

**CITY OF BOULDER
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: August 25, 2014

AGENDA TITLE: Valmont City Park Planning

PRESENTERS:

Jeff Dillon, Director, Parks and Recreation
Jeff Haley, Parks Planning Manager
Doug Godfrey, Parks Planner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently in the process of updating the 2008 concept plan for the undeveloped portions of Valmont City Park (VCP). The original concept plan, developed with significant community input, has served as a guiding document for park development including the successfully completed Valmont Bike Park (VBP), Valmont Dog Park (VDP) and the temporary Valmont Disc Golf Course (VDGC). The goal of the current project is to update the original concept plan to ensure it continues to meet the community's needs. The update process includes the administration of a statistically valid community survey, an industry trend analyses, an athletic field study, stakeholders meetings, outreach sessions with community youth groups, community meetings, and regular updates with City Council and the PRAB. Through extensive data gathering, analysis, and a public outreach process, the goal for this project is to develop an updated concept plan for the undeveloped portion of VCP that will garner wide community acceptance and can be used to help develop future partnerships, funding opportunities, and support for possible bond consideration.

ANALYSIS:

Six years after the adoption of the current VCP concept plan, the park has undergone significant development including the completion of the VBP, VDP and the temporary VDGC. With the successful completion of the first phase of park development, it is time to focus on the future development of the park and use the concept plan update process to assist in developing successful partnerships, identify grant opportunities, and possibly set the stage for a future Capital Improvement Program (CIP) or bond funding opportunities. In January 2014, Boulder-based MIG, formerly Winston Associates, was contracted by the city to serve as the planning and landscape architecture consultant on this project.

MIG has a sub-contracting consultant team to provide technical expertise in areas such as transportation, civil engineering, and sustainability planning and engineering. As part of the planning process, a comprehensive data gathering, analysis, and public outreach plan has been developed for this project and includes:

Garnering Broad Public Support

A critical component of the concept plan update is a broad public engagement process that includes input from community members, elected and appointed bodies, athletic groups, recreation clubs, environmental groups, businesses, foundations, schools, and city staff. The goal of public involvement in the planning process is to:

- Inform the community about the project; and
- Compel community members to support and implement the plan.

Reaching Children and Youth

The department has engaged both Growing Up Boulder (GUB) and the Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB) to assist in reaching youth populations. Through outreach activities facilitated by the YMCA's University Hill and Crestview Elementary school-based programs and the city's Youth Services Initiative (YSI), GUB has solicited ideas and information from groups of children, youth and families. GUB prepared a report that summarized the youth feedback regarding important elements to include within a park such as accessibility, safety and appearance. Additionally, the YOAB has been consulted to assist in identifying effective mechanisms to contact youth populations, promote public meetings and provide opportunities for youth feedback.

Addressing Specific Interest Areas

During the planning process, a number of roundtable discussions and focus group meetings will be held with community experts and advocates to address topics such as athletic fields, recreation facilities, place-making and design, economic sustainability, conservation and the environment, and accessibility. Additionally, discussions will also be held with staff and industry experts to provide critical information regarding design and long term operational issues associated with different facility and amenity options.

Using Data to Inform Decisions

The department recently completed a community-wide survey that assessed the public's view of current recreation opportunities, barriers to using recreation facilities, and satisfaction with current facilities. A system-wide athletic field study is also underway that will analyze current athletic field stock and field reservation policies and ultimately provide field development and enhancement recommendations as well as field policy recommendations. In the near future, the department will conduct a system-wide aquatics analysis that will inform decisions regarding potential future facilities, amenities, or programmatic elements at VCP.

PUBLIC INPUT:

On May 1, 2014, the first VCP open house was held and featured a slide presentation that summarized the work completed to date as well as a “visual preference” exercise. During the well-attended public meeting, the public had the opportunity to give important historical insight as well as provide important perspectives as to how the update plan should develop. In addition to hosting 70 community members, representatives from GUB and YOAB were also present at the first community meeting. A second public meeting will be held in late summer to present findings and gauge public opinion for different development scenarios. Several future meetings will also be scheduled with the PRAB where further public input can be provided.

ANALYSIS:

The facilitation of three athletic field focus group sessions, five roundtable group discussions, one public meeting, preliminary findings from an athletic field study, findings from a community-wide opinion survey, children and youth outreach exercises, and one PRAB session has yielded a tremendous amount of information. A summary of the findings to-date is provided (Attachment D). From these initial findings, emerging key themes and recommended programmatic elements have been identified. The initial findings focus on athletic field facilities, passive recreation opportunities and facilities, sustainability issues, and access and transportation. The Matrix of Program Elements (Attachment A) outlines each element and its support throughout the process. This data will continue to be evaluated by the project team with the intent of developing material to take to the public at the next community meeting. Secondly, the initial draft of the Athletic Field Study has been developed and delivered to staff. With this initial draft, staff has once again engaged the sports groups through a focus group work shop to review the key findings and prioritize recommendations from the study. At this meeting, PRAB is engaged in a similar exercise to review the initial findings and prioritize recommendations for implementation.

NEXT STEPS:

A second VCP community meeting will be held in late summer to further gather community feedback regarding desired park amenities and programs, to address conflicts in the data, and provide recommendations for the overall design direction and concept plan development. The data from this report will not only provide guidance about the current state of the department’s athletic fields, but will also inform decisions about future needs at VCP. Other remaining next steps before the completion of the concept plan update include the development of options and alternatives. Through each of these plan refinement stages, opportunities will be provided for public comment and feedback.

ATTACHMENT A: Matrix of Program Elements

ATTACHMENT B: Valmont City Park Planning Schedule

ATTACHMENT C: Athletic Field Study Schedule

ATTACHMENT D: Valmont City Park Key Findings

INTRODUCTION: The following table reflects a chronology of various surveys and assessments regarding program preferences for Valmont City Park from 2001 through 2014. The graphic used below illustrates the range of support for a given program element and utilizes a series of four symbols. The first symbol, a solid blue circle, represents high support for a given element. For instance, "Natural Landscapes" received strong support in the 2014 NRC Community Survey. The following symbols, a half circle, and empty circle and a dash, represent an incremental decline in support, from moderate support, to low support, and finally minimal support respectively. Professional discretion was applied in some cases. It was necessary to use professional discretion in instances:

- Where multiple program elements were combined to establish consistent naming conventions;
- Based on the number of program choices, or the degree of their variability within a single programming source.

Next, the gray boxes indicate program elements that were not present in the associated source. For instance, the Small Lake as a program was not brought up in the Round Table Discussion during the 2014 Concept Plan Update. Furthermore, the yellow and red highlighted boxes indicate the highest and lowest levels of support in relation to their respective programming source. For instance, in the 2002 Recreation Needs Assessment, Multi-Purpose Fields and an Indoor Ice Area received the highest levels of support, while Bike Racing Facilities and Youth Baseball received the lowest levels of support. When applicable, these were determined numerically. This is not a scientific representation of the data, but should help to provide insight into overall trends.

Preliminary Notes:

- It is important to note that due to length of time between and the variability of each programming source, there are many instances in which there is no direct relation between survey questions or needs assessments. In these instances, professional discretion was applied and the Potential Programming Element was absorbed into a related category.
- Ranking for the '2008 Valmont City Park Concept Plan Update Program Elements' was determined by the final program elements, in relation to the presence of the programs in the previous concepts A and B, with consideration given to PRAB recommendations and the support of City Council in the early months of 2008.
- Columns I, J and M are Qualitative Results, not Quantitative. Their findings are based on the analysis of comments, meeting minutes and field inventory.
- Regarding the 'Highest / Lowest Support in Source' color symbols, the dog park specifically was removed from ranking prior to the 2008 survey as the northern portion of Valmont City Park was not yet built. 'Biking' and all variations of it, due to the variability of the program elements, was included.
- Line A, Multi-Use Paths, was removed from the 'Highest / Lowest Support in Source' color ranking due to consistent high-ranking support.
- When there are multiple symbols in a single box, there were multiple sources that influenced the rating.
- The term "Givens" applies to the first category, "General Park Features". This implies that the associated Potential Program Elements will likely be included in any concept alternative due to their consistently strong support.

Potential Programming Sources

Potential Program Elements	A 2001 Parks and Recreation Survey	B 2002 Recreation Needs Assessment	C 2005 BVSD Athletic Facilities Needs Assessment	D 2005 Parks and Recreation Survey	E 2007 Valmont City Park Resident Survey	F 2008 Valmont City Park Concept Plan Update Program Elements	H 2014 NRC Community Survey Results	I 2014 Concept Plan Update: Round-Table Discussion Assessment	L 2014 Concept Plan Update: Community Meeting Results	N 2014 Concept Plan Update: Web-Based Visual Preference Survey Results (Comments Excluded)
General Park Features (with High Support)										
A Multi-Use Paths										
B Multi-Purpose Fields (including Outdoor Soccer Fields)	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	1 ●	2 ○
C Small Lake										
D Passive Recreation (including Picnic Areas/Structures)							○	●	●	●
E Adventure Play (including Nature Play, and Nature/Adventure Play Features)						●	3 ○	●	4 ○ ●	5 ●
F Shaded Play									○	●
G Natural Landscapes							●	○	○	○
Specialized Outdoor Recreation Amenities										
H Dedicated Field Sports (Includes: Lacrosse, Football, Rugby)							—	○	—	○
I Lighted Artificial Turf Field (including Lighted Outdoor Fields/Courts)	○				○	●	○	○	○	○
J Outdoor Performance Area (including Amphitheatre)					○	●	○	○	○	○
K Single Track Mountain Bike Trail, Cyclocross Course, or Cycling Terrain Park	○					●				
L Bike Racing Facilities (including Paved Cycling Loop)	○	○			○			○		
M Youth Baseball/Softball	○	○			○	○	○	○		○
N 18 Hole Disc Golf Course				○	○	○	○	○	●	○ ●
O Skate Park							○		○	○
P Outdoor Basketball Courts						○	○		○	○
Q Outdoor Sand Volleyball Courts							○		○	○
Major Indoor/Outdoor Facilities										
R Indoor Ice Area (including Covered Outdoor Ice Rink)	○	●			○	●	○	○		
S Indoor Performing Arts Center				○	○	○				
T Aquatic Facility (Indoor and/or Outdoor: including Swimming Complex, Lap Swimming, Water Exercise, etc.)	○	●	○	●	○	○	6 ○	○		
U Outdoor Water Park	○				○	○				
V Recreation Center (including Indoor Basketball/Volleyball and/or 'Field House')	○	●	○		○	○		7 ●		
W Tennis Complex (including Indoor and/or Outdoor, and Pickleball)	○	○			○	○	○	○	○	○
Other Park Uses (with Varying Support)										
X Cross Country Ski Trails	○	○						○		
Y Fenced Dog Park		●			○	●				
Z Community Gardens (including Farm-to-Table plots, Scenic Gardens)	○	○					○	○	○	○
AA Farmer's Market Space								○	○	
BB Prairie Dog Preservation								○		
CC Water-Based Play							○	○	○	○
DD Education Signage								○	○	○
EE Standard Play Equipment								○	○	○

- In general, soft surface (i.e., crusher fines) paths are preferred over hard surface (i.e., paved concrete) paths. However, they have been included in the same line item for the purpose of this matrix.
- Column N, 2014 Concept Plan Update: Web-Based Visual Preference Survey Results, distinguishes Multi-Use Synthetic Turf Fields from Multi-Use Turf Grass Fields, however the results were similar, and it was categorized accordingly.
- Type of Play is not specified, Source states "Children's Playgrounds"
- The term "Adventure Play" was added in the 2008 Concept Planning Process. Recent results suggest smaller-scaled adventure play playgrounds are preferred to larger-scaled playgrounds
- Source shows strong support for multiple categories: small-scale nature play, large-scale nature play, physically challenging play)
- Source states "Swimming pools (laps & open swim)" with no distinction of Indoor/Outdoor
- Source specifically states 'Field House', including reference to 'indoor, unprogrammed, unscheduled space'

Key / Legend:	
● High Support	○ Not Present In Source
○ Moderate Support	● Highest Support In Source
○ Low Support	○ Lowest Support In Source
— Minimal Support	

 The Purple Box indicates a Potential Programming Source based on Qualitative Data

2nd Matrix to be completed:

Focusing primarily on the "Specialized Outdoor Recreation Amenities" category, a second matrix will be provided by August 19th which details a series of programmatic trade offs based on alternatives determined by the Athletic Field Study Needs Assessment.

proposed project schedule

South Valmont City Park Concept Planning Boulder, Colorado		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Phase 0 Up-to 10 staff work sessions															
0.1	Up-to 10 staff work sessions	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Phase 1 Project Organization															
1.1	Start-up / city work session (final scope, roles, survey ques., etc.)	■													
1.2	Project kick-off meeting		■												
1.3	Background research		■	■											
Phase 2 Data Gathering															
2.1	Develop base maps		■	■											
2.2	Develop website content		■	■											
2.3	Review opinion survey results			■	■										
Phase 3 Opportunities, Constraints and Needs Analysis															
3.1	Analyze the site and data			■	■										
3.2	Develop questionnaire for roundtable user groups			■	■										
3.3	Stakeholder roundtables (Six, 2.5 hour sessions at site/Farmhouse)					■									
3.4	Draft the project vision, goals, and program					■									
3.5	Community meeting planning meeting						■								
3.6	Community meeting #1 (MIG leads / Includes meeting prep)							■							
Phase 4 Concept Alternatives Development															
4.1	Develop concept alts. (ID capacity, pro/con, trade-offs, etc.)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
4.2	Prepare materials for Staff Working Group meeting								1			2			
4.3	Community meeting planning and review with staff									■	■	■			
4.4	Community meeting #2 (Includes meeting prep)										■	■			
Phase 5 Recommended Concept Plan Development															
5.1	Refine and illustrate recommended concept plan							■	■	■		■	■	■	
5.2	Develop cost estimate & partnering / implementation strategies							■	■	■		■	■		
5.3	Recreation and community group meeting (Task Reallocated)														
5.4	Prepare information for the bond process (Task Reallocated)														
5.5	Community meeting planning and review with staff											■	■	■	
5.6	Community meeting #3 (Includes meeting prep)												■	■	
Phase 6 Final Concept Plan															
6.1	Complete and package the final concept plan document								■	■	■	■	■	■	■
6.2	Work w / Parks Foundation / operating agmnt. (Task Reallocated)														
6.3	Council meeting to adopt Master Plan (Task Reallocated)														

proposed project schedule

South Valmont City Park Concept Planning Boulder, Colorado		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Athletic Field Study Schedule Boulder, Colorado		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Phase 1: Project Initiation and Data Analysis															
1.1	Project Initiation Teleconference and Background Data Transfer	■													
1.2	Existing Data Analysis	■	■												
1.3	Sports Group Questionnaire		■	■	■										
1.4	Sports Group Focus Groups			■											
1.5	Staff Working Group Meeting (schedule with 1.4)			■											
1.6	Best Practices/Case Studies			■	■										
1.7	Scenario Development, Analysis and Findings				■	■									
1.8	Project Management and Coordination	■	■	■	■	■									
Phase 2: Athletic Field Plan Development and Refinement															
2.1	Draft Recommendations and Policies				■	■									
2.2	Sports Group Meeting (MIG provides agenda and key findings)									■					
2.3	Staff Working Group Meeting (teleconference)					■									
2.4	Draft Athletic Field Plan					■	■								
2.5	Athletic Field Plan Presentation						■	■							
2.6	Final Athletic Field Plan														■
2.7	Project Management and Coordination				■	■	■	■							

Valmont City Park

I. Existing 2008 Master Plan Concept Phase 3B



LEGEND

- multi-use path network
- multi-modal trail connections
- nordic trail
- easy/moderate bike trail (cyclocross race course/ ~2 miles)
- moderate/difficult bike trail (singletrack with features/ ~.6 miles)
- existing vegetation
- proposed vegetation
- building envelopes (uses to be determined)
- existing structures
- picnic/shade structures



II. Site Analysis . Existing Natural Features

LEGEND

100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN

PRAIRIE DOG COLONY BOUNDARY (INCLUDING PARKS, CITY, AND PRIVATE COLONIES)

TOPOGRAPHY (1' CONTOURS)

DECIDUOUS TREES (CLUSTERED; UNSPECIFIED)

EVERGREEN TREES (CLUSTERED; UNSPECIFIED)

INDIVIDUAL DECIDUOUS TREE

INDIVIDUAL EVERGREEN TREE

MAJOR TREES

RIPARIAN VEGETATION

DRAINAGEWAYS / DITCHES

CREEKS

MAN-MADE FEATURES

OFF-SITE BUILDINGS

ON-SITE BUILDINGS

PARKING AND ROADS

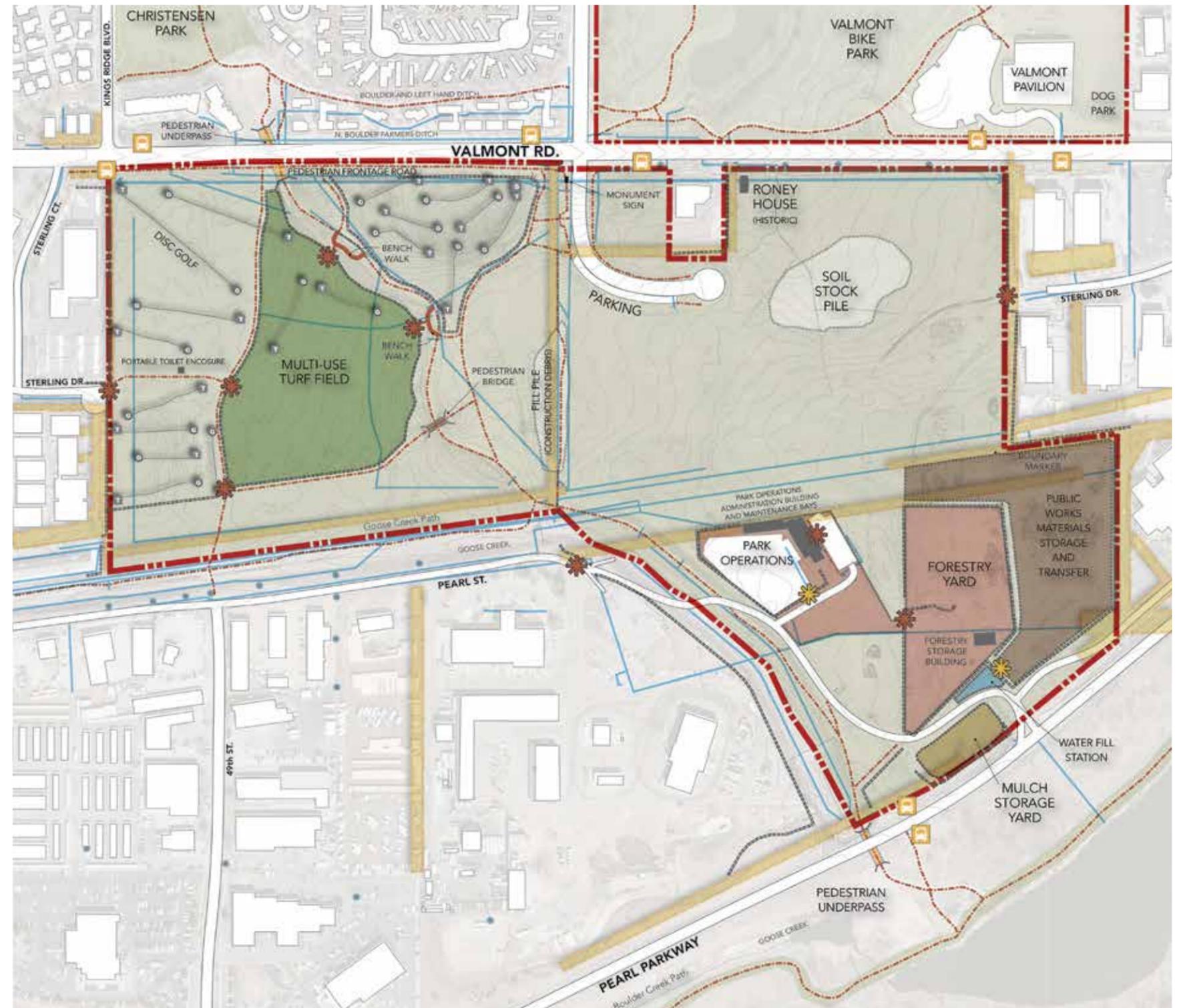
PARK BOUNDARY



II. Site Analysis . Existing Man-Made Features

LEGEND

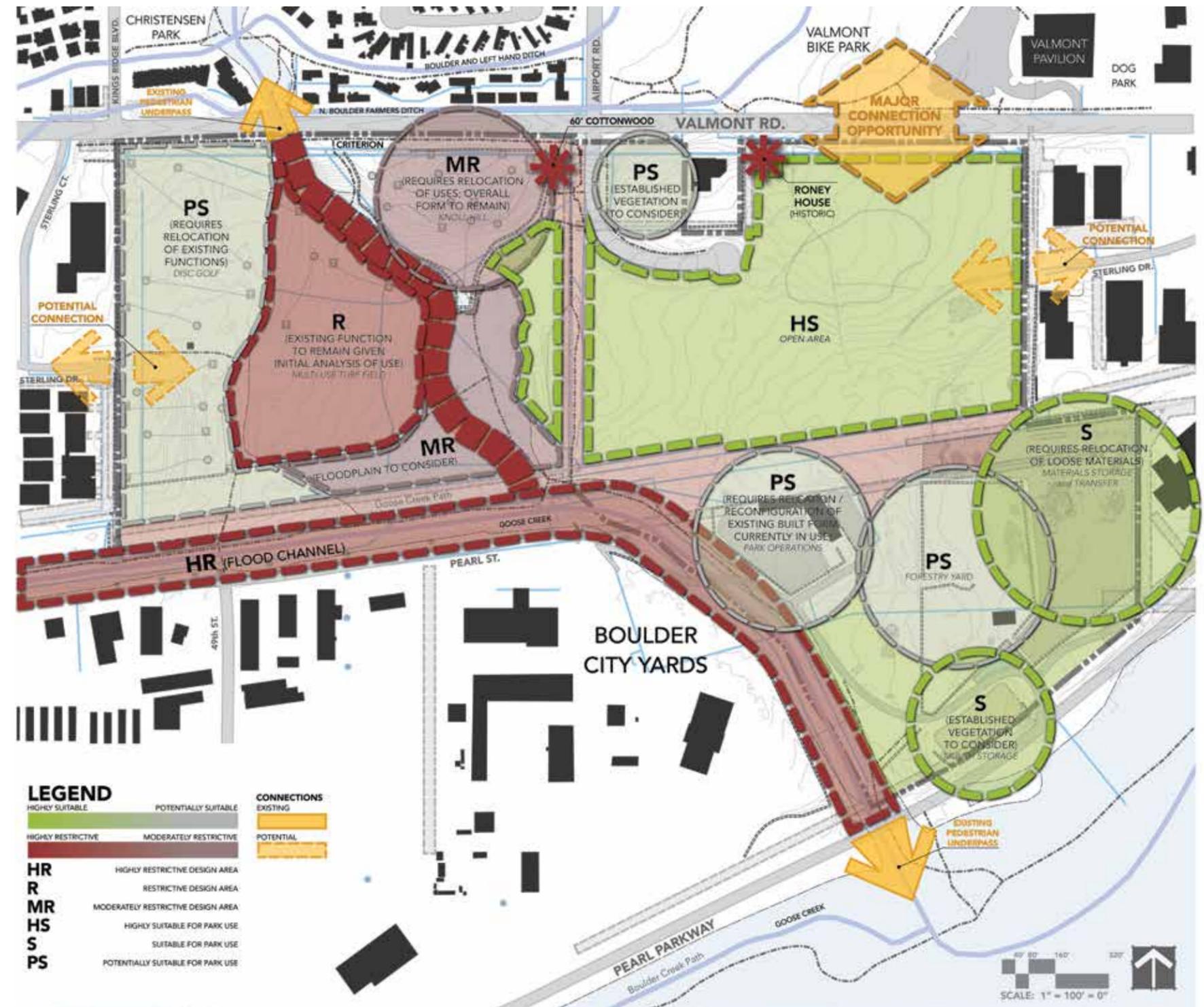
-  PUBLIC WORKS MATERIALS STORAGE AND TRANSFER
-  MULCH STORAGE YARD
-  SOIL STOCK PILE
-  PARKING AND ROADS
-  MULTI-USE TURF FIELD
-  PEDESTRIAN POINTS OF ENTRY (GATE)
-  VEHICULAR POINTS OF ENTRY (GATE)
-  DISC GOLF
-  WALKING PATHS
(INCLUDING CONCRETE, CRUSHER FINES AND DIRT SOCIAL PATHS)
-  UTILITIES (ALL)
-  EASEMENTS
(BOTH SURFACE AND UTILITIES EASEMENTS)
-  FENCE
-  PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS
-  PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
-  OFF-SITE BUILDINGS
-  ON-SITE BUILDINGS
-  UTILITY POLE
-  PARK BOUNDARY
-  RTD BUS STOP



II. Site Analysis . Opportunities and Constraints

Key Findings

- The park's size and features are generally well suited for a major city park.
- The Wonderland Creek Channel is site's most valuable natural resource.
- The Multi-Use Field and Park and Forestry Operations Building represent significant investments that will require careful consideration if converted to another use.
- The site has two major regional trails and a network of on-site trails.
- Areas occupied by the Goose Creek Channel and utility easements will have limitations for park use.





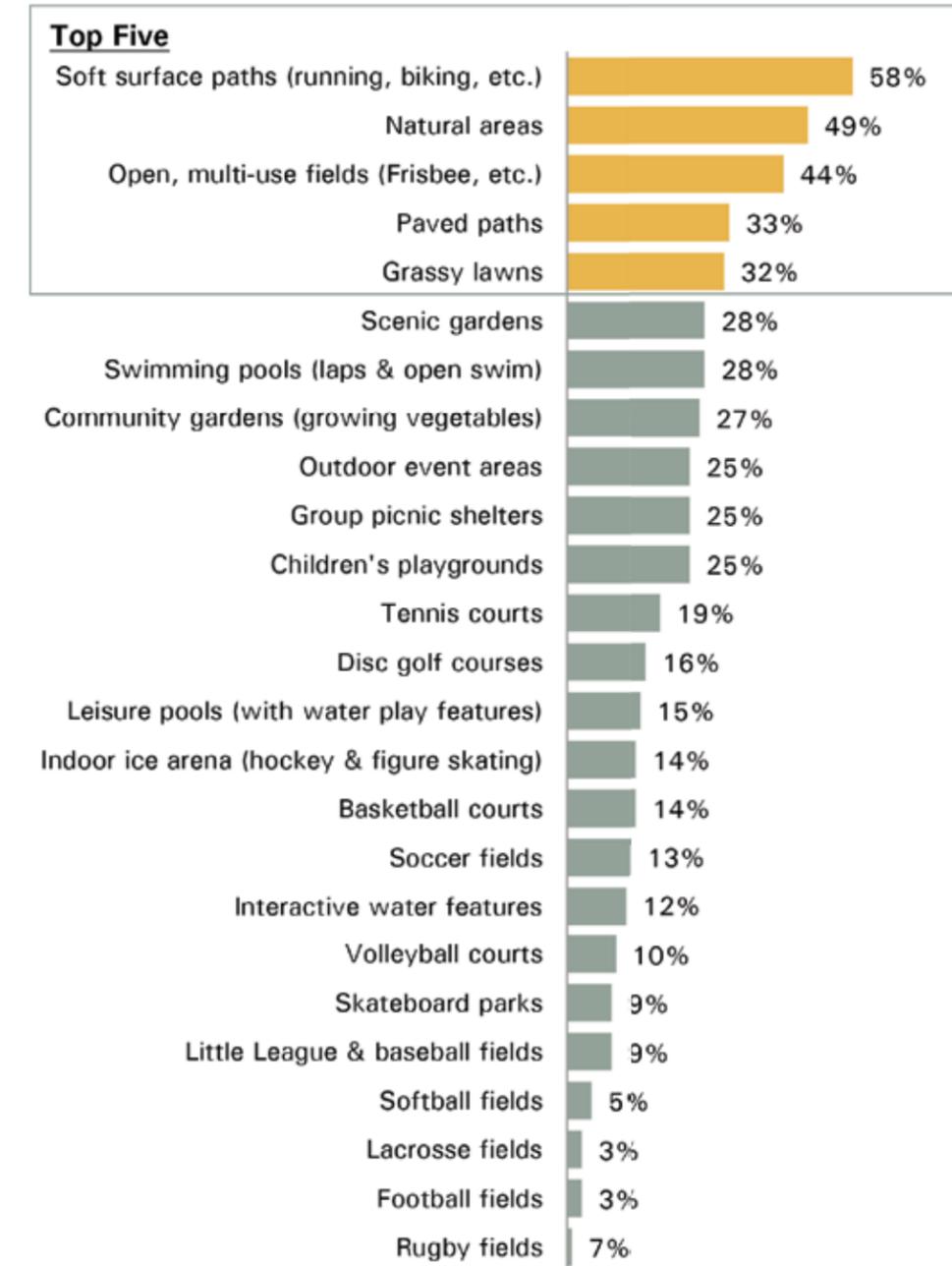
II. Community Survey Results

Key Findings

- Most residents are satisfied with the park and recreation facilities in the City.
- Boulder’s park and recreation facilities are well used. Over 80% have used paths, natural areas, and grassy lawns at least once in last year.
- Multi-use turf sees heavy use and is something most residents would like to see in the park.
- Scenic and community gardens, swimming pools, children’s playgrounds, picnic shelters, and outdoor event areas were considered desirable facilities.
- Tennis and volleyball courts, leisure pool, and disc golf were next on the list of desired facilities for Valmont City Park.

Survey Sample

Which recreation activities or facilities would you most like to see developed at south Valmont City Park? Please check up to 5.

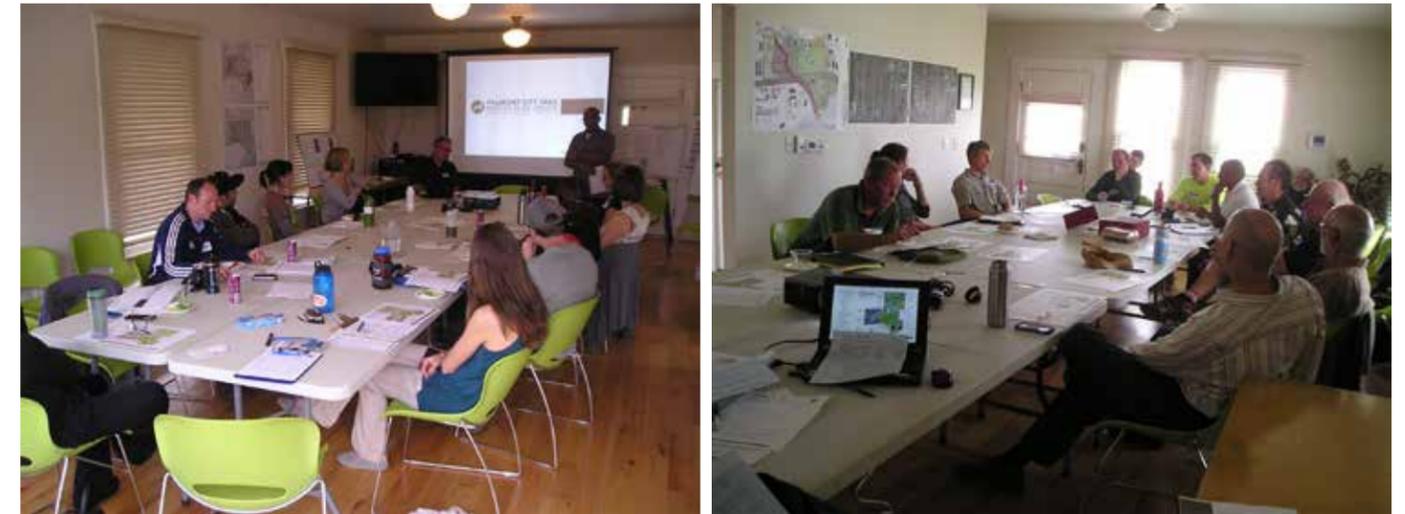


II. Round Table Summaries

Key Findings

- Valmont City Park should be multi-generational, multi-use, and accessible to all, including alternative modes of travel.
- A balanced park is important: Active vs. passive recreation / community-based amenities vs. facilities that would have a regional / national draw.
- Most felt VCP is Boulder’s last chance to address active recreation needs.
- Partnerships between the City, School District, CU, and private business are very desirable and should be encouraged.
- Sustainability for natural systems, park systems, and maintenance is important.

Images from the Meeting





II. Community Meeting no. 1 Summary Key Findings

- Disc golf users would like a tournament-level course with various amenities. Many noted City Council approval of a course earlier this year.
- Many attendees requested more sports fields and/or sports field complex (soccer, lacrosse, ballfields) of tournament quality to meet the needs of organized leagues for both adults and children. Currently, facilities are too few, or owned by schools with limited access.
- Many attendees requested a dedicated track or connective trail system for running/walking and training, as many school tracks are unavailable for public use, and Boulder's running population is large.
- Other amenities included more pedestrian/biking connections, archery range, picnic/social gathering areas, pavilion, facilities for year-round sports (cross-country skiing), good directional signage, large aquatics facility, tennis courts, and a children's environment"

Station Boards Samples

The station boards provide a comprehensive overview of the project's history, context, and findings. Key elements include:

- 2008 Master Plan Highlights:** A timeline of past projects and a map of the park's layout.
- Relevant City Plans:** Links to other city planning documents like the 2014 Parks & Recreation Department Master Plan.
- Community Survey Results:** A detailed breakdown of survey data, including a word cloud for 'Boulder park' and various charts.
- City-wide Athletic Field Study:** Photos of athletes and a summary of field usage and demand.
- Youth Engagement:** Information about the Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB) and its mission.
- Key Findings Summary:** A central hub diagram connecting the survey, field study, and other inputs to the final plan update.



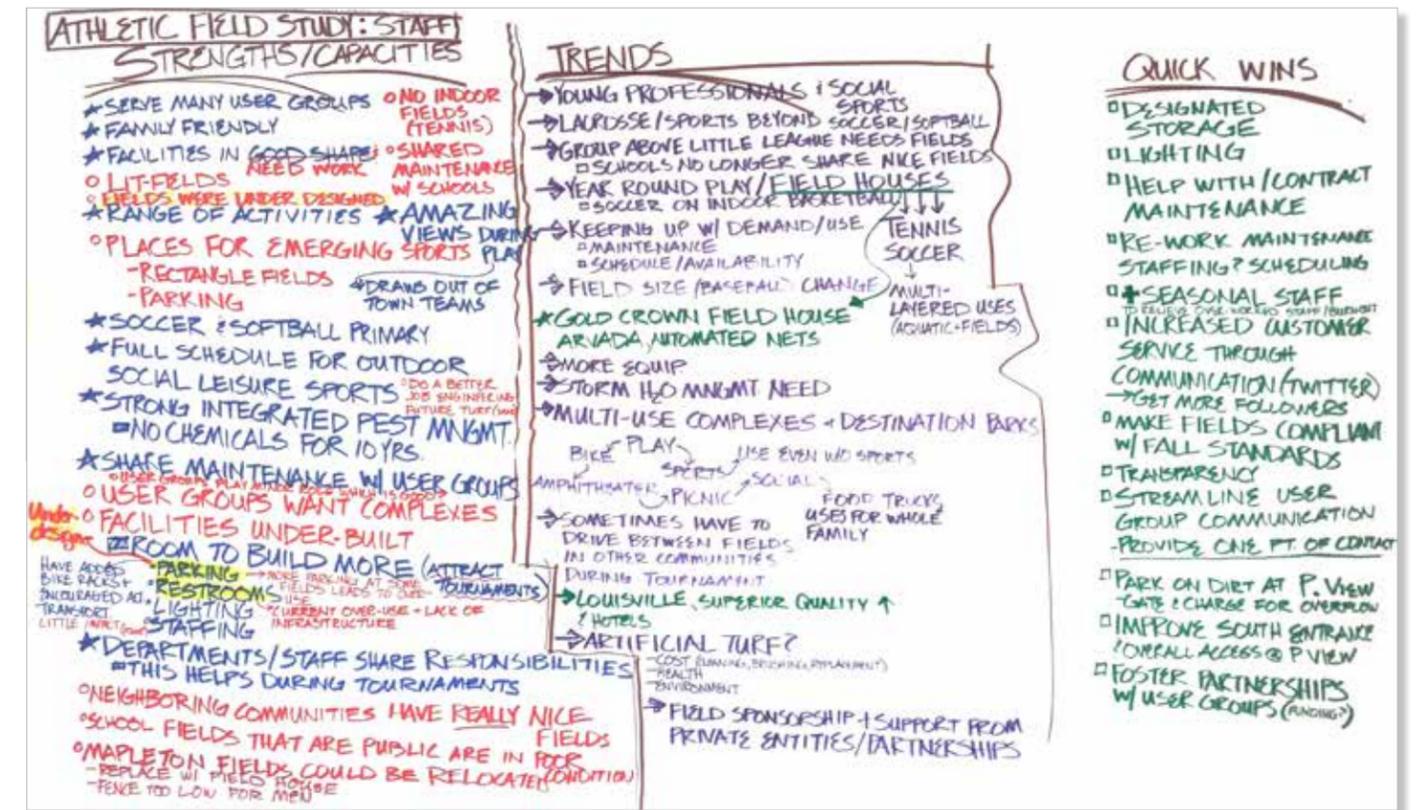
II. Athletic Field Study . Focus Group Summary

Organized Sports Key Findings

Ideas to Consider for the Athletic Field Study:

- Reinvest in existing assets to ensure they remain viable.
- Upgrade the quality of some existing City sites, adding restrooms where needed and addressing the safety and usability of School District sites overall.
- Make athletic fields/complexes usable for multiple sports and multiple age groups. The use of portable pitcher's mounds was one example given. Design standards for capital improvements should prioritize flexibility.
- Address the lack of baseball fields in Boulder available for youth over age 13 and young adults.
- Increase the availability of fields for youth and non-City providers.
- Ensure that a diversity of field sports, skill levels, and age groups are supported in Boulder. This may require a shift in field allocation policies and Park & Recreation Department priorities.
- Consider ways to engage volunteers to assist with field activities, such as a Spring Cleanup volunteer day.
- Improve consistency among field providers in field rental costs, allocation policies, etc. Example: BVSD costs are higher than City's for lower quality fields.
- Explore the UC's South Campus (120 acres) as a place for athletic field development, for community and university use.
- Consider field houses or even field "bubbles" to support year round play.
- Be aware of the drawbacks of private provider facilities to support overall community athletic field demands.
- Be aware of the trend of regional superteams and the impact on local leagues.
- Be aware of the current shortage of indoor warehouse space, due to the legalization of marijuana in Colorado.
- Address the lack of trust due to the limited improvement of athletic fields in Boulder over the past ten to twenty years.
- Capitalize on the City of Boulder's ability to convene multiple entities to achieve big ideas, as exemplified by the recent exploration of public power.
- Convey the importance of athletic fields and field sports as part of Boulder's recreation mix with the Athletic Field Study report, which should be designed to speak not only to staff and sports groups but also to key decision-makers. The resulting report should motivate them to act on the study's recommendations.

Notes



Staff Key Findings

- Explore field houses and other methods to support year-round play.
- Explore multi-use complexes as a means of streamlining operations and programming, as well as providing better facilities.
- Provide a better basic level of service (especially with regard to restrooms) at scheduled field locations. Consider storage and lighting, as well.
- Address parking and the realities of parking demand given today's family structure.
- Explore relocating/shifting existing fields (e.g., Mapleton) to accommodate other athletic field opportunities.
- Explore whether Boulder Parks & Recreation could serve as a single point of contact or scheduling entity, including streamlined communication.
- Improve field quality overall to be more consistent with Boulder's identity, or at least to be comparable to neighboring communities.