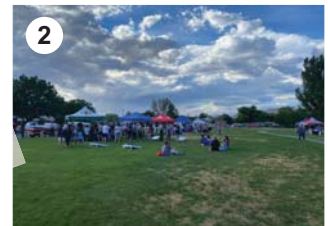


CCC Parks Project
a. Renovated Park
b. New Sidewalk / Path



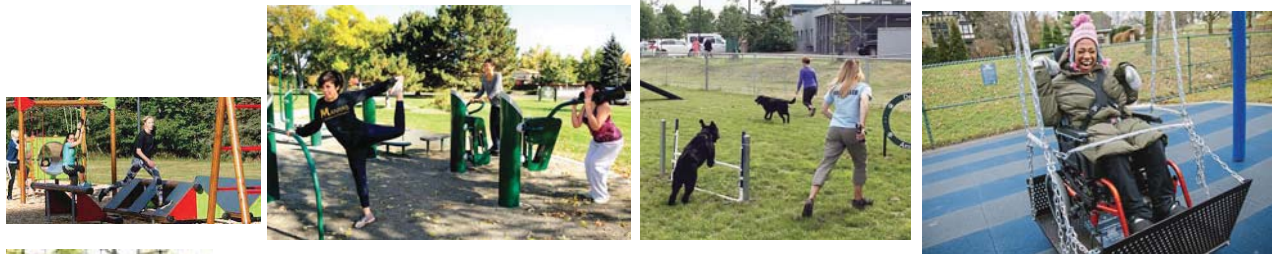
CCC Project*
a. Rocky Mountain Elementary-Schoolyards
b. Clifton Connector & Loop Trail-Connections

**Refer to area map indicated for additional details.*





GATHER Gathering spaces that support coming together in small and large groups. A place where Clifton residents can come together and celebrate their community.



PLAY Spaces for everyone (children, teens, and adults) to play, be active and have fun.



LEARN Safe outdoor spaces that support learning opportunities for all and nurture a spirit of community stewardship.



EXPLORE Opportunities to develop a sense of adventure and experience the natural world through activities that take advantage of Clifton's location in the Grand Valley.

seating, and walking paths. The vision for the park as a multi-generational community gathering space can only be fully realized if comfort and convenience features such as restroom facilities are also included in the park's redevelopment. The renovation of the park will require significant investment both in physical improvements and in ongoing maintenance costs. While Mesa County supports a full renovation of the park, there are few to no resources for the long-term maintenance a full renovation would require. Realizing the community's vision for this community greenspace is a critical component of realizing the full vision for the Clifton Community Commons.

Clifton Community Leaders received funding from Colorado Health Foundation for the new playground at Rocky Mountain Elementary Park and led implementation of this project in 2023.



Schoolyards

The Schoolyard Area is also a very high priority for the Clifton community. It includes the three elementary schools in closest proximity to the Clifton Commons: Rocky Mountain Elementary School, Clifton Elementary School and Chatfield Elementary School. In Clifton, schoolyards serve as more than just play spaces for students during their school day; schoolyards in Clifton offer the closest greenspace and recreation opportunities for residents to access without having to drive to neighboring communities. Unfortunately, these schoolyards are equipped with outdated play features, cracking basketball courts, and limited shade and seating. They are no longer meeting the needs of students and families of Clifton. The vision for this area maximizes the shared use of schoolyards as community hubs to take full advantage of these spaces to improve the community's access to safe outdoor spaces.

Rocky Mountain Elementary School

The schoolyard at Rocky Mountain Elementary School is an important recreation hub for the Clifton community. The schoolyard functions as an extension of the

SCHOOLYARDS

Rocky Mountain Elementary School

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County Valley School
District 51
Trust for Public Land

Possible Implementation
Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Colorado Health Foundation
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center
Good Natured Learning
Eureka!

park to the north, Rocky Mountain Elementary Park, with only a chain link fence separating the spaces and an open gateway between the two. The large field stretches the width of the schoolyard and provides many opportunities for field sports, large community gatherings, and flexible green space. Central to the schoolyard are the basketball courts, a feature not found at the park, attracting youth of all ages when school is not in session. Middle school students often come onto the schoolyard after their school lets out to play on the basketball court because they are the only courts within walking distance of their homes. Although these features serve the students and community, the other play structures at the school are showing their age and there are unused spaces primed for activation. There is opportunity to create an inclusive schoolyard that provides play, exploration, learning, and gathering spaces that meet the Clifton community's priorities to create access to quality outdoor spaces for residents of all ages.

The nearly seamless connection between the schoolyard and the park provide a unique opportunity to expand access to quality outdoor amenities that complement each other across the two green spaces. There is a need to maintain the flow between the schoolyard and the park to the north while adding safety features for the schoolyard at the entry point. Currently there is not a locking gate at the entry from the park and students and residents can enter the schoolyard at any time of the day, causing challenges for school staff to maintain a safe environment for the students. Adding a gateway that locks during the school day and is open all other times will increase safety for students and welcome the community when school is not in session.

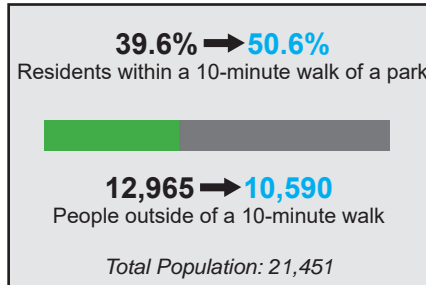
In 2021, Rocky Mountain Elementary School partnered with Trust for Public Land on a schoolyard pilot project to update the school's outdoor basketball courts and provide shade structures for outdoor learning. During the pilot project, school administrators shared their vision for a schoolyard that includes new play equipment for students of all ages. Teachers want dedicated outdoor classrooms to use during the school day that can be used by families outside of school hours as gathering spaces. A high priority for the schoolyard is addressing the lack of shade by planting trees around the field and creating spaces for students and families to cool down in the hottest months. Lastly, the school shared their vision to build a large pavilion that can be used by the school and community to host performances and other social activities throughout the year. This vision complements the opportunities at Rocky Mountain Elementary Park and if designed in coordination, the schoolyard will expand the types of outdoor recreation and access to quality greenspace for Clifton residents.

Clifton Community Commons Schoolyards Zone

- Ⓐ Rocky Mountain Elementary School
- Ⓑ Clifton Elementary School
- Ⓒ Chatfield Elementary School

Improving these three elementary school schoolyards will increase access to park spaces in Clifton for 11% of residents currently without access to quality parks.

2,734 residents will be served by these three schoolyards who do not live within a 10-minute walk of a park in Clifton.

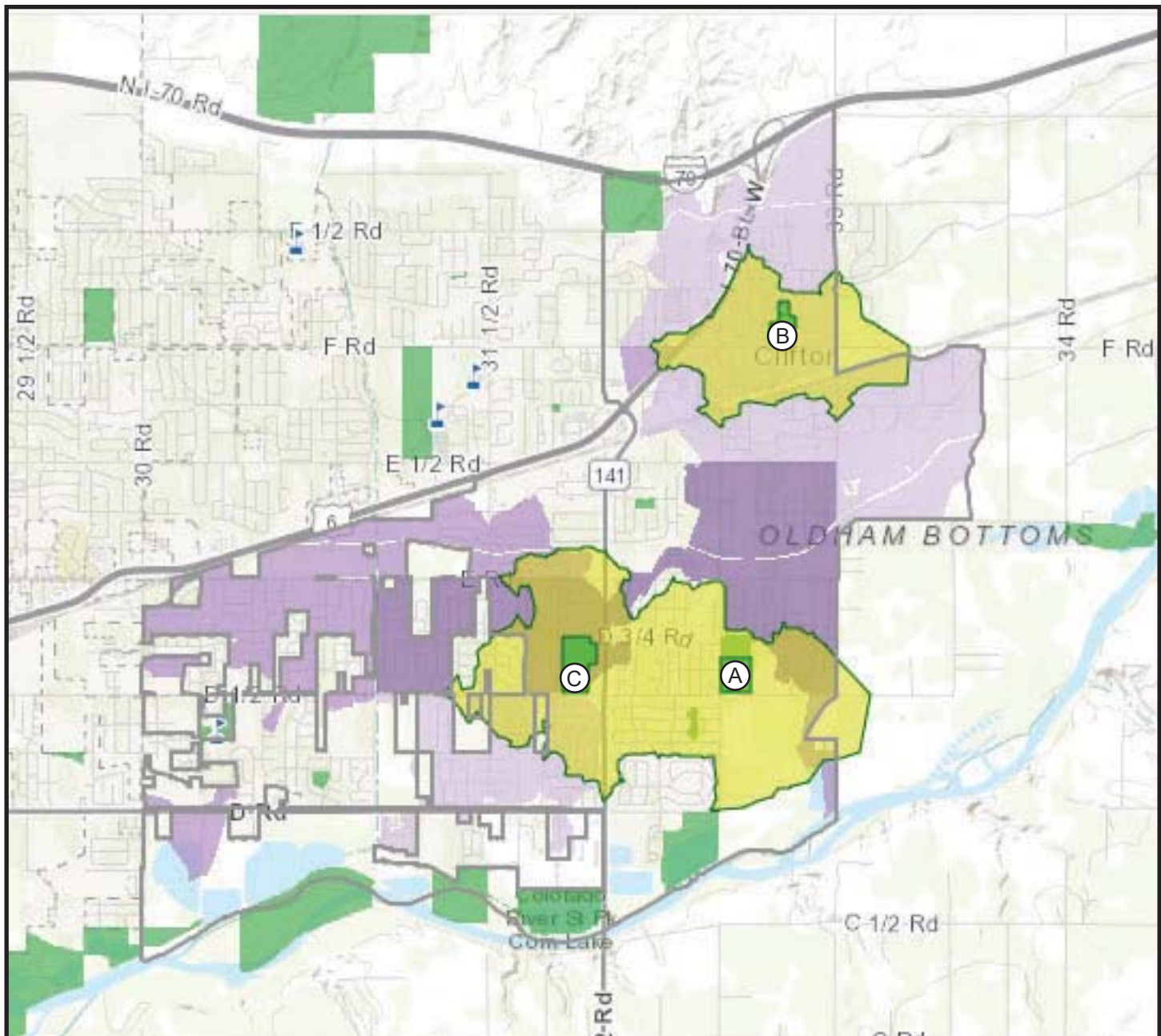


Legend

- City Boundary
- Project Areas
- Project Service Area
- Parks
- Service Areas

Park Need

- Very high priority
- High priority
- Moderate priority



SCHOOLYARDS

Clifton Elementary School

Community Priority:
VERY HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County Valley School
District 51
Trust for Public Land

Possible Implementation Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Colorado Health Foundation
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center
Good Natured Learning

Clifton Elementary School

The schoolyard at Clifton Elementary School is the only potential green space and recreation hub for residents living north of the train tracks and east of the I-70 BL. There are no parks in this part of Clifton and the train tracks, canal and major roads create barriers for youth and families to access green spaces within walking distance of their homes. If renovated, the schoolyard could serve as the recreation hub for this part of the community by providing play spaces for youth of all ages and places for families to gather and socialize. The schoolyard currently has outdated metal play structures, cracking asphalt, gravel play pits, and no ADA accessibility. The limited amenities, lack of shade, and older equipment in this schoolyard means that students and families are more likely to drive to other parts of Clifton or neighboring communities than use the schoolyard outside of school hours.

In 2021, Clifton Elementary School partnered with Trust for Public Land on a schoolyard pilot project to add a shade structure and mural to the east side of the schoolyard. During this pilot project the school principal, Amy Shepherd shared that the schoolyard is, “like a prison yard... students are like rats in a cage” surrounded by asphalt, gravel, and hot metal play equipment. The only respite the students have is the large field on the north side of the school; unfortunately there is limited shade on that side of the schoolyard so students can be found sitting up against the building in the narrow patch of shade during recess. The addition of the new shade structure begins to address the high need for new amenities at this school. The school, District and County all agree that of the three elementary schools in the Clifton Community Commons vision, Clifton Elementary School has the highest need for a complete renovation of the schoolyard. Additionally, because of its “grandfathered” status, once one change is made to the schoolyard, the entire schoolyard will need to be updated to meet current schoolyard regulations including creating ADA accessibility. The vision for Clifton Elementary School will transform this “prison yard” into a community hub that meets the needs for students to thrive in their learning environment, engage in outdoor recreation, and bring their families and friends to play and gather.

Chatfield Elementary School

On the western boundary of Clifton, Chatfield Elementary School hosts a schoolyard in need of updates and activation. The schoolyard is a recreation hub for residents living on the west side of 32 Rd, providing playground features, basketball courts and a large field to recreate. The play features are showing their age and the cracking asphalt breaks up the basketball court,

SCHOOLYARDS

A Rocky Mountain Elementary



B Clifton Elementary



C Chatfield Elementary



Not to Scale



Legend



Clifton Community Campus



Funded Project (Completed or In Progress)

- a. Basketball Court Seal
- b. Mural
- c. Shade Shelter



CCC Schoolyards Project

- a. Renovated Playground
- b. New Sidewalk
- c. Soccer Fields

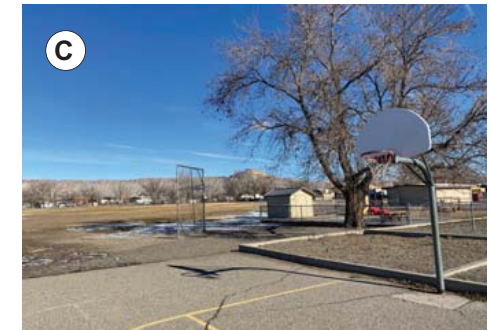


CCC Project*

- a. Rocky Mountain Elementary Park-Parks
- b. Clifton Connector & Loop Trail- Connections

*Refer to area map indicated for additional details.

Existing Conditions





GATHER Gathering spaces that support coming together in small and large groups. A place where Clifton residents can come together and celebrate their community.



PLAY Spaces for everyone (children, teens, and adults) to play, be active and have fun.



LEARN Safe outdoor spaces that support learning opportunities for all and nurture a spirit of community stewardship.



EXPLORE Opportunities to develop a sense of adventure and experience the natural world through activities that take advantage of Clifton's location in the Grand Valley.

SCHOOLYARDS

Chatfield Elementary School

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County Valley School
District 51
Trust for Public Land

Possible Implementation Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Colorado Health Foundation
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center
Good Natured Learning

and the lack of shade and seating limit the community's use and enjoyment of the space. However, Chatfield Elementary School hides a massive schoolyard field that largely goes unused by the school due to its size. Resident leader Alyssa Jones recalls being told not to play too far out into the field during recess because teachers would have a hard time rounding up students to go back into the building.

This field (approximately 11 acres in size) is larger than Rocky Mountain Elementary Park and has the potential to become a hub for Clifton's soccer community and host other field sports. The residents of Clifton have expressed a desire to make soccer more accessible for players of all ages by creating dedicated soccer fields within Clifton. In the past, the large field at Chatfield Elementary School has supported youth soccer games and now has the potential of bringing back that use to become a shared field for organized soccer games. There is an opportunity for a partnership between District 51 and Mesa County to invest in updating the schoolyard and create dedicated playing fields to support community activities like soccer games and other large community events through a shared use agreement that benefits students, families, and community members. A strategic partnership could provide the necessary leverage of resources and funding to create a schoolyard that supports the Clifton community's vision for access to organized sports.

Natural Areas

This area is a high priority for the Clifton community. It includes the proposed future natural area at the gravel pit, trailhead improvements and improved nature trail loops at the Clifton Nature Park, and river access improvements. United Companies currently owns this 94 acre property and will complete mining activities in three to five years (by 2028). As areas for mining are finalized and removed from the permit they can be re-purposed and used for other community priorities. The vision for this area is to increase the community's connection to natural spaces, improve safety at the river, and provide unique opportunities to bring outdoor recreation and nature-based experiences to Clifton residents.

Proposed Future Natural Area

The proposed future natural area may be developed after gravel pit operations cease. The size and configuration of the future natural area will be determined at a later date. Along with the natural area, other possible uses for the gravel pit include workforce housing, business and retail (such

NATURAL AREAS

Gravel Pit Proposed Future Natural Area

Community Priority:
MEDIUM

Primary Partners:
Mesa County
United Companies / Old Castle
Materials

Possible Implementation
Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Trust for Public Land
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach
Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Clifton Sanitation District

Possible Program Partners:
MarillacHealth
Riverside Educational Center
Eureka! Science Museum

as a grocery store), solar energy production, and other yet-to-be determined community needs and priorities.

The natural area is envisioned to provide the community with multiple opportunities to connect to the Riverfront Trail and existing Clifton Nature Park. For this reason it is likely that the southern portion of the gravel pit will be prioritized for future natural area. Possible recreation uses identified for this space include nature trails, community agriculture such as a 4-H Club, and a bicycle skills area. Due to the extensive excavation of the site, its proximity to the river corridor, and future adjacent development, it will be important to consider stormwater management and other environmental benefits such as improved riparian and habitat areas in the overall design of this natural area.

A feasibility study is needed to determine the best use of this space. For example, uses such as nature trails and a bicycle skills course can be integrated into the natural area and be designed to minimize the types of earthwork and fill that would be required to make the land suitable for other types of more traditional park and recreation uses, like basketball courts or sports fields. The future natural area is envisioned to be a complement to the more traditional park amenities found in the Park Area by providing Clifton with nature-based recreation experiences that celebrate the community's connection to the Colorado River. A feasibility study would also need to address future ownership models.


Youth outdoor and experiential education opportunities with partner programs such as Eureka! Science Museum, Riverside Educational Center, and others are important learning experiences that will be integrated into the design of a future natural area. Educational programs that educate both students and the broader community about native vegetation and wildlife will be prioritized in this area. Stewardship volunteer opportunities through adult programming that engages and connects adults outdoors will help support the natural area and provide important opportunities for the community to participate in caring for the space.






Riverfront Improvements

Currently undeveloped, the gravel bar area located at the terminus of the Clifton Nature Park trail sees a lot of informal use by the community that currently has no developed riverfront access. This area is also viewed as dangerous due to a lack of adequate infrastructure to support the safe use of the river. The closest developed river access point is at Corn Lake which is approximately one mile from the gravel bar area. The distance, along with

NATURAL AREAS



Not to Scale 

Legend		 CCC Natural Area Project	 CCC Project*
	Trail Connection-Existing	a. Proposed Future Natural Area	a. New Local Trail Connection - Connections
	Riverfront Trail-Existing	b. Trailhead Improvements (Restroom)	b. Clifton Connector & Loop Trail- Connections
	Clifton Community Campus	c. River Access Improvements	c. Riverfront Trail Eastline Alternative-Connections
		d. Improved Nature Trail Loops	d. Rocky Mountain Elementary - Schoolyards

*Refer to area map indicated for additional details.

Existing Conditions





GATHER Gathering spaces that support coming together in small and large groups. A place where Clifton residents can come together and celebrate their community.



PLAY Spaces for everyone (children, teens, and adults) to play, be active and have fun.



LEARN Safe outdoor spaces that support learning opportunities for all and nurture a spirit of community stewardship.



EXPLORE Opportunities to develop a sense of adventure and experience the natural world through activities that take advantage of Clifton's location in the Grand Valley.

NATURAL AREAS

Riverfront Improvements

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County
Clifton Sanitation District

Possible Implementation Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Trust for Public Land
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center
Save-A-Life Jacket

Clifton Nature Park Improvements

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County

Possible Implementation Partners :
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach
One Riverfront
Great Outdoors Colorado

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center

a required fee (\$4 for non-vehicular and \$9 for vehicles), makes Corn Lake a less attractive option for Clifton families. Operated by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Corn Lake includes a parking area, safety signage, developed trail, life vest kiosk, and a restroom facility.

The undeveloped riverfront area is also viewed as unsafe due to the use of this area by unhoused individuals who camp along the river. Refuse and waste left behind require regular clean ups and contribute to environmental degradation of the river corridor. Improving access to the river and supporting the safe use of the river by Clifton residents will enhance the community's connection to the Colorado River and may also contribute to a cleaner and safer river experience for all users of the Riverfront Trail and adjacent landowners. For example, Clifton Sanitation currently manages their adjacent land by regularly removing invasive species and cleaning out trash. They welcome a more developed recreational use of the river on the County's property that could support safe use of the river while decreasing trespass and non-compliant use of their property by the public.

Amenities that will support the community's safe use and enjoyment of the Colorado River include an improved trail to the gravel bar area from the Riverfront Trail, restrooms, adequate parking, trash cans, picnic facilities, safety signage, and a life vest kiosk (similar to those found at other riverfront parks in the area such as Corn Lake). Due to limited access and inadequate infrastructure to support facilities such as restrooms and parking areas adjacent to the river, this plan recommends that those improvements take place at the existing Clifton Nature Park which is just a 5-7 minute (.6 mile) walk from the gravel bar area. This distance is much more reasonable than the one mile and 20-30 minute walk that separates the gravel bar area from Corn Lake.

Clifton Nature Park Improvements

The community also greatly values the Clifton Nature Park. This existing natural area is used by the community to access the Riverfront Trail and the gravel bar area. Surveys reveal a desire for improved trail connections within the park, including a loop path that would allow trail users to safely access the western side of the park. A user-created trail or footpath exists in this area but is not safe or accessible. Increasing trail connectivity will greatly increase the functional and recreational use of this natural area for Clifton residents and visitors using the Riverfront Trail.

Connections

CONNECTIONS

Clifton Trail Connection

Rocky Mountain Elementary to Clifton Nature Park

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County
Mesa County Valley School District 51
Colorado West Land Trust
Trust for Public Land

Possible Implementation Partners :
One Riverfront
Great Outdoors Colorado
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Possible Program Partners:
Riverside Educational Center
Mesa County Library

Safe outdoor connections is a high priority for Clifton as well as the broader Grand Valley community. This section includes the new Clifton Trail Connection (between Rocky Mountain Elementary School and Clifton Nature Park), Safe Routes, the Clifton Connector and Loop Trail, and the Riverfront Trail (from Clifton to Palisade). Collectively, these projects have the potential to draw people from Clifton as well as people from outside of Clifton to the area. Enhancements to Clifton's connectivity will activate the entire Clifton Community Commons and potentially stimulate Clifton's outdoor recreation economy, encouraging more local businesses to establish themselves in Clifton. Trails and other connections are critical to establish Clifton's outdoor recreation economy and attract outdoor enthusiasts eager for more spaces to play and explore in the area.

Clifton Trail Connection

Presently the Clifton community lacks safe, direct access to the Colorado Riverfront Trail and the Clifton Nature Park but this can be accommodated with a new trail connection along 32 ½ Road. The trail would be roughly one half-mile long and approximately 12-feet wide to meet the standards of the Colorado Riverfront Trail. The Clifton Nature Park and the Colorado River provide unique nature experiences for Clifton residents. Without adequate access many residents do not know that these incredible resources are just steps away. The trail connection will also provide an important link to other areas of the Clifton Community Commons and will connect the river corridor to Rocky Mountain Elementary Park and School. Mesa County has already acquired the easement that will make this project possible and only lacks the funding resources to complete design and construction of the trail.

Safe Routes

Improving walkability and bikeability of the streets and sidewalks that connect the community to the Clifton Community Commons is imperative for the successful implementation of the community's vision for close-to-home access to nature and a safer, more connected Clifton. In 2016, Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO) conducted walk audits and a series of surveys for the majority of elementary and middle schools in the Mesa County Valley School District 51. In addition to the walk audits, Mesa County RTPO collected parent surveys and travel tallies from each of the participating schools. This work was done through the provision of grant funds from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Safe

CONNECTIONS

Safe Routes

E Road

D 3/4 Road

D 1/2 Road

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County RTO
Mesa County Public Works

Possible Implementation
Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Colorado Department of
transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Trust for Public Land

Possible Program Partners:
Mesa valley School District 51
Riverside Educational Center
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Routes to School Program. These walk audits evaluated the condition of the streets and roads within a one and two mile radius of the schools to identify the safest walking and biking routes. Routes were ranked based on existing infrastructure and conditions of the facilities, then they were color-coded with green being the most favorable, then blue, yellow, and red as the least favored route (See Figure 5). Data was uploaded into the Mesa County and City of Grand Junction GIS servers, then Mesa County created a series of maps for each of the participating schools, including the identified routes to schools.

As part of the Clifton Community Commons three safe routes have been prioritized: E Road, D 3/4 Road, D 1/2 Road. In addition to physical improvements, Safety can also be improved with signage, traffic calming elements, education, and projects that enhance community pride. Clifton residents could benefit from safety education about bicycle safety, importance of wearing helmets, street crossing, and Safe Routes to School education within the schools. It is also important to help increase driver awareness to help improve safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

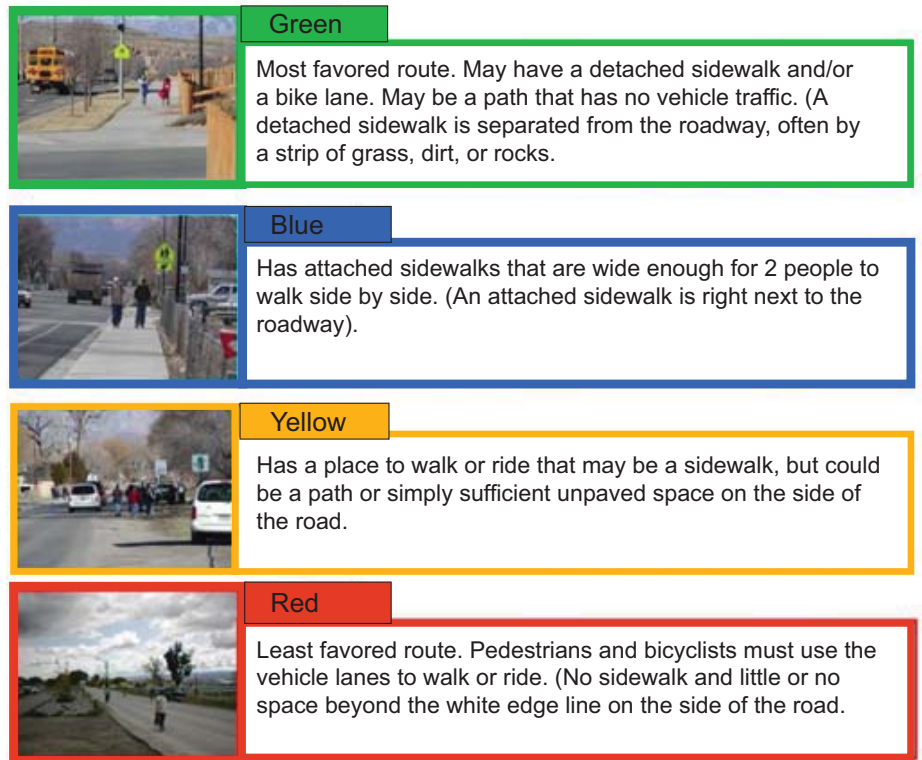


Fig. 6: Safe Routes to Schools Walk Audit Color Coded Rankings

CONNECT

Improve walking and bicycle connections to the Clifton Commons and to neighboring communities along the Riverfront Trail.



CONNECTIONS

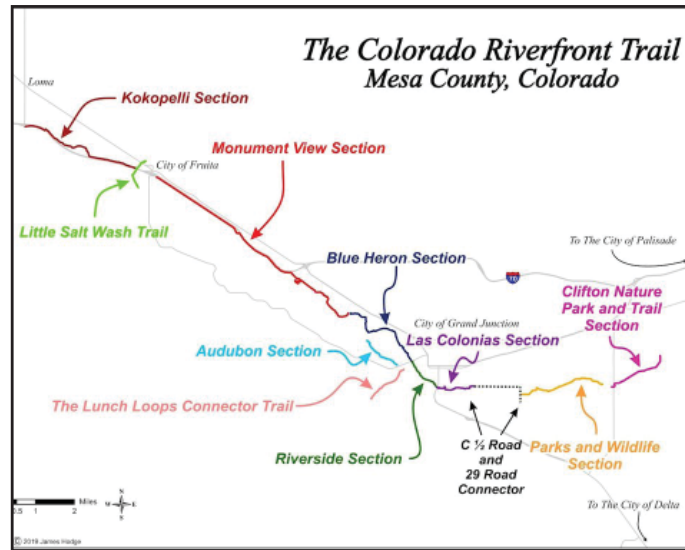
Riverfront Trail Clifton to Palisade Segment

Community Priority:
HIGH

Primary Partners:
Mesa County
Clifton Sanitation District
One Riverfront

Barriers:
Funding Support

Possible Implementation
Partners :
Great Outdoors Colorado
Trust for Public Land
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach



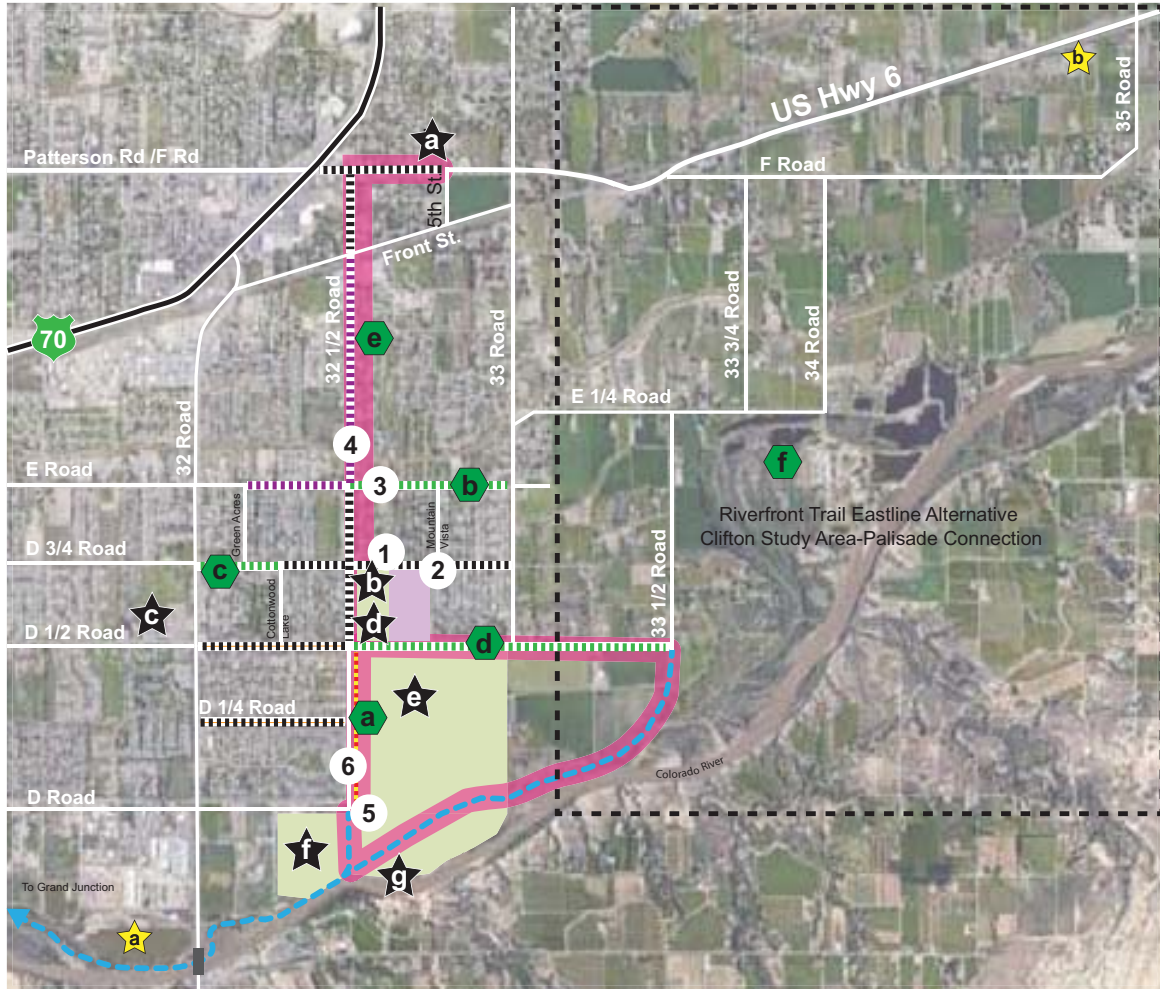
The Colorado Riverfront Trail currently extends from the Kokopelli Trailhead on the west end of the valley to Clifton, where it abruptly terminates at 33 1/2 Road.

Riverfront Trail-Clifton to Palisade

An effort to develop a paved trail through the Grand Valley along the Colorado River started in 1987; evolving from earlier efforts to increase appreciation of the river corridor by removing junk and invasive vegetation on the riverbanks. The non-profit group, One Riverfront, was formed by community leaders to work with municipal and county governments to create and maintain the Riverfront Trail. As of early 2023 that effort is 85% complete. The Riverfront Trail is a multimodal path that is used extensively by valley residents and visitors for tourism, exercise, commuting, and river corridor appreciation. Recent surveys indicate that one point of the Riverfront Trail hosts more than 60,000 visits each year, including walkers, bikers, strollers, wheelchairs, and other forms of non-motorized uses. It currently extends from the Kokopelli Trailhead on the west end of the valley to Clifton, where it abruptly terminates at 33 1/2 Road.

The vision for the CCC embraces One Riverfront's mission to increase use and expansion of the Riverfront Trail. An extension of the Riverfront Trail east from 33 1/2 Road into Palisade would expand recreational access and connectivity for Clifton residents and recreationalists across the Grand Valley. Completion of the trail connection to Palisade has experienced challenges in the past related to property ownership and acquisition of easements, however, together with Mesa County One Riverfront is in the process of completing a feasibility study that will investigate alternative options. Connecting the Riverfornt Trail from Clifton to Palisade would allow recreational and commuter use between the two communities that would otherwise only be achievable by automobile.

CONNECTIONS



Not to Scale



Legend			
	Safe Route (Completed/Under Construction)		Important Connection/Destination a. Corn Lake Day Use/James M Robb State Park b. Mount Garfield Middle School
	Safe Route (Partially Funded)		CCC Project* a. Clifton Elementary-Schoolyards b. Rocky Mountain Elementary Park-Parks c. Chatfield Elementary-Schoolyards d. Rocky Mountain Elementary - Schoolyards e. Future Natural Area-Natural Areas f. Clifton Nature Park Improvements-Natural Areas g. River Access Improvements-Natural Areas <small>*Refer to area map indicated for additional details.</small>
	Riverfront Trail-Existing		CCC Connections Project a. Clifton Trail Connection b. Safe Routes- E Road (32 1/2 Rd. to 33 Rd.) c. Safe Routes- D 3/4 Road (32 Rd. to Cottonwood Lake) d. Safe Routes- D 1/2 Road (32 1/2 Rd. to 33 1/2 Rd.) e. Clifton Connector & Loop Trail f. Riverfront Trail - Clifton to Palisade
	Clifton Community Commons		
	Clifton Community Campus		

Existing Conditions



Clifton Connector & Loop Trail

The 2.5 mile Clifton Connector Trail connects the Riverfront Trail north to Clifton Elementary School along 32 1/2 Road. This “trail” is made possible by sidewalks and bicycle lanes (ie. safe routes) either planned or already completed by Mesa County. Likewise, the Clifton Loop provides a 3 mile loop that connects Riverfront Trail users to Rocky Mountain Elementary School and Clifton Nature Park along existing trails and safe routes. Route alternatives like these provide incentive for Riverfront Trail users to leave the regional trail corridor and explore the Clifton Community Commons. This loop trail would effectively increase the community’s access and enjoyment of the entire study area. The 3 mile loop trail could also effectively host 5K runs and other events that would draw people to Clifton. Similar to other projects presented in this chapter, improved wayfinding is a critical component of this project.

CONNECTIONS

Clifton Connector & Loop Trail

Community Priority:
MEDIUM

Primary Partners:
Mesa County
Clifton Sanitation District
One Riverfront

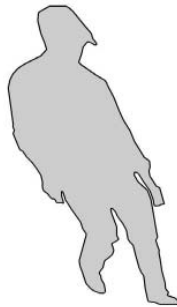
Barriers:
Funding Support

Possible Implementation Partners:
Great Outdoors Colorado
Trust for Public Land
Clifton Community Leaders
Clifton Community Outreach

Directional Sidewalk Decal



Custom arrows will be painted on concrete sidewalks at key points along the route. These directional elements will be created using a template and elastomeric paint. Unlike the eight-of-way directional signs, these distances will be measured in “average minutes-to-walk.” Having key junctions labeled with orientation arrows in brightly colored paint will make it easy for pedestrians to orient themselves along the Westwood Via Verde.



Precedent Image

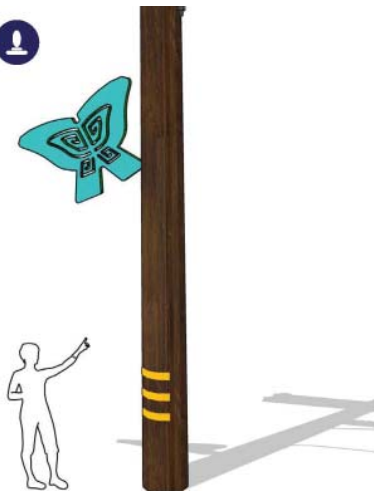


Cairn



The concept of the wayfinding “cairn” was conceived during the community involvement process. Their intent is to—like stacks of rock along a trail—provide visual guidance to people moving along the Via Verde. These butterfly-shaped, powder coated metal cones will be mounted to light-colored poles at key locations along the route. Local artists will be commissioned to paint each of these in different styles. They will serve as both local artistic expression and easily visible markers to aid people in orienting themselves along the Via Verde.

Precedent Images



Directional Sign



Right-of-way directional signs will give clear directions, distances, and place names to destinations along the Westwood Via Verde. These signs may follow the already established City of Denver Bikeway design guidelines, or adhere to the design guidelines outlined in this document. These signs will either be mounted to T-pole, free-standing sign posts or mounted to processing light or power poles along the route.



A wayfinding plan, like this example from the Westwood Via Verde (Denver, CO), could help people navigate the CCC and be used to celebrate the culture and identity of Clifton.



*Ready for action!
Clifton Community
Commons partners
include residents,
Mesa County,
business, and non-
profit partners.*

4

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is based on the project outcomes identified at the beginning of the project and detailed in Chapter 1. The plan was co-written by the partner team which includes Mesa County Public Health, Clifton Community Outreach, Clifton Community Leaders, and Trust for Public Land. Action Plan strategies were developed in close coordination with key stakeholders in a series of stakeholder conversations held in February 2023. Stakeholders that contributed their expertise to the development of the Action Plan include Mesa County, Outdoor Recreation Coalition of the Grand Valley, Mesa County Sheriff's Office, and Riverfront Education Center.



COMMUNITY LED CHANGE:

CLIFTON'S PLACE IN AN EMERGING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY

Mesa County is at the forefront of Colorado's outdoor recreation economy, with a higher than state average 4.8% of its GDP coming from the more than 150 local business involved in outdoor recreation and outdoor recreation tourism¹. Clifton is largely left out of the region's growing outdoor recreation economy that is driven by skiing, hiking, fishing, hunting, and camping on the Grand Mesa; river recreation on the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers; and world-class mountain biking trails like Kokopelli and the Palisade Plunge. Yet Clifton sits on the banks of the Colorado River and hosts critical elements of a potentially expansive and accessible open space. Through Centennial visioning, participants have elevated action items that will help transform currently underfunded and underutilized natural amenities. These action items will establish pathways for Clifton community members to create and work for recreation oriented businesses, securing a role for Clifton in the Grand Valley's growing and vibrant OREC economy.

1 Grand Junction Sentinel

ACTIONS **SHORT TERM** **(2023-2025)**

Partner with Mesa County Public Works to accelerate connector trail project that will connect Rocky Mountain Elementary to the Colorado Riverfront.

Engage with Clifton businesses (may include Alpine Bank, Murdochs, etc) to brainstorm about how to support business growth around the Clifton Community Commons. Consider presenting to Chamber of Commerce, Latino Chamber of Commerce, look to local business professionals to guide this effort.

Partner with CMU Outdoor Program and Outdoor Industries Studies undergraduate program to create a hands-on opportunity/series of opportunities for students to engage in outdoor recreation activities that could result in business development and employment training for residents. These may include bike maintenance, fishing, kiosk management, and more.

Activate the Clifton Nature Park and Riverfront Trail with Saturday Food Trucks and Equipment Rentals (this model is used by The Nature Connection with skis at County Line on the Grand Mesa). This could inspire OREC business development.

ACTIONS

MID TERM

(2026-2029)

Clifton community member on Outdoor Recreation Coalition of the Grand Valley (ORC) Board

On-going outdoor program development to engage Clifton youth and families in fishing, biking, walking, volunteering and other related activities. Perhaps this operates out of Clifton Campus (Library or Community Center). This program teaches surrounding residents how to use outdoor spaces safely and how to care for these spaces.

Clifton non-profit to submit to Wright Collegiate Challenge, OREC grants, to explore opportunities around small business development in Clifton that serves the outdoor industry or another idea identified by the community.

ACTIONS

LONG TERM

(2030-2033)

Clifton and its community members are fully engaged with Grand Valley ORC, Clifton is a sustainable location for business to call home!

Clifton businesses benefit from and support outdoor recreation activity throughout the Clifton Community Commons and the Clifton Riverfront.

CLIFTON PRIDE:

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR CLIFTON'S TREASURED OUTDOOR SPACES

Clifton lacks a consistent source of public funding to support a modern park system, yet parks and safe outdoor spaces have long been identified as a community priority. Without public funding support, improvements to parks in Clifton are limited. In March 2023 Mesa County signed a technical support letter with Trust for Public Land to begin the necessary steps to explore a conservation finance solution for Clifton's treasured Outdoor Spaces. The national leader in state and local funding for parks and conservation, Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance program is a trusted advisor to state and local governments and community leaders on how to design, pass, and implement ballot and legislative measures to fund parks and conservation. In partnership with Mesa County and the Clifton Community, the Trust for Public Land will provide technical assistance, feasibility research, public opinion surveys, measure design, and program design and evaluation to finance parks, trails, open spaces, and other conservation priorities.

ACTIONS **SHORT TERM** **(2023-2025)**

Technical Assistance: Trust for Public Land will help elected officials and community groups research and evaluate park and conservation finance options and design ballot and legislative measures that reflect public priorities (See Appendix).

Feasibility Research: Analyzing public finance options and exploring their legal, fiscal, and political constraints.

Public Opinion Surveys: Field surveys by expert polling firms to gauge voter support for funding mechanisms, uses for funds, and messages.

Measure Design: Recommend optimal funding method, amount, use for funds, ballot language, and election timing.

Program Design and Evaluation: Provide models and recommendations for Mesa County and the Clifton community conservation program.

Campaign Services: Provide campaign planning, management, and fundraising; select and direct pollsters and other consultants; write and produce digital, direct mail, television, and radio advertisements; oversee public education and get-out-the-vote programs; and manage compliance with campaign finance and lobbying registration and reporting.

Choosing a Local Funding Strategy

Generally, there are three broad-based types of revenue sources available to local governments to pay for parks, trails, and open space: discretionary annual spending (i.e., budget appropriation), creation of dedicated funding streams such as voter-approved special taxes, and the issuance of bonds. The financing options utilized by a community will depend on a variety of factors such as taxing capacity, budgetary resources, voter preferences, and political will. While most local governments can create funding for land protection through their budgetary process, this either happens infrequently or does not yield adequate funding.

In the Trust for Public Land's experience, local governments that create funding via the budget process often provide substantially less funding than those that create dedicated funding through ballot measures. As elected officials make critical budgetary decisions, funding for open space lags behind other public purposes and what voters usually support. Raising taxes without an indisputable public mandate for the intended purpose is often quite difficult.

Nationwide, a range of public financing options has been utilized by local jurisdictions to fund parks and open space, including bonds, sales taxes, and property taxes. Other mechanisms have included special assessment districts, real estate transfer taxes, impact fees, and income taxes. The ability of local governments to establish dedicated funding sources depends upon state enabling authority.

Conservation finance measures are not suitable for every local government, or there might be better approaches at the time. Budget appropriations and other revenue mechanisms that the local government can implement may serve as short-term funding options while park and land protection proponents develop a strategy and cultivate broad support for longer-term financing options. Sometimes a combination of funding options is needed to address the jurisdiction's varied needs.

-Clifton, Colorado Public Finance Feasibility Study, Trust for Public Land, July 2023

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS:

SAFETY & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Safe places to gather, safe non-motorized transportation corridors between connected spaces, and overall public safety were focal points in the initial community surveys, focus groups and various meetings. These necessitated partnering the community with local law enforcement in relationship to the overall visioning process. It has been documented that when spaces are highly used by the community (especially families and children) negative activities are less likely to occur.

Clifton is located in unincorporated Mesa County and the Mesa County Sheriff's office (MCSO) is its sole provider of law enforcement. It must be noted that Mesa County covers 3,500 square miles and at any given time there are as few as 7 law enforcement officers on duty. Lack of funding for an adequate number of officers, and reasonable response times, perception of higher crime rates (compared to other nearby communities), and a low level of public trust in some areas of the Clifton Community Common's study area are ongoing points of concern.

In February 2023, members of the Action Team comprised of Clifton Community Outreach, Clifton Community Leaders, Mesa County Public Health, and Trust for Public Land met with both the Mesa County Sheriff and the Undersheriff. Ongoing park maintenance, community stewardship, safety and "near neighbor advocacy" ideas should be put forth as immediate activation solutions. Community members on the Action Team additionally shared concerns around security of public spaces including community member self-policing ("see something say something") and expanding law enforcement's presence. Lighting and camera placement in the design of playgrounds, safe routes, trails and other open space improvements as they come online were also focal points of the discussion. Clifton residents identified safe places and safe activities for youth as some of the highest priorities for their community.

ACTIONS **SHORT TERM** **(2023-2025)**

Law enforcement should be involved in project design, providing guidance on best practices for increasing safety in public spaces such as input on ingress and egress points, sight lines and visibility, lighting, etc.

Additional funding for lighting and cameras as a component of park design and other improvements (ie. schoolyards, trails and walking areas) should be requested.

There is a need to address the issue of homelessness and the needs of those who are currently occupying these spaces. We must be sensitive to the challenges people are facing and advocate for support services, re-housing programs, and behavioral health programs.

ACTIONS
MID TERM
(2026-2029)

Pursue funding on behalf of partners, such as D51 for school yards and Mesa County for common park areas. These include public safety grants for both staffing capacity and advanced technology.

Partners participate in annual “Neighborhood Night Out” celebration, sponsored by law enforcement and first responders, thus enhancing trust, goodwill, and relationships. Inviting officers to community events and meetings (Officers get overtime for community engagement) will be typically encouraged to immerse themselves in community.

Law enforcement develops relationships with community members by having deputies talk to youth or take time to “play with and in the community”, enhancing the relationship building process.

Encourage youth to join the MCSO Junior Explorer Program, providing them the opportunity to see law enforcement “from the other side of view”.

Improve the process of reporting and responding to maintenance concerns quickly. Maintain tall grasses and shrubs along river and at Clifton Nature Park improve visibility in key areas to improve safety of park and trail users.

ACTIONS
LONG TERM
(2030-2033)

Maintenance, community stewardship and advocacy will continue to be priorities because broken equipment, graffiti and poor conditions send a message of apathy and decreased overall safety.

Write grants, seek donations, and identify other funding opportunities enabling Clifton residents long-term sustainability goals.

Continually enhance the community/law enforcement/ first responder relationship through ongoing dialogue and joint activities.

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS:

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GROUP

The Community Transformation Group (CTG) is a coalition of neighborhood residents, government organizations, nonprofit agencies and other partners, formed with the vision of creating “a vibrant, caring and connected community where each of us has the relationships and opportunities we need to thrive.” CTG has met regularly since early 2018 to work on community change strategies that strengthen social connectedness and build community resilience in Clifton. The current focus of this group, to build public support for creating safe community spaces, was determined through community outreach and review of neighborhood-level data, including more than 300 surveys and interviews done by Clifton resident leaders.

The decision to focus on public outdoor spaces brought experienced and well-connected new partners like Colorado West Land Trust and One Riverfront to the existing CTG table, as they saw a role for themselves in creating change in Clifton. However, CTG’s purpose is not limited to parks, trails, and other community spaces. The larger goal of supporting efforts that build a thriving community through connectedness and resilience is relevant in many contexts, and CTG partners not closely involved in the Clifton Community Commons work stay connected through quarterly coalition meetings. These organizations value the catalytic impact of working in partnership with both residents and other organizations, and they contribute their expertise and energy to CTG’s big-picture purpose. The community-centered process playing out with the Commons and other Clifton projects contributes to lasting and authentic relationships that increase the overall, long-term capacity for successful resident-prioritized work of all kinds in Clifton.

ACTIONS

SHORT TERM (2023-2025)

Clifton Community Commons Lead Partner Team (Clifton Community Leaders, Clifton Community Outreach, Mesa County Public Health, Trust for Public Land) meets weekly to address action and implementation plan items.

Clifton Community Commons Action Team (lead partners plus other key stakeholder organizations) meets biweekly to address action and implementation plan items.

Clifton Community Leaders and Clifton Community Outreach build their networks of residents interested in contributing to positive community change.

CTG partner organizations identify opportunities to contribute to specific projects contained within the Clifton Community Commons vision.

Short term actions continued on next page.

ACTIONS
SHORT TERM
(2023-2025)

CTG partners share qualitative and quantitative data that supports successful implementation of projects prioritized within the Clifton Community Commons vision.

CTG coalition meets quarterly to build relationships and identify opportunities for collaborative planning and action.

ACTIONS
MID TERM
(2026-2029)

CTG partners share qualitative and quantitative data that support other resident-identified projects and priorities.

CTG coalition partners meet regularly to build relationships and identify opportunities for collaborative planning and action.

ACTIONS
LONG TERM
(2030-2033)

CTG coalition meets regularly to build and maintain relationships across partners.

CTG coalition meets regularly to identify and elevate community-prioritized and community-driven projects that build connectedness and resilience.

CTG coalition reviews qualitative and quantitative data to build support for implementation of community-identified priorities.

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS:

SUPPORT & DEVELOP LOCAL LEADERS

Clifton Community Leaders (CCL) and Clifton Community Outreach (CCO) are resident-led action groups that developed over the past few years as a way to create the change they wanted to see in their neighborhoods. The hundreds of surveys, interviews, and informal conversations conducted by these resident leaders led to the multi-sector collaboration with CTG partners that became the Clifton Community Commons project. Unlike many previous efforts in the Clifton area, which were often prioritized and led by nonprofit and government organizations, the projects within the Commons are a response to priorities set by the community. Neighborhood residents, school communities, and local users of existing outdoor spaces are the primary voices in determining the direction of the collective work.

Both CCO and CCL have a long-term purpose of building collective power and resident leadership to achieve equity within their community. Resident leaders help create a sense of community and social cohesion when resident-led priorities are elevated to action and the results are shared back to the community. These successes begin to shift the community's perception of how decisions are made and who has the power to create change. Communities most impacted by health inequities develop the skills to participate in and influence local decision making on the issues that affect them. Over time, sustained effort by the community leads to changes in policies, procedures and practices across organizations, and eventually systems, where these relationships and local capacities result in ongoing impact. Although each group has additional areas of focus independent of the Commons project, the Commons effort is a significant opportunity for each group to build relationships, influence decisions, and work productively with a broad range of partners to have a large-scale impact on their community.

ACTIONS

SHORT TERM (2023-2025)

- Expand resident group membership and the pool of committed local volunteers.
- Use social media to increase awareness of community opportunities and ongoing project status.
- Hold regular community meetings to inform, educate, and engage community.
- CCO: Identify location for ongoing meetings after April 1, 2023.
- Build in community advocacy training and support to build the skills needed to influence decisions in the community - and have the confidence to use those skills.

Short term actions continued on next page.

ACTIONS
SHORT TERM
(2023-2025)

Research and gather accurate information about topics of interest; share this back to community members so people are able to make well-formed decisions and opinions about things happening in their community.

ACTIONS
MID TERM
(2026-2029)

Train new leaders within existing resident groups to ensure longevity, sustainability, and continuity of the groups.

Establish a structure for identifying and monitoring community priorities (surveys, interviews, polls, etc.).

Integrate youth and adult action groups to create a continuous and connected pipeline of people who want to have a positive influence on their community.

Build legal and financial stability for resident-led organizations.

Build relationships with potential funders like foundations, government entities, and philanthropic organizations.

Build financial capacity to allow financial influence independent of outside funding sources.

ACTIONS
LONG TERM
(2030-2033)

Continue to grow resident leadership and community advocacy opportunities in Clifton.

Use neighborhood-level leadership opportunities to encourage Clifton residents to seek out more formal roles of influence (running for office, serving on boards, seeking out government and nonprofit jobs, starting a Clifton-based business).

Support a network of leaders who are mentors for the next generation of leaders.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP:

SUPPORT & DEVELOP CLIFTON YOUTH TEAMS

Clifton residents identified safe places and safe activities for youth as some of the highest priorities for their community. Youth are invaluable community connectors, with a set of experiences, priorities and expertise that cannot be provided by adult partners. However, they are a segment of the community that is consistently left out of most planning and decision making. The Clifton Community Commons project creates an opportunity for youth to be directly involved in all aspects of a series of public space projects that directly affect them. Three youth teams, two facilitated by Riverside Educational Center (at Mount Garfield Middle School and Central High School) and one organized through Clifton Community Leaders (for any Clifton youth), are currently active partners in the Commons process.

Through these groups, youth develop leadership skills, build character, learn life lessons and are empowered to have a positive impact in their community. The meetings and the relationships they build there also provide a safe place where they can reach out to others for assistance when needed. The experiences gained through participation in the Commons project lay the groundwork for ongoing involvement in the community, whether through projects initiated by the youth themselves or by joining in a larger community effort. The adult Clifton Community Commons partners are committed to honoring their voices, sharing power, and working to understand and implement their opinions and ideas. The three youth groups will continue beyond this project, giving youth an ongoing voice in their community.

ACTIONS **SHORT TERM** **(2023-2025)**

Provide activities that bring youth together in an environment that is safe and engaging.

Offer youth an environment in which to discuss the future of Clifton and their goals for their community.

Complete Vision Board and PhotoVoice projects to help identify youth priorities for outdoor spaces in Clifton.

Reach out to potential partners for community art projects (for example, partner with a local business where youth can paint a mural on their property).

Make presentations to local decision makers about youth priorities for community spaces (Mesa County Board of County Commissioners, school officials, etc.).

Short term actions continued on next page.

ACTIONS
SHORT TERM
(2023-2025)

Assess Clifton public outdoor spaces for current strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Visit public outdoor spaces in other parts of Mesa County to gather ideas for neighborhood parks and other community spaces.

Plan and volunteer for projects that contribute to a cleaner, more livable Clifton (neighborhood cleanups, park and trail trash pickup) and inspire younger students to engage with their community (tutoring, mentoring, etc.).

Participate in ongoing youth leadership training.

ACTIONS
MID TERM
(2026-2029)

Write grants, seek donations, and identify other funding opportunities so that youth councils in Clifton have the resources to help set the priorities and influence the decisions that affect them and their families.

Continue outreach to youth and families in Clifton to maintain membership, adult leadership, and youth-driven values.

Participate in ongoing youth leadership training.

ACTIONS
LONG TERM
(2030-2033)

Ensure stability for youth councils through sustainable funding and adult leadership.

Participate in ongoing youth leadership training.

Ongoing outreach to youth and families.

Ongoing training for adult leaders.

The Clifton Elementary Schoolyard Pilot was a big success but successful implementation of the full CCC will require a long-term commitment to the Clifton community by project partners.



5

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Clifton Community Commons (CCC) vision will only be accomplished if the Action Plan described in Chapter 4 is used as a roadmap to continue to center and strengthen the Clifton community. The projects described in Chapter 3 will create incredibly valuable outdoor assets, but if they are accomplished without community at the center and without authentic leadership and direction from Clifton residents, the Clifton Community Commons Vision will not be achieved. This chapter describes next steps for implementation, including associated costs and a proposed timeline for implementing the 11 projects described in Chapter 3. Successful implementation will require a long-term commitment to the Clifton community and their vision for improving close-to-home access to nature.



PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE FOR IDENTIFIED PROJECTS

The schedule outlined below is for planning purposes only. As funding is secured and other barriers to implementation are addressed projects may shift along the projected ten-year implementation period for the eleven identified projects. Public funding support is a critical milestone that may impact this timeline significantly.

 Critical Milestone

	PARKS	NATURAL AREAS	CONNECTIONS	SCHOOLYARDS	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029-2033
Year											
Project:											
Funding Support for Clifton's Parks, Natural Areas, & Trails					●	●	●				
Rocky Mountain Elementary School Park	●							○	—	○	
Clifton Trail Connection			●			○	—	○			
Riverfront Improvements		●				○	—	○			
Clifton Elementary School				●		○	—	○			
Improvements to Clifton Nature Park		●				○	—	○			
Safe Routes			●			○	—	○			
Chatfield Elementary School				●				○	—	○	
Clifton Connector & Loop Trail			●					○	—	○	
Riverfront Trail-Clifton to Palisade			●					○	—	○	
Rocky Mountain Elementary School				●					○	—	○
Proposed Future Natural Area (Gravel Pit)		●				○	—	○	—	○	

Preliminary Estimate of Probable Costs:				
Project:	Planning	Design	Construction	Total
Rocky Mountain Park*	\$ 210,000	\$ 210,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$3,920,000
Clifton Trail Connection	NA	\$ 180,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$1,680,000
Riverfront Improvements	\$ 15,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 250,000	\$295,000
Clifton Elementary School*	\$ 65,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$1,785,000
Improvements to Clifton Nature Park	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 500,000	\$575,000
Safe Routes**	NA	\$ 804,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$2,804,000
Chatfield Elementary School	\$ 35,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 800,000	\$895,000
Clifton Connector & Loop Trail	\$ 50,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$1,700,000
Riverfront Trail-Clifton to Palisade***	\$ 350,000	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rocky Mountain Elementary School	\$ 15,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 250,000	\$295,000
Proposed Future Natural Area (~25 Acres of re-claimed gravel pit area)	\$ 300,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$21,300,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,065,000	\$ 2,634,000	\$ 31,900,000	\$35,249,000

*Probable cost based on completed master plan and estimate of cost developed by landscape architect.

**Probable cost based on Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office estimate of cost.

***Currently studying feasibility and costs of potential routes.

Note: All costs in this document are preliminary and are estimates for planning purposes only. As projects move forward costs will be refined. Additional expenses not included in the estimate include funding to support partner time and expertise.

Clifton Elementary School will require a major renovation to truly serve as a healthy learning environment for children, but once complete could also serve as a park for the entire community!



6

APPENDIX

SURVEY RESULTS

EQUITY PLAN

GOCO CENTENNIAL CONCEPT PAPER

MASTER PLAN_ ROCKY MOUNTAIN PARK

MASTER PLAN-CLIFTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

COLORADO CITIES PRIORITIZATION ANALYSIS

PARK PRIORITY AREAS & SCHOOLYARDS IN CLIFTON



Clifton Community Commons Survey





Hello! ¡Hola!

We are the Clifton Community Leaders representing the voices of the Clifton community! ¡Somos los Clifton Community Leaders representando las voces de la comunidad de Clifton!

"Our vision is to connect the Clifton community and empower the residents to improve their quality of life."

"Nuestra visión es conectar a la comunidad de Clifton y empoderar a los residentes a mejorar su calidad de vida."

The Leaders Los Lideres



Andres Sanchez
Has lived in Clifton for over 25 years, Youth Leader and advocate for everyone in Clifton



Alyssa Jones
Has lived in Clifton for ... years, and advocates for the Elders in the community



Elvia Chavez
Has lived in Clifton for 16 years, Latina Leader advocating for the Spanish Speakers in the Community



Maria Luiza Perez-Chavez
Has lived in Clifton for 16 years, Latina Leader, Social Media, and Data Analyst



Heidi Escabedo
Leader of the Youth, Social Media, and Data Analysis



Jose Luis Chavez
Founder of the Clifton Community Outreach Leader

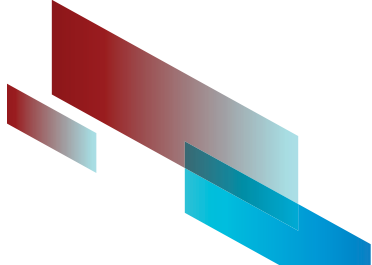
“

*Take only what you need
and leave the land as
you found it*

*Toma solo lo que
necesites y deja la tierra
como la encontré*

- Arapaho

”



Big concept

We Need An Awe-Inspiring Park

Necesitamos Un Parque Inspirante



Timeline Línea de Tiempo

June – July started working with Clifton. Community meetings started. Jose Luis Chavez

Clifton Community Leaders founded by Jose Luis Chavez

COVID- Zoom meetings/ conducting interviews by phone.

August- Compiled data from surveys. September/October- Community Meetings at Long’s Park, to discuss 6 issues.

October- 3rd trash clean-up.

January-submitted Grant for 1 million dollar grant for Community Center.

April- Health Equality Grant for training Met with the County Commissioner and county staff to discuss Rocky Mountain Elementary Playground.

October- First Clifton clean-up 1 mile square.

**January- hired Clifton Community Outreach
February – started conducting surveys**

October – 2nd trash clean-up expanded to a larger area of Clifton

**January- hired more community leaders (Clifton Community Leaders)
Continued with surveys**

**Summer- spoke with County Commissioners regarding Community Center.
Fall-writing and action plans, Grant for Community Center**

**September 8th- Ground breaking ceremony for Community Center.
Began to plan Rocky Mountain Elementary Playground.**

Why do more surveys... Porque hacer más encuestas...

Clifton Community Outreach conducted surveys from March to July 2020 with the residents of Clifton to obtain their views on the area.

- **Surveys were conducted in person, by phone, and online**
- **300 surveys were completed as of July 25**

Clifton Community Outreach realizó encuestas de marzo a julio de 2020 con los residentes de Clifton para obtener sus puntos de vista sobre el área.

- **Las encuestas se realizaron en persona, por teléfono y en línea**
- **Se completaron 300 encuestas hasta el 25 de julio**

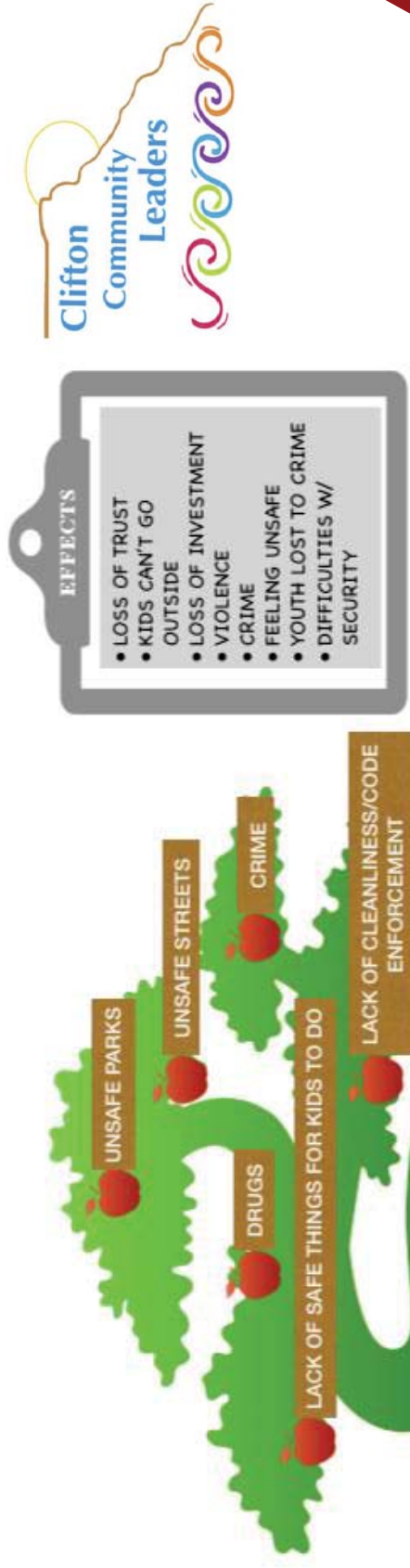
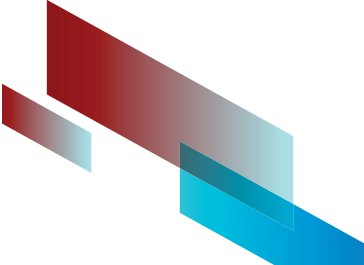
Why do more surveys... Porque hacer más encuestas...

Sus preocupaciones mayores fueron:

- falta de limpieza 52%
- Calles peligrosas 44%
- Crimen 44%
- Falta de actividades para niños 43%
- Parques peligrosos 38%
- Drogas 35%

Their top concerns were:

- Lack of cleanliness 52%
- Unsafe streets 44%
- Crime 44%
- Lack of safe things for kids to do 43%
- Unsafe parks 38%
- Drugs 35%



MOST IMPACTED: PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY, YOUTH, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, PEOPLE OF COLOR, & LGBTQ+



Why do more surveys... Porque hacer más encuestas...

- But we missed some voice in the process, we spoke to an average of people within the range of
- Pero nos hizo falta unas voces en el proceso, hablamos con gente que se identifica como
- 49 years old 49 años
- White/Caucasian blanco
- female mujer

■ We missed Nos hizo falta

White/blanco
Female/mujer
Adult/Adultos

Youth/
Jovenes

Communities
of color

Male or non
binary/
hombre o
sin genero

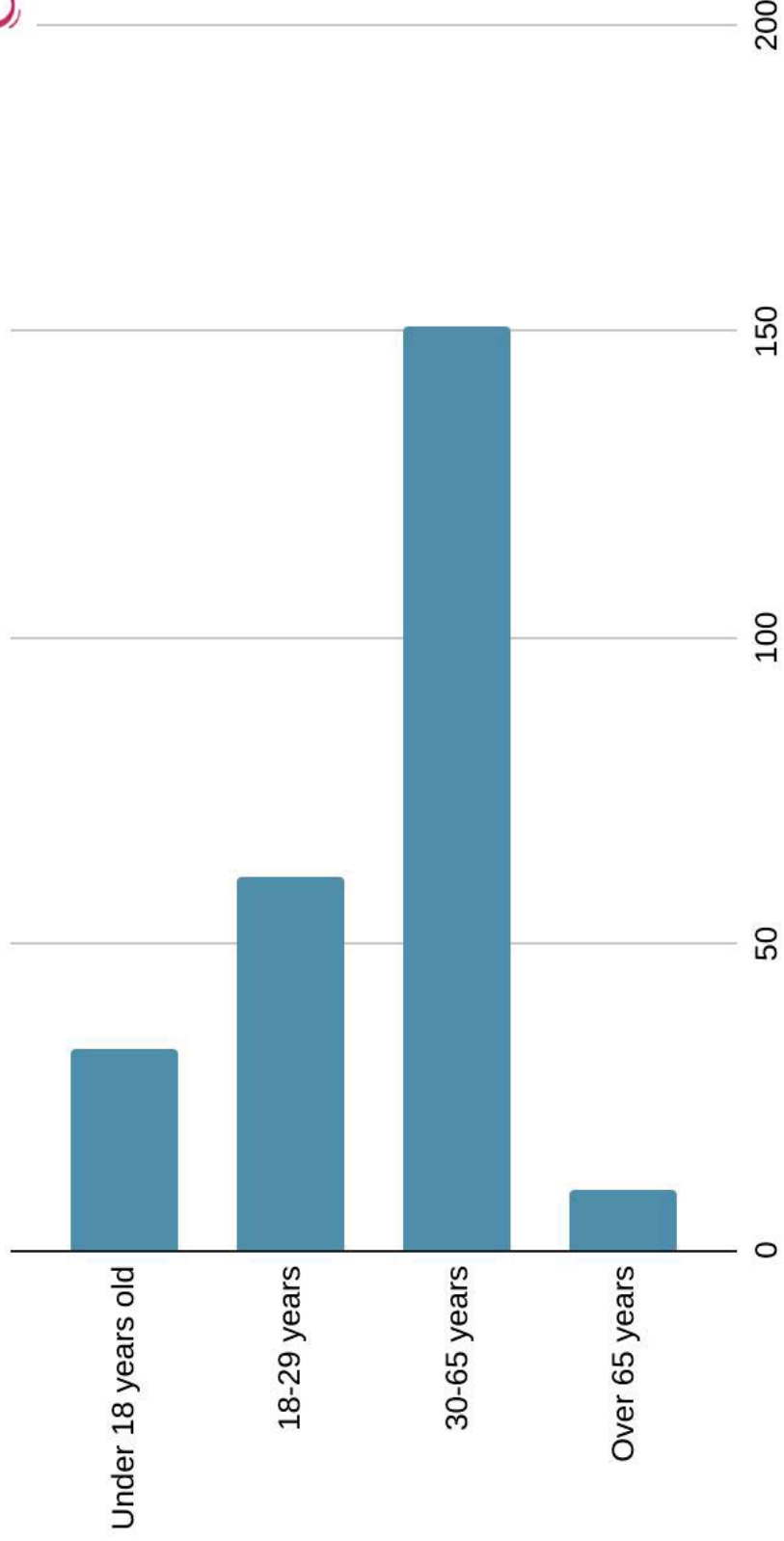
1. The Purpose of the Surveys Cuál Fue el propósito de las encuestas

The purpose of the survey was to get the residents of Clifton's input on what they believe, and what they would like to see in their community!

El propósito de las encuestas fue recibir la opinión de los residentes de Clifton en lo que ellos creen y quieren ver en su comunidad!

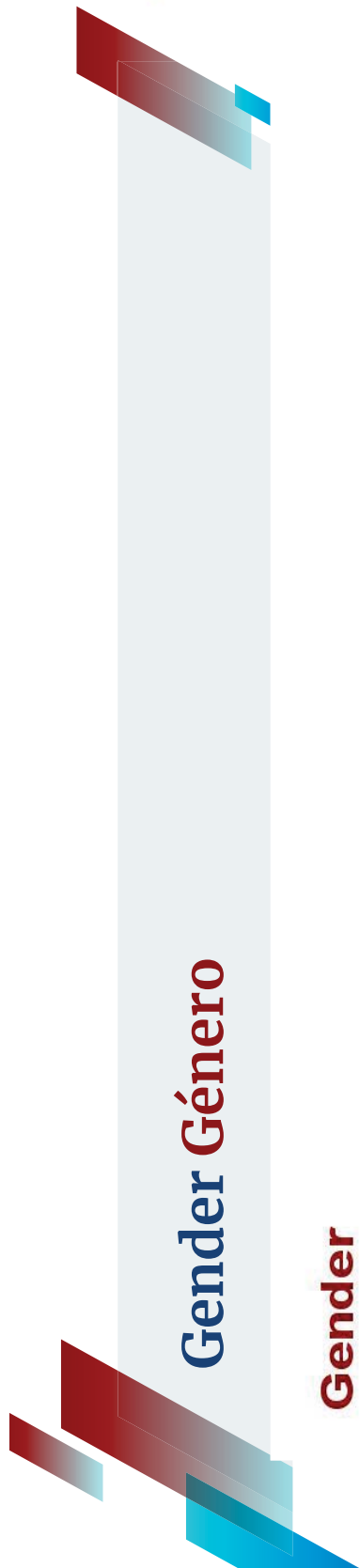
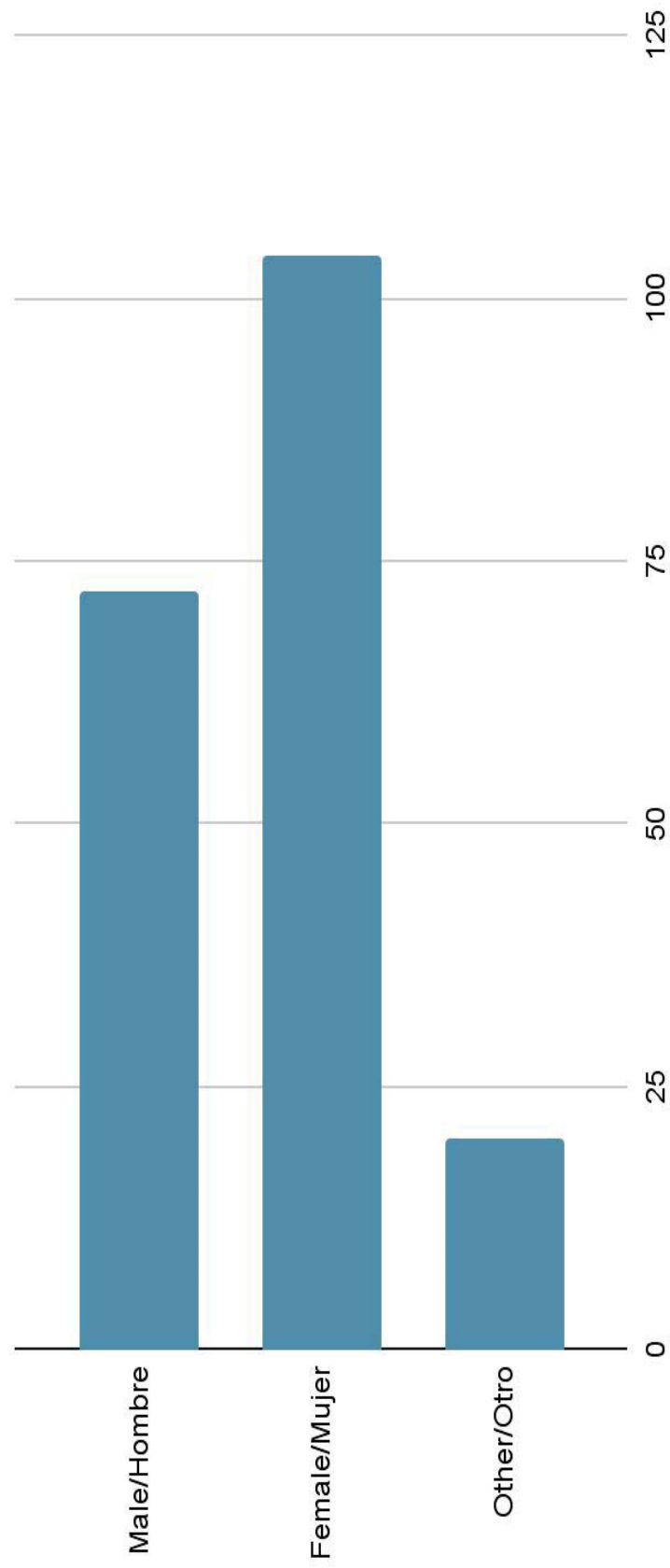
Age Range Edades

What is your age?



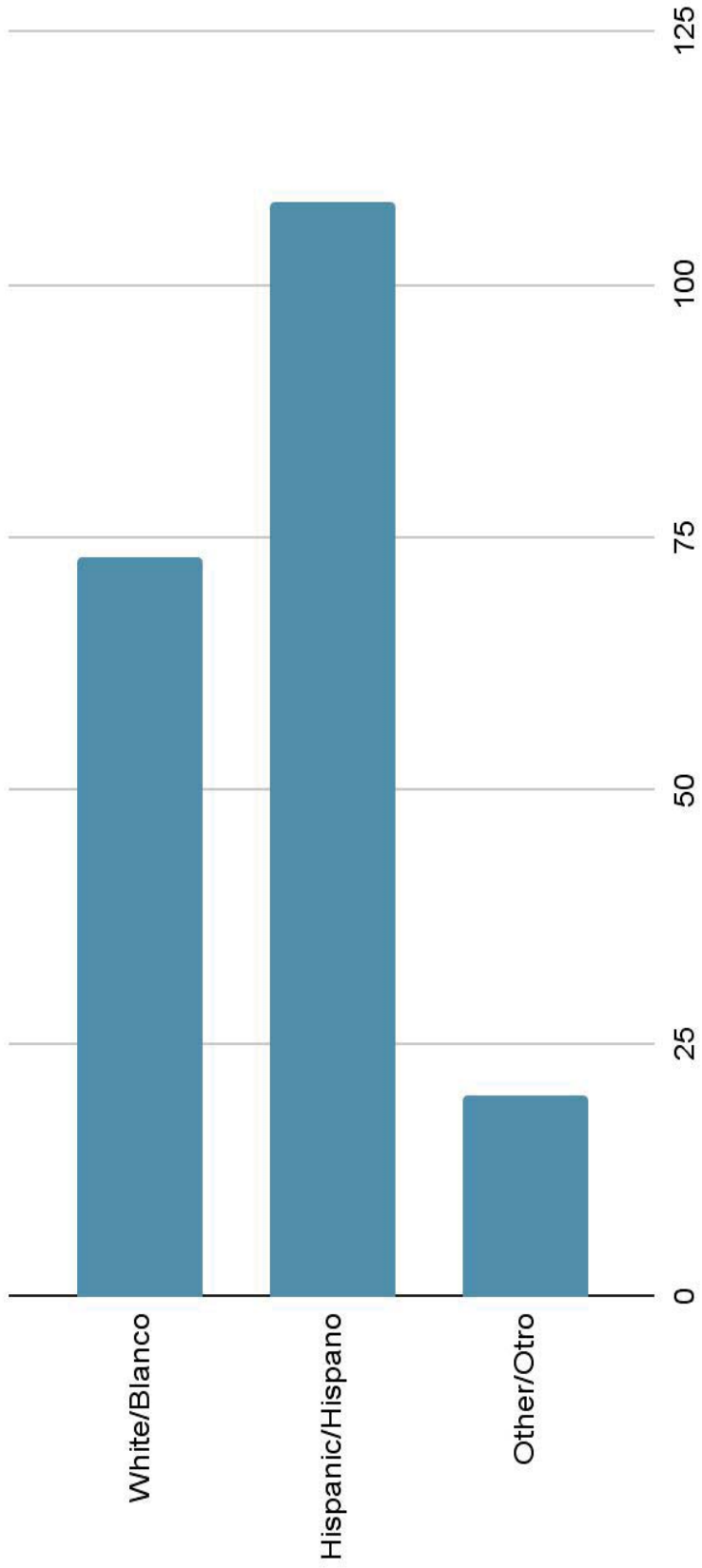
Gender Género

Gender



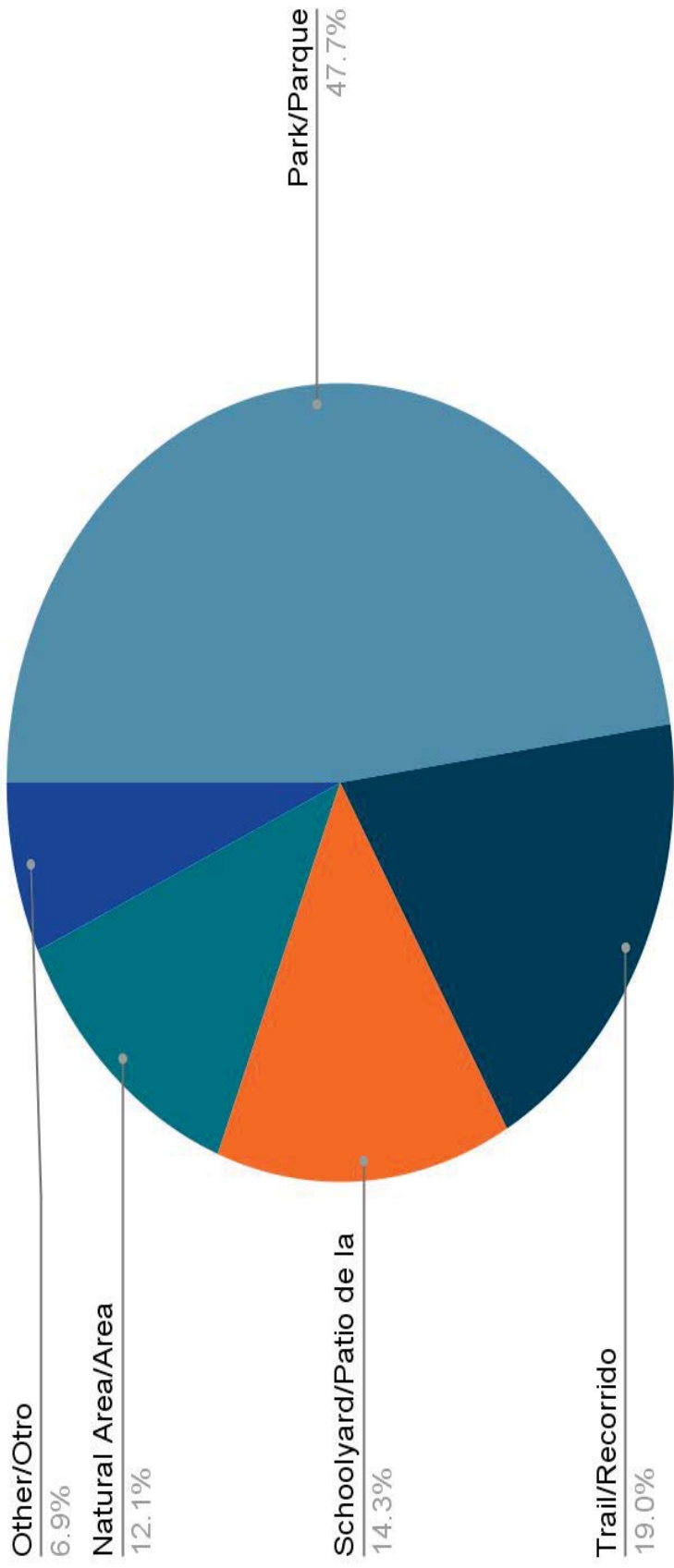
Demographics Demograficas

Ethnicity



Types of outdoor spaces the community uses Espacios que la comunidad usa afuera

What types of outdoor spaces do you currently use?

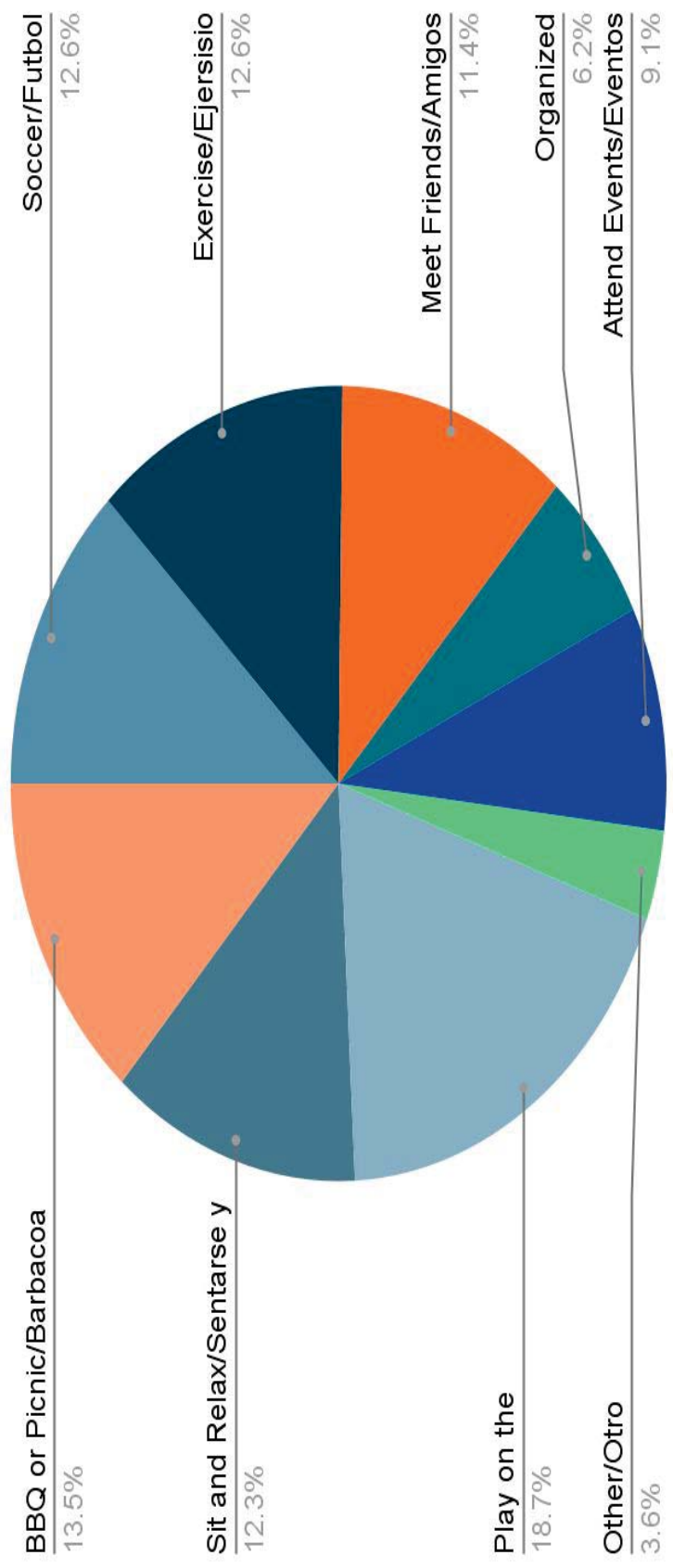


Types of Outdoor Activities

Tipos de Actividades

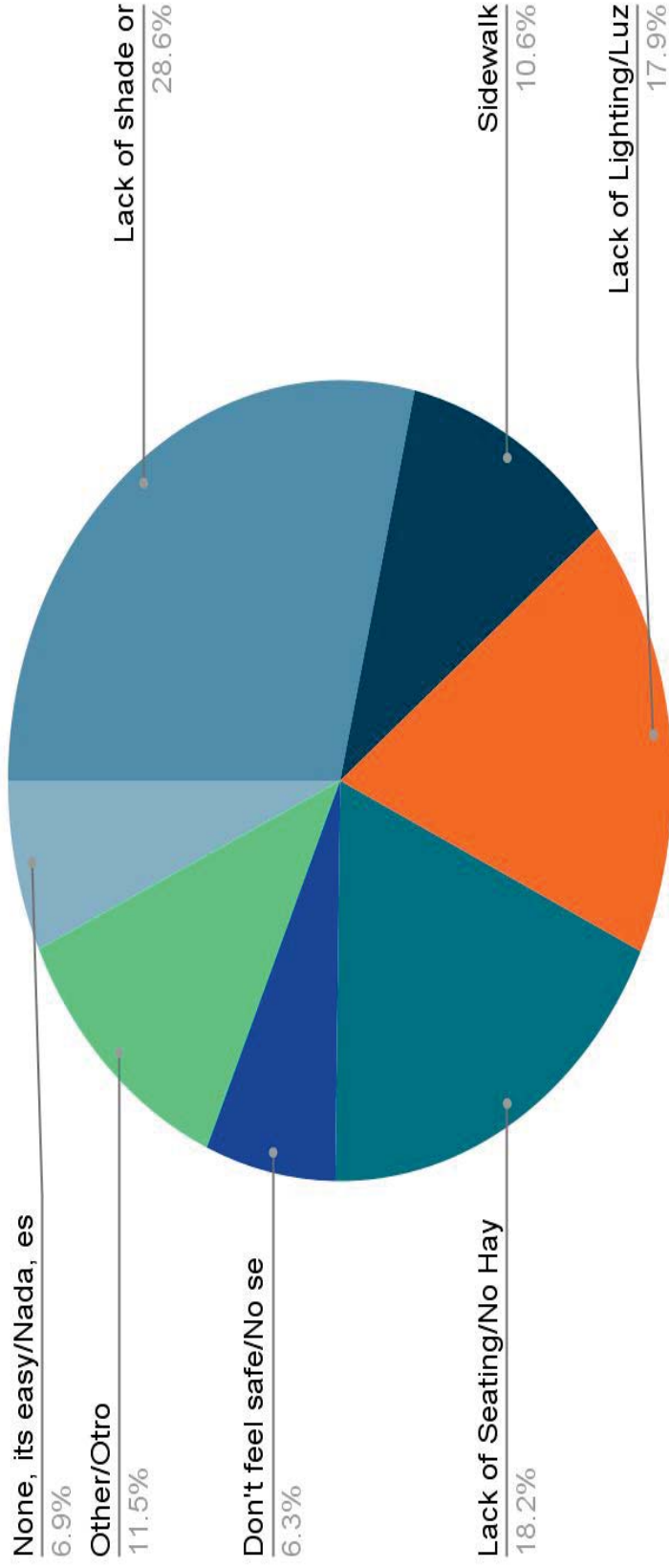


What do you or your children do when you visit park?



Types of Aversions Porque Evitar Los Parques

Is there anything that makes it hard to visit parks in Clifton?



Roadmap Mapa

Gather Surveys
Hacer encuestas

Design park and pick colors
Diseñar parque y escoger colores

GROUND BREAKING
Romper Piso



Prepare Application for the Grant
Preparar Aplicación para la Donación

Take apart Park
Quitar y Limpiar Parque

Watch the Park Come to Life
Ver el Parque Nacer





Rocky Mountain ES Park

Thanks! ¡Gracias!

Any questions? ¿Preguntas? You can find us at:

- Facebook
 - @CliftonComLeaders
- Instagram
 - Clifton_Community_Leaders
- Email
 - clifton.com.outreach@gmail.com



Equity Assessment Tool

Purpose

By using this assessment process, you are helping to make Mesa County a more equitable community for all residents.

This toolkit is intended to provide community partners an opportunity to assess proposed and existing programs, practices, processes, and projects (referred to as “items”) with the goal of eliminating existing or avoiding future inequities and promoting equity in everything we do. This set of questions and considerations is designed to produce not only equitable outcomes, but also processes that promote inclusive participation, intentional goal-setting, and strategies to minimize unintended negative consequences.

Instructions

Please read through the entire toolkit before beginning an analysis of your item. Please do your best to respond to all of the questions. Some questions may require you to reach out to additional community stakeholders for input and specialized guidance.

- The toolkit should be completed with key partners and stakeholders involved with your item.
- Ideally, the toolkit is used before taking action on the item, and again at least midway through to allow for adaptations as needed. Long-term projects may be best served by a periodic check-in, as appropriate to the timeline (for example, twice a year on a multi-year project).
- All voices should have equal influence when responding to the toolkit's questions.

This toolkit is meant to guide you in designing, revising and implementing your work through an equity lens, and should be referred to throughout the entire development and implementation process.

Existing Conditions

Historical and current policies or practices may have made it difficult for some residents to participate in or benefit from services, policies and practices. This toolkit is designed to ensure that as community partners, we focus on the **impact** of our actions as well as the intentions guiding the decisions we make.

Our goal is to create an equitable Mesa County so that all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

Definitions

The following definitions are intended to help better understand different language used in the toolkit, and may not necessarily be the same in other contexts:

- **Disparity:** Significant differences that result from actions and/or decisions at the institutional and systemic levels.
- **Equity:** The state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. *Equality* means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. *Equity*, on the other hand, recognizes that each individual or community has different circumstances, and resources and opportunities are designed reach an outcome that meets the needs of that individual or community.

- **Stakeholder:** Someone who is involved in or affected by the design, implementation, and outcomes of the item. Stakeholders might include residents, elected officials, nonprofit agencies, and/or community organizations within Mesa County.
- **Community Organization:** A group of people or an organized entity that mobilizes resources and/or people to serve a collective purpose of building relationships and impacting their community.
- **Civic Engagement:** The processes of outreach, relationship building and collaboration to incorporate the ideas and participation of stakeholders and community members in decisions. Examples include: public meetings, surveys, listening sessions, community advisory committees, etc.
- **Social Demographics:** Segments of our community with shared experiences and/or identities, some of which are reported in Census data. Others can be specifically identified based on your focus area, such as houseless individuals, older adults, formerly incarcerated people, single-parent households, LGBTQ+ youth, children under the age of five, etc.

Analysis Questions

1. Describe the policy, program, practice, project, or activity that is being reviewed (from here on referred to as “item”). Please specify if this item is new, or a modification or expansion of an existing one.
 - Clifton Community Commons partner process
 - Are all voices being included? Do people feel like their voice matters?
2. Briefly describe the intended outputs (products) and outcomes (impacts) of this item. *(For example, in a neighborhood park project the **output** may be a renovated playground that includes multi-age and adaptive equipment; the*

outcome may be that people of all ages and abilities are able to enjoy the playground together.)

- **Outputs:** trail connection, schoolyard improvements, gravel pit feasibility assessment, other feasibility studies, RMES park build-out, possibly bathrooms/Clifton Nature Park improvements
- **Outcomes:**
 - Increased usage by community members
 - Clifton residents have the same opportunities as other people in the Grand Valley to access the Riverfront and nice outdoor spaces.
 - Health is improved by access to these new outdoor spaces, amenities, improvements.
 - Connections to and via the Riverfront Trail – better access for users throughout the valley. Connects Clifton to the other communities.
 - Community building – put Clifton on the map as a gathering place.
 - Outdoor facilities/improvements help drive the local Clifton economy.
 - Youth have a voice in community decisions, feel empowered to take on leadership roles. Youth have places where they feel safe and welcomed.

3. Which specific areas, towns, neighborhoods or census tracts will primarily be impacted? Please list all that apply. *(If this item is for an internal service/policy, write “Not Applicable.”)*

- Clifton (different definitions of Clifton exist (County study area, Census, ZIP code, etc.), and depending on the project the definition may change, may require more specific boundaries to be identified)

- Riverfront Trail – not exclusive to Clifton, stretches along and impacts whole Grand Valley (“string of pearls” – with completion of the trail Clifton becomes one of those pearls!)

4. What is your plan for implementation? Please include a description of:

- Why it is realistic -
- How it will be funded
- Who will carry out the plan
- How it will be supported or sustained
- How you will ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, and community engagement

5. Which community organizations or social demographics will be impacted by this item?

- Who is likely to be positively impacted, and how?
 - Whole Clifton community – people who live in the area
 - Kids in Clifton
 - People who are already active in the community (cyclists, river recreationalists, etc.)
 - People who have not taken advantage of Colorado River, Riverfront trail before – youth and families will have better/easier/safer access
 - After-school and activity program participants (EUREKA!, Cycle Effect, etc.) will have better access to outdoor spaces for programming.
- Who is likely to be negatively impacted, and how?
 - Residents who live next to/in proximity of project areas - People who don't want things to change or see drawbacks.
 - People who feel that their voices have not been heard

- People who feel that they missed the opportunity to weigh in – may have wanted to be part of Visioning process and did not know they had the opportunity.
- People who are linguistically isolated – English is not primary language, other languages we are not connecting to in our outreach – process did not give them a clear opportunity to participate.

6. Are there any potential outcomes of this item that will contribute to existing (or create new) inequities?

- Housing prices, cost of living (especially for renters) – perceived desirability may increase the cost of living there
- More people coming in from outside of Clifton who already have experience with this type of recreation, own the needed equipment – important to make sure equipment, materials, guidance are available to people who live there and have not participated in these activities in the past, so they don't feel left out of their own community
- If yes, how will you eliminate or lessen these potential inequities?
 - By knowing who else in the community is working on related challenges, and finding ways to align efforts/reinforce others' work (for example, the Housing Coalition)
 - Make sure residents have information about what is happening so they can plan or act to lessen the impact, get involved with decision making and planning
- What support will you need to eliminate or lessen these potential inequities?
 - Funding for equipment and programming, as well as larger concerns like housing

7. Are there specific groups or individuals in support of or opposed to this proposed item? Why?

Support.-

- We have received support from different members of the community and groups from Clifton (CCO, CCL)
- As well as members of other communities such as Grand Junction, Palisade and Fruita.
- The work that is being done is valued and is expected to benefit the entire community.

Opposed.-

- Only opposition was when we integrated Marillac Health into the project but fortunately it is planned to build Marillac Health in the North area of the Workforce Center. We are excited about this project that will help many families.

8. Does this item promote inclusive participation and civic engagement? Why or why not?

We define item as the project itself and the team that is working on it

- Emily and her team are doing an excellent job,
- They keep us informed,
- They give us plenty of time to complete all the tasks or what is assigned to us, there is clear communication and understanding.

In general, we believe that there is participation, however we face some challenges since we are in the process of building a park. One of the challenges is when the government is involved, for example the

commissioners. Today we had a conversation about how much information is going to be shared, is it going to have public access? How much is it going to be kept private? Feels some disconnection.

- Participation and inclusion of the community is promoted.
- A lot of promotional work has been done but there are many members of the community who have no idea what is happening in Clifton.
- We have to be more aggressive.
- Involve more people.
- Provide more information.
- Participating in more public events as we did with PBS Kids and a ready program in Clifton we did an overview of the Clifton project and families were excited.
- We need to find a better way to involve the community and every single person.

9. How will the impact of this activity be measured? Explain the measuring tools or indicators that will be used to measure short-term and long-term impact.

- There are many tools but what we have used the most are surveys.
- We have done and plan to continue doing before, during and after the project.
- In the short and long term to find out what the community wants and what their expectations are with this project.
- Identify projects.
- Involve teenagers.
- Talk to the community.
- An example is once the park project is completed, we can ask people how many times they came before and after construction (to see if increase or decrease visits).

- Even putting a box in a strategic area and asking them for their comments and feedback.
- Ask our captive audience during Rocky Mountain meetings.

10. How will you ensure accountability, communicate with stakeholders, and evaluate results?

- For communication, create a newspaper or brochure with information about the project in Clifton and updates as well as meetings .
- See the possibility of sending the information out along with the water bill, for example.
- The group of leaders have the opportunity to meet once or twice a year and reflect on what has been accomplished.

Project Summary Information

Project Title:

Applicant Organization(s):

Applicant Name(s):

Partner Organization (if applicable):

Partner Name (if applicable):

Amount Requested:

Estimated Total Project Cost:

Estimated Grant Period (years):

Brief Project Description (limit to space provided without expanding the text box; use 10 pt font)

The Clifton Community Commons (**CCC**) will create an expansive and connected outdoor recreation and open space network that will build on the growing momentum to enhance Clifton's social fabric, provide a higher quality of life, and ensure safe, positive spaces for all. Through GOCO's Centennial visioning process, the community worked with the partner team (Mesa County Public Health (**MCPH**), Clifton Community Outreach (**CCO**), Clifton Community Leaders (**CCL**), and Trust for Public Land (**TPL**)) to develop a long-term vision, strategy, and action plan that will connect and enhance existing schoolyards and neighborhood parks, improve access to the Colorado Riverfront, develop trails and safe routes, and expand natural open spaces. The CCC will serve not only Clifton residents but also connect their community to the momentum of the greater Grand Valley region.

Clifton is a community of about 20,000 just east of Grand Junction with economic roots in agriculture and extraction industries. However, despite being nestled along the Colorado River with sweeping views of the Grand Mesa, Clifton has been largely left out of the Grand Valley's growing recreation and tourism "gold rush." With a median household income nearly \$13k lower than Mesa County as a whole, many Clifton residents do not access regional outdoor opportunities due to time, transportation, cost, and lack of experience. And although it has the second largest population in Mesa County, Clifton is unincorporated and thus lacks much of the infrastructure that typically supports municipal services like parks and recreation, opportunities for civic engagement, and a built environment that encourages community ties.

Several efforts to improve Clifton through resident-prioritized projects began to coalesce in 2021. The Clifton-focused Community Transformation Group (CTG) coalition had centered its efforts on a 26-acre parcel adjacent to Rocky Mountain Elementary School (RMES), and by October 2021 Mesa County had purchased the property for the Clifton Community Campus - a project that delivers on multiple community-identified public space priorities. This purchase also included RMES Park (both properties were previously owned by Mesa County Valley School District 51 (D51)). With the future of the 26-acre property secured, Clifton resident leaders stepped up work with partners to further the community's park and street safety priorities, and TPL worked with D51 to complete two small schoolyard pilot projects at Clifton Elementary and RMES. Meanwhile, the County secured a right-of-way (ROW) easement for a trail connection from the Clifton Community Campus to the river. Impressed by the momentum and resident leadership, the Colorado Health Foundation invited CCL to apply for funding for a new playground at RMEP. Neighborhood residents worked together on design, and a new playground that reflects the community's wishes will be installed in 2023.

The depth and complexity of the work in Clifton is not incidental but an intentional effort to address years of underinvestment. In Clifton, more than 77.5% of children receive free or reduced lunch, the median household income is \$49,350, and poverty is nearly 18%. Approximately 26% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. Families travel to parks outside of their community to picnic and celebrate life milestones, and youth programs put kids in vans and transport them to distant trails. School principals compare their schoolyards to prison yards, and neighbors have few places where they can gather, connect, and build the social capital that leads to a thriving community. Residents are poised to replace this narrative with one that builds a sense of pride, belonging, and community identity through the creation of a sustainable system of parks, trails, and other valued public spaces. Collectively these places make up the CCC. Equity-centered outcomes include a strengthened community, enhanced economic

opportunity, improved access to nature, and a solution to Clifton's need for permanent funding to support parks and other outdoor spaces.

Strong Community: In part due to its unincorporated status, Clifton residents have historically had fewer opportunities to influence decisions that impact their community. The visioning process identified five outcomes that leverage equity and guide all of our work together: community-led change, Clifton pride, trusted partnerships, improving relationships between residents, and youth leadership. Increasing community power and centering community in the implementation of the CCC vision will help build a culture of connectedness and civic engagement that will sustain positive community change for years to come.

Outdoor Recreation Economy: Outdoor recreation is an economic force in Western Colorado, with a higher-than-state-average 4.8% of its GDP coming from the 150+ local outdoor businesses that contribute more than 2,000 jobs and \$300 million to the local economy. Clifton, however, has largely been shut out of this financial boost. Sarah Shrader, President of the Grand Valley Outdoor Recreation Coalition, stated in her testimony to Congress in 2019 that "The irony...is that we have focused below the surface of the land to find economic prosperity. It has given some, yes; but as we have learned, it was a Faustian bargain. With a pivot to outdoor recreation, we are now looking at a sustainable use of our lands to drive the economy — without the punishing boom-and-bust vagaries of an extraction economy." Clifton sits on the banks of the Colorado River and hosts critical elements of a potentially expansive and accessible open space. Through Centennial visioning, participants elevated action items that will help transform currently underfunded and underutilized natural amenities, establishing pathways to employment and encouraging investment. The proposed feasibility study, for example, lays the groundwork for possible improvements that together create a truly transformational regional amenity with potential to attract outdoor recreation businesses and other related economic development.

Access to Nature: Once an unbroken expanse of farmland along the Colorado River, much of Clifton was rapidly sold and developed as dense, low-amenity neighborhoods during the oil shale boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The community has few outdoor spaces reachable by walking, riding, or a short drive - 73% of Palisade and 57% of Grand Junction residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park while only 39.6% of Clifton residents do. The CCC seeks to expand close-to-home access for Clifton residents through unique opportunities such as the potential reuse and reclamation of a large 94-acre gravel pit and completing the connection between Clifton and Palisade through the Riverfront Trail.

Funding for Clifton's Treasured Outdoor Spaces: Without a sustainable source of public funding improvement options in unincorporated Clifton are limited, yet parks and safe, activated outdoor spaces are long-time community priorities. One outcome of the visioning process is that in March 2023 Mesa County signed a technical support letter with TPL to begin the necessary steps toward a conservation finance solution for Clifton's outdoor spaces. TPL will provide technical assistance, feasibility research, public opinion surveys, measure design, and program design and evaluation to finance parks, trails, open spaces, and other conservation priorities.

The CCC is made up of 11 distinct projects with a 10-year implementation timeline (2024-2032). This proposal supports funding to implement the first seven priority projects, three of

which will be completed by 2026 if funding is awarded. Projects include park, trail, natural areas, and schoolyards, representing the core of the CCC and the community's highest priorities:

- **Rocky Mountain Elementary School Park** is considered by residents to be their “central park,” and they have identified key priorities for this 8-acre area. These include basketball and skate features to support the interests of older youth and multigenerational gathering spaces like shade trees, seating, and walking paths.
- Clifton neighborhoods lack safe, non-motorized access to the Colorado Riverfront Trail and the Clifton Nature Park, incredible resources located just steps away. The **Clifton Trail Connection** along 32 ½ Road would be roughly one half-mile long and approximately 12 feet wide to meet the standards of the Colorado Riverfront Trail. This will also provide an important link to other areas of the CCC and will connect the river corridor to Rocky Mountain Elementary School and Park.
- Funding is requested for a **Schoolyard** at one of the three schools in closest proximity to the Clifton Commons: Rocky Mountain, Clifton, and Chatfield Elementary Schools. The school will be determined this fall, after D51 completes a district-wide facilities analysis. In Clifton schoolyards not only serve students during their school day but also offer the closest recreation and green space for many residents without having to drive to neighboring communities. These schoolyards are currently equipped with outdated play features, cracking basketball courts, and minimal shade and seating.
- The **Safe Outdoor Connections and Natural Areas** feasibility study includes the Clifton Connector and Loop Trail (linking the north and east sides of Clifton to CCC improvements), the proposed gravel pit natural area, trailhead and trail improvements at the Clifton Nature Park, and access and safety improvements at the river. Understanding what this space can and cannot sustain is a critical first step before asking the community for their input on its design, encouraging business development, and engaging with nonprofit partners like Riverside Education Center and EUREKA! Science Museum to activate the space with programs that serve the local community and visitors alike.

It should be noted that GOCO's historic investments in the Colorado Riverfront Trail, with its decades-long vision of being the “spine” of the Grand Valley connecting Palisade to Loma, are supported through the CCC's activation of Clifton's Riverfront. One Riverfront is already leveraging Clifton improvements to add momentum to their efforts to finally extend the Riverfront Trail to Palisade. GOCO's Centennial support will help further this long-held goal for one of the Grand Valley's most iconic outdoor recreation amenities, by attracting additional private and public investment and diversifying outdoor recreation opportunities for Clifton residents and a growing and more inclusive visitor base.

In Clifton, accessible and welcoming outdoor spaces and the health, social capital, and economic benefits they offer are woefully lacking. Imagine a future where Clifton residents and visitors alike can easily access the types of outdoor experiences that make the Grand Valley unique, where Clifton is seen as a one of a “string of pearls” along Colorado's riverfront and a critical piece of the region's outdoor recreation economy. This is the promise of the CCC.

Clifton Community Commons
10 Year Implementation Timeline & Budget

KEY:	
	Planning
	Design
	Construction

PROJECTS	GOCO Centennial 2023*				Total	PHASE 2-3: 15 TO 20 Million Estimated					
	1 2023	2 2024	3 2025	4 2026		5 2027	6 2028	7 2029	8 2030	9 2031	10 2032
Rocky Mountain Elementary Park	\$ 750,000	\$ 210,000	\$ 210,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 4,670,000						
Clifton Trail Connection		\$ 180,000	\$ 1,500,000		\$ 1,680,000						
Schoolyard-Pilots	\$ 33,500				\$ 33,500						
Schoolyard TBD	\$ 64,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 1,610,000		\$ 1,794,000						
Feasibility Study:		\$ 200,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 500,000						
<i>Riverfront Improvements</i>	\$ 6,000				\$ 6,000						
<i>Clifton Connector & Loop Trail</i>											
<i>Clifton Nature Park Improvements</i>											
<i>Future Natural Area (Gravel Pit)</i>											
Safe Routes	\$ 804,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 4,804,000						
Riverside Trail-Clifton to Palisade	\$ 100,000				\$ 100,000						
Schoolyard TBD											
Schoolyard TBD											
SUB TOTAL	\$ 1,757,500	\$ 2,710,000	\$ 3,470,000	\$ 5,650,000	\$ 13,587,500						

PERSONNEL					
Partner Contribution					Total
Clifton Community Leaders		\$ 49,739	\$ 49,739	\$ 49,739	\$ 149,217
Clifton Community Outreach					\$ -
Colorado West Land Trust	\$ 3,000				\$ 3,000
Mesa County					
Mesa County Public Health	\$ 92,190				\$ 92,190
Riverside Education Center					\$ -
Trust for Public Land	\$ 204,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 82,750	\$ 50,000	\$ 386,750
SUB TOTAL	\$ 299,190	\$ 99,739	\$ 132,489	\$ 99,739	\$ 631,157
GOCO Contribution					Total
Clifton Community Leaders		\$ 127,000	\$ 127,000	\$ 127,000	\$ 381,000
Clifton Community Outreach		\$ 38,183	\$ 38,183	\$ 38,183	\$ 114,550
Colorado West Land Trust		\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 10,500
Mesa County					
Mesa County Public Health					\$ -
Riverside Education Center		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 90,000
Trust for Public Land		\$ 163,500	\$ 153,500	\$ 70,000	\$ 387,000
SUB TOTAL	\$ -	\$ 362,183	\$ 352,183	\$ 268,683	\$ 983,050

TOTAL (PROJECTS & PERSONNEL)	\$ 2,056,690	\$ 3,171,922	\$ 3,954,672	\$ 6,018,422	\$ 15,201,707
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GOCO Centennial 2023-3 Year Detail*	2024	2025	2026	Total
Mesa County	\$ 390,000	\$ 1,710,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 5,600,000
Trust for Public Land	\$ 682,183	\$ 2,112,183	\$ 418,683	\$ 3,213,050
SUB TOTAL	\$ 1,072,183	\$ 3,822,183	\$ 3,918,683	\$ 8,813,050
TOTAL	\$ 8,813,050			

*See GOCO Budget Form for Detailed Breakdown of Request

PROJECT BUDGET & DETAILS

APPLICATION SCOPE OF WORK

Source of Funds (CASH)	Date Secured	GOCO Funds	Matching Funds
		\$8,813,050.00	
Mesa County	TBR		\$0.00
Trust for Public Land	TBR		\$232,750.00
Clifton Community Leaders-CDPHE Health Equity	1-Jan		\$149,217.00
Source of Funds (IN-KIND)			
[Applicant]			
[Partner Source]			
[Partner Source]			
	subtotal	\$8,813,050.00	\$381,967.00
TOTAL SOURCE OF FUNDS			\$9,195,017.00

Use of Funds (CASH)	Description	GOCO Funds	Matching Funds	Total Funding
Mesa County				
Professional Services-Design Team	Rocky Mountain Elementary School Park	\$420,000.00		\$420,000.00
Professional Services-Design Team	Clifton Trail Connection	\$180,000.00		\$180,000.00
Capital-Park Renovation	Rocky Mountain Elementary School Park	\$3,500,000.00		\$3,500,000.00
Capital-Clifton Trail Connection and Wayfinding	concrete path, signs	\$1,500,000.00		\$1,500,000.00
Trust for Public Land				
Conservation Finance	Polling, Educational Campaign		\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Project Management & Travel	conservation finance, park, trail and schoolyard program directors (4 staff/3years)	\$200,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$300,000.00
CORE Fellowship	2 year CORE Fellowship	\$187,000.00	\$32,750.00	\$219,750.00
Community Engagement	Clifton Community Outreach-5 leaders, 2 community connectors, outreach materials, and training for 3 years.	\$114,550.00		\$114,550.00
Community Engagement	Clifton Community Leaders-3 leaders, gift cards for community participation, youth team, outreach materials for 3 years.	\$381,000.00	\$149,217.00	\$530,217.00
Community Engagement	Riverside Education Center (3 teams/3 years)	\$90,000.00		\$90,000.00
Technical Expertise	Colorado West Land Trust (Trail Connector & Gravel Pit)	\$10,500.00		\$10,500.00
Professional Services-Schoolyard TBD	teacher trainings and construction documents	\$120,000.00		\$120,000.00
Professional Services-Clifton Loop Trail, Nature Park, River Access Improvements, Gravel Pit Feasibility & Capital-Schoolyard Renovation	feasibility study for gravel pit, Clifton Connector and loop Trail, Nature park Improvements, design development & design documents for prioritized projects	\$500,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$550,000.00
	Mesa County Valley School District 51	\$1,610,000.00		\$1,610,000.00
	subtotal	\$8,813,050.00	\$381,967.00	\$9,195,017.00

Use of Funds (IN-KIND)	Description	Matching Funds
Category		
vendor/service provider		\$0.00
Category		
vendor/service provider		\$0.00
Category		
vendor/service provider		\$0.00
Category		
vendor/service provider		\$0.00
	subtotal	\$0.00

	GOCO Funds	Matching Funds
subtotal	\$8,813,050.00	\$381,967.00
TOTAL USE OF FUNDS*		\$9,195,017.00

* The Total Use of Funds must equal the Total Source of Funds in the section above.

OTHER LEVERAGED RESOURCES (OPTIONAL)

CASH OR IN-KIND	Description	Total Funding
Clifton Community Leaders		
Playground Renovation Project(2023)	Renovation of playground at Roky Mountain Elementary School Park (Colorado Health Foundation Grant)	\$1,500,000.00
Mesa County		
Clifton Community Campus & Library	Development of adjacent 26 Acre property-Includes community center and outdoor spaces to support community gathering and recreation priorities.	\$40,000,000.00
Riverfront Trail-Feasibility Study (2023)	Partnership with One Riverfront to explore alternate on-street trail connections from Clifton to Palisade	\$100,000.00
Safe Routes Investments(2023)	Non-Infrastructure (safe routes app & safety education)	\$100,000.00
Safe Routes Investments(2023-2024)	Infrastructure (32 1/2 road and 1st street project)	\$4,704,000.00
Frisbee Golf Course at the River (2023)	Partnership with Frisbee Golf Club to build course at gravel bank area (CDPHE grant)	\$6,000.00
CDPHE Community Funds (2023-2024)	Community Mobilizer	\$40,000.00
	Hispanic Community Outreach	\$10,000.00
	incentives-resident experts and youth (ex: gift cards for youth council)	\$7,200.00
	Clifton Community Outreach-community advisors	\$9,990.00
	REC Youth Teams	\$25,000.00
Mesa County Valley School District 51		
Schoolyard Pilots (2022)	Pilot projects at Clifton Elementary and Rocky Mountain Elementary (Costs include improvements such	\$3,500.00
Trust for Public Land		
Schoolyard Pilots (2022)	Pilot projects at Clifton Elementary and Rocky Mountain Elementary (Costs include improvements such	\$94,000.00
Community Trails Program(2023-2024)	Partner and Project Development (Support for Community Trail Director to help facilitate trail and	\$30,000.00
Community Schoolyards Program(2023-2024)	Project Management and Schoolyard Design (Support for Community Schoolyard director to advance a schoolyard project in Clifton and for community enagement, professional services through master	\$99,000.00
Conservation Finance(2023-2024)	Staff Time, Feasibility Report, Campaign Planning	\$75,000.00
Riverside Education Center		
Safety Kiosk-Youth Project (2023)	Youth team will build kiosk with support from Save a Life	\$1,200.00
Colorado West Land Trust (2023-2024)		
Partnership and Project Development		\$3,000.00
	subtotal	\$46,807,890.00

TOTAL PROJECT VALUE		\$56,002,907.00
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GOCO % of project cost 96%
GOCO % of project value 16%

Budget Narrative - Clifton Community Commons

- Full vision implementation: \$35 million over 10 years
- Critical path milestones:
 - United Companies ceases gravel pit operations by 2028
 - Successful determination of sustainable park and trail funding (Trust for Public Land (TPL) is working with Mesa County to provide technical assistance, feasibility research, public opinion surveys, measure design, and program design and evaluation to finance Clifton parks, trails, open spaces, and other conservation priorities. Final research report anticipated in August, current timeline for a potential ballot measure is 2025.)

Requested project funding:

Rocky Mountain Elementary School Park (RMES Park)

- Requested: \$3,920,000
- Mesa County has committed to maintaining improvements at RMES.
- Mesa County and Clifton Community Leaders will lead on the improvements to RMES Park utilizing a master plan completed by the County in 2022 as part of the adjacent Clifton Community Campus project.
- Colorado Health Foundation and the Colorado Trust have both funded proposals from Clifton Community Leaders to improve the park's playground in 2023. Due to grant timing, these funds are included in leverage.
- Additional support from the County is included in the leverage section and includes the Clifton Community Campus and Library, both of which are adjacent to the park. Along with the park and the trail connection, their total investment in the CCC area is \$40 million.

Clifton Trail Connection

- Requested: \$1,680,000
- Mesa County has committed to maintaining the Clifton Trail Connection.
- Mesa County has already acquired the easement and only lacks the funding resources to complete design and construction of the trail.
- The County will take the lead on design and construction of the Clifton Trail Connection.

Schoolyard (TBD)

- Requested: \$1,730,000
- Mesa County Valley School District 51 (D51) fully supports the schoolyard projects included in the CCC Vision and will maintain all improvements to District-owned property.
- TPL will work closely with community partners and D51 and will support preliminary design by Urban Play Studios and teacher training from Good Natured Learning. TPL intends to complete this first phase of work by April 2024 so that Centennial funds can be used to complete final design and construction of a schoolyard by 2025.

- D51 anticipates a decision about school closures by September 2023 and will identify the schoolyard project to be included in the Centennial proposal at this time.

Feasibility Study: Safe Connections and Natural Areas

- Requested: \$500,000
- TPL will lead, in close coordination with Mesa County and community partners, the feasibility study for natural areas and connections.
- Encompasses Clifton Connector & Loop, Natural Area at Gravel Pit, Riverfront Improvements, and Clifton Nature Park Improvements
- Expected to include:
 - Preliminary design and engineering studies to help evaluate different models and understand costs of proposed improvements
 - Ownership options for the gravel pit
 - (May also include) Economic evaluation to assess the implications of proposed improvements on the local economy
- Based on outcome, improvements will move forward in a second (and possibly third) phase of work between 2027-2032 with an anticipated cost approximately \$15-20 million.
- Additional phases are expected to be needed for full implementation.
 - Project partners will look for additional funds from foundations, individuals, corporations/businesses, State trail funds, and federal funds such as Land and Water Conservation Funds.
 - Additional support to realize the CCC vision will likely be presented to GOCO in future proposals, as well.

Partners share the expectation that to be successful, implementation will require continued collaboration and support of multiple partners and project stakeholders. Below is a list of key partners and their specific roles and responsibilities:

- **Mesa County:** Grant administration and management, design of RMES Park and the Clifton Trail Connection as well as construction of all facilities on County-owned property.
- **Mesa County Valley School District 51-** Construction of all facilities on District-owned property, school-based community engagement.
- **Trust for Public Land-** Grant administration and management, community centered process, conservation finance, schoolyard project (TBD) design, and feasibility study and conceptual design for natural areas and connections (Clifton Nature Park improvements, riverfront improvements, Clifton Connector and Loop Trail, and possible natural area at gravel pit).
- **Clifton Community Leaders-**Youth engagement, resident experts, and community outreach for Rocky Mountain Elementary School Park (main focus is park but will support other projects)
- **Clifton Community Outreach-**Resident experts and community outreach (main focus is conservation finance but will support other projects).
- **Riverside Education Center-**Youth engagement, three youth teams supported at Mount Garfield Middle School and Central and Palisade High Schools.

- **Colorado West Land Trust**-Technical expertise and support for Clifton Trail Connection and natural areas and connections feasibility study.

Requested Partner Funding:

- \$983,000 to support the expertise and time of project partners, resident experts, and youth working on this project.
 - Resident leadership: Clifton Community Leaders (CCL) and Clifton Community Outreach (CCO)
 - Youth leadership: Wunder Club (CCL youth team), Clifton Youth Councils (Riverside Educational Center programming at Mount Garfield Middle School and Central and Palisade High Schools)
 - CORE Fellowship: a two-year community-based position designed to provide support to both TPL and community partners to advance park, trail, and green infrastructure priorities. Each CORE Fellow is a rising leader within their community with a passion for community engagement and a firm belief in the transformational effects of equitable access to the outdoors. CORE Fellows lead their communities through a holistic and inclusive community engagement process to envision, design, build, and program public outdoor spaces.

Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Owner: Mesa County, Colorado

Task: Existing Park Renovation

Location: Clifton, Colorado

PROJECT TEAM:

Clifton Community Group

Mesa County, Colorado

RDG Planning & Design

INTRODUCTION:

In July of 2022, RDG Planning & Design submitted and received approval for the Rocky Mountain Elementary Park Master Plan. The Master Plan illustrated park renovation and improvements developed in a collaborative process between RDG Planning & Design, Mesa County, residents and other project stakeholders. The Master Plan gave general direction for new and/or upgraded park elements and outlined desired activities/programming for several areas within the park.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan, new programmatic elements have been requested or anticipated for inclusion within the park. These additional elements include: maintaining the existing playground and incorporating new equipment and surfacing; addition of a shade shelter; and a potential pump track bicycle course. As requested by the project team, RDG has compiled the following anticipated scope of design and construction tasks associated with the Master Plan along with these additional program elements.



Existing Conditions (Elevated View of Existing Park Conditions from West to East)

SITE & EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Rocky Mountain Elementary Park is located along 32 ½ Road, north of Rocky Mountain Elementary School. Currently, on-street parallel parking and a recently improved adjacent sidewalk allow easy access into the park along 32 ½ Road on the



Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs

west side of the park. Wooden bollards limit vehicular access on the north and west sides of the park, while 6' height chain-link fencing limits access along the south and eastern limits to gates where the sidewalk runs through. Sweeping panoramic views of the buttes and mesa's to the north and east, fronted more immediately by adjacent suburban neighborhood homes provide the backdrop to the park.

Most of the 7.25 acres of park is irrigated turf grass interrupted by a 5 to 6' wide asphalt looped walking trail along the outside. The trail makes connections to the south into the elementary school grounds and is proposed to connect to the Clifton Community Campus project to the southeast. The primary actively programmed parts of the existing park exist within the trail loop and include a playground, water fountain and shade structure in the southwest corner, and a paved circular sport court with basketball hoop to the northeast. A new playground design is already in place prior to RDG's involvement with this project. This design keeps the same playground footprint but upgrades the play equipment on site. A newly proposed pump house and transformer located in the northwestern corner of the park adjacent to 32 1/2 Road are under construction as part of the Clifton Community Campus project to the southeast. New irrigation mainline from the pump house to the CCC project crosses the park south of the southern portion of the loop trail, and future mainline connections for future park improvements on this site are planned as part of that effort. Site lighting is restricted to a handful of poles that light the play area and southeastern trail connection to the elementary school. One water fountain is located to southwest of the playground and is in unknown condition. The park shelter is in average to poor condition. A few dozen shade and ornamental trees follow the loop trail and shade portions of the playground.



Proposed Overall View (Elevated View of Proposed Park Improvements from West to East)

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SCOPE:

1.0 – SITE PREPARATION (Estimated Construction Cost: +/- \$133,400):

Preparing the existing site for construction includes the assumptions within this section. Most of the site features, program elements, infrastructure, paving, etc. are aging and in need of replacement within the park. The metal shade structure, drinking fountain, asphalt paths and other activity features should be replaced altogether to give this park a totally new finished look. Within the estimated project budget, RDG assumes that the metal structure, asphalt paths, light poles, existing



Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs

concrete pad and basketball hoop will all be removed. In areas where equipment, paving, and/or infrastructure is proposed for removal, the immediate area around them will need to be cleared and left ready for proposed improvements. All disturbed existing sod area will have the top 6-8" inches of topsoil removed and stockpiled on-site for replacement after construction and prior to re-sodding of disturbed areas. Silt fence, drainage sock, and other stormwater best management practices will be implemented after prior removal of site features and remain in place until completion of construction.

2.0 – EARTHWORK (*Opinion of Probable Construction Cost: +/- \$94,000*):

The existing park is currently very flat with higher elevations at the northwestern corner of the park and slope gradually to the southeast. One major topographic feature is the mound to the east of the playground area. RDG proposes repurposing that existing feature to create a small amphitheater hang out space adjacent to the proposed pickleball courts. Most of the grading and earthmoving will be concentrated to proposed sport courts, within proximity to proposed trails, sidewalks, and around the renovated playground space. Stockpiled topsoil from the demolition phase will be used to address sodded areas of disturbance. A minimal amount of import fill is expected.



View of Proposed Basketball Court Adjacent to the Multi-use Loop Trail

3.0 – FLATWORK, SPECIALTY PAVING & SPORT COURTS (*Opinion of Probable Construction Cost: +/- \$1,223,000*):

Much of the proposed park improvements relate to proposed paving. The proposed multi-use loop trail will increase the size of the existing 6' asphalt trail to 8' wide. Sidewalks branching off the main loop trail are proposed at 6' wide and create connections between activity areas. Design for concrete sidewalks, footings, and other subgrade treatments will be impacted by a Geotech report provided separately by the County. The two different sport courts, pickleball and basketball, are proposed to be post-tension concrete. All the proposed courts are shown at official size and would comply with national and/or international regulations for layout. Other features around the park involving paving include the amphitheater retaining wall seating, large portions of the bicycle pump track and large portions of the skate park. A pump track design consultant would assist with the design of a small beginner pump track and a larger intermediate/advanced pump track with artificial turf berms and ramps with paved paths. A skatepark consultant would assist with the design of the numerous ramps, rails and other skatepark features.



Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs



View of Shade Structures Near Central Greenspace

4.0 – STRUCTURES, FURNISHINGS, EQUIPMENT (*Opinion of Probable Construction Cost: +/- \$498,000*):

Proposed shade structures, site furniture, and activity equipment will help provide shade, places of rest and refuge, and points of activity around the entire park. The existing shade structure is proposed to be removed and replaced by three prefabricated shade structures adding opportunities for shade on site. New picnic tables and benches will help support social events and interactions while also providing places for relaxation. Trash receptacles and pet stations spread throughout the park will help ensure waste is disposed of in centralized locations making it easier on maintenance staff. A proposed maintenance shed will provide a location for equipment storage. Extensive lighting elements would be spread throughout the park to ensure park safety and curtail vandalism. Additional security measures such as cctv cameras are anticipated with park development.



View of Refurbished Drinking Fountain and Light Pole



Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs

5.0 – UTILITIES (*Opinion of Probable Construction Cost: +/- \$52,000*):

At this time, proposed utility improvements will be limited to electrical and water improvements. New electrical conduit would need to be extended to proposed light poles and any power receptacles across the park. Proposed lighting and other amenities may require increased power demands. Additional transformers and/or upgrades to existing equipment may be needed. A new domestic water line will likely need to be extended to the refurbished water fountain location. The water line and drinking fountain would be designed to be frost-proof and vandal resistant.



View of Planting Area at SW Park Entrance.

6.0 – LANDSCAPE (*Opinion of Probable Construction Cost: +/- \$188,200*):

Care will be taken during construction to preserve many of the existing trees in the park. Thirty-four new deciduous trees are proposed to help supplement the existing trees and provide more shade over the multi-use loop path and activity areas. Eighteen new ornamental trees are proposed at the entrances to the park to provide visual interest and a positive first impression of the park. Eight evergreen trees will also be spread throughout the park to provide variety and winter color. A mix of shrubs, ornamental grasses, and perennials will be placed in strategic locations around the park. They are primarily located at entrances and high activity areas to provide the most value and easiest maintenance requirements. Certain areas around the multi-use loop trail are designated to receive a native seed mix consisting of drought tolerant grasses, forbs, and wildflowers. Planting areas would be divided from turf by steel edging and mulched with wood or rock mulch. Sod is proposed for the large open space areas.

7.0 – IRRIGATION (*Opinion of Probable Construction Cost: +/- \$124,000*):

Irrigation for the proposed improvements to the park would be sourced from the newly renovated pumphouse in the northwestern corner of the park. A new 2-4" mainline would follow the multi-use loop trail; laterals would branch off from the new mainline. All proposed trees would be irrigated by bubblers. Areas proposed for shrubs and perennials would receive drip irrigation and all sodded areas would be irrigated with spray heads designed to provide head-to-head coverage. A new controller and rain sensor would need to be located likely at the pump house due to availability of power.

8.0 – CONTINGENCIES (*20% of Construction Cost: +/- \$462,500*):

The Master Plan serves as a preliminary vision for design development and final design of the park. Because of its preliminary nature, contingency costs have been included as part of the Master Plan-Opinion of Probable Costs. These contingencies are estimated at 20% of total construction costs and encompass project unknowns that may arise prior to and during



Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs

construction. These contingencies may include additional survey information, mobilization, delays, scope changes, inflation, product availability, scheduling, etc.

9.0 – DESIGN & ENGINEERING (15% of Construction Cost: +/- \$347,000):

Per the Master Plan and continuing discussions with Mesa County, an estimated fee has been provided for consultant design and engineering services. Fees for these services are provided at 15% of estimated construction costs. These service fees include, but are not limited to: schematic/design development/final design/engineering/construction documents, Geotech, soil analysis, structural design, site visits/investigations, coordination, scheduling, etc.

COST SUMMARY:

(Opinion of Total Project Cost: +/- \$3,122,000):

The opinion of total project cost is approximately **\$3,122,000**. This is an estimated cost representing the anticipated scope, fees and work necessary to complete the project as generally depicted in the Master Plan and additional programmatic elements. RDG has made every reasonable effort to ensure scope and fees reflect approximate current rates, costs & market conditions. However, we do not guarantee or warranty our opinion of costs. This document is intended solely for informational purposes and not to be used in conjunction with bidding.



Rocky Mountain Elementary Park - Master Plan Narrative & Probable Costs

Opinion of Probable Construction Costs

NO.	ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1.0 - SITE PREPARATION					
1.00	Basketball concrete halfcourt removal	3,100	SF	\$1.25	\$3,875.00
1.01	Misc. conc. & asphalt removal	40,000	SF	\$1.25	\$50,000.00
1.02	Clear & Grub, Strip/Stockpile soil	100,000	SF	\$0.75	\$75,000.00
1.03	Erosion Control	1	LS	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
Site Preparation Subtotal					\$133,375.00
2.0 - EARTHWORK					
2.01	Topsoil, amend and install	100,000	SF	\$0.50	\$50,000.00
2.02	Rough Grading	100,000	SF	\$0.15	\$15,000.00
2.03	Fine Grading	100,000	SF	\$0.25	\$25,000.00
2.04	Import Fill	75	CY	\$50.00	\$3,750.00
Earthwork Subtotal					\$93,750.00
3.0 - FLATWORK, SPECIALTY PAVING & SPORT COURTS					
3.01	Post Tension full court basketball court w/specialty markings & goals	8,100	SF	\$20.00	\$162,000.00
3.02	Post Tension Pickle Ball courts with surfacing/stripping (3 courts)	5,400	SF	\$20.00	\$108,000.00
3.03	Additional safety surfacing w/substrate, soil prep & conc. Edge	2,000	SF	\$20.00	\$40,000.00
3.04	Pickle Ball net kits	3	EA	\$3,000.00	\$9,000.00
3.05	Pickle Ball perimeter fencing	345	SF	\$32.00	\$11,040.00
3.06	Skatepark hardscape & structures	1	LS	\$300,000.00	\$300,000.00
3.07	Bicycle Pump Track (Beginner & Intermediate)	1	LS	\$300,000.00	\$300,000.00
3.08	Concrete amphitheater seating & site prep	200	LF	\$100.00	\$20,000.00
3.09	6' & 8' Wide concrete walks, 6" thk.	39,000	SF	\$7.00	\$273,000.00
Flatwork, Specialty Paving & Sport Courts Subtotal					\$1,223,040.00
4.0 - STRUCTURES, FURNISHINGS & EQUIPMENT					
4.01	Shade Shelters Approx 36'x36'	3	EA	\$42,000.00	\$126,000.00
4.02	Additional ADA accessible play equipment	1	LS	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00
4.03	Picnic tables	16	EA	\$3,200.00	\$51,200.00
4.04	Benches	22	EA	\$1,000.00	\$22,000.00
4.05	Trash Receptacles	8	EA	\$800.00	\$6,400.00
4.06	Pet Stations	6	EA	\$500.00	\$3,000.00
4.07	Pedestrian light poles	55	EA	\$3,500.00	\$192,500.00
4.08	Equipment shed & conc. pad	1	EA	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
4.09	Security Cameras	1	LS	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Structures, Furnishings & Equipment Subtotal					\$498,100.00
5.0 - UTILITIES					
5.01	Site Elec. Distribution & Eqpt.	1	LS	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
5.02	Domestic Water Line Relocate (for drinking fountain)	1	LS	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
5.03	Drinking Fountain & frost proofing	1	EA	\$6,500.00	\$7,000.00
Utilities Subtotal					\$52,000.00
6.0 - LANDSCAPE					
6.01	Deciduous trees, 2" cal., staked & mulched	34	EA	\$1,000.00	\$34,000.00
6.02	Evergreen trees, 6' ht. staked & mulched	8	EA	\$900.00	\$7,200.00
6.03	Shrubs, No. 5 cont.	200	EA	\$70.00	\$14,000.00
6.04	Ornamental Grasses, No. 1 cont.	150	EA	\$35.00	\$5,250.00
6.05	Perennials, No. 1 cont	50	EA	\$24.00	\$1,200.00
6.06	Wood Mulch, 3" depth	100	CY	\$100.00	\$10,000.00
6.07	Rock Mulch, 3" depth, w/fabric	150	TON	\$65.00	\$9,750.00
6.08	Steel Edging	800	LF	\$6.00	\$4,800.00
6.09	New/Refurbished sod	120,000	SF	\$0.85	\$102,000.00
Landscape Subtotal					\$188,200.00
7.0 - IRRIGATION					
7.01	Spray irrig. new/refurbished sod areas	120,000	SF	\$0.85	\$102,000.00
7.02	Drip irrig beds	15,500	SF	\$0.75	\$11,625.00
7.03	Valve repair/upgrades	1	LS	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
7.04	New controller	1	EA	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
7.05	New/Supplemental Mainline	1,000	LF	\$2.00	\$2,000.00
Irrigation Subtotal					\$124,125.00
Total Construction Cost					\$2,312,590.00
8.0 - CONTINGENCIES					
8.01	Contingencies (20% of Construction Cost)	1	LS	\$462,518.00	\$462,518.00
Total Contingency Cost					\$462,518.00
9.0 - DESIGN & ENGINEERING					
9.01	AEC Consultant Fees (15% of Construction Cost)	1	LS	\$346,888.50	\$346,888.50
Total Design & Engineering Cost					\$346,888.50
APPROXIMATE PROJECT TOTAL					\$3,121,996.50





7 U-10 SOCCER FIELD
PROPOSED WORK OUT STATION(S)

5 PROPOSED SCHOOL GARDEN
4 OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WITH BOULDERS
8 PROPOSED VEGETATED EDUCATIONAL SWALE
2 RE-SURFACED INTERMEDIATE COURT

1 RE-GRASSED GRASS AREAS
UPGRADED INTERMEDIATE PLAY AREAS

6 RE-GRASSED GRASS AREAS
RE-SURFACED ASPHALT COURT (PART 1)

3 INCORPORATE SCHOOL LOGO

BUS DROP-OFF / PICK-UP

7
8
5
4
2
1
6
3

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PROPOSED WORK OUT STATION(S)

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PREFERRED LANDSCAPE PLAN
CLIFTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Presented by: The Colorado Health Foundation

School District 51
SCHOOL DISTRICT 51
MILWAUKEE COUNTY, COLORADO
Every student, every day, learning for life.

Learning Landscapes
Building tomorrow through play.

CCCD
COLORADO CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Clifton Elementary

Clifton Active Play Areas Master Plan Description

Clifton's design team came up with innovative ways to show school spirit and improve learning. The Clifton Active Play Areas Master Plan was developed based on the needs and desires of the school. The school currently maintains a good relationship with the community and would like to further that relationship by hosting community events near play areas with shaded seating areas. The school mascot, the star, is very important to Clifton's identity. The design team would like to incorporate this icon themed in blue and yellow as much as possible. Described below are the proposed changes to the Clifton schoolyard in an effort to fulfill the vision and goals developed by the design team.

1. Age-Appropriate Play Equipment

The existing play equipment at Clifton is mostly old and out-dated. This equipment is not appropriately suited to meet the needs of different age groups or students with special needs. The proposed plan maintains the location of the existing play structure areas to keep the cost down, but maximizes the use of each space with areas designated for the needs of different age groups; primary (grades K-2) and intermediate (grades 3-5). The new equipment will not only be safer than the existing structures, but challenge the students to test their coordination, balance, and strength in a colorful and alluring setting.



2. Expanded Asphalt with Games and Activities

Much of the ground surface of the existing schoolyard is cracked asphalt that limits the variety of available activities for recess and PE. Adding more asphalt surface will enlarge the playground with colorful ball courts, games, and educational elements. The



expanded play surface will allow for a more even distribution of play activities, and therefore students, throughout the grounds.

3. Shade Trees

The current play area(s) at Clifton lack adequate shade for its warm, sunny climate. There are many mature trees in the front of the school, but there is almost no shade within the existing play areas. Adding new trees will increase shade areas and places for students and the community to cool down on hot days. New trees will also break up the large space of the existing playground with vertical elements and add visual interest with seasonal color change.



4. Outdoor Classroom

An outdoor classroom space was highly desired by the teaching staff at Clifton and will provide additional seating to cool down on hot days, a comfortable vantage point for teachers on recess duty, and provide an outdoor space to promote learning. The design team chose to place the outdoor classroom near the rear of the school to allow for quiet instruction separate from the active play area(s). The new classroom will also provide a gathering area with shade trees and boulders for community meetings and the back-to-school barbecues.



5. Community Garden

The incorporation of a school garden has been proven to improve students' healthy eating habits and understanding of where food comes from. Adding a community garden to the grounds and Clifton will promote the grounds and Clifton will promote healthy eating habits and bolster a sense of student pride through the cultivation and harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables.



6. Community Gateway(s)

Community gateways act as an entrance to the school grounds and a landmark to promote a sense of pride and identity for the students, faculty and staff. The gateway at Clifton will be located on the Southwest corner of the building near the primary play area(s), and South of the cafeteria which is a frequently-used access point for students entering the playground after lunch.

7. Recreation/Soccer Fields

The large grass field south of the school is currently underutilized. Re-grading and adding designated areas will allow for the incorporation of regulation-sized soccer/practice fields. This will allow Clifton the opportunity to utilize the space during gym and also host local league games, which will generate revenue for the school district through use fees.

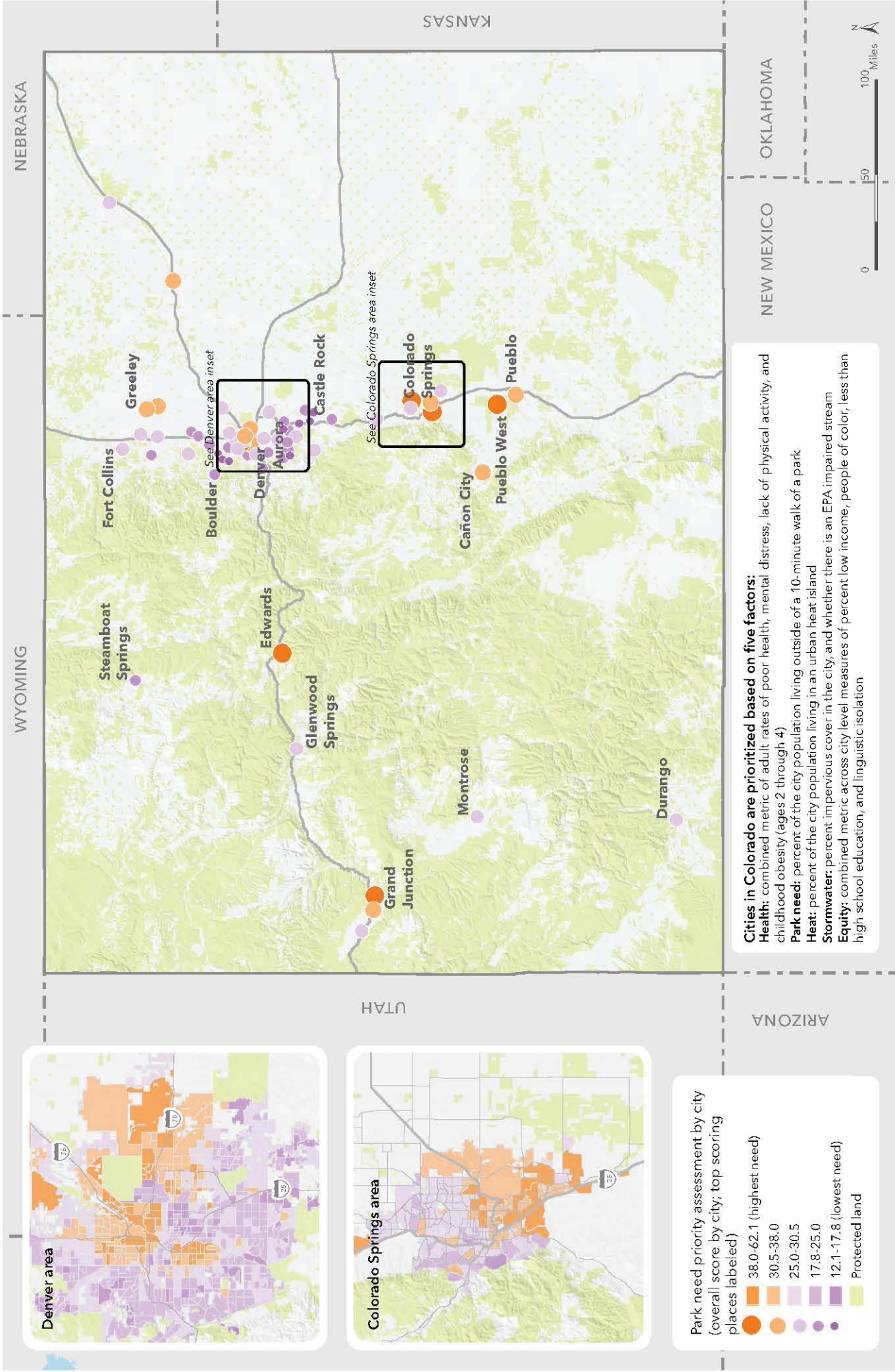


(wsau.com)

8. Vegetated Educational Swale

A vegetated swale will not only be used for storm water management, but will provide the Clifton Elementary school an interactive opportunity for students to learn about biology, ecology, and the living systems involved





Colorado cities prioritization analysis

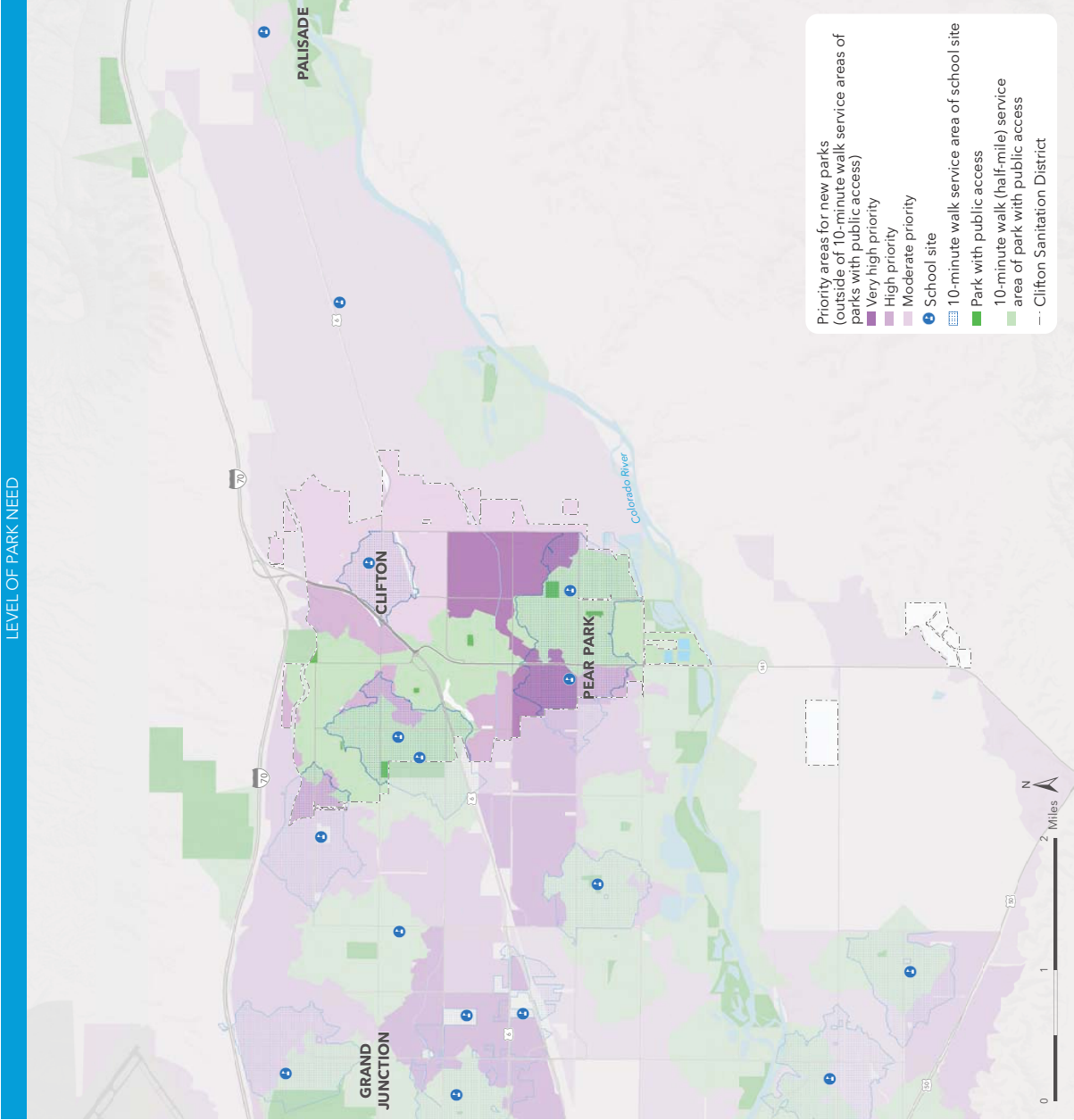
A PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK BASED ON HEALTH, EQUITY, HEAT, STORMWATER, AND PARK NEED

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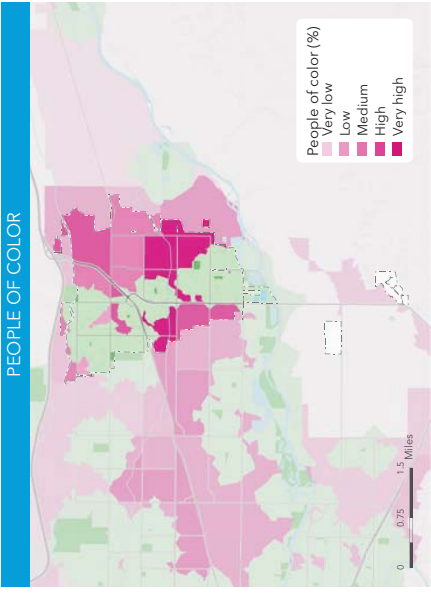


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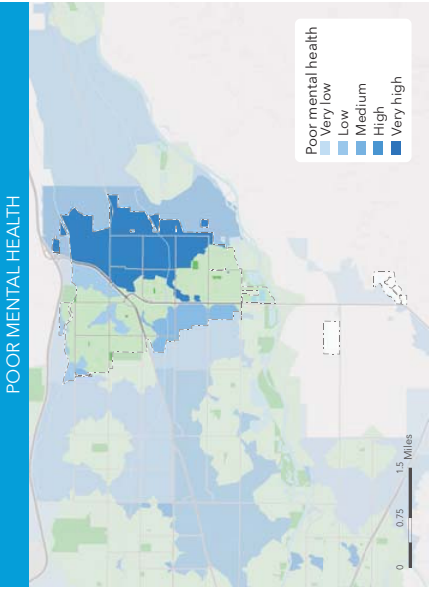
LEVEL OF PARK NEED



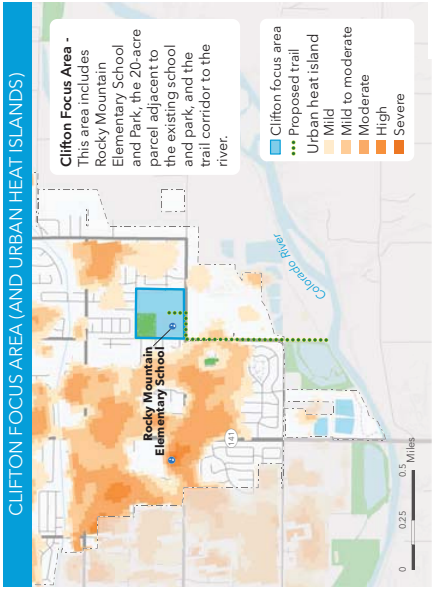
PEOPLE OF COLOR



POOR MENTAL HEALTH



CLIFTON FOCUS AREA (AND URBAN HEAT ISLANDS)



Park priority areas and schoolyards in Clifton, CO

GAPS IN PARK ACCESS AND NEED BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC, HEALTH, AND CLIMATE FACTORS

Areas in a city outside of a 10-minute walk to a park are prioritized based on six equally-weighted factors: population density, density of low income households, density of people of color, air pollution respiratory hazard, urban heat islands, and health (mental health and physical activity).

This document was produced by

