

TOPICAL REPORT: CHARTER, MISSION & VISION

Purpose of This Report

This Topical Report represents subject-specific research findings that will ultimately inform the content of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The information contained in this report does not necessarily constitute the final narrative that will be presented in the plan. After the findings of this report are reviewed and deemed to be accurate and sufficiently comprehensive, they will be fully synthesized with research from other topical areas as part of the Needs Assessment process. The final content of the Master Plan may reflect significant portions of this report, but will not consist entirely of it. Table 1 depicts the progress of research and planning for this topical area.

Table 1: Topical Area Research Progress

Development Phase	Notes
✓ Research methodology approved	
✓ Preliminary research and analysis complete	
✓ Data gaps identified and remaining research assigned	Some relevant data has not been obtained and/or verified. Instances of this are noted. When applicable, these issues will be addressed in the Needs Assessment.
✓ All data obtained	
✓ Preliminary community plan integration review	
✓ Preliminary department leadership review	
✓ Technical (TAG) review	
✓ Board (PRAB) review	
✓ Department leadership review	Approved by KK (11/13)
<input type="checkbox"/> Topical Report research and analysis complete	
<input type="checkbox"/> Synthesis for needs assessment and community plan integration	

Summary

The organizational purpose and intent of the City of Boulder’s Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) are captured in several separate but complementary statements from different guidance and governing documents. The most fundamental guidance is found in the Boulder City Charter. Stemming from this foundation are the department’s mission, vision, and goal statements. Each is presented below.

City Charter, Article XI, Section 155

Under the direction, supervision, and control of the city manager, the department of parks and recreation:

- (a) Shall supervise, administer, and maintain all park property and recreation facilities.

- (b) Shall supervise, administer, and execute all park and recreation programs, plans, functions, and activities of the city.
- (c) Shall prepare and submit to the parks and recreation advisory board written recommendations on those matters where this article requires a recommendation from said board prior to council or department action.
- (d) May, at the request of the parks and recreation advisory board, prepare and submit to the board information and recommendations on such park and recreation matters as are not provided for by (c) above.
- (e) May request advice on any park and recreation matter from the parks and recreation advisory board. (Added by Ord. No. 2392 [1961], § 1, adopted by electorate on January 31, 1961.)

Mission statement

The mission of the City of Boulder's Parks and Recreation Department is to provide safe, clean, and beautiful parks and facilities and high-quality leisure activities for the community. These services shall enhance residents' health and well-being and promote economic vitality for long-term community sustainability. We will accomplish this through creative leadership, environmentally sustainable practices, and the responsible use of available resources.

Vision statement

Strive for excellence in our parks and recreation system to reflect and serve the unique values and qualities of our community.

Department goals from 2006 Master Plan

- (1) Maintain and protect our parks and recreation facilities and programs
- (2) Become economically sustainable
- (3) Fill in the gaps in our parks and recreation system
- (4) Engage a broader range of the community, especially underrepresented populations
- (5) Be a community-wide leader in environmental sustainability
- (6) Enhance our quality of life

Analysis

An overarching goal of the 2012 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is to investigate the department's existing role as a provider of public services in the Boulder community and to make recommendations to allow for greater effectiveness. A critical step in preparing such an analysis is understanding what is expected, both formally and informally, from the department, as well as understanding how these expectations align with similar or related pursuits of other entities. The City Charter articulates the most fundamental expectations of the department in general, which could be summarized in abstract as these two charges: manage parks and recreation facilities and programs, and engage the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) by providing recommendations or requesting advice (in the case of and per the appropriate process). To that end, in order for the Master Plan Update to be successful, it must identify ways to maintain or enhance the department's management capacity and utilization of the PRAB.

A first step in achieving this success involves reviewing the organizational mission and vision statements to ensure that they fit within the framework created by the charter. Mission statements, which are typically stable, long-term, and enduring, describe the general purpose of an organization using the charter framework as it is updated by the community's contemporary needs. Mission statements answer the question, "What does the organization do?"

Vision statements, which are also long-term yet regularly reviewed, focus on the future and describe the desired accomplishment of the organization. Like mission statements, they align with charter mandates to achieve and maintain a desirable future that is shared by the community, policy makers, advisory boards, and the professional staff of the BPRD. Vision statements answer the question, "Where do we want the organization to be?" A best practice utilized by many park and recreation departments is to review and update these statements to reflect current conditions and changes in community need approximately every three to five years.

The Parks and Recreation Department's current mission and vision as found in the 2006 Master Plan are analyzed further below. The strength of each is found in its first sentence. See the table below (emphasis added). The mission is effective in stating that in order to fulfill its charter, the department will provide *parks, facilities, and activities*. The vision identifies the desired accomplishment as a *reflection and service* of Boulder's *values and qualities*.

Mission ("What do we do?")	Vision ("Where do we want to be?")
<p>"...provide safe, clean, and beautiful <i>parks</i> and <i>facilities</i> and high-quality leisure <i>activities</i> for the community."</p>	<p>"...excellence in our parks and recreation system to <i>reflect</i> and <i>serve</i> the unique <i>values</i> and <i>qualities</i> of our community."</p>

Further analysis of the mission and vision statements suggests that some wording is unspecific and difficult to operationalize (e.g., excellence) and that the content included in both statements appears to be goals, objectives, or methods to be used in attaining the mission. Generally, descriptions of *how* an organization will fulfill its mission and vision are not contained in the mission and vision statements but are instead expressed as goals, objectives, or actions. Operationally, statements of "how" (i.e., operationalize how something is to be done) tend to be nested and hierarchical. Goals are typically higher-order expressions, while objectives specify what is needed to achieve goals, and actions identify individual steps. The six goal statements from the 2006 Master Plan range in specificity, and by virtue of the passage of time since they were developed, arguably fall short in encompassing the array of areas of responsibility that befall the department.

Discussion

The Master Plan Update should include a fundamental review of the mission, vision, and goal statements of the department. These should be revised to reflect the current needs of the community, available resources, and public expectations of the department. Specifically,

revisions should focus significantly on the mission and vision statements, modifying them as necessary to fit the framework from the charter, and create a shared desired future for parks and recreation in the community that includes the values and qualities of the community that the department can contribute to most.

Revisions to the BPRD vision and mission should consider the full landscape of related service providers in the community. It would be ineffective and inefficient for the department to establish a purpose or to set goals that significantly overlap with services offered by another public provider, unless an explicit decision is made to do so. The following table presents mission statements of related agencies. The master-planning process will help find ways in which BPRD can supplement, rather than supplant, these complementary public services.

Agency	Mission
Open Space and Mountain Parks, City of Boulder	...[P]reserves and protects the natural environment and land resources that characterize Boulder. We foster appreciation and use that sustain the natural values of the land for current and future generations.
Housing and Human Services, City of Boulder	...[C]reate a healthy, socially thriving and inclusive community by providing and supporting housing and human services to Boulder residents in need.
Library and the Arts, City of Boulder	...[E]nhance the personal and professional growth of Boulder residents and contribute to the development and sustainability of an engaged community through free access to ideas, information, cultural experiences and educational opportunities.
Transportation Division, Public Works, City of Boulder	...[F]acilitates the mobility of people and goods by developing and maintaining a safe, efficient, environmentally sound and balanced transportation system with emphasis on transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular transportation and street and bikeway maintenance.
Local Environmental Action Division (LEAD), City of Boulder	...[E]ngage and assist the community to reduce waste and energy use through education, services and economic assistance. We develop city policy, offer educational programs, and partner with citizens, businesses and other organizations to protect Boulder's environment.
Boulder County Public Health	...[P]rotect, promote, and enhance the health and well-being of all people and the environment in Boulder County.
Boulder County Parks	...[C]onserve natural, cultural and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect

sound resource management and community values.

These goal statements provide more detail on how the mission will be served. Similarly to the mission/vision statements, revisions to the goals should focus on the core values of the department, which may include the following based on community values: promoting public health, social capital, urban ecosystem awareness, physical connectivity, and community connectivity, in addition to the citywide established goals of promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

A broader context for establishing the department's statements of purpose can be found among related agencies' planning documents. A separate topical report reviews several strategic and master plans that help shape the community and help inform the role that the Boulder Parks and Recreation Department should fill.

Further analysis of the department's mission and the PRAB charter may also be appropriate in the context of comparing it to other "benchmark" communities. This secondary level of research may be appropriate in preparing for City Council study sessions, community group meetings (such as Pathfinders), and summits, if a determination is made that the mission and charter contents need revision and updating.