

BORROWED SPACE

The concept of **borrowed space** refers to the idea that open space on certain properties can be “borrowed” by residents or occupants of adjoining properties, thereby expanding their view of open space from their own property. Borrowed space can involve open areas on both public and private properties, including lakes, reservoirs, rivers, creeks and ponds.

While neighbors and visitors may have access, even in the case of some adjoining private property, it is visual versus physical access to open space that is borrowed. Such borrowing of visual openness continues literally forever in the case of public parks, trails, greenways and other land in public ownership or otherwise dedicated to ongoing public use.

Public borrowed space can add to the greater sense of openness that is already found in Rural, Estate and Suburban character areas. In areas with Auto Urban and Urban character, the ability to borrow the open space provided by public parks and areas of water is especially valuable. The Mary Carter Greenway and South Platte Park are classic examples of public borrowed space amid developed areas of Littleton.

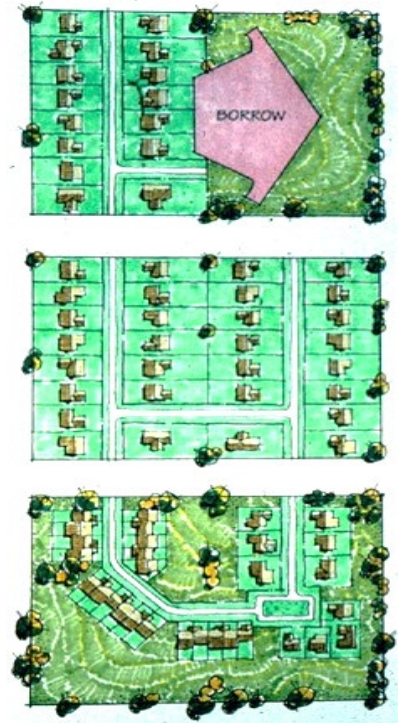
Private borrowed space may also involve land that is intended to be preserved as open space for the long term, with minimal or no land development activity. More often, however, it is temporary borrowed space involving vacant land that will eventually be developed. The accompanying graphic, in the top view, illustrates how residents of an area enjoy the benefit of undeveloped private land on an adjacent property. They may experience a sense of loss as the adjacent property also changes to further residential development, as shown in the middle view. Depending on the nature of the developments, the character of the broader area may transition given the overall decline in quantity and visibility of open space. The bottom view illustrates how a cluster development approach maintains some amount of permanent open space for all to enjoy, both on the subject and adjacent properties.

The accompanying **map of Borrowed Space in Littleton** shows the many and varied locations from which residents and others can visually borrow open space. This is primarily public open space given the extent of parks, trails, greenways and water features found in the community. As Littleton is nearly a built-out city, only a small proportion is borrowed space from privately-owned properties.

The community vision and guiding principles adopted by Littleton City Council in December 2018 emphasize stewardship of assets and the need to protect the community’s “cherished natural setting in harmony with new development and redevelopment.” The Envision Report also cites core values in Littleton, which include a passion for and/or a commitment to:

- Stewardship of river and open space assets;
- The integrity of natural resources and Littleton’s open space endowment; and
- The quality of both open space and the built environment.

Goals and policies in the City’s new Comprehensive Plan will build on and reinforce Littleton’s overall vision and guiding principles. Given the values and priorities cited above, the concept of borrowed space and its contribution to community character will be an important consideration during future land use planning discussions for Envision Littleton.



To the left, public open space at Ketrang Park that is borrowed by residents of adjacent homes. To the right, private open space on undeveloped, commercially zoned property just north of Mineral Avenue that is borrowed for the time being by nearby residents.

