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# FORT COLLINS COLORADOAN

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RECREATION IN FORT COLLINS

## CITY PARK'S FUTURE



### Boardwalk, partial road closure among proposals for 104-year-old park

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City Park is more than a place to watch fireworks and listen to the Fort Collins Symphony perform patriotic music on the Fourth of July. It's a year-round destination for Fort Collins residents and visitors who want to catch a baseball game, play golf, swim in the pool, skate on Sheldon Lake or find respite from the noise and bustle of city life.

The park has evolved during its 104 years, and it's certain to keep changing. Fort Collins officials have launched the City Park Tomorrow initiative to develop a master plan for the 85-acre park as way to channel that change.

City officials want the public to weigh in on what the core area of the park should look and feel like in the years to come.

The goal is to make sure elements that make the park special remain while making some improvements, said Kurt Friesen, park planning manager.

"There's opportunity for us to think long-term about ways in which we want to use the park and

**Chime in**  
Information about the City Park Tomorrow project, including a survey, is available on the city website [www.fcgov.com/parkplanning/cityparktomorrow.php](http://www.fcgov.com/parkplanning/cityparktomorrow.php)

how it can be better, not only to serve this generation but the next," he said.

Planners have come up with four working concepts for the park with several interchangeable options, including highlighting the streetcar operated during the summer by the Fort Collins Municipal Railway Society and building a boardwalk along the shores of Sheldon Lake.

With voter-approved improvements to the park's miniature train and Club Tico already in the works, it's a good time to look at broader issues and long-range concepts, Friesen said.

One of the safety goals of the project is to reduce the number of conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, Friesen said. That would be done by changing the configuration of the street pattern and "circulation" within the park.

Working concepts for the park proposed by city staff are:

- Trolley Garden:** The trolley line would be brought deeper into the park to a depot area that would include shelters, play areas and gardens. The trolley would be stored in a facility that would put it on display while protecting it from the elements.
- Lake Shore:** Sheldon Lake, which has been a major draw, would be highlighted, potentially with a boardwalk and other features intended to make it more accessible. The boardwalk would link to playgrounds and the popular outdoor pool.
- Park Center:** A large shelter with restrooms would be built as a hub for the park, and paths would branch out to other features. City Park Drive would be partially closed to improve pedestrian safety and provide access to the north shore of the lake.
- Existing elements improved:** The train would be moved to the south of the tennis courts and existing features, such as the playground, would be improved. A drop-off area for the pool would be built near its entrance. Parking along Bryan

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Arnon Bruno kills some time by fishing at Sheldon Lake in City Park Tuesday. Fort Collins planners are looking at options to improve the 104-year-old park, including the lake.  
AUSTIN HUBBARD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

## Senate ponders zero suicide bill

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A bill circulating in the Colorado legislature would make the state the first to implement a statute promoting an ambitious suicide prevention protocol for health care providers, potentially bringing more dollars for mental health services into the state.

There are a handful of proposed bills in the state legislature related to mental health therapies and the professional conduct of mental health professionals. But a bi-partisan state Senate bill encouraging the statewide implementation of the national zero suicide model is the sole measure promoting suicide prevention this session.

Colorado is ranked seventh in the nation for suicide deaths. State Sen. Linda Newell, a Democrat from Denver who is sponsoring the zero suicide bill, said suicide has become a "plague" in the state.

In 2014, a record 1,058 people died by suicide in Colorado. Last year's state data is not yet available. Suicide deaths in Larimer County spiked by nearly 25 percent in 2014, with 81 people dying by suicide. Eighty people died by suicide in Larimer County last year, according to the coroner.

The question is does legislating mental health issues make a difference?

"You're damn right it makes a difference," said SummitShore Health Partners CEO Randy Ratliff. SummitShore is in the early stages of considering the zero suicide model and supports

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## Clint Black cancels Thursday concert

COLORADOAN STAFF

Country music artist Clint Black's performance Thursday at the Lincoln Center in Fort Collins has been canceled due to an unforeseen family emergency, according to a release on the venue's website.

Black had been slated to make a run through Colorado, starting Thursday in Fort Collins and moving through to the Vilar Performing Arts Center in Boulder Friday and the Wheeler Opera House in Aspen Saturday. All three performances have been canceled.

Those who purchased tickets with credit cards will be refunded their money within the next five business days and cash purchasers will be contacted on an individual basis to discuss refund options.

Those with questions can contact the Lincoln Center box office at 970.221.4738.

## Suicide

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Newell's bill.

On the surface, promoting zero suicide in the legislature could be considered a feel-good measure without real impact. The bill wouldn't mandate the implementation of zero suicide due to sensitivities about funding implications but would encourage providers to consider the model and engage in applicable training.

The implementation of such a bill, even if it doesn't mandate the model, could make Colorado more likely to receive funding for mental health, Newell said.

If passed, it would make the state look more favorable for a national mental health pilot program.

Carl Naisir, a licensed professional counselor and director of Heart-Centered Counseling in Fort Collins, said legislation can help drive the suicide conversation forward and bring attention to the issue.

Zero suicide puts a spotlight on service gaps and prevents more clients from

falling through the cracks, he said, but it doesn't mandate treatment protocols.

There is real merit in putting energy and attention toward filling the gaps," he said. "That's appropriate and

making zero suicide successful in Colorado will take more than lip service, Ratliff said.

It would need to be a community systemic effort coupled with financial support. This can be the flavor of the month," Ratliff said. "It has to be something embedded in our system that changes practice, changes thinking and moves us forward."

Zero suicide focuses on eliminating suicides among at-risk individuals receiving health or mental health care. More than 30 percent of those who died by suicide from 2009 to 2013 were receiving some form of mental health treatment when they died, according to the Colorado Violent Death Reporting System. According to a national study, 45 percent of those who die by suicide have seen a primary care physician within a month of their death.

The national model, which identifies seven components to preventing suicide in health care systems, is used by hundreds of sites across the country, said Julie Goldstein Gremet, director of health and behavioral health initiatives for the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. It's based on the success of the Henry Ford Health System, which was able to reduce the suicide rate of health plan members by 80 percent.

The goal of zero suicides for those receiving mental or other health care is "ambitious, maybe even audacious," Goldstein Gremet said. But it helps shift the culture and mindset of those fighting the epidemic.

"It lets everyone in that system know that they'll constantly drive to do better," she said. "There's no other number. It has to be zero."

Follow Sarah Jane Kyle on Twitter @sarahjanekyle or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sarahjanekyle. Keep up with social issues in Northern Colorado by subscribing to the Life Connected newsletter.

## About Zero Suicide and mental health

Legislation in 2014 established the state's Suicide Prevention Commission in response to Colorado's ranking as one of the top 10 states for suicide deaths. The commission is called with establishing data-driven and evidence-based priorities for suicide prevention efforts. The zero suicide bill is a result of this commission's work.

Sen. Linda Newell, a Democrat from Denver, Sen. Beth Martinez Hammer, a Republican representing Adams County, and Rep. Brittany Peterson, a Democrat from Lakewood, are the bill's main sponsors. Sen. John Kafalen, a Democrat from Fort Collins, is among the bill's 25 bipartisan sponsors.

Learn more about the zero suicide model at [www.zerosuicide.com](http://www.zerosuicide.com).

The following bills, which are active in the Colorado Legislature, are among those that concern mental health.

• **HB16-106:** Would establish the Colorado zero suicide model, which is based on the national zero suicide model, in hopes of reducing suicide rates and

numbers in the state through system-level training and strategies for health care and mental health care providers.

• **HB16-103:** Would allow the disclosure of confidential communications with a mental health professional if a client makes a direct threat against a school or its occupants, or if a mental health professional believes the safety or well-being of students, faculty, staff, parents or the general public were at risk due to a client's behavior.

• **HB16-1103:** Would clarify licensure requirements and pathways for mental health professionals.

• **HB16-1112:** Would create a pilot program for veterans to train their own service dogs. If approved, a group of 10 eligible veterans, as defined by federal law and with the referral of a qualified mental health professional, would participate.

• **HB16-1210:** Would prohibit licensed physicians and mental health care providers from providing conversion therapy to minors. Conversion therapy tries to change sexual orientation, including behavior and/or gender expression or eliminating or reducing some sex attraction.

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## City Park

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Street would be formalized, and the promenade along the lake would be improved.

Friesen said there is no set time frame for implementing the changes. After taking public input for a couple of months, park planners expect to develop a master plan for the core area and identify "phase I" projects.

Facilities would be built based on the availability of funding. About \$1 million is available for community parks in the Building on Basics, or BOB, capital improvement program and could be used on City Park.

Another \$350,000 is available for the train through the BOB II program approved by voters in April 2015. The same program has \$250,000 for improvements to Club Xico.

Public comments on City Park "Sometime have ranged from 'don't change anything' to 'go for the biggest and the boldest,'" Friesen said.

It's clear from the public response that people who live near City Park feel a strong connection to it and sense of ownership, he said.

Neighbors are concerned about the impact of improvements to the park and their neighborhoods, especially if they translate to more people coming to the park.

Park planning wants to preserve the feeling of City Park as it heads into its second century, Friesen said.

"It really is a treasure to this community," he said. "And we

## History of City Park

• **1907:** Fort Collins purchases 62 acres from John Sheldon; trolley service begins on Mountain Avenue to Grandview Cemetery.

• **1912:** City Park is officially named and opened.

• **1919:** Prospect Park is purchased, adding to the size of City Park.

• **1921:** Public campground opens.

• **1921:** Businessman Robert Langston builds a pavilion next to Sheldon Lake that now contains Club Two.

• **1925:** A diving tower, playground, a warming house and bath house are added near the lake.

• **1940:** City Park Nine Golf Course opens.

• **1950:** Children's train is installed.

• **1952:** Permanent pool is built separate from Sheldon Lake.

• **1962:** Streets inside the park are converted to one-way traffic.

• **1968:** 1025 CU train depot is installed for use by the trolley.

• **2003:** City Park Pool is completely renovated.

Source: City of Fort Collins Park Planning

want it to remain that way," Kevin Duggan is a Coloradoan senior reporter covering local government. Follow him on Twitter, @coloradoan\_duggan, and on Facebook at Coloradoan Kevin Duggan.

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