

Project Description

A project team consisting of staff from Natural Areas, Parks and Utilities Departments, the City Attorney's Office and SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) addressed urban lakes water quality management concerns by developing an Urban Lakes Water Quality Management Policy. The purpose of the Policy is to provide a foundational framework for the City's operational and management decisions related to water quality management in City-owned lakes and stormwater basins. The project team developed an Urban Lakes Water Quality Management Guidance as a technical resource to assist City staff with implementing the Policy.

IMPACTS WITH MEDIUM TO HIGH CONFIDENCE



Environmental

Positive

- ENV 1 - Will improve plant and animal communities. Fewer fish kills and algae blooms.
- ENV 4 - City will more easily be able to adapt to climate-related water quality impacts; healthy urban lakes can serve as refuge spaces for community during periods of high heat.
- ENV 6 - Will improve water quality in City's Urban Lakes, outlet streams and groundwater.
- ENV 9 - Policy and Guidance to be shared with community; and will help staff communicate water quality drivers and threats to community.
- ENV 10 - Will enhance regional watershed planning and collaboration; aligns with City's Strategic Objectives 4.5 and 4.6

Negative

- NA



Economic

Positive

- ECON 1 - Healthy Urban Lakes may increase tourism and benefit local businesses.
- ECON 2 - Healthy Urban Lakes will improve the quality of recreational access.
- ECON 7 - Managing urban lakes water quality will reduce some costs associated with future stormwater infrastructure retrofits and maintenance.

Negative

- NA



Social

Positive

- SS1 - Project will help improve access to nature and physical activity within the City.
- SS2 - Urban lakes are popular places for community members to interact; healthier lakes will encourage increased usage.
- SS3 - Managing water quality in urban lakes will reduce the frequency and severity of algae blooms and other human health-related issues

Negative

- NA

Tradeoffs / Mitigations

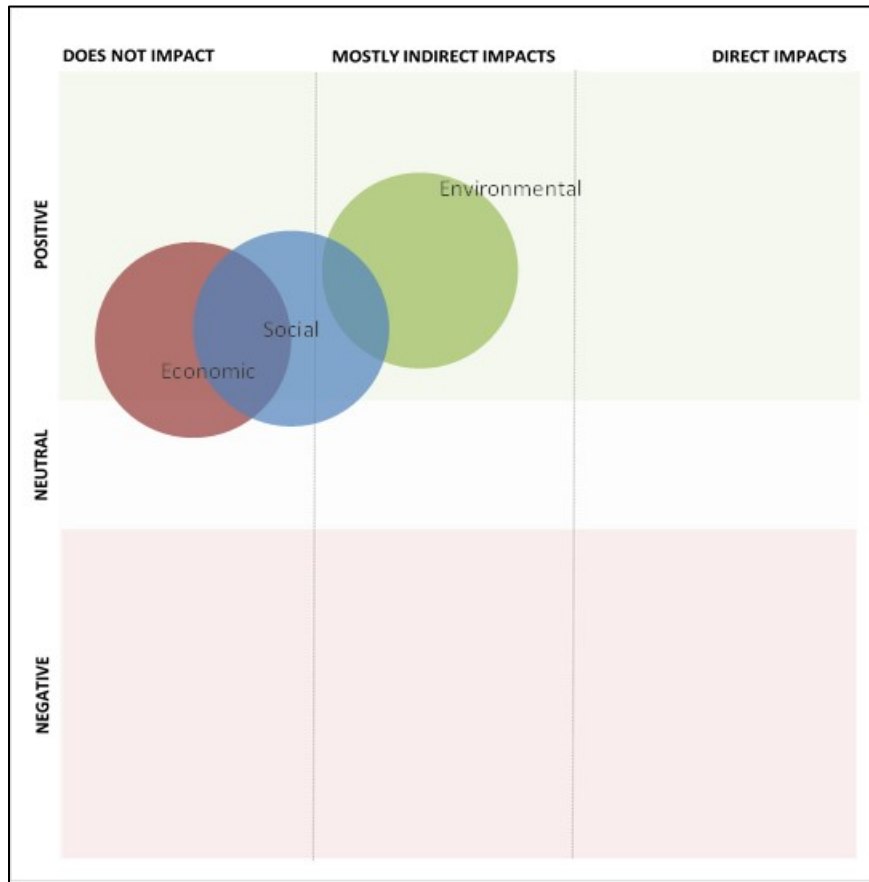
Tradeoffs

- NA

Mitigations

- NA

Key Alignment: This project is most aligned with the environmental category. It is expected to improve water quality management of the City's urban lakes for the benefit of the environment and community members.



Discussion

This project is expected to positively impact water quality and improve the overall environmental health of City-owned urban lakes. The management framework and tools provided by this project will likely result in reduced frequency and severity of algae blooms and other water quality issues. Improving urban lakes water quality will benefit plant and animal communities utilizing these resources as habitat. Development of the Policy and Guidance have been informed using feedback received during a community engagement process. The Guidance will be available to the general public as an educational and technical resource. The Policy and Guidance will improve environmental health by supporting ongoing water quality-related planning and collaboration and.

The City of Fort Collins is known for its public access to natural resources and recreation. Improving urban lakes water quality could enhance the City's brand and increase tourist visitation. Increases in visitation and usage at local lakes could indirectly benefit local businesses and the City's overall economic health. The economic health of the City will likely benefit from this project by reducing the need to replace and maintain stormwater infrastructure. And lastly, the project will positively benefit social health within the City by improving access to natural spaces, physical activity and social connection.

The Policy and Guidance also align with the City's Strategic Plan by addressing the following strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective 4.5 – Protect and enhance natural resources on City-owned properties and throughout the community.

Strategic Objective 4.6 – Sustain and improve the health of the Cache la Poudre River and all watersheds within the City