

## CITY OF BOULDER OPEN SPACE AND MOUNTAIN PARKS MASTER PLAN PRIORITIZATION FOCUS GROUP REPORT

MARCH 16, 2019

### Introduction

This report reflects the findings from a focus group, held on March 16, 2019 with Spanish-speaking people living in and around Boulder. This focus group was coordinated and conducted jointly by the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks and El Centro AMISTAD.

The objective of planning and convening a focus group of people from the Spanish-speaking Latinx and Spanish-speaking community was to hear what their priorities are for open space to inform the development of the City of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Master Plan as the department prepares for a decrease in funding. In 2020, open space sales tax changes will result in a 30-percent decrease in the amount of citywide sales tax dedicated to OSMP. Therefore, the focus group included an exercise where participants were asked to prioritize potential management activities by allocating funding to the activities they felt were most important and useful to open space management over the next 10 years.

### Demographic Data

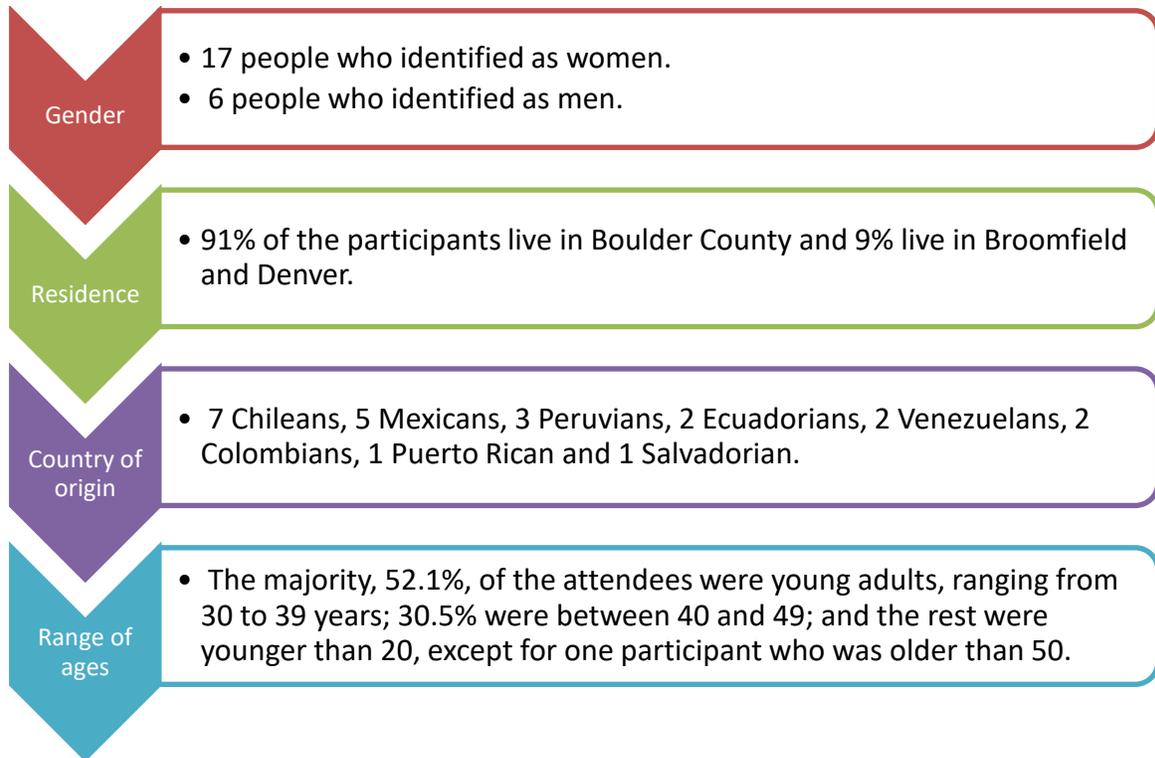
Twenty three **people from different countries in Latin America such as Chile, Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, and others attended the focus group.**

The demographic variables represented in this project were:

- Gender
- Age
- Place of residence

- Country of origin

In the following graphic we describe the attendees.



In our opinion, one of the transcendental aspects of the focus group was the diverse multicultural representation of the Spanish-speaking community living in Boulder and the surrounding areas as well as the different combination of socio educational level compared to the previous groups.

## Findings

The suggested method by OSMP for collecting information from the participants was to assign a budget of \$100 for each participant, represented by 10 stones each worth \$10. Each participant was then asked to allocate their \$100 worth of stones across ten potential open space management activities, based on which activities participants felt were most important.

During this exercise, AMISTAD in collaboration with OSMP fostered a deep conversation with the participants, while sharing information, about all the different subjects so all participants could allocate their “stones” in their sections of choice. These conversations were very productive and reflected the participants’ opinions and thoughts about how important education is. The main

conversation was around how education, amongst other strategies, can help address urgent climate matters.

In general, **the management activities that received the most funding (or stones) were related to the restoration of ecosystems and education of youth. Participants suggested that OSMP invest resources in training, research and restoration.** Suggestions related to training were that information and education should be directed to all residents including youth. The most needed trainings, according to our participants, had to do with climate, hiking culture and natural resources. These trainings need to be inclusive, not just for the Spanish-speaking community, but for all residents. Participants felt that research should also be conducted so OSMP can develop a sustainable and sensible plan that works for all types of communities. This research is related to whatever investigations are already happening as well as finding new ways to manage OSMP and utilizing already existing resources. One suggestion made by one of our participants, and enthusiastically seconded by the rest, was to create partnerships with other institutions such as Colorado University in Boulder or other educational and scientific entities in the area, which would reduce costs for OSMP and could potentially develop a strong network of likeminded individuals and institutions that would benefit OSMP and our society at large. Finally, restoration needs to be a priority as well, as a protective measure to our natural environment.

It is interesting to highlight, that **only 35% of those who attended this focus group, also participated in one of the previous Master Plan focus groups held in November of 2018**, where participants' preferences, needs, limitations and strengths with regard to the use of open space and mountain parks were explored. One important aspect to keep in mind is that each focus group had its own diversity mix due to the different socioeconomic and educational levels of participants. This second round was comprised of mostly bilingual Spanish speakers, who have an educational background ranging from high school to doctorate, whereas the first focus groups were comprised of people who completed middle school up to college graduates. The reason to mention this is that it is important to remember the main point made in the first round of this study, meaning that education and communication should be done not only in English, but in Spanish as well and that many of our participants felt that cultural competency was very important. So, **during the previous focus groups the topics identified as most important were related to the desire for: translation of all OSMP materials including signs into Spanish, infrastructure improvements and greater cleanliness of public restrooms, inclusion of more picnic areas and picnic shelters, alternatives for parking or public transportation that include routes connecting with the trails**, and more OSMP-led programs on weekends. During this focus group, as we show in the following table, these management actions are in fourth place of importance; giving priority to preparation in the face of climatic changes, preservation of the environment and ecosystems, and educational investment in future generations and youth so that they can enjoy lands that are protected and preserved.

The following table describes the potential management actions and the number of stones received for each management action, from most to least. Afterwards, the explanatory and relevant comments made by attendees are included which help describe why certain management actions were prioritized over others.

<b>POTENTIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION</b>	<b>NUMBER OF STONES (EACH WORTH \$10)</b>
Restoring degraded ecosystems and habitat of the animals.	<b>40</b>
Preparation for extreme weather phenomena such as floods, fires and droughts	<b>31</b>
Developing opportunities so that youth can spend more time in nature	<b>27</b>
Maintaining and improving trails and infrastructure of facilities for visitors	<b>25</b>
Involving the marginalized communities such as: the Latinx and Spanish-speaking community, and people with disabilities, among others	<b>22</b>
Providing education, outreach and volunteer programs	<b>21</b>
Reducing the impact of visitors to the natural environment caused by more people visiting parks	<b>20</b>
Maintaining and improving the condition of OSMP farms and agricultural land	<b>17</b>
Research and monitoring open space resources and trends	<b>15</b>
Acquiring more open space	<b>10</b>

Quotes from participants:

*“We have a lot of potential if we work on the side of nature instead of against it.”*

*“Restore the ecosystems, provide education and prepare for climatic change.”*

*“Climatic change is not the future, we are suffering now.”*

*“Should be ecologically trained, avoid acquiring more land without maintaining that which presently exists. It is very important for us to prepare for fires and other meteorological events.”*

*“Prepare ourselves for meteorological damages.”*

*“If we invest in education it covers the other topics, I vote for participatory and scientific investigation that involves the community.”*

*“Involve youth and children so that they can benefit from nature instead of using screens, TV, video games, etc.”*

*“The most important actions are education and the participation of youth in programs as volunteers.”*

*“Inclusion and equity, especially with communities of color, LGBTQ or with special needs.”*

*“Youth are the heirs of the earth.”*

*“I believe that the scientific investigations should be done by the CU University, in that fashion, OSMP could invest their funds in other areas, and not take from the budget. Considering that the infrastructure is very important, the public transportation system in order to reduce the impact of cars on the ecosystem.”*

*“Preserving the trails and preparing the land for catastrophic damages.”*

*“Maintain the farms and the farmland, free education about how to plant and harvest vegetables. Create competency in organic products.”*

*“Involve the communities, the families, and improve the restrooms.”*

As indicated by the comments of the participants, **the biggest concern is with the care and conservation of the natural environment and preparation for the effects of climate change** and natural events that are damaging for natural spaces, animals and human beings. There needs to be investment in the training of children and youth in programs that help them to benefit from and participate in the natural environment. And finally, another important aspect **is the improvement of infrastructure, specifically there is interest in increasing the number of and cleanliness of public restrooms on and near open space and mountain parks.**

To conclude this report, we would like to thank OSMP for giving us the opportunity to be part of the Master Plan process and for valuing the opinions of the Spanish-speaking community. We hope to maintain our relationship as allies in order to know, educate, form, create and share all of the initiatives that permit us to better the quality of life of the residents in and around Boulder.

PHOTOS OF FOCUS GROUP

