



# Ridgeview Park Small Group Agenda

Thursday, August 5, 4:30 – 6 pm, Ridgeview Park

*\*Three or more members of Littleton City Council may be present*

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## Agenda

- Introductions
- Process goals
  - o Long term – sustainable approach for the park and pond for community, city & SSP&RD
  - o Short term – reasonable maintenance as a longer-term solution is pursued.
- List of issues
- Status and schedule
- Next Steps



# Ridgeview Park FAQ

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## Background

The area around Ridgeview Park was developed in 1962, 1971, and 1972 as part of three developments. Ridgeview Park is 5.0 acres and is designated as a passive use park.

Historical reports indicate that the pond regularly held water through the years although Google Earth historical imagery shows variability in the water levels. According to previous research completed by water attorneys for the City and South Suburban, both separately confirmed there are no water rights associated with the pond. Historical filling of the pond appears to come from two potential sources – stormwater drainage from the associated basin and seepage from upslope water users including property owners and Denver Water’s Highline Canal.

As of January 26, 2021, Littleton is designated by the State of Colorado as being in Exceptional Drought, the driest rating available. It should be noted that in 14 of the last 20 years the region has been in a drought condition at some level with several years in Severe or Extreme Drought. The current conditions are the driest in the past 21 years and only a dozen years since 1895 has it been this dry in Arapahoe County. (*Information can be referenced at [www.drought.gov](http://www.drought.gov) and specifically for Arapahoe County*).

Some neighbors in the area have asked for the parties managing the park to fill the pond on a consistent basis in the absence of water rights, including demands to fill the pond with potable water. The city of Littleton and SSPRD are not water companies, Denver Water is the water service provider in this area; this has been the case since 1972.

Past projects at this location have included park grading/seeding, pond lining (bottom), and turf irrigation improvements.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are the Park and Pond responsibilities of the city versus the SSP&RD?**

- Over the history of Ridgeview Park South Suburban Parks & Recreation District has the role of maintaining the park. This includes mowing, irrigation, algae treatments, and user issues.
- The city’s role revolves around management of stormwater, the trickle ditch that runs to the pond is a stormwater collection feature that is designed to contain stormwater flows from the area. The other primary role of the channel is water quality, to allow sediments, nutrients, and contaminants to settle prior to moving downstream through the South Platte River Basin.

### **How are park and pond maintenance and improvements funded by the city and SSP&RD?**

- Maintenance is funded from the general tax revenues of SSP&RD.



# Ridgeview Park FAQ

- Minimal stormwater maintenance, as needed, is funded by the city's stormwater utility and city-wide rate payers.

## **What is the function of the pond?**

- The pond serves to collect and detain (not retain) stormwater from the small drainage basin that covers the developments in the area.
- The pond has been an aesthetic feature of the park from many years.

## **Why is the pond not continuously filled with water?**

- The lack of water in the pond is very likely due to a couple of reasons, most importantly the lack of water in the High Line Canal. This coupled with drought and climate change yields insufficient ground water to supplement the stormwater runoff. There should be no hope that somehow there will be a reversal of High Line Canal policy by Denver Water. This is entirely within their purview, and they will not be making changes.
- It has been determined by multiple water attorneys that there are no associated water rights with this pond.

## **If the High Line Canal is not operational, then what other options exist to maintain the water level?**

- The city has 16 water shares in the City Ditch, they are minimal and very junior in seniority. The city is exploring the use of these water rights. They currently supply Geneva Park and the pond at this facility. The city also has water supply issues at Ketring Lake.
- The city is exploring the potential to use these water rights to fill Ketring and/or Ridgeview. The hurdles to these uses are several – perfection of the water rights in water court and conveying the water to these locations. In a preliminary engineering study, the cost to convey water to Ridgeview was over \$1,000,00 and to Ketring \$750,000, plus ongoing mechanical maintenance and future capital replacement. Based on the regional and high use nature of Ketring Park this investment would likely supersede any investment for Ridgeview.
- Any options for Ridgeview that would create a long-term filling of the pond require a rebuild of the pond to create lining to assure water retention.
- The city approached Denver Water about a one-time fill of the pond with potable treated water. DW indicated they would consider this option if a permanent solution to the water problem had been secured. They have also informed us they will not honor a one-time fill if we are in a drought condition as imposed by the State.

## **Why is the pond getting so much water this spring?**

- Through May 24<sup>th</sup> this is the wettest spring in the last 100 years in the Littleton area. The average normal precipitation through 5/24 is 5.00 inches, the current in 2021 is 9.70 inches. This additional precipitation is creating run off that has been adding to the pond volume.

## **Can the cattails in the waterway be cut down?**

- In an effort to work with the neighbors the city will allow some management of the cattails. During the summer months they will be allowed to grow, but in the fall/winter SSP&RD staff will trim the cattails to the ground. No matter the management approach the bottom and sides of the channel must be maintained with adequate vegetation to assure water quality and water transmission.



# Ridgeview Park FAQ

The city may change course if it is determined that this alternative is detrimental to the primary needs of storm waterquality control and flow.

## **What is the schedule to pursue such options?**

- The city and SSP&RD will be seeking to engage a consultant to pursue alternatives development. The city is intending to complete a Water Resources Master Plan looking at all the city's water needs for parks, rights-of-way, medians, S Platte Park, and other requirements. If grant funding is secured, we expect this project to begin in Q3 2021; the WRMP will inform any solution for Ridgeview Park.

## **If the city is not able to secure a viable solution for water rights and an engineering solution, what are the other options?**

- There are a host of potential options for Ridgeview Park. Some options offered by residents and others include:
  - Reduce the pond size to accommodate only the amount of water that is modeled to flow into the pond annually
  - Eliminate the pond and reduce the stormwater conveyance to a small trickle channel or piped
  - Develop the park into a new model that reduces the amount of bluegrass to a more naturalized, native plants platform, with a small trail and other amenities. Using the existing water used for irrigation of the bluegrass to establish native species and fill a reduced size pond or no pond
  - Replace the pond and parts of the bluegrass with a tree canopy or orchard
  - Develop a park model that brings wider use to the park from a neighborhood park to a larger city draw
  - This is just a small list of options that have been discussed, the consulting team will explore a variety of alternatives, and this will be built through the public engagement process



**INVITE YOU TO:**

## **Ridgeview Park Neighborhood Open House**

Thursday, August 5, 4:30 – 6 pm, Ridgeview Park

Join your neighbors for an open house discussion with representatives of South Suburban Park and Recreation District (SSPRD) and the City of Littleton to gain information on Ridgeview Park and Pond.

**YOU'RE  
INVITED!**

Free snacks, giveaways  
and activities in the park  
for kids and families.

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

South Suburban and the City of Littleton recognize there are questions regarding the Ridgeview Park and Pond. This open house will allow neighbors to hear facts and provide input into possible solutions.

SSPRD maintains Ridgeview Park; this includes mowing, irrigation, pond algae treatments and user issues. The City of Littleton owns the park and is responsible for storm water. The Ridgeview Park Pond has no water rights associated with it and the pond is currently only detaining water from recent storms. The city is investigating options to address water in the pond long term through a water resources master plan. If the city determines filling the pond is not feasible, South Suburban will present other options for the area.

## **What would you like to see happen at the park?**

Visit [www.ssprd.org/publicinput](http://www.ssprd.org/publicinput) or scan the QR code to take a survey.

Surveys will also be available at the open house on August 5.

**The survey closes on Friday, August 6.**

