Why do we need an OSMP Master Plan?

The year 2017 marks 50 years since Boulder residents passed the nation’s first city tax to fund open space. The city now stewards more than 45,000 acres of public land to:

- Preserve and protect unique natural, cultural and agricultural resources;
- Ensure open space stewardship for current and future generations; and
- Help the community enjoy and connect with its diverse landscapes.

How will the next 50 years be different than the last 50? Less land is now available for acquisition in Boulder Valley. Sales tax increments that fund acquisitions are scheduled to sunset over time. Population in the Front Range is growing; demographics are changing and visitor use is increasing. At the same time, climate change and invasive species are affecting our ability to conserve important landscapes. Resilience to natural disasters is on the minds of many. And the desire to un-plug, exercise and connect with natural landscapes is increasingly important - for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. These and other topics like the following will inform conversations with the community about the future of OSMP:

- ECOLOGICAL HEALTH
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- BIODIVERSITY
- NATURAL DISASTERS
- RESILIENCE
- WATER
- WORKING LANDSCAPES
- POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS
- STEWARDSHIP AND ENJOYMENT
- HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
- YOUTH AND FAMILIES
- ACCESSIBILITY
- INCLUSION
- FINANCIAL HEALTH
- AND MANY MORE . . .

What other topics may be important for the future? What are community values, hopes and concerns for these beloved lands? How can OSMP anticipate future changes and uphold community values and open space purposes in the city charter? How can we emphasize and ground management priorities in reality?

To help answer these questions, Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) has resource and area plans and policies in place; but no system-wide plan that connects the dots for staff and the community. This inclusive, community-based effort will connect the dots and satisfy citywide expectations that departments complete master plans to guide service delivery. The OSMP Master Plan will establish an integrated, strategic approach to OSMP management over the next decade and beyond.
What guides OSMP? The City Charter.

The plan will help integrate and prioritize needs across all open space purposes defined in the City Charter. The values inherent in the charter purposes will be incorporated into the development of strategic focus areas or themes in the master plan. These themes will guide OSMP management over the next decade. The OSMP Master Plan will not recommend changes to the City Charter.

According to Section 176 of the charter, open space land shall be acquired, maintained, preserved, retained, and used only for the following purposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARTER PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUMMARY TITLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Preservation or restoration of natural areas characterized by or including terrain, geologic formations, flora, or fauna that are unusual, spectacular, historically important, scientifically valuable, or unique, or that represent outstanding or rare examples of native species</td>
<td>Natural areas and features or species of special value</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Preservation of water resources in their natural or traditional state, scenic areas or vistas, wildlife habitats, or fragile ecosystems</td>
<td>Water, landscapes and ecosystems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Preservation of land for passive recreational use, such as hiking, photography or nature studies, and, if specifically designated, bicycling, horseback riding, or fishing</td>
<td>Passive recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>(d) Preservation of agricultural uses and land suitable for agricultural production</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>(e) Utilization of land for shaping the development of the city, limiting urban sprawl, and disciplining growth</td>
<td>Limiting sprawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Utilization of non-urban land for spatial definition of urban areas</td>
<td>Urban shaping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Utilization of land to prevent encroachment on floodplains</td>
<td>Floodplain protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Preservation of land for its aesthetic or passive recreational value and its contribution to the quality of life of the community.</td>
<td>Aesthetics and quality of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does this relate to existing plans?

The OSMP Master Plan will incorporate broad direction in the City Charter and inform future updates to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and other city and regional guidance. It will also confirm current strategies and policies in existing OSMP plans. As needed, the Master Plan will also make general recommendations to update existing plans or conduct new planning and design efforts to align service delivery with broad guidance in the Master Plan. The Master Plan will also provide direction for some on-the-ground priority projects and operations (see page 5).

What do we hope to achieve?

- Articulate **community values** to help focus OSMP operations around key management topics and measures of success.
- Provide **clarity for the community about OSMP priorities.**
- Build understanding and agreement around policy questions, trends and opportunities.
- Define and prioritize strategies that address all OSMP purposes in the City Charter.
- Develop financial scenarios to anticipate future funding and staffing needs.
- Support the development of realistic, coordinated work plans and budgets.
- **Build excitement** and establish commitments around future projects.
What will the OSMP Master Plan include?

The OSMP Master Plan will provide high-level, strategic policy guidance for the department, so the amount of detail will be kept broad. Updated or new plans that emerge after the Master Plan will provide more specific, on-the-ground guidance.

What Will Be Included

- Confirmation of existing citywide and OSMP plans and policies and, if needed, policy guidance to update existing plans;
- Current conditions and future trends;
- Overarching topics of community and council interest over the last 5 to 10 years;
- Focus areas (plan themes) that are tied to the City Charter and community values, as well as current and future trends;
- An OSMP-specific dashboard of broad metrics that relate to the focus areas as well as the city’s Sustainability Framework;
- Strategic priorities that tie to focus areas or themes and provide direction for the department;
- General estimates for up-front and ongoing costs including staffing needs and long-term operation and maintenance costs; and
- Economic analysis and financial scenarios to guide prioritization,

After the Master Plan has been approved, staff will develop an implementation plan to guide short-, mid-, and long-term actions that help implement the Master Plan. This framework would include:

- An enhanced approach to planning and acquisition, including updates to existing plans as well as new planning/design studies;
- A mix of on-going programs and one-time projects that advance master plan strategies, including capital improvements, operations, maintenance, research and monitoring;
- Consideration of life cycle costs; and
- Integrated operations, work-planning and budgeting across service areas and workgroups.

The Master Plan will NOT include:

- Recommendations to change the voter-approved City Charter, including sections that define open space purposes; or
- Site-specific recommendations such as:
  - changes to management area designations for certain properties;
  - the exact placement of trails or other facilities;
  - allowable activities or visitor use levels for specific locations; or
  - specific desired conditions for ecological systems or visitor experience.
What’s in it for the community?

These lands are your lands. City staff need to know what's important to you and what you’d like to see in the future. How would you like us to manage your beloved public lands now and into the future? We’ll also share some important information along the way about our current and future conditions to help shape our conversations. We hope to learn from each other over the next two years!

The engagement strategy for the OSMP Master Plan focuses on building or enhancing long-term relationships with a diverse cross-section of our residents and visitors both during and beyond the master planning process.

Staff intends the engagement process to be:

- Democratic and fair
- Inclusive and welcoming
- Creative and fun
- Predictable and structured
How will the community help shape the OSMP Master Plan?

Many of the practices described in this document reflect a change or enhancement in how OSMP has led plans in the past. To help enhance public processes across the city, City Council formed the Public Participation Working Group (PPWG) in 2016. City staff then incorporated recommendations from PPWG into the Engagement Strategic Framework (ESF), adopted by City Council in November 2017. The OSMP Master Plan process will pilot this emerging approach, and staff will work closely with the City of Boulder’s Engagement Manager to adapt as needed. The diagram on page 8 illustrates alignment with the nine steps to good engagement.

In addition, the ESF commits the city to following an engagement spectrum to help identify the role of the community in project planning and decision-making processes. The table below describes each level of engagement. For the OSMP Master Plan, each stage of the project requires a slightly different level of engagement. On page 10, a timeline graphic explains which level will be used at each stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORM</th>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>INVOLVE</th>
<th>COLLABORATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding a problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</td>
<td>To obtain public feedback on public analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</td>
<td>To work directly with the public throughout a process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</td>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of a preferred solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will keep you informed.</td>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and share feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.</td>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are reflected in any alternatives and share feedback on how the public input influenced the decision.</td>
<td>We will work together with you to formulate solutions and to incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</td>
</tr>
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How will this planning process align with citywide engagement processes?

Aligning with City of Boulder’s 9 Steps to Good Engagement*:

1. Define the Why Before Embarking
2. Determine Who is Affected
3. Create a Public Engagement Plan
4. Share a Foundation of Information and Inquiry
5. Identity Options
6. Evaluate Ideas
7. Make a Decision
8. Communicate Decision and Rationale
9. Reflect and Evaluate

Develop three financial scenarios to help prioritize strategies:
1. Expected funding (fiscally constrained)
2. Some increase in funding
3. Unlimited funding

Develop purpose statement in consultation with decision makers
Prepare System Overview Report on current and future conditions to further describe the need for the plan
Community network analysis, with input from staff and Process Committee
Seek OSBT and City Council support for Project Management Plan
System Overview Report: Past, current, and future conditions
Community values, hopes and concerns for the future

Prepare System Overview Report on current and future conditions to further describe the need for the plan

How will this planning process align with citywide engagement processes?

*The steps in this process may evolve as the city’s engagement framework evolves.
How can the public be involved?

OSMP staff and consultants have integrated the city’s core engagement principles to help structure the engagement strategy for the OSMP Master Plan. These include:

Defining a clear purpose

- Staff drafted the purpose statement on page 1 of this project management plan.
- To kick off engagement, staff will also share information on current conditions and future trends to build a shared understanding and inform plan development.

Planning for thoughtful, respectful engagement

- The City Manager’s Office established a Process Committee to engage decision-makers in developing, supporting and ensuring best practices for the planning and engagement process for the OSMP Master Plan. It consists of two members of City Council and two members of the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT).
- With input from the Process Committee and OSBT, this project management plan reflects the city’s commitment to thorough and thoughtful planning to guide engagement.
- Staff also plans to engage youth, which can foster respectful dialogue among all parties.

Inviting all voices to the table

Staff intend to engage members of the public where they typically go, in addition to inviting them to join more traditional public meetings. This inclusive strategy involves:

- Fostering relationships with underrepresented groups;
- Attending festivals, events, and trailheads;
- Partnering with Growing Up Boulder and the Youth Opportunities Advisory Board;
- Using digital engagement platforms when available; and
- Making translation services and assistive devices available as needed.

Implementing a trustworthy, transparent process

- Structuring clear windows of engagement for the public, and analysis periods when staff is working to incorporate feedback between engagement periods (see page 9);
- Demonstrating feedback loops and clear decision-making (see page 10); and
- Offering participants ways to evaluate engagement efforts.
**OSMP MASTER PLAN TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE ONE: PREPARATION</th>
<th>PHASE TWO: MASTER PLANNING</th>
<th>PHASE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PREP</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CONSULTING THE PUBLIC:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE TWO: MASTER PLANNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>PHASE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INVOLVING THE PUBLIC:</strong> Building on the City Charter and the System Overview Report, broad and inclusive community engagement begins by exploring the values, hopes and concerns of our residents and visitors.</td>
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<td><strong>FOCUS AREAS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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*Engagement windows* will include a range of opportunities to provide input for members of the public, Open Space Board of Trustees, Planning Board and City Council. After a certain point, each engagement window will close and input will not be considered until the next window opens, so that staff has time to analyze and incorporate ideas. The windows shown here are approximate only as specific dates for engagement cannot be confirmed until City Council approves the Project Management Plan. To align with the city’s Engagement Strategic Framework, staff also selected the appropriate level of engagement for each window, to describe the community’s role in planning and decision-making. For more information, please see page 6.
How will decisions be made?

Throughout the process, staff will engage members of the public, the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT), Planning Board and City Council at key milestones to gather input and provide guidance. As the process draws to a close, the following steps will produce a final OSMP Master Plan.

**Inputs to decision making**

- City Charter and other laws, policies, plans
- Community values, ideas and feedback
- Best available data and research*
- Staff and consultant expertise
- Available funding and staff resources

**Recommendations**

1. **Step 1:** Staff develops Draft Plan
2. **Step 2:** OSBT recommends Draft Plan to City Council
3. **Step 3:** Planning Board recommends Draft Plan to City Council

**Final decision**

City Council approves Final OSMP Master Plan

*OSMP has and will share a great deal of data and information to support the master plan process. However, if available data and research are not adequate for making policy-level decisions, recommendations to close data gaps will be included as strategies in the Master Plan.

Where can I get more information?

The project website is under development at this address: [www.OSMPMasterPlan.org](http://www.OSMPMasterPlan.org). At this time, you can sign up for the email list there and find some additional background information. Please continue to check back for more updates as the public kick-off draws near in the first quarter of 2018.