

The background is a solid orange color. On the left side, there is a stylized tree with a blue trunk and branches. The branches have several large, rounded shapes in green, blue, and red, representing leaves or canopies. At the bottom of the tree, there are two stylized human figures in blue, one appearing to be holding the other's hand or a stick. The overall design is modern and colorful.

APPENDIX E

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# **EQUITY ANALYSIS**

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# PARKS AND OPEN SPACE EQUITY ANALYSIS

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably despite their different meanings. Equality means all residents or neighborhoods receive an equal amount of investment. While that sounds fair, it assumes that all people start from the same baseline of investment and opportunity, which is often not the case. Equity means ensuring that everyone has the same access and receives the appropriate investment relative to their current conditions and needs. Some neighborhoods and segments of the population require greater investment in parks and open space because they have historically been underserved.

Public parks, recreation and open space should be equally accessible and available to all people regardless of income level, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, language or age. Public parks, recreation and open space lands and facilities, including maintenance, safety and accessibility, should be provided equitably to all residents.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) documents many benefits to social equity and inclusive and accessible public parks and open space, including:

- » **Public enjoyment and engagement.** Where parks and open space are plentiful, residents enjoy the closest attachment and engagement within their communities. Studies indicate higher levels of local gross domestic product and economic well-being.
- » **Quality recreation time with family and friends.** Parks and open space provide a space and a reason to enjoy quality time, relaxation and fun among family members and friends, thus strengthening the social and familial bonds that provide balance and satisfaction in life.

- » **Improvement of mental and physical health.** Parks, open space and recreation can reduce the impacts of chronic diseases, especially in such vulnerable populations as children, older adults and the socially vulnerable.
- » **Measurable decreases in rates of crime and other detrimental activities.** Communities are safer because of a wholesome atmosphere created by well-managed parks, open space and recreation services that provide healthy activities and programming for all people.

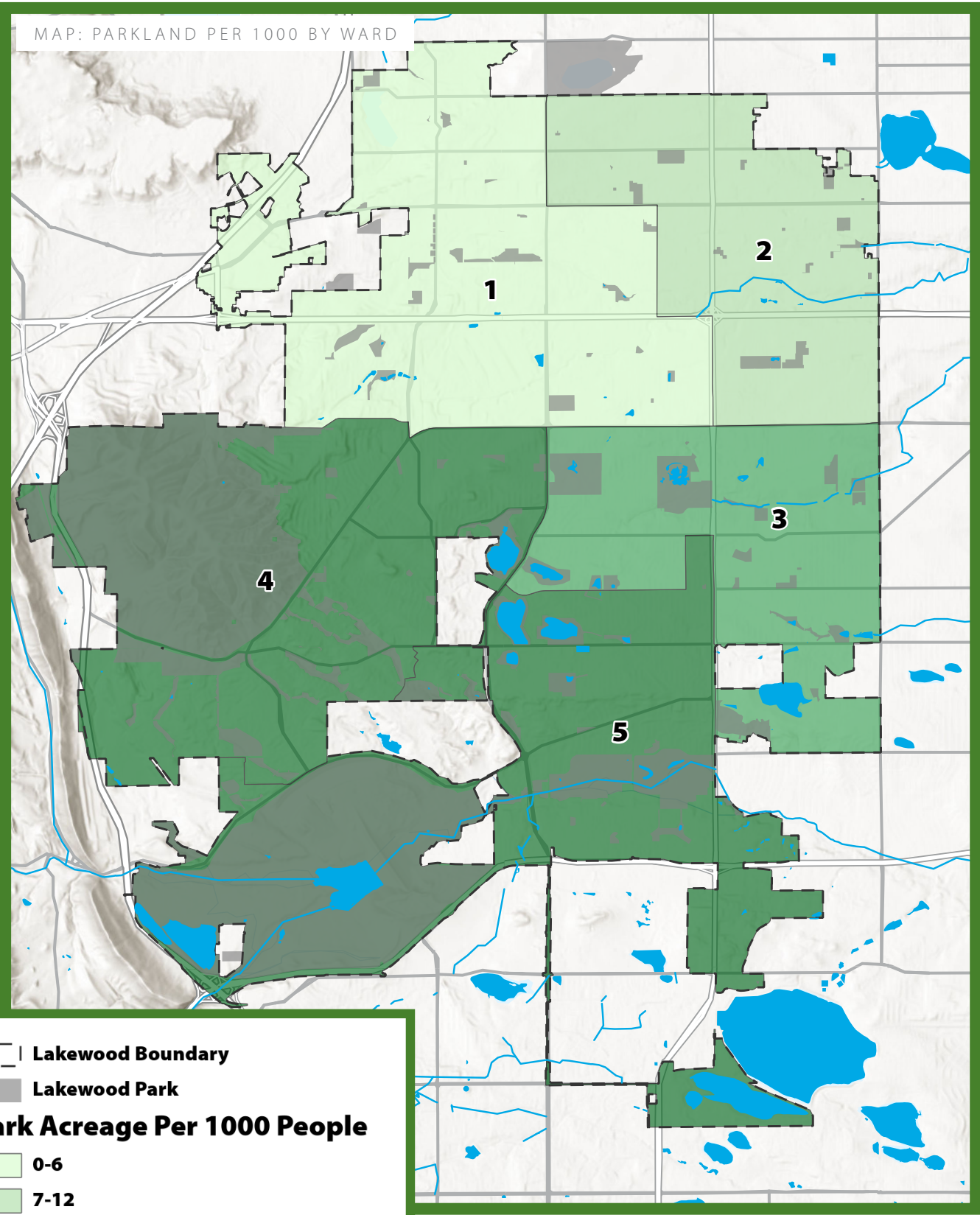
VISIT THE [EQUITY ANALYSIS STORYMAP](#) TO INTERACT WITH MORE DETAILED, ZOOMABLE ANALYSIS MAPS.

## ANALYZING EQUITABLE ACCESS IN LAKEWOOD

Since 2018, the City of Lakewood acquired 117 acres to expand access to parks. To continue to improve equity in investment decisions through the city, the Community Resources Department and the *Imagine Tomorrow!* planning team evaluated three factors through geospatial analysis that reveal the geographic areas with the greatest need for increased access to parks or natural areas.







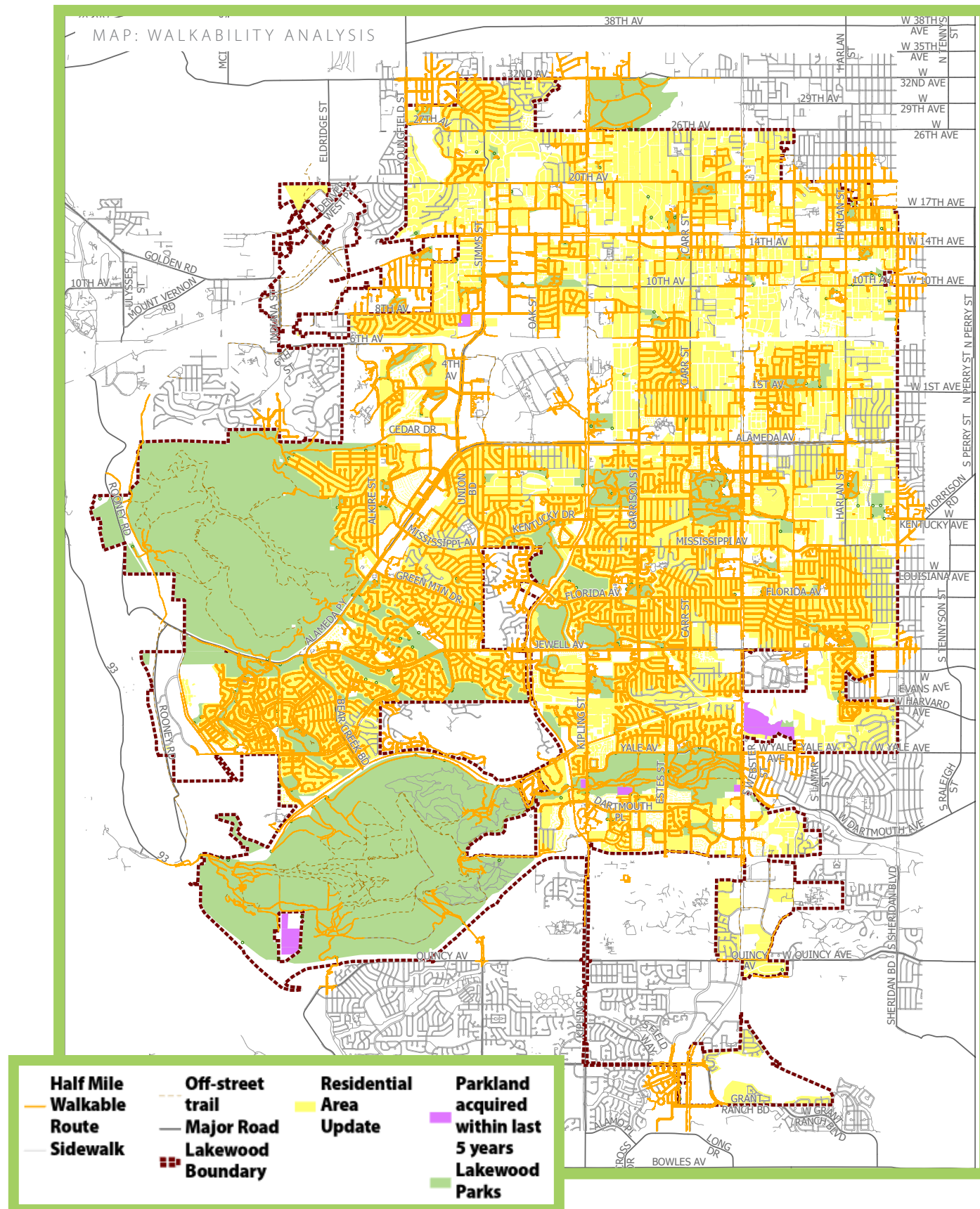
## PARKLAND PER 1,000 PEOPLE BY CITY COUNCIL WARD

The City of Lakewood is organized into five City Council Wards (numbered on the map). The Parkland per 1,000 People by Ward map illustrates the amount of park and open space land (measured in acres) in each Ward relative to the population of each Ward. This measurement is calculated as the number of acres per 1,000 residents in each City Council Ward.

This calculation serves as an indicator of how well Lakewood is providing parks and open space for residents who live in each Council Ward based the opportunities available to acquire parkland within each Ward. The darker the green, the more park and open space land is available to each resident in that Ward.

City Council Ward	Acres of Parkland per 1,000 residents
1	5.6
2	11.8
3	14.5
4	94.5*
5	105*

\*INCLUDES REGIONAL DESTINATIONS: BEAR CREEK LAKE PARK, BEAR CREEK GREENBELT AND WILLIAM F. HAYDEN PARK. WARD 2 INCLUDES A PORTION OF CROWN HILL PARK, WHOSE INITIAL CONSTRUCTION WAS FUNDED BY THE CITY.



## WALKABILITY ANALYSIS

The park and open space walkability analysis map illustrates the areas of Lakewood (orange) that are within a 10-minute, or half mile, walk of a park or open space via safe pedestrian connections on sidewalks and trails. The yellow areas of the map are residential neighborhoods where investment may be needed to provide safe, walkable access to parks. This analysis is helpful to identify gaps in park and open space availability and gaps in safe walkable access to existing park and open space lands.

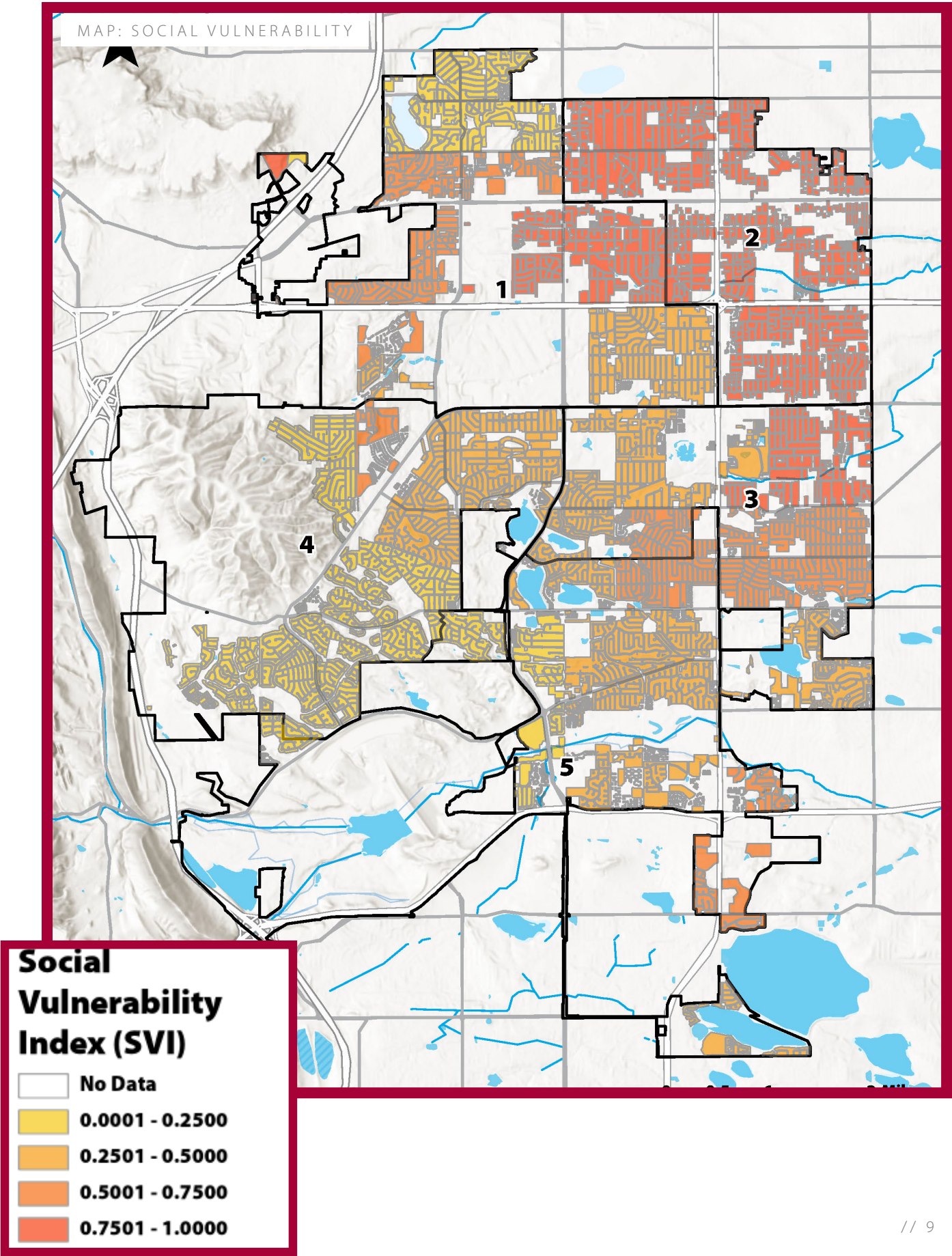


# SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

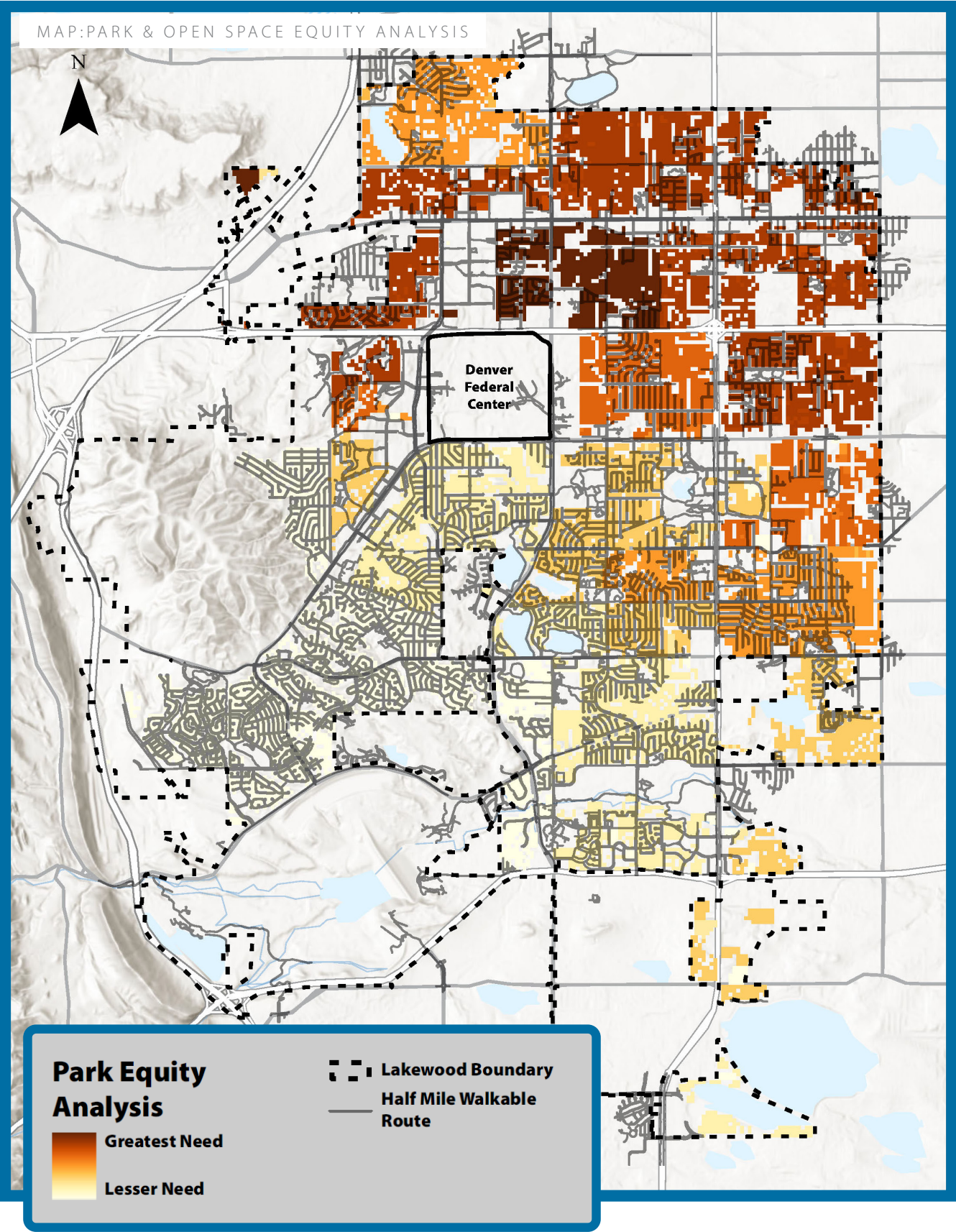
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index calculates the relative vulnerability of every U.S. census tract based on an index of 15 variables to identify communities that are most vulnerable to negative effects caused by external stresses on human health. Red areas of the city, identified on the Social Vulnerability Map, demonstrate residential areas with the highest rate of social vulnerability.

CDC SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX VARIABLES

Socioeconomic Status	Below Poverty
	Unemployed
	Income
	No High School Diploma
Household Composition & Disability	Aged 65 or Older
	Aged 17 or Younger
	Civilian with a Disability
	Single-Parent Households
Minority Status & Language	Minority
	Speak English "Less than Well"
Housing & Transportation	Multi-Unit Structures
	Mobile Homes
	Crowding
	No Vehicle
	Group Quarters







## EQUITY ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS

The Equity Analysis map integrates the three previously described factors to visually convey the “hot spots” where all three factors compound.

Parkland per 1,000 residents, and the CDC Social Vulnerability Index were standardized to a geographic grid where each cell of data is the same geographic size. Each cell was then assigned a composite score based on the cumulative effect of each factor. The higher the composite score, the greater the need for investment in parks and open space or park access. Finally, the Walkability Analysis is added as a separate layer on top.

The final Equity Analysis illustrates geographic areas in need of park or open space investment on a scale of least to greatest need. The darker the shading of an area, the greater the need for investment in parks or open space based on the described multi-factor analysis. The analysis revealed that the north-central area of Lakewood, among other smaller areas, is in need of investment to expand equitable access when land becomes available for city acquisition or private redevelopment.



HOW WILL THE CITY USE THIS INFORMATION?

This analysis provides the City of Lakewood with information on where to invest in parks, open space and recreation amenities in an effort to provide all residents with the opportunity to live healthy lives through access to high quality parks, open space and recreation. The utility of the Equity Analysis is strengthened by other City efforts, including the Lakewood Advisory Commission’s current initiative to identify and prioritize missing pedestrian connections through an equity lens.

The Lakewood Advisory Commission recently worked with staff and residents to collect additional information on missing connections and conducted its own analysis that includes equity as a factor for prioritizing missing connections. This future report identifies specific missing connections to consider for investment along with other project priorities.

The City’s strategic parkland acquisition plan also works in tandem with the Equity Analysis. In 2019, the Community Resources Department worked with the Conservation Fund to develop a Strategic Acquisition Plan to inform targeted locations in the city for park acquisition with results that aligned with *Imagine Lakewood!* This plan informed the purchase of 86 acres of additional parkland in the city since 2020.

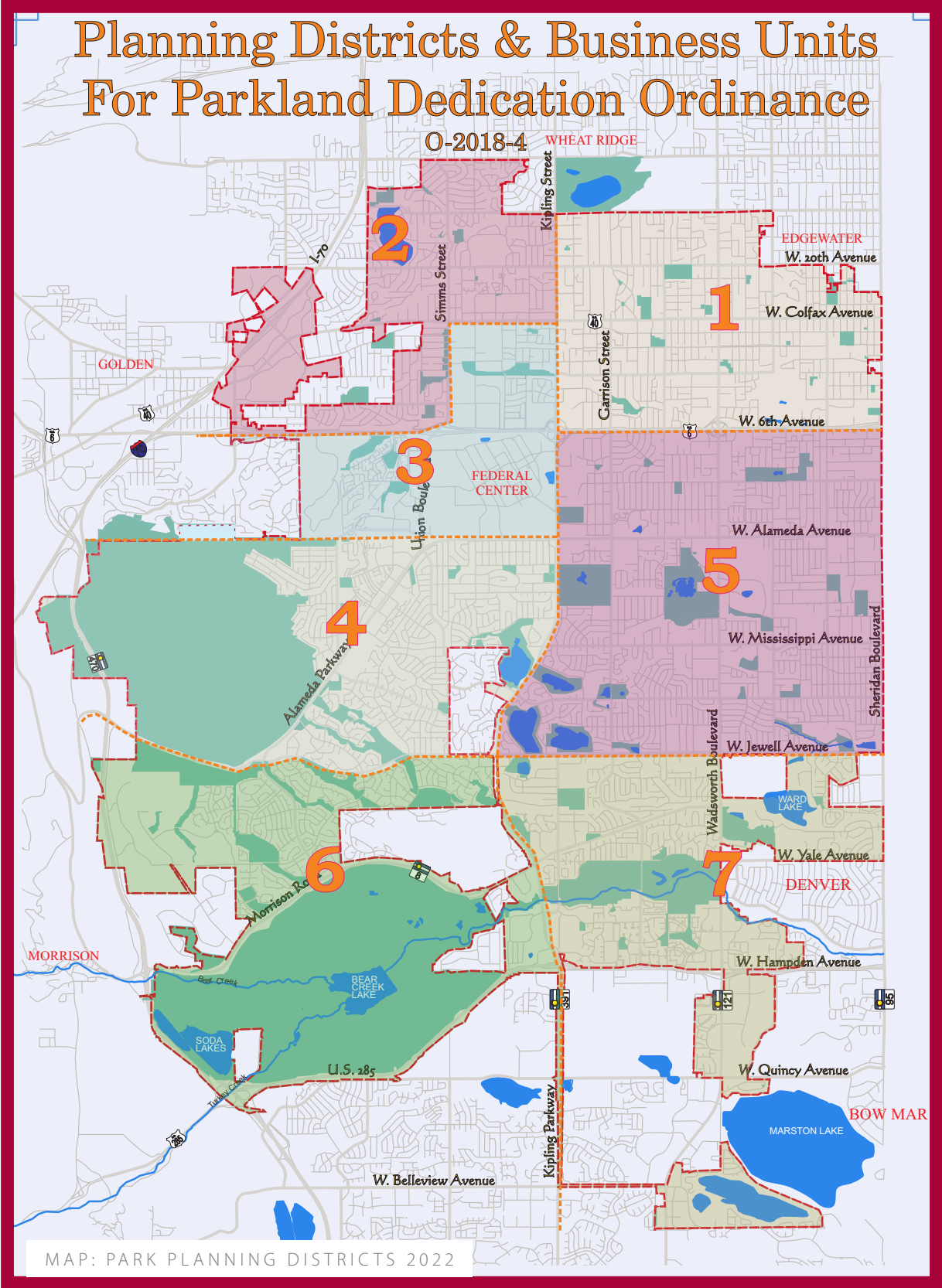
HISTORY OF INVESTMENT BY PARK PLANNING DISTRICT

Over the past 10 years, the City of Lakewood has invested nearly \$30 million in capital improvements and land acquisition for parks, open space and recreation. The city is divided into seven Planning Districts, which have received different levels of funding over the past 10 years (see the Park Planning Districts Map). The table below lists the amount of investment in each Park Planning District of the City from 2012-2022. Investment varies between Districts due to several factors including development, opportunities to establish new parks and varying levels of maintenance for different types of parks and facilities. Of the total investment listed below, approximately \$8 million was derived in 2012-2022 from parkland dedication fees required from residential development in the city.

For example, District 3 has historically been a very stable neighborhood with little new growth. Parks in District 3 (Sunset, Union Ridge and Union Square) did not require as much capital maintenance over the past 10 years as parks and facilities in other districts. Conversely, District 5 is home to large parks and amenities such as O’Kane, Ray Ross, Belmar, Addenbrooke and Heritage Lakewood Belmar Parks, all which required significant capital improvements to maintain in recent years.

Park acquisitions occur as land becomes available for sale. The Community Resources Department works with City Council to set a list of priority acquisitions and has funds set aside to allow for parkland purchases at fair market value. Examples include the recent addition of parkland for Two Creeks Park in District 1 and the new Porter Park in District 2.

Planning District	Total Investment 2012-2022
District 1	\$4,339,057
District 2	\$1,052,494
District 3	\$1,081,074
District 4	\$2,530,557
District 5	\$10,997,061
District 6	\$1,281,372
District 7	\$11,949,474





## **APPENDIX E. EQUITY ANALYSIS REFERENCES**

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