2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan

A SUB-ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Community Planning and Sustainable Development Department

SETTING THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

DOUGLAS COUNTY
COLORADO

2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan

A SUB-ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

Douglas County Community Planning and
Sustainable Development Department

Planning Services Division
Parks, Trails, and Open Space Section

Open Space and Natural Resources Division

Douglas County, Colorado
Douglas County Planning Commission
November 5, 2012

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Douglas County CO Jack Arrowsmith,
Clerk & Recorder

RESOLUTION NO. PC012-001

DOUGLAS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2030 DOUGLAS COUNTY PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-106(1), it is the duty of the Douglas County Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated territory of Douglas County; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-108, the Planning Commission may amend, extend, or add to a master plan or carry out any part of it into greater detail from time to time; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-106(3)(a) the master plan of Douglas County shall, in part, show the Planning Commission's recommendations for the development of the territory covered by the plan and may include the general location, character, and extent of parks and other public ways and the general location and extent of forests and open development areas for purpose of conservation or the protection of urban development; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, the Planning Commission adopted the 1992 Douglas County Master Plan, which included parks, trails, and open space elements; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the Planning Commission adopted the Douglas County Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan (1998); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission directed staff to engage the Douglas County citizens in a thorough public outreach process in support of the update to the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Open Space and Natural Resources, the Parks, Trails and Building Grounds Section, and the Planning Services Division of the Department of Community Planning and Sustainable Development worked in conjunction with each other to engage the public in the community outreach process; and

WHEREAS, the Douglas County Open Space Advisory Committee and the Douglas County Parks, Trails, and Building Grounds Advisory Board met in joint work sessions with the Planning Commission to consider the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-28-106(1), the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan has been reviewed by the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission has accepted and considered oral and written public comments throughout the process of developing it; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan at a properly noticed public hearing held on November 5, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Douglas County Planning Commission, that:

1. The 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan dated October 12, 2012, including any amendments approved by the Planning Commission by motion in the public hearing held on November 5, 2012, all of which are incorporated herein and made a part hereof by this reference, is hereby adopted for the unincorporated area of Douglas County, superseding the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan (1998), approved February 9, 1998, as amended.

2. The Douglas County Planning Commission Resolution No. PC98-02, dated February 9, 1998, approving the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan (1998), as was amended by Resolution No. PC98-005, approved September 29, 1999, is hereby repealed and all prior actions inconsistent herewith are repealed.

3. In connection with the printing of the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan, the Director of Planning Services is authorized to make any appropriate corrections to the grammar, syntax, and format of the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan.

4. A copy of the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan, together with a copy of this resolution, shall be certified to the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Douglas, State of Colorado, and to the Planning Commissions of all municipalities within Douglas County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan is hereby incorporated by reference into and is a part of the Douglas County 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan adopted April 21, 2008.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 5th day of November, 2012, in Castle Rock, Douglas County, Colorado.

DOUGLAS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

BY: _____
Jim Dullea, Chair

ATTEST:

BY: _____
Gary Weaver, Secretary

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Planning Commission, County Open Space Advisory Committee, and the Parks, Trails, and Building Grounds Advisory Committee, staff would like to thank all of those who participated in the update process for this 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan for demonstrating their commitment to the development and enhancement of parks and trails, and the preservation and conservation of open space. Your advocacy on behalf of your fellow citizens is appreciated.

Planning Commission 2012

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Introduction

SECTION 1

Overview

The purpose of the 2030 Douglas County Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan (the "PTOS Plan" or "Plan") is to establish a baseline of community-identified values that will guide decision-making processes in the development and management of parks and trails, and in the preservation and conservation of open space within Douglas County. An element of the 2030 Douglas County Comprehensive Master Plan ("2030 CMP" or "CMP"), this updated PTOS Plan builds on goals, objectives, and policies of the 2030 CMP to foster integration of the two plans. The PTOS Plan serves as a basis for community conversation among citizens, appointed and elected officials, and County staff as a means to protect and enhance parks, trails, and open space as an important component of the high quality of life within the County. The PTOS Plan also presents a series of maps depicting a wide variety of conditions across the County, including existing and proposed park facilities, acquired and conserved open space lands, and existing County regional and open space trail corridors.

While the parks and trails program and the open space program share many similar goals they are sufficiently distinct in their primary missions as to warrant, in some instances, separate discussion and treatment within this document. As presented, this document provides a brief overview of the environmental qualities, and other characteristics and conditions of the County that set the stage for the two programs; presents the similarities and differences in their funding; provides more detailed discussion of their individual programs; and then presents goals, objectives and policies for each program.

Elements and Structure of this Plan

The major elements of this Plan include:

- An overview of the intent and purpose of the Plan.
- A description of the public input and participation process, and the synthesis process by which the resulting community values were identified.
- Opportunities and constraints.
- A list of the goals, objectives and policies derived from public participation.
- Updated map resources describing existing conditions and facilities, as well as resources proposed for future development.

Additional resources developed through this Plan update process, including the community meetings' value statements and value statement synthesis, have been presented as a component of the PTOS update process and remain available for review on the County website via the Community Planning and Sustainable Development Project Records Online (CPSD-PRO) database.

Implementation of this Plan

This PTOS Plan is a policy guide intended to express community values as a basis for decision-making processes in support of the implementation of programs, establishment of priorities, and investment of funds in facilities and resources for the County's Division of Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) and the Division of Parks, Trails and Building Grounds (PTBG) within the Planning Services Division of the Community

Planning and Sustainable Development Department (CPSD). Importantly, this Plan also speaks clearly to the need and desire for coordination between County planning efforts for parks, trails and open space, and complementary efforts undertaken by other planning agencies. These include municipalities, metropolitan districts, State and Federal agencies, and homeowners' associations acting within and affecting the County. As an adopted element of the Douglas County 2030 CMP, the PTOS Plan also supports achieving the community vision through its implementation during review of County land use applications and planning activities.

While the terms "parks and trails" and "open space" may be interpreted broadly by a reader of this Plan, these terms are more specifically defined as follows:

- "Parks and trails" as referenced by this Plan generally refer to County-owned and maintained regional and local parks, and trail corridors. These facilities, primarily oriented towards active recreation, are managed and operated by the Division of Parks, Trails and Building Grounds. The terms may also refer to these types of facilities as owned and managed by other jurisdictions, as further described within.
- "Open space" refers generally to the lands or ownership interests in land that are acquired, protected and managed for environmental conservation and passive recreation functions on behalf of the County by the Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources Division.

The 2030 Douglas County CMP

The 2030 CMP seeks to establish a thoughtful balance in the development of communities and in the protection of abundant natural resources and scenic beauty. Through the adoption of policies tied to specific geographic regions within the County, urban and rural areas are established, existing historic development patterns are supported, costly infrastructure development is directed to well-defined areas, and agricultural and rural lifestyles are protected.

Designated urban areas accommodate a full range of housing, educational and employment opportunities based upon fully-developed infrastructure and transportation. Diverse housing and lifestyle options are protected through policies that support and establish specific regions for urban, semi-rural and rural lifestyles. Open spaces and natural resources remain protected through both broad and specific land use policies developed to protect the natural beauty of the County and to support its wildlife habitats, ecosystems and natural heritage. As a result of a commitment to sound land use planning and growth management policies within Douglas County, approximately 90 percent of its population lives on 17 percent of the land.

Relationship of Parks Trails and Open Space Plan to the CMP

The PTOS Plan is an adopted sub-element of the 2030 CMP. In order to obtain a broad understanding of community values and vision for a development proposal or action affecting parks, trails or open space, consultation of the goals, objectives and policies of the 2030 CMP may be warranted and useful. Additionally, the 2030 CMP lays out within its goals, objectives and policies a full set of values that complement and support parks, trails and open space as they are provided or impacted through the development review process. The full community vision for parks, trails and open space therefore is established in both the PTOS and the 2030 CMP.

This Plan builds on and expresses community values in a manner that is generally consistent with the 2030 CMP. For both parks and trails, and for open space and natural resources, an identified vision statement describes the overarching community vision for these resources. That

vision is expressed with progressively greater specificity through goals and objectives, and in some instances through additional policy statements. These goals, objectives and policies are supplemented by a series of maps that illustrate existing conditions and lay out a projected vision for the locations of facilities and resources to be considered and pursued in the development of County parks, trails and open space. More specifically, in regards to decision-making processes for parks, trails and open space:

- Goals provide general statements reflecting County desires.
- Objectives establish a more specific framework for the larger goal.
- Policies provide more detailed guidance for direction and action.
- Mapping resources establish a baseline of existing conditions and identify the facilities and resources to be considered or pursued in the implementation of this Plan.

Community Participation and Vision Process

This document builds upon and refines two significant County efforts in the establishment of parks, trails and open space: the 1994 voter approval of the Parks, Trails and Open Space Sales and Use Tax (herein referred to as the "PTOS Sales and Use Tax") and the 1998 Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan. These forward-looking initiatives expressed and established a strong level of community support for the preservation of open space, wildlife habitat, and parks and recreation as components of character of the County and its high quality of life. In the 14 years that have elapsed since the last update to this Plan, as evidenced in the community interest in this update process, County citizens continue to support these initiatives.

As part of this update, Douglas County Planning Services; Parks, Trails and Building Grounds; and Open Space and Natural Resources hosted eight separate community meetings in locations across the County. At each event, community members were presented with an overview of the intention and purpose of the PTOS Plan, and the functions and activities of the PTBG and OSNR Divisions. Community members were asked to reflect on and identify the values, benefits and qualities of parks, trails and open space in their own lives, and to rank their responses according to their personal importance. These core value statements were then shared in small group settings. Individual value statements, as well as those refined through small group discussions, were transcribed to establish a public record of the community feedback process.

More than 720 individual value statements were provided through this process. All comments were also entered into a database and categorized by topic. The comments were then aggregated into 15 thematic concepts. Comments that effectively addressed day-to-day operational activities or programmatic decisions were expressed within the most pertinent theme. The concepts were presented at three community outreach meetings to determine whether community comments had been accurately summarized.

The thematic concepts were then converted into core value statements. The value statements then became the basis for the goals within this Plan.

Trends and Challenges

SECTION 2

Since the passage of the Parks, Trails and Open Space Sales and Use Tax in 1994, the total population of the County has more than tripled to a current estimate of just over 290,000 residents. Consistent with the vision established in the 1998 Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan, significant open space, parks and trails resources have been protected, conserved and developed to meet the increasing demands of existing and new residents and users. Beyond the growth in its population, other significant changes have affected the County, state, and nation. These warrant a brief review for their role in shaping the physical, social and economic conditions within the County, and therefore their influence on the achievement of the goals, objectives and policies of this Plan.

Success

Significant success in the protection and conservation of open space resources has been realized across the County. More than 46,000 acres of open space have been preserved and conserved. Significant wildlife habitat areas and movement corridors have been protected. Over 1,400 acres of park land has been developed or acquired. New parks and trails facilities have been completed, expanding recreational opportunities within the County.

A close evaluation of existing conditions and the expressed community vision will help to assure that new opportunities appropriately maximize community values and build upon existing investments.

Demographics

The County's demographic profile is changing, with both the baby boom and millennial generations (cohorts) moving up the age scale and representing an increasing proportion of County residents. Accordingly, facilities and services will need to meet the evolving needs and requests from these groups.

Diverse recreational needs will need to be accommodated with changing population characteristics. Parks and trails facility designs that support multi-generational use can strengthen

their role as centers for community. Specific and evolving community needs and requests should be identified through public participation processes on major projects and on an on-going basis.

Growth Rates

Continued population growth within the County and metropolitan areas to the north and south have placed increasing demands on existing parks, trails and open space facilities and resources. For this reason the County has focused on regionally significant park areas and trail connectivity.

To accommodate projected growth within the County as well as outside demands, new facilities and programs will need to be developed to maintain existing service levels. Existing facilities and programs should be monitored to assure that facilities do not experience excessive wear and tear and that user satisfaction levels are maintained.

Increased access to County-owned open space lands via the development of new trail corridors and through off-trail use is often requested by residents. Costs associated with construction and maintenance of new trail corridors as well as the resulting degradation to wildlife and habitat resources from unauthorized use will need to be monitored. Educating the general public about resource protection as well as necessary enforcement actions offers a cost-effective solution.

Community Involvement

Effective community engagement in the review of parks and trails development proposals is critical to understanding the needs and concerns of nearby residents and property owners, as well as the need for active and passive recreational opportunities for County residents. These processes should strive to meet and balance identified needs and concerns.

Community Health

Passive and active recreational facilities and programs can provide more healthful environments and support active lifestyles, helping to counter observed decreasing levels of fitness across the country and provide an opportunity for healthier, enjoyable and meaningful lives.

Land Use Framework

Major land use patterns have, in many areas, become more distinct as cities and towns have established their projected growth boundaries, and major urban and non-urban areas under County jurisdiction have been designated.

As the County and its communities and jurisdictions continue to recognize broad and progressively more detailed development patterns and boundaries, opportunities are presented for coordinated, strategic decision-making to support cost-effective delivery of parks, trails and open space resources and services. Additionally, opportunities for joint funding and participation of projects can reduce overhead costs and deliver stronger results.

Citizen-Supported Funding

Both the Open Space and Natural Resources and Parks, Trails and Building Grounds Divisions are funded by revenues collected through the County's Park, Trails and Open Space Sales and Use Tax. The functions and activities of the OSNR Division are almost entirely funded by revenues from the PTOS Sales and Use Tax while the PTBG Division obtains funding from the tax as well as other revenue sources, including the general fund and the Conservation Trust Fund, itself funded by proceeds from the Colorado Lottery.

As approved, the PTOS Sales and Use Tax establishes a levy of one-sixth of one cent applicable to the sales of goods, including automobiles, and building and construction materials. The Sales and Use Tax most generally provides for the acquisition, conservation, and management of open space resources and for the construction, acquisition and maintenance of park and recreation facilities and equipment.

The County PTOS Sales and Use Tax provides specific guidance in the expenditure of its funds, including:

- Providing for distribution of a portion of its revenues back to those municipalities in existence at the time of its approval.
- Identifying the maximum amount of funds (8 percent) to be used to cover overhead costs.
- Identifying percentage distributions of funds for both open space resources, and parks and recreation.
- Establishing criteria to be used in the evaluation of proposed acquisition of open space lands and interests (further discussed within Section 5 of this Plan).
- Identifying intended improvements for parks and trails facilities.

The PTOS Sales and Use Tax, as approved by voters, will terminate in 2024. While an update to this Plan is anticipated well in advance of this timeframe, advance thinking regarding its potential extension through a voter referendum or its possible extinguishment remains warranted.

Many of the guiding principles for the Open Space program as established in the PTOS Sales and Use Tax originated within the Douglas County CMP. These goals and policies were subsequently adopted within the 1998 PTOS Plan. Owing to their central foundation in the mission of the OSNR Division, they are also directly evident within the open space goals, objectives and policies in Section 5 of this Plan.

Economic Challenges

Current economic challenges at the regional, state and national level have decreased revenue streams to local governments. Both programs will need to control costs and make careful investment decisions that maximize and fulfill community values. The long-term adequacy of financial resources to maintain the existing public investment in parks, trails and open space must be assured.

Wildlife Corridor Connectivity

Protection of wildlife habitat and movement corridors within and between protected open space lands is critical to the support of healthy wildlife populations. Larger habitat areas offer more seclusion for wildlife. Movement corridors that connect diverse habitats, environments and protected areas of the County are critical to supporting the natural behaviors of wildlife. A system of interconnected, high-quality habitats and connecting movement corridors provide wildlife with greater access to shelter and varied food sources, and meet seasonal and life-cycle needs, including the rearing of offspring.

Recreational Corridor Connectivity

Completion of regional trail corridors will remain an on-going challenge. Trail corridor development can face challenges resulting from land ownership patterns, the length of time inherent to negotiating with multiple property owners, competing needs for protection of riparian corridors and habitats, natural and built environment constraints, and the availability of funding.

Completion of regional trail corridors remains problematic in some areas as construction opportunities remain delayed. Key grade-separated road crossings may be required but are unfunded. Interim trail corridor linkages may need completion as a catalyst to larger regional trail corridor planning efforts. Landowners may be resistant to the establishment of trail corridors near their property. Building relationships with landowners and other public entities will be necessary for completion of many of these linkages.

Some trail corridors are substantially complete with the exception of enclave properties that have required the establishment of temporary alternate routes, pending acquisition of development rights on the preferred alignment. Other long-identified future trail corridors, such as the Plum Creek corridor from Castle Rock to Chatfield State Park, pose significant challenges and may require creative solutions, including the use of alternative alignments that are consistent with the original vision for regional connectivity.

Operational Efficiencies - Resource Conservation

Regional and local County-owned parks have been designed to significantly reduce water consumption through the use of artificial turf playing fields, landscape plantings that emphasize native plant materials, and judicious use of sod grass. Additionally, the development of artificial turf multi-sport playing fields has dramatically increased the amount of available play time as fields can be heavily scheduled even during wet seasons.

Parks, trails and open space facilities provide a learning environment about water resources and water conservation. Park design that emphasizes the use of moderate- and low-water consuming landscapes can serve as a model for plant palettes and irrigation practices, particularly if supported through educational materials and signage.

Open space areas function to re-charge aquifers, protect water quality, and reduce flood events.

Cost savings from reduced consumption of water in parks represent a realistic and compelling response to existing water supply conditions within the County.

Partnerships

Douglas County has been very successful in augmenting PTOS sales tax revenues through working in partnership with outside entities. Partner organizations have provided funding and logistical support for fee-title acquisition and for the establishment of conservation easements. Substantial financial support has been garnered from a wide variety of funding partners, including governmental agencies, conservation organizations, and other jurisdictions. Individual property owners have also participated in open space preservation and conservation for scenic, wildlife and agricultural values on their own lands through the use of conservation easements. Continued success in open space resource protection will utilize all available means, including harnessing the interests of diverse and divergent organizations, utilizing appropriate financial tools, building and maintaining alliances, and employing the enthusiasm of the volunteering public.

Planning for Parks, Trails and Open Space

Major infrastructure project planning should include a review of the potential leveraging of investment dollars in ways that support the goals and objectives of this Plan. For example:

- As road improvements impact floodplains or protected wildlife habitats, trail corridor improvements could be identified and proactively addressed through the permitting process.
- Utility extensions and improvements, owing to their linear nature, should be considered for potential trail corridor alignments.
- Roadway improvements should be evaluated for regional and local at-grade and grade-separated trail crossings.

Similarly, these same types of projects should be designed in ways that support the protection of open space and natural resources.

Information Technology

Information technologies offer significant opportunities to improve the efficiency of service delivery, enhance user experiences through access to a wide variety of resources and information, provide opportunities to enhance user experiences, and reduce costs. Information that could be made readily available include: trail conditions, facility booking, natural history resource information for a specific trail or open space area, enhanced mapping, and safety and emergency information.

Natural History Framework

Section 3

Situated near the geographic center of the State and located between its two largest urban areas, the County spans 843 square miles. More than one-fourth of the County's total landmass is within the Pike National Forest. The County is home to three unique Colorado State parks: Chatfield, Roxborough and Castlewood Canyon. The elevation extremes in Douglas County are defined by the Platte River within Chatfield State Park (5,380 feet) and the top of Thunder Butte in the Pike National Forest (9,836 feet). Four of the five municipalities within the County are located within the central and northern portion of the County. Similarly, almost all of the County-jurisdiction urban-designated areas are located within the northern third of the County. Much of the southern portion of the County is characterized by a combination of ranches, agriculture, large-lot residential, and protected open space.

Douglas County is one of the most beautiful and biologically diverse areas of the Colorado Front Range. Characterized by mountains, expansive grasslands, shrub-covered hillsides, forested woodlands, and prominent buttes and canyons, the County offers scenic diversity. Located on the southern edge of the Platte River Basin, the southern boundary of the County is coincident with the Palmer Divide, which itself forms the northern boundary of the Arkansas River Basin. The headwaters of Cherry Creek and Plum Creek originate near the Palmer Divide, sending their waters northerly across the County. Plum Creek has been identified as an especially valuable resource owing to its relatively pristine nature and significance in supporting valuable and rare animal and plant communities. The Platte River defines the western boundary of the County before flowing from the mountains into Chatfield State Park. Additionally, the northern tier of the County lies within the Denver metropolitan area where the topography is amenable to urban development, and has been designated for such by the Douglas County CMP.

The higher elevations of the Palmer Divide, as well as the buttes and uplands above Cherry Creek and East and West Plum Creeks, support conditions that extend the characteristic scrub oak and Ponderosa Pine forests well into the central and eastern portions of the County. Several canyons combine dramatic geologic formations with diverse riparian habitat features. Coupled with the high rolling plains within the central and eastern portions of the County, the geography presents a significantly sized and complex transition area between ecosystems that are characteristic of the High Plains and Southern Rocky Mountains.

The diverse landscapes and resources of the County support especially rich and diverse animal and plant life, create dramatic and scenic vistas; support a wide distribution of grasslands and forest types; provide habitat for its abundant wildlife; and offer productive agricultural opportunities including livestock, grass crops and farming. Additional characterizations of the major ecosystems within the County are included in the glossary of this Plan.

These same features also present opportunities and constraints in the protection, conservation and development of parks, trails and open space resources. Douglas County residents have acknowledged these attributes as significant components of the quality of life within the County. Community values expressed through this update process reflect the significance of these resources to County residents and citizens, and the need for carefully crafted land use policies to direct the character and locations of development.

Parks and Trails Background

SECTION 4

The Division of Parks, Trails and Building Grounds was established in 1980 to develop and maintain a regional parks and trails system and to meet the active and passive recreational needs of Douglas County citizens. It is responsible for the planning, design, construction management and maintenance of all County-owned parks and trails facilities and maintains County building grounds as a logical extension of its parks and outdoors maintenance functions. Through its participation in joint venture recreation programs and projects with County–based municipalities, special districts and other public agencies, PTBG seeks to provide cost-effective delivery of services to County citizens. The Division reviews land use applications to assure that such proposals consider and support the development of appropriate parks and trails facilities.

The County is home to five developed regional parks and seven local parks totaling almost 800 acres. Two future regional parks, Macanta and Wildcat Ridge, will bring an additional 656 acres into the system. The parks are further described within the glossary.

The seven local parks were developed or conveyed to the County mostly in the 1970s and 1980s. Because of their relatively high maintenance costs, the County no longer develops or accepts these types of facilities, supporting the provision of local parks as part of the development review process instead. In particular, the County encourages community designs that integrate local parks and trails and provide connections to the regional park system as well as access to key neighborhood destinations.

Douglas County Parks Advisory Board

Appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, the Douglas County Parks Advisory Board (PAB) serves as a community liaison by assisting in the overview of development of County parks and trails. Working with staff, the duties of the PAB include review of: the annual budget, major management decisions and project construction plans; development of public and private partnership opportunities; and community engagement. The public is encouraged to attend and participate in the monthly meetings of the PAB.

Funding

Funding for operations, maintenance, and capital development of Parks, Trails and Building Grounds is derived from four primary revenue streams: the County's general fund, the PTOS Sales and Use Tax, the Conservation Trust Fund (partially supported by Colorado Lottery funds), and cash-in-lieu of land dedication. Operations, maintenance, and capital equipment purchases for PTBG are partially funded through the general fund.

As part of the subdivision development process, required park land dedications may be allowed to be met through cash payments rather than though the provision of local or regional park lands. These funds allow the PTBG Division to efficiently provide parks and trails facilities that meet the regional recreation needs of new residents.

Trail Design

Trail design responds to the context of location and setting. In urban settings with gentler terrain, hard-surfaced trails can be used by people of all capabilities, from children to seniors, as well as non-motorized means of travel, such as bicycles. These trails can also function as routes for daily pedestrian and bicycle travel within the community.

Multiple-use Trails in Natural Settings

In terrain characterized by steeper topography, trails design must respond to very specific conditions, with widths and trail materials varying within even short distances. Backcountry trails provide recreational access mainly to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrian users in natural areas. These trails are intended to facilitate enjoyment of natural areas with minimal impact to the environment and to wildlife habitat. Covering more rugged terrain, these trails are characterized by typically narrower widths and rougher surfaces than trails in urban settings.

Trail Network Locations

The trails network, inclusive of both regional and local trails, is more extensive in the urbanized portion of the County, owing in part to land use review processes and community designs that integrated trails as a community asset. Trails within the nonurban portion of the County remain less developed.

Regional Connectivity

Regional trail connections have been established in some portions of the County and remain undeveloped in others. East to west connectivity is provided in the High Line Canal corridor, and the C-470 and E-470 corridor. North to south regional trail connectivity occurs along Cherry Creek and, in the western portion of the County, via the High Line Canal, Waterton Canyon, Indian Creek and Roxborough State Park corridors.

Parks, Trails and Open Space Maps

The Parks and Trails Plan map includes descriptions of additional trail corridors and study areas, as listed below.

Inter-regional Trails

The Colorado Front Range Trail is a proposed region-wide trail network envisioned to connect along the entire Front Range of Colorado, providing strong regional interconnectivity and creating economic development opportunities. In Douglas County, the trail includes segments within the Plum Creek, Cherry Creek, and Greenland Ranch corridors.

The American Discovery Trail is intended to connect the east and west coasts of the United States. Also showing a north to south alignment within Douglas County, the final designation of the trail corridor may be established based upon any series of trail links, including roadways, that complete the connection across the County.

The Forest Edge Trail would provide additional recreational amenities for hikers, equestrians, bicyclists, hunters and others within the national forest as well providing improved access for wildfire mitigation and management. The trail would improve non-motorized access to a significant amount of forested land resources.

Northeast Trail Study Area

Based upon previous inquiries from area residents and in support of improvements to regional trail connectivity, this Plan describes a "Northeast Trail Study Area" on the Parks and Trails Plan Map. Located to the northeast of the Town of Parker, trail improvements in this area could support access for area residents to the Cherry Creek Trail as well as eventual connections to the City of Aurora on the north. Proposed regional trails may be considered by the County through a formal study process, inclusive of appropriate community outreach, with final approval by Douglas County.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Vision Statement

An integrated system of regional parks and trails providing diverse recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of life for Douglas County citizens and support programs for healthy communities and active lifestyles.

Goal PT 1

Provide a system of regional parks and trails that are interconnected and integrated within the community.

Objective PT 1A

Appropriately locate parks and trails to maximize access to the surrounding population.

Objective PT 1B

Support and establish designs that provide convenient access between parks and trails facilities and to the surrounding community.

Objective PT 1C

Design and improve parks and trails facilities to strengthen their role as centers for community.

Policy PT 1C.1

Provide opportunities for engagement and interaction with fellow citizens and the natural and built environment.

Policy PT 1C.2

Build community awareness and use of parks and trails to cultivate a sense of ownership and support for these resources.

Policy PT 1C.3

Support educational programs and opportunities that align with this Plan.

Objective PT 1D

Provide trails that meet the needs of non-motorized trail users except as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Objective PT 1E

Support alternative travel needs by maintaining trails for year-round use, to the extent feasible.

Objective PT 1F

Ensure parks and trails are provided through the development review process to meet the demands of new development.

Goal PT 2

Design and provide parks and trails facilities and programs to meet the recreational needs of a wide variety of users.

Objective PT 2A
Design facilities and amenities to meet a variety of needs within the same facility.

Dog off-leash areas within parks are well-used amenities and are supported by this Plan, where appropriate.

Objective PT 2B
Provide an appropriate balance of passive and active use areas within the same park or trail facility.

Objective PT 2C
Provide an enhanced level of recreational opportunities and access to special populations at existing and new facilities.

Objective PT 2D
Design facilities to support change in use and programming over time.

Objective PT 2E
Support a wide variety of structured programs and activities for citizens to use parks and trails facilities.

Objective PT 2F
Review and evaluate community-wide recreational needs as a basis for improvements and programs, including opportunities for year-round uses.

Objective PT 2G
Support development of parks and trails that function as part of and augment the regional parks and trails systems within the County.

Objective PT 2H
Complete trail links that support trail connectivity.

Goal PT 3
Ensure that parks and trails are compatible with the natural and built environment and adjacent uses.

Objective PT 3A
Establish parks and trails in locations suitable for proposed uses and community needs.

Objective PT 3B
Evaluate the impacts of park and trail development on surrounding uses through processes that include public participation.

Objective PT 3C
Design parks and trails facilities to minimize and mitigate the impacts of the proposed facilities to adjacent communities, as feasible.

Objective PT 3D
Manage parks and trails facilities to minimize impacts to adjacent communities, as feasible.

Goal PT 4
Practice stewardship of the natural environment in the design, development, and management of parks and trails.

Objective PT 4A
Work with appropriate entities and stakeholders to evaluate impacts to natural resources and systems during project design.

Objective PT 4B
Protect and enhance natural resources and systems as part of project development, where appropriate.

Objective PT 4C
Design projects to protect and enhance riparian environments while providing access to improve recreational opportunities.

Objective PT 4D
Conserve water through park design and operations.

Goal PT 5

Increase public awareness and understanding of the use of the natural and built environment and respect for all users.

Objective PT 5A
Employ a variety of communication tools that explain and seek to protect natural resources and features.

Objective PT 5B
Promote courteous behavior between users.

Objective PT 5C
Work with schools and other groups to support use of parks and trails as learning environments.

Objective PT 5D
Preserve, protect and improve historic, pre-historic, and paleontological resources on parks and trails lands, as feasible.

Goal PT 6

Provide safe and secure parks and trails.

Objective PT 6A
Design facilities that provide visibility, way-finding and temporary shelter for users.

Objective PT 6B
Design and manage facilities to promote their safe and secure use.

Objective PT 6C
Manage parks and trails activities to reduce unsafe conditions.

- Provide information, including rules for use and conduct, to promote safety.

Goal PT 7

Realize operational efficiencies through planning, development, and management practices.

Objective PT 7A
Maximize creative opportunities for acquisition and development of park and trail facilities.

Policy PT 7A.1
Coordinate with park and recreation providers to share infrastructure and resources and to cooperatively plan, develop and maintain park and trail facilities.

Policy PT 7A.2
Develop joint funding opportunities through partnerships with other entities.

Policy PT 7A.3
Work with utility and infrastructure providers to identify and coordinate cost-efficient development opportunities for park and trail facilities.

Objective PT 7B
Balance funding of capital improvements with maintenance activities.

Objective PT 7C
Utilize technologies to support operational efficiencies and communication with users and stakeholders.

Objective PT 7D
Partner with the Open Space program to meet common and complementary objectives.

Policy PT 7D.1
Coordinate facility development, programming and management efforts, where appropriate, for expanded recreational opportunities and to leverage resources.

Policy PT 7D.2
Coordinate park and trail development with open space acquisition to provide passive recreation opportunities, where appropriate.

Open Space Background

Section 5

With Douglas County voters' passage of the Parks, Trails and Open Space Sales and Use Tax in 1994, the Open Space program was born. In approving the first ever County-wide sales tax, voters confirmed their support for the values of open space resource protection and conservation. Since its establishment in 1996, the Division of Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) has worked on behalf of County residents to implement this community vision.

The Division is responsible for acquisition, management, and maintenance of County-owned open space areas, and construction related to open space and trail facilities. Strongly oriented towards collaborative efforts with partners, it works closely with multiple outside agencies and organizations to develop operational and financial support for its mission. In its management role, the Division supports environmental rehabilitation through forest management, habitat restoration, and weed control. County-held conservation easements are monitored, as are agricultural leases on County-owned lands. Public outreach and engagement occurs through contacts and educational efforts of County Rangers, OSNR-led educational programs and public hikes, and support for volunteer programs including Scouts and the Mounted Patrol.

The original intent of the Open Space program is clearly evident within the physical character of the County today. It is demonstrated, in part, in the preservation of lands in their natural condition, in the protection of wildlife habitats and agricultural heritage, in the provision of passive recreational opportunities and the establishment of a strong sense of place within the County.

As established in the 1994 PTOS Sales and Use Tax, lands proposed for open space acquisition are to demonstrate some of the following characteristics and qualities:

Wildlife Habitat and Movement Corridors - Critical wildlife habitat resources and movement corridors including wetlands; riparian areas; and fragile ecosystems and areas of undisturbed, native vegetation.

Historical, Archeological and Paleontological Sites - Protection of important historic sites preserves a sense of life in Douglas County in the early 1900s, the 1800s, and before. Archeological and paleontological sites also provide excellent educational and scientific research opportunities.

Scenic Viewsheds – Protection of lands that preserve the aesthetic beauty, unique geological features and rural appearance of the County as viewed from major roadways and key public places.

Community Buffers – Separation of communities to help maintain distinct community identity. Buffers around other select protected open space properties and state parks may also be warranted.

Conservation of Natural Resources - Preservation of agricultural, range, forest and aquifer recharge areas support productive and important uses on properties while preserving their natural character. As an example, preservation of agricultural land retains the historic heritage of the County, while supporting other open space criteria including preservation of wildlife habitat, archaeological and cultural sites, aquifer recharge areas, and scenic vistas.

Trail Corridors and Passive Recreation - Acquisition of properties and easements suitable for regional trails and trailheads, including access to stream corridors and suitable open space lands. Open space lands are also evaluated to determine whether specific types of passive recreational uses are appropriate, based on existing resource qualities.

Land Preservation Tools

Two of the primary preservation tools by which open space lands are protected include fee-title acquisition and the use of conservation easements.

- Fee-title acquisition is the outright purchase of land. Douglas County as well as local municipalities and state jurisdictions have protected lands through fee-title acquisition.

Conservation easements are established through a legal contract and typically involve the separation of identified development rights from a parcel to ensure its protection in perpetuity. A conservation easement might establish, for instance, that only one residential home site may be permitted on a parcel as well as establish that the continued use of the property for agricultural purposes is allowed. As a result, the parcel is maintained as productive agricultural land under private ownership.

Funding

As previously described within Section 2 of this Plan, OSNR receives almost all of its County-funding through the revenues generated from the PTOS Sales and Use Tax. Additional background regarding funding and operational activities provides an appropriate context with which to evaluate the identified goals, objectives and policies for the OSNR Division.

Following approval of the PTOS Sales and Use Tax, in 1996, voters approved the issuance of bonds, secured by future Sales and Use Tax revenues, to expedite land acquisition during the high-growth period of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Today, revenues from the Sales and Use Tax are oriented primarily to debt payment on the bonds. Consequently, major open space acquisitions are rarer. Alternative resource conservation tools such as multiple funding sources, partnerships with neighboring agencies and municipalities, and acquisition of conservation easements by conservation organizations have become the predominant tool in securing protection of open space resources.

Partner Funds and Grants:

Douglas County continuously seeks partner funds from other sources in order to supplement County funds on specific projects. Significant contributing funding partners include:

- Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund.

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife.
- The State Historic Fund.

Grant monies are awarded to the OSNR Division from a variety of funding sources to support special purpose projects. All funds received by the County directly from Great Outdoors Colorado for land acquisitions and other purposes are awarded as a result of grant proposals. Grant monies have also been received from other funding entities for land acquisitions, historic structure stabilization, scientific research, habitat restoration projects, and trail planning and construction. The Division has also partnered in regional open space preservation efforts with other agencies including Colorado State Parks, and the Towns of Castle Rock and Parker.

The Division works closely with other specialized supporting partner organizations:

- The Conservation Fund supports the Division's mission by facilitating major land purchases as requested through negotiations with land owners and through the provision of temporary funding.
- Douglas Land Conservancy plays a key role in assuring that conservation easements remain a viable alternative for protection of open space by working in partnership with land owners, local governments, other conservation organizations and citizens to evaluate, accept and monitor conservation easements.

Finally, a limited amount of County general fund revenues are used by OSNR to address natural resource management functions, such as water resource issues and compliance with the Endangered Species Act and other federal requirements.

County Open Space Advisory Committee (COSAC)

The County Open Space Advisory Committee (COSAC) advises the Board of County Commissioners in the disbursement of funds from the Open Space Lands, Trails and Parks Fund and in the selection, acquisition, maintenance and preservation of open space lands. COSAC also assists in the establishment of priorities used as a basis for open space acquisition. This nine-member body meets monthly in a public meeting to re-

view work program items of the OSNR Division. In addition to their primary duties referenced above, COSAC also reviews such items as significant program management decisions, resource protection plans, trail construction plans, potential land acquisitions, and partnership opportunities. The public is encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings.

Open Space Land Acquisition Process and Criteria

The guiding language for the PTOS Sales and Use Tax closely describes the acquisition criteria and operations and procedures by which the OSNR Division implements the open space program. Lands proposed for fee-title acquisition or other protection measures are evaluated by OSNR staff with the participation of COSAC and, on a case-by-case basis, with other affected agencies. The land acquisition process begins with an initial evaluation of a potential acquisition parcel according to the criteria established by the PTOS Sales and Use Tax.

Based upon a determination that the parcel is characterized by significant or desirable resource values, an appraisal of the property is undertaken and negotiations for purchase of the property may commence. If an agreement is reached, a recommendation is offered by COSAC to the Board of County Commissioners for its consideration and final decision.

Open Space Acquisition Priorities

Lands within the County exhibit wide variation in their inherent value for open space resources. Wetlands along Plum Creek would rank more highly based on the acquisition criteria than would an open space drainageway in a suburban neighborhood, as an example. The open space resource values of a potential acquisition area are analyzed in detail at such time as a property is available for fee-title purchase on the market or establishment of a conservation easement is under consideration. The prioritization of open space resources for acquisition is undertaken by the Open Space and Natural Resources Division, utilizing the acquisition criteria, in consultation with COSAC and the Board of County Commissioners.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Vision Statement

A fully integrated system of open space and preserved lands that protect wildlife habitat, hydrologic resources, scenic values, natural and cultural resources, rural character of the County, and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education and support programs for healthy communities and active lifestyles.

Goal OS 1

Acquire and preserve open space properties that maintain and contribute to the existing character, resources, and sense of place within the County.

Objective OS 1A

Through acquisition of fee-title and conservation easements, protect open space lands and interests that provide significant benefit to County residents.

Objective OS 1B

Identify and preserve important landmarks and features that contribute to the natural and built environment of the County, including water bodies, agricultural lands, forest lands, cultural and historic resources, and scenic vistas as viewed from the major road network and key public places.

Objective OS 1C

Protect lands that benefit wildlife through the preservation of ecosystems, habitats, and linked movement corridors.

Objective OS 1D

Protect strategic properties that help to maintain a distinct identity for, and separation between, distinct communities.

Objective OS 1E

Acquire appropriate water rights that are sufficient to serve the needs of open space properties.

Objective OS 1F

Acquire lands within or adjacent to parks and public open lands to protect open space values.

Goal OS 2

Provide opportunities for the use and enjoyment of Douglas County open space properties.

Objective OS 2A

Develop access to County open space by creating trails and trailheads where appropriate while maintaining and managing existing facilities.

Objective OS 2B

Support development of passive outdoor recreational uses within designated areas, including but not limited to: hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, and other compatible uses of open space in accordance with adopted County regulations, conservation easements, and the PTOS Sales and Use Tax.

Objective OS 2C

Improve recreational opportunities by linking open space areas, regional parks, trails, the national forest, and municipalities.

Objective OS 2D

Provide opportunities for innovative agriculture practices to occur on County open space, where appropriate.

Objective OS 2E

Adopt and refine open space resource management plans to balance the needs and desires for public use of open space properties and features with other identified open space values.

Objective OS 2F
Design facilities and programs which meet the needs of a variety of users and provide opportunities for community interaction.

Objective OS 2G
Provide access and recreational opportunities for special populations within open space facilities, as appropriate.

Objective OS 2H
Design facilities to balance future community needs with protection of conservation values.

Objective OS 2I
Assure a community involvement process that includes input from citizens, stakeholders, and other entities in accordance with adopted County policies, conservation easements, and the PTOS Sales and Use Tax.

Goal OS 3
Protect County open space resources through conservation and management practices for future generations.

Objective OS 3A
Acknowledge the need to accommodate growth by balancing open space acquisition and protection with the needs of growing communities.

Objective OS 3B
Evaluate and protect open space resources and systems through a process that includes key agencies and stakeholders and allows for public participation and comment through the County Open Space Advisory Committee.

Objective OS 3C
Develop site-specific land management plans to serve as a basis for proposed site uses, protection measures, and management of open space lands.

Objective OS 3D
Design improvements and establish activities to protect and enhance wildlife habitat and ecosystems.

Objective OS 3E
Improve open space lands through resource management activities to support natural ecological processes and wildlife carrying capacity.

Objective OS 3F
Identify, monitor, and manage activities that impact wildlife, and natural and cultural resources on open space lands.

Objective OS 3G
Actively protect open space resources and enhance visitor safety.

Objective OS 3H
Engage citizens as volunteers in on-site management of open space lands, as appropriate.

Objective OS 3I
Build multi-agency relationships to enhance resource protection and emergency response capabilities.

Objective OS 3J
Ensure that open space improvements are compatible with the surrounding built environment and adjacent uses.

Objective OS 3K
Preserve, protect, and improve historic, prehistoric, and paleontological resources on open space lands, as feasible.

Objective OS 3L
Provide safe and secure open space public facilities.

Goal OS 4

Acquire, develop and manage open space resources through the efficient use of fiscal and operational strategies.

Objective OS 4A
Ensure that existing open space resources, facilities, and services are adequately funded and maintained.

Objective OS 4B
Leverage open space revenues with partner dollars and in-kind services, grants, and additional funding sources for acquisition and management activities.

Objective OS 4C
Work with government and partner agencies to achieve mutual open space goals through cooperative acquisition, planning, development and management of open space.

Objective OS 4D
Work with partner agencies, organizations, and private parties to develop and secure no- or low-cost resources, including conservation easements and donations.

Objective OS 4E
Operate in a fiscally sound manner to maximize resources and minimize costs within established priorities.

Objective OS 4F
Identify opportunities to implement the goals of this Plan through the development review process.

Goal OS 5

Strengthen the opportunities for understanding and appreciation of open space and natural resources.

Objective OS 5A
Engage with the community through outreach and education to develop and strengthen familiarity and long-term support for open space and natural resources management.

Objective OS 5B
Manage and extend resources by promoting and supporting community outreach, and educational, safety, and volunteer programs.

Objective OS 5C
Partner with historic conservation groups and others to identify, interpret, and preserve Douglas County's history.

Objective OS 5D
Provide opportunities for agricultural education and demonstration on open space lands.

Objective OS 5E
Utilize technologies and outside contractors to support operational efficiencies and enhance user experiences.

Objective OS 5F
Use the County website, social media, and other technology to foster communication and provide information to the public.

Objective OS 5G
Promote safe behavior among users through education, signage, patrol, and enforcement.

Objective OS 5H
Partner with the Douglas County Parks, Trails, and Building Grounds program to meet common and complementary objectives.

Policy OS 5H.1
Coordinate facility development, programming, and management efforts where appropriate to expand recreational opportunities and to leverage resources.

Policy OS 5H.2
Coordinate open space acquisition with parks and trail development to provide passive recreation opportunities, where appropriate.

Glossary

Please note that terms used in this document but which are not listed below may be included within the glossary of the 2030 Douglas County Comprehensive Master Plan. Select terms from the 2030 CMP are included below, as well as additional terms that are closely related to this Parks Trails and Open Space Plan.

Conservation

A careful protection and use of something. Especially, the planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. (Source: Douglas County 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan)

Conservation Easement Purchase

A conservation easement purchase involves the loss or extinguishment of the rights to subdivide or develop the property and requires the protection of conservation values. The term is also known as "purchase of development rights." Traditional rural land uses such as agriculture are generally allowed under the terms of a conservation easement.

Douglas County Comprehensive Master Plan

An official public document adopted by the County Planning Commission and ratified by the Board of County Commissioners that establishes the community vision for the development of the County within the identified timeframe of the plan. The plan addresses a variety of growth-related issues and includes broad goals, objectives, and policies to guide land-use decisions that shape the pattern of physical development.

Ecosystem

The complexity of a community of organisms and its environments functioning as an ecological unit (source: Douglas County Comprehensive Master Plan). Identified ecosystems within Douglas County include:

- **Shortgrass prairie** – Generally lower elevation grasslands dominated by buffalo grass, blue grama, western wheatgrass, and other native and introduced grass species, as well as prairie dogs, ferruginous hawks, and pronghorn.
- **Mixed grass prairie** – Found along the western edge of the plains along the base of the foothills, dominated by big bluestem, little bluestem, yellow Indian grass, mountain muhly, and Arizona fescue; supports coyotes and historically, the sharp-tailed grouse.
- **Scrub oak shrublands** – Middle elevation plant community containing Gambel oak, hawthorn, mountain mahogany and rabbitbrush, often mixed with shortgrass prairie and ponderosa pine forests; supports scrub jays and mule deer.
- **Ponderosa pine forest** – Generally, lower elevation forest (5,500-8,000 ft.) that makes up a significant portion of the South Platte Watershed in the Pike National Forest, is common on south-facing slopes within remnants of the Black Forest, and often supports Douglas-fir and aspen populations.

- **Geological features** – Including hogbacks (mainly along the interface with the Rocky Mountain foothills), canyons (including Castlewood Canyon), buttes (mostly in southern and central portions of the County), and unique caprock and rhyolite formations. Fence lizards, chipmunks and rock squirrels typically inhabit these areas.
- **Riparian areas and wetlands** – Mainly associated with Plum Creek, Cherry Creek, South Platte River, and associated tributaries. Willow, cottonwood, rushes, sedges, and cattails dominate this habitat. These areas are home to the greatest biological diversity, including the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and the northern leopard frog.

Fee-title purchase

Outright land purchases typically involving the complete purchase of ownership. Water or mineral rights are not required to be included or maintained with the property.

Habitat

The total of all the environmental factors of a specific place occupied by animal species.

Natural Areas

Relatively large areas where ecological processes dominate and humans can typically experience a sense of solitude and remoteness.

Park

Any public or private land available for active and/or passive recreational uses, educational, cultural, and/or scenic purposes (source: Douglas County Comprehensive Master Plan).

Park, local or neighborhood

Generally, a park facility characterized by a relatively small size, limited improvements and facilities. Local or neighborhood parks are often integrated within residential neighborhoods. Local parks owned by Douglas County include: Bingham Lake, Chatfield East, DOTTS, DuPont, Perry Pines, The Pinery, Springer, and Whispering Pines.

Park, regional

Generally, a large park facility designed to accommodate a wide range of passive and active uses, inclusive of related amenities and facilities. Regional parks may have any of the following features: formal multi-use athletic fields, lighted athletic fields, informal play areas, playgrounds, hard- and soft-surface trails, passive recreation areas, equestrian facilities, hard-surface athletic courts, skateboard facilities, dog off-leash areas, picnic shelters, concessions, parking, and restroom facilities. Regional parks owned by Douglas County include: Bayou Gulch, Bluffs, Challenger, Fairgrounds, Highlands Heritage. County-owned regional parks slated for future development include Macanta and Wildcat.

Recreation, active

Leisure activities that are often formally structured, requiring equipment and designated sites or fields. Activities include field sports (soccer, baseball, etc.), playground facilities and skateboard parks.

Recreation, passive

Leisure activities that are not formally structured and that generally require minimal equipment and few improvements. Activities include walking, hiking, biking, horseback riding, picnicking, and nature study.

Preservation

The act or process of applying measures to sustain the quality and integrity of land, structures, ecosystems, and other resources with natural, historic, or other significant values.

Preservation Area

An area of land secured and maintained for the protection of wildlife, natural resources or historic significance.

Trails, Local

Trails that are often characterized by a shorter distance or lack of connection to a larger trail network, often established within and serving local communities or neighborhoods. Local trails may ideally connect to a network of trails and to regional trails.

Trails, Regional

County-owned and maintained trail links which connect to other regional or local trails as part of an interconnected regional trail network and which are characterized by amenities including trailheads (with parking).