

Relocation Plan and Methodology- Armory to Damyonovich receiving site project

The following summarizes the relocation plans for the project to move the colony of prairie dogs present on the Armory site in North Boulder to the Damyonovich open space colony south of Boulder. Modification may be necessary in response to weather, numbers of prairie dogs present, behavior of the prairie dogs on the receiving site, and other potential factors.

Sending Site (Armory)

Activity at the Armory is anticipated to begin on or about October 1, 2016.

The trapping of the prairie dogs at the Armory will be done with the goal of humanely capturing as many of the prairie dogs present so they can be safely relocated to the Damyonovich open space site prior to any development at the Armory site.

The boundary of each coterie (i.e., “family” group”) on the trap site is expected to be identified based on the professional judgment of the relocation contractor’s supervising wildlife biologist during prebaiting in order to facilitate each prairie dog being able to be relocated with, or near, other coterie-mates, to the greatest extent possible.

Live traps will be set out at the site and pre-baited for a period of no less than four (4) days. Exact duration will be subject to the professional judgment of the relocation contractor’s supervising wildlife biologist to be reasonably sufficient to adequately acclimate the prairie dogs to the traps in order to maximize trapping success.

Once trapping begins, the relocater expects to have an experienced wildlife biologist frequently onsite to monitor prairie dog activity on the trap site, and expects to release non-target wildlife and collect trapped prairie dogs approximately every two hours during daylight hours. Once collected, traps containing prairie dogs will be covered and moved to a protected area to await transport to the release site.

Prairie dogs will be sprayed with insecticidal spray and checked for injury or illness.

Prairie dogs will be transported to the receiving site in a covered vehicle and released.

Any non-target species captured will be released at the point of capture or relocated to a location designated by the City staff.

City staff will be in contact with the relocater to monitor the status of the trap and relocation effort and will visit the capture site frequently to observe how the trapping effort is going. Although the public will not have access to the trap site on the Armory property, the area is easily observable from the adjacent roads and sidewalk. People are asked, however, to minimize their activities around the Armory property while the trap effort is underway as any disturbance could adversely impact the success of the capture effort.

Once trapping has been unsuccessful at capturing any prairie dogs for five (5) clear days (i.e., not actively snowing/raining, with no to light wind, and temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit), City staff will visit the site to determine if trapping can be ceased. If 100% of the prairie dogs have been captured and relocated, trapping will cease at that point. If trapping needs to continue, this will be determined by City staff, the landowner, and the relocation contractor.

Receiving Site (Damyonovich):

The receiving site is expected to be prepared to receive between 92 to 140 prairie dogs depending on coterie composition and age structure. City staff will install 6 artificial nest boxes for use in releasing prairie dogs. In addition, the site contains 12 natural burrows with a depth greater than 3 feet, 8 additional burrows that are between 2-3 feet and many other burrows that are either more shallow, or not entirely open.

Burrows and artificial burrows that are suitable to serve as release burrows will be covered with retention pens or cages (caps) to temporarily hold the prairie dogs at that location so they may become acclimated to their new surroundings. Prairie dogs are expected to be released into the burrows along with, or adjacent to, other coterie members. They will remain in the pens or cages for an expected 3-5 days before the pens or cages are removed. During this time, they will receive food and water (or high water content vegetables) on a daily basis. Following removal of the retention cages and pens, food will continue to be offered at the burrows for an additional 7 days, weather permitting.

While in the pens or cages, prairie dogs are expected to be provided with below-ground shelter by the burrows, and above ground shelter with hay or hay and shelter boxes.

Once fully prepared, the receiving site is expected to contain:

- 10 open, natural burrows open to a depth of at least 3 feet with retention pens
- 2 open, natural burrows open to a depth of at least 3 feet with retention caps
- 6 open, natural burrows with depth of between 2-3 feet to be used as/if needed
- 6 artificial nest chambers/burrows with dual entrances, each with a retention cap

Numbers of animals to be released in each burrow will be determined by trap site coterie identification, sex, and age class (juvenile, yearling, adult) of each prairie dog as well as acclimation behavior and digging activity at the release site. This setup is anticipated to provide sufficient sites for the number of prairie dogs at the Armory site.

Attempts will also be made to open up to 25 additional burrows that are either not open to sufficient depth, or are partially closed, to serve as a behavioral trigger to start digging in that location (will not be used for release, but will be available for prairie dogs after they are freed from retention pens/caps).

During the release activities the site will be closed to the public to allow the prairie dogs to acclimate to their new home and prepare for winter with minimal disturbance. City staff will

periodically visit the site, receive weekly updates from the relocation contractor, and provide updates to the community and decision makers on the progress. The site is easily observable from adjacent roads and so periodic on-site visits and updates from staff should be sufficient to allow the community to observe how the relocation is progressing.