



Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

***Minutes
August 24, 2016***

Meeting Summary

The committee reviewed several models of 'e-bikes' along with a demonstration and information from Golden Bear Bike Shop. The committee also reviewed and discussed Open Space and Trails finances and the recent City Council Study Session on Open Land acquisitions.

Roll Call

Present:

Tim Griffin, Chair

Doug Grumann

Todd Cohen

Joel Hendrickson

Terra Lenihan

Patrick Tennyson

Councilmember Liz Law-Evans

Absent:

Ray Churgovich

Councilmember Mike Shelton

Visitors:

Robin Forsythe, Golden Bear Bikes

Frank Cassella, Golden Bear Bikes

Other staff and consultants in attendance:

Kevin Standbridge, Deputy City and County Manager

Kristan Pritz, Open Space and Trails Director

Holly D'Oench, Open Space and Trails Assistant

Valerie Price, Finance Accounting Manager

Agenda Minutes

1. Call to Order by Tim Griffin, 6:05 p.m.

2. Introduction of Interested Citizens

None

3. Presentation and Review of E-Bikes

Frank Cassella and Robin Forsythe of Golden Bear Bike Shop brought several e-bikes to the meeting for the committee to review and test ride. They also provided basic information regarding the cost, types of models, and features that are associated with e-bikes currently and in the coming years.

4. Presentation on Open Space and Trails Finance

Kristan introduced Valerie Price, Finance Accounting Manager, to review the Open Space and Trails finances. Valerie presented slides for the committee outlining open space revenues, debts, projections, and progress towards the current 40% Open Lands goal for the community. Valerie also explained how the ¼-cent sales tax works, as it is split 80%-20% between Open Space and Parks.

>Liz, would like to understand exactly what the outstanding debt is here, as it is kind of hard to tell what the debt is associated with in different areas; what is the current outstanding debt and when will it be paid off?

>Valerie, explained the different areas of debt, also noting debt owed to the water fund and outstanding debt towards specific property purchases; there is currently about \$6 million in outstanding debt (about \$3.7 from Metzger), and this debt would be paid off in 2019 as currently scheduled;

>Kristan, there is the debt to the water fund, which will be paid back in 2017; also, there may be an opportunity to refinance some of the debt, with Metzger in particular, so that number could come down;

>Doug, do not necessarily see spending projections into the future, do we have purchases planned?

>Kevin, see page 7 chart -- the lean years are in 2017-18, due to water fund payments, but then more money is available. The line item on this chart—highlighted in green—shows the amount of money available each year assuming a placeholder for trails and open space improvements.

>Joel, how does maintenance impact the funding and would increasing maintenance fees affect purchases?

>Kevin, we estimate maintenance costs by acre and it is really quite low for open space; maintenance is not taken out of the open space and park fund but is handled through the general fund.

>Kristan, in the event that we were able to purchase all of the land that we need, the money from the sales tax can be used for maintenance and improvements; Currently, the tax is approved in perpetuity, which gives the ability to have longer-range financial planning.

5. Discussion and Review of Recent Open Lands Acquisition Study Session

Kevin described and summarized the City Council Study Session review of Open Lands Acquisition that took place on August 16. Kevin reported that the City Council ultimately asked for a prioritized list of the most desired acquisition properties. Kevin also noted that while land is only available when it is available and the Council understands some of the constraints, they also do not want to make decisions 'in isolation' and would like to review the debt and financial projections as well for the entire City and County of Broomfield.

>Liz, speaking only for myself, I fear too much debt along with concerns for other City priorities and overall community needs; it is difficult to decide what is really crucial to take on debt for;

>Kevin, Council will really want to see the aggregate view with these decisions, even beyond open space and parks;

>Tim, my guess is that the council will want to limit debt, and will find a balancing point;

>Liz, some cities in Colorado have gotten into very serious debt troubles and we will need to avoid that as a top priority; we'll need to determine what is an acceptable debt balance for our citizens to carry;

>Patrick, in the meeting, it was very interesting to consider the risk vs. reward analysis and it was very insightful; it really was an open dialogue;

>Todd, the current debt could be considered in isolation, given the perpetual funding source that is exclusive to open space; it may not need to be looked at with other debt/finance issues given that it is not funded the same way; projections appear to be quite strong for revenues and business growing in Broomfield; land is a limited resource, and they are not making more of it so there seems to be an incentive to use debt as a tool to get the land we can get within reason;

>Kevin, we're at about 70% of the way to buildout now; we have seen some unprecedented growth in recent years but is likely to slow down;

>Liz, what can we hope to gain from property vs. the risk of the debt is important to consider; these things tend to move in long-term cycles, and we have seen great debt episodes in the past; all we have are projections and we don't know how good the projections really are; would rather lose out on some opportunities than potentially put the city in a bad spot financially;

>Kevin, many different departments/priorities are sales tax based as is the open space/parks fund in their potential funding, so there is a concern that a downturn in sales could hit all of the different areas at the same time; as such, the Council favors looking at the open space/parks fund and the general fund together;

Patrick, it would probably be good to take a broad view and then try to narrow it down;

>Todd, if we're too afraid of debt, while land sales and changes are permanent, we really may be missing out on opportunities; recessions are temporary too, and the land is in perpetuity;

>Tim, we have strong counter arguments on both sides of this and the Council is pretty good at finding consensus; the other big issue was the 40% number—my opinion is that the level of service is more important than the number; the level of service will likely drive the number to the right place, whether it is 38% or 42%;

>Todd, the counter argument is that the 40% is a value from marketing and a recognition standpoint that really stands out and says something; it is an attractive and impressive goal; I think it is very strong from a marketing standpoint too, for the community;

>Terra, concerned about removing the 40% goal and what that would mean for community?; I like having that goal;

<Patrick, the public has said that they like what we're doing in respect to open space and parks, in terms of level of service; we should keep the 40% goal there on some level with the level of service concept;

>Todd, if the 40% goal was a part of the voter's passage of the sales tax, and the tax in perpetuity, then there may be an obligation to the voters to continue to pursue that goal; that is what they voted for;

>Terra, I agree, I really like having that 40% goal;

>Kevin, there will continue to be possibilities to acquire land; whether it be edges along our boundaries or private land holdings that become available; opportunities can always come up in regards to reaching the 40% goal;

>Kristan, explained the history of the 40% goal and the analysis that went into it; it was a number that was arrived at by looking at open space and park goals derived from community input, criteria for acquisition, and analysis of available land in coordination with the business plan for the entire community; the 40% goal and the level of service goals in the current OSPRT Master Plan inform our current land acquisition; we're working in tandem with these goals; currently, there is still land within the community that has value that could be used to achieve the 40% open lands goal as noted in the open lands mapping OSTAC reviewed at the last meeting.

>Tim-the goals should work in tandem, the level of service and 40%, and they can push each other along in a way;

>Patrick, the integrity of open space remains an important piece of the equation, that we have a plan for the land and access/connectivity/usage; that we don't just get it because it is the only

thing available at the time. We need to have a long-term commitment to wildlife, habitat, and resources for children;

>Liz, regarding the different “camps” in council, there is a part of council that hasn’t really heard the details yet about the DRAFT Comp Plan; the level of service is one of the most important concepts that has come out of the update of the Comp Plan; we are planning for public comment on the DRAFT Comp Plan in the coming month.

>Doug, Some of the other things that we heard at the council study session from individual councilmembers was that nothing outside Broomfield should be pursued for acquisition, and we also heard that the approval of open space is already at 90% by the community, so perhaps we can stop our efforts to acquire and preserve land; that private development can dedicate needed land going forward; it seems like there may be some big hurdles to acquisition in the future;

>Kevin, this is an evolving discussion with City Council, we do assess how receptive the council may be to a project before we bring something forward; we work with council to try to build consensus and address concerns.

>Terra, we share great resources, lands, and trails along our boundaries and it seems like a good idea to look at those properties to see where joint acquisitions may make sense financially and for land conservation;

>Kevin, we will continue to discuss this issue and council is actually more receptive to considering buying land along our boundaries; we have a current agreement in place with Erie that could be a good mechanism for this type of purchase where each community is to set aside a certain percentage of revenues for open lands purchases and or improvements so there may be some opportunities for jointly working on acquisitions with our neighbors;

>Kevin, the consensus from the Council was for OSTAC and PRAC to prioritize their needs and come back to the Council;

>Kristan, there is work ahead with OSTAC and PRAC to develop a strategy and often the discussions take time to answer all questions—the actions rarely flow in a straight trajectory. It is an ongoing process.

>Joel, what happens if we reach 40% and then a beautiful property comes available, would we miss it because we are all done? Maybe level of service goal gives us some flexibility;

>Terra, what happens to the CCOB budget with a major disaster, like flooding?

>Tim, do we have contingencies in our budget?

>Kevin, yes, typically 17% and some additional reserves for critical infrastructure;

6. Review and Approval of the July 28, 2016 OSTAC Meeting Minutes
Doug motions for approval, Todd seconds, minutes pass unanimously.

7. Updates:
 - Broomfield Open Space Foundation Speakers Series Fall 2016
 - Broomfield Open Space Foundation Fundraiser “What’s Brewing in Broomfield’s Open Space,” Brunner Farmhouse, August 27, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
 - Broomfield 100, concludes at Broomfield Days
 - Broomfield Days, September 17
 - Finalize September Meeting Date - (set for September 21, 2016)

8. Other Topics as Desired by Members

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55

Minutes approved by OSTAC on September 21, 2016.