

**CITY OF BOULDER
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: June 9, 2010

**AGENDA TITLE: Update on the West Trail Study Area Community Collaborative
Group Planning Process**

PRESENTER/S: Open Space and Mountain Parks Department
Michael D. Patton, Director
Eric R. Stone, Resource Systems Division Manager
Mark D. Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor
Joseph J. Mantione, West Trail Study Area Planner / Project Manager
J. Dean Paschall, Communication and Public Process Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) formed a Community Collaborative Group (CCG) to develop consensus recommendations for the West Trail Study Area (TSA) plan. Their recommendations will be aimed at maintaining and improving the qualities of the visitor experience and natural and cultural resources while minimizing the negative effects of visitor use.

The CCG has worked long and hard to build trust and working relationships. Staff appreciates their efforts and supports their work. The CCG has completed collaborative learning, issue exploration, visioning, definition of desired future conditions, and identification of proposals for possible on-the-ground actions (Figure 1). The CCG is now focused on their core work of developing possible plan scenarios, building common ground, and creating workable solutions that serve multiple interests.

The Board has received brief West TSA updates at each board meeting since last fall. This more formal update is intended to:

1. Describe the accomplishments of the CCG to date.
2. Identify the CCG's future work and associated timeline.
3. Describe the public process to date and new public process initiatives.
4. Provide an update on neighborhood representation issues.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

This update is being provided consistent with previous commitments to the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) as part of the West TSA planning process. It is intended as an opportunity for the OSBT to discuss and provide feedback on the West TSA planning process. Staff has no recommendations for Board action at this time.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS:

- **Economic:** OSMP lands contribute to the economic vitality of the city by providing a valuable amenity and recreation opportunities that add to the quality of life in the Boulder area attracting employers especially those associated with natural living and outdoor recreation. The West TSA plan will identify ways to ensure the long-term sustainability of this important economic asset.
- **Environmental:** The preservation and restoration of natural lands is a central aspect of the West TSA plan and contributes to the city's environmental sustainability. The West TSA plan will describe how OSMP will deliver a high quality visitor experience while protecting sensitive natural resources.
- **Social:** OSMP lands, facilities and programs contribute to the community's sustainability because they provide opportunities for members of the community to enjoy the natural values, cultural resources and recreational opportunities. The West TSA plan supports the Visitor Master Plan's framework to maintain and enhance recreational opportunities that are compatible with resource protection. The CCG process is designed to facilitate collaboration that will result in a balanced plan and a high level of community buy in.

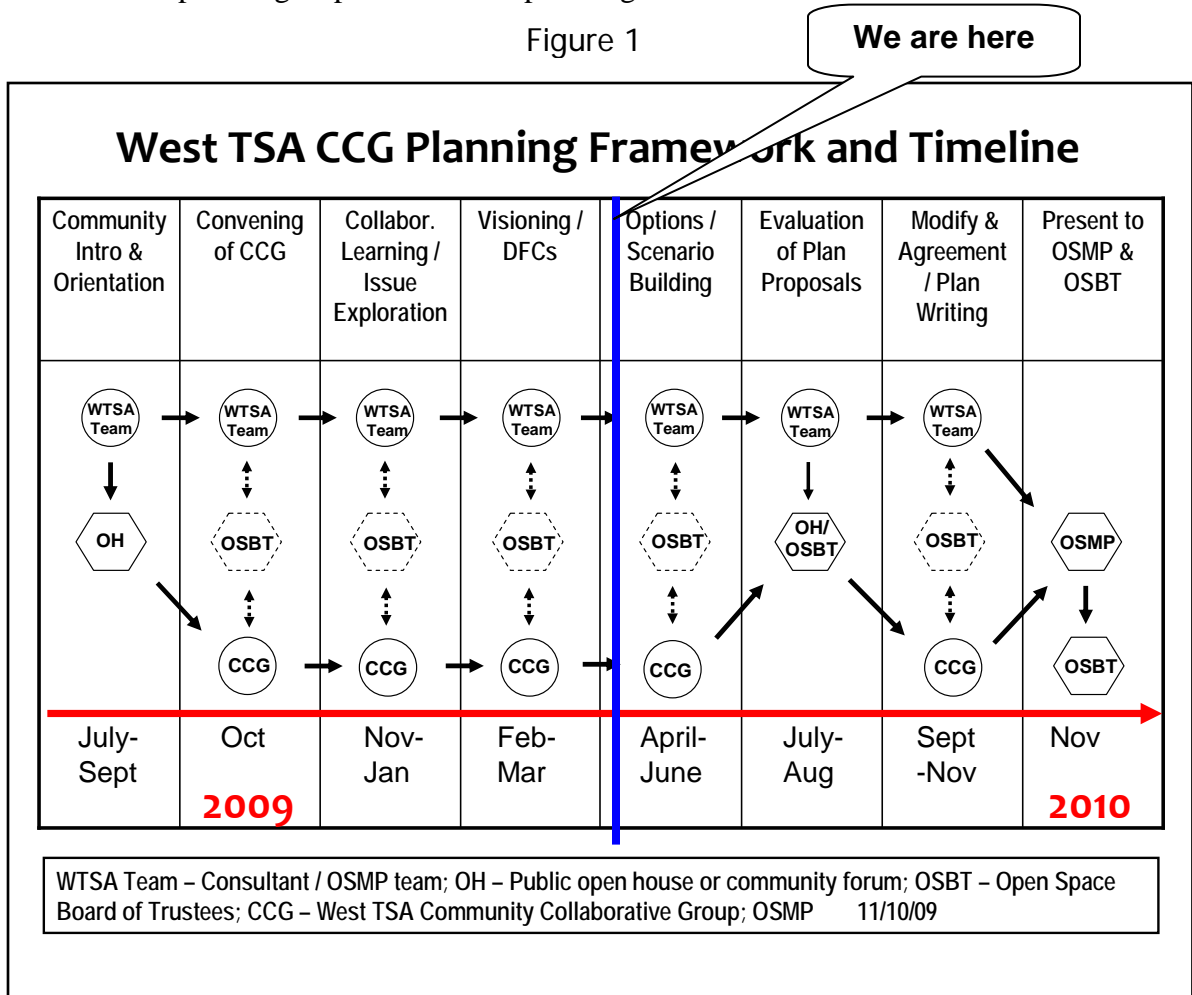
OTHER IMPACTS:

- **Fiscal:** The 2010 non-personnel costs for the development of the West TSA plan and to support the work of the Community Collaborative Group are approximately \$80,000, mostly for consultants who assisted in the development and facilitation of the CCG process. Other costs include meeting room rental, printing/copying, newspaper advertisements, vehicle rental, etc.
- **Staff time:** The West TSA planning project staffing level is high, representing both the priority and complexity of the project. An environmental planner and a planning technician work full time on this project. Five other staff members make significant time commitments to the plan.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

I. CCG Accomplishments to Date

Figure 1 shows the planning steps in the CCG planning framework and timeline.



The www.westtsa.org website provides information about the CCG’s work, including background documentation, resource inventories, CCG meeting agendas, materials and meeting notes and the work products of the CCG.

The CCG began its work in late October 2009. Since then, the group has been advancing through the process illustrated in Figure 1. The CCG is generally on schedule, but it will likely not complete the Options / Scenario Building stage until July. Completed to date:

Collaborative Learning: During this phase, the CCG developed a shared understanding of the policy and planning context for the West TSA including information on existing recreational, natural, cultural, and neighborhood conditions, issues, and opportunities. This information was discussed to aid in the development of the CCG’s consensus strategies.

Collaborative Learning Work Product: A set of [Protocols and Ground Rules](#) to guide how CCG members will work together.

Visioning and Desired Future Conditions: The CCG developed a set of ideas that describe the long-term vision for the West TSA. Rather than integrate their diverse ideas into a single vision statement during this phase, the CCG decided instead to revisit a vision statement later in the planning process.

The CCG then developed a set of desired future conditions (DFCs) from different points of view that provide objectives for the plan in the form of specific ideas about desired qualities and services. OSMP’s contribution to the CCG’s collective DFCs identify attributes, indicators, and measurable objectives for recreational, natural, and cultural resources.

Visioning and DFC Work Products: [CCG Vision Statements](#), [CCG Desired Future Conditions](#), [Summaries of CCG Proposals](#), and [CCG On-the-Ground Proposals](#).

II. Future Work of the CCG

Exploring Options / Scenario Building: The CCG began this planning step on June 2. One goal is for the CCG to discover common ground and create workable solutions to achieve collective desired future conditions. The CCG is now examining on-the-ground proposals. These include new natural resource protection measures, changes to trails and allowed use on the trails. These proposals will be integrated into planning scenarios addressing recreational, natural and cultural interests as well as neighborhood livability. One challenge facing the CCG is how to create scenarios that are considered to be realistic and a beneficial change, especially where interests conflict. The outcome of this step is to reach consensus on options upon which the CCG would then get public input.

Evaluation of Plan Proposals: The goal of the evaluation step is to gather feedback from interested community members about the options under consideration by the CCG. This input will involve taking public feedback at an open house or other public events. The Board will also have the opportunity to provide the CCG with input on the scenarios.

Modification and Final Agreement: The goal of this phase is to use public input to refine the scenarios. This stage emphasizes reaching consensus among CCG members on a package of recommendations for West TSA plan.

Presentation of CCG Recommendations to OSBT: The CCG recommendations are scheduled to be completed in November and presented to the OSBT in December.

Staff will then use feedback from the Board to complete the draft plan. The draft plan will include staff recommendations that the CCG and OSMP decided should be addressed separately by OSMP (e.g., improvements for people with disabilities) and recommendations for CCG non-consensus decision items important to include in the plan. The draft plan will be reviewed by the public and then returned to the Board.

III. Public Process to Date and General Public Outreach Initiatives

The West TSA process began with outreach intended to engage the public and gather significant input. The commitment for public interaction has continued throughout the process. OSMP staff and CCG representatives have employed a variety of techniques to provide the public an opportunity to participate in this planning process.

Ongoing West TSA Outreach Efforts: OSMP began collecting contact information from interested community members at the beginning of the West TSA planning process. Staff has compiled an email list that includes hundreds of people. Staff is responding to recent feedback that more frequent updates to members of this email list would be beneficial. Staff is now sending notices of upcoming meetings, notes from past meetings, and periodic progress reports to all those on the West TSA email list.

The West TSA website (www.westtsa.org) contains a compendium of information about the West TSA planning process including all meeting materials for the CCG. The website is being redesigned in response to suggestions from community members interested in easier access to this information.

Throughout the process, the CCG neighborhood representatives have held several listening sessions, met with several homeowner associations (HOAs), sponsored a public field trip, and provided the opportunity for communications with CCG representatives through their blog. The representatives for climbing, trail running, mountain biking, dog interests and resource conservation have all met with their stakeholder groups and communicate regularly through emails, blogs, and various list serves. Early on in the process the representative for cultural resources had not conducted the amount of outreach that staff felt was adequate. That concern has been addressed and corrected with the alternate now in the role as representative.

Upcoming Collaborative Initiatives to Expand Outreach: Some CCG members met with the department last month to explore ideas on how staff could coordinate to increase general awareness about the CCG process and inform the public on how to participate in the process. This group recommended these ideas to the CCG:

1. The CCG submits an editorial to local media outlets such as the Daily Camera and Boulder Weekly.
2. CCG members “pitch” the idea of a feature story about the CCG to local media outlets such as the Daily Camera, the Boulder Weekly, KGNU and Colorado Public Radio.
3. CCG members join OSMP outreach staff at the Boulder Farmers’ Market to discuss West TSA issues with public who stop at the booth.
4. CCG members create an online survey to obtain public opinion about CCG proposals.

As a follow up to items listed above, the CCG and OSMP could host an open house to gauge the success of these outreach activities in attracting new participants in the process. The CCG supported the first option (an op-ed piece). There was little CCG support for the other options.

IV. Update on Neighborhood Representation Issues

At the October 14 meeting, the OSBT endorsed several requirements for the performance of neighborhood representatives as outlined below (see [Attachment A](#) for details). To document performance, a “*trust and verify*” approach was implemented. The approach involves setting expectations for effective neighborhood communication and representation, trusting they will be met, but having mechanisms to verify that expectations are met.

1. Neighborhood Outreach.

Outreach by all neighborhood representatives has been extensive including the development of websites and blogs and hosting two well-attended TSA-wide neighborhood meetings, one field trip, and several meetings with HOAs. The neighborhood representatives have spent a large amount of time and effort in their outreach activities. The neighborhood representatives will continue to offer meeting opportunities to homeowner and neighborhood associations.

2. Representation of the Full Range of Neighborhood Interests.

- On May 3, all CCG members including the neighborhood representatives presented initial proposals as a starting point for CCG deliberation. The alternate who was sitting in for the south neighborhood representative presented a set of proposals that represented his personal thinking rather than ideas and concerns communicated by many neighborhood residents. These proposals caused serious concerns among the residents of this area who felt their ideas had not been included.
- At the June 2 meeting, the south Boulder neighborhood representative and alternate expressed their commitment to represent all the various interests and views of residents, develop and consider new proposals as the CCG tries to put together the best consensus plan and use neighborhood interests as a filter to evaluate all CCG proposals. They explained that their May 3 proposals were intended to spur broader thinking on possibilities for the West TSA, but they now realize they did not adequately represent the diversity of opinion regarding introduction of bikes and expanded access in the neighborhood. The south Boulder neighborhood representative and alternate will be reshaping their proposals as the CCG deliberates to better reflect the full range of neighborhood issues and interests.
- The CCG facilitator is discussing ways she can be helpful to the south Boulder neighborhood representative and alternate as they reshape their proposals. The CCG facilitator will be meeting with the south neighborhood representative, the alternate, and other neighborhood representatives to discuss how she can be helpful in their outreach and communication of neighborhood interests in the future.

3. Provide Input to the CCG, Documenting Ideas and Concerns of Neighborhood Residents.

The neighborhood listening sessions have documented a wide range of concerns and ideas for how to address those concerns. The neighborhood representatives have provided notes

that accurately reflect the breadth of comments of the community members who attended the [listening sessions](#) held on October 22, 2009 and April 7, 2010.

4. **Document Attendees and Notes from Neighborhood Meetings.**

The neighborhood representatives have consistently provided OSMP with this information.

V. Future Board Involvement

OSBT Retreat: Are there particular topics the Board is interested in discussing at the June 18 retreat?

Major Update on CCG Scenarios / Packages of Proposals for OSBT Review: As noted above, an open house or community meeting and submission of comments will be vehicles used to obtain public input on the CCG's proposal (in August or early September). Concurrently, a board agenda item or study session will be scheduled for OSBT's input.

CCG Recommendations: The CCG will present the report with its final recommendations to OSBT in December.

Submitted by:

Michael D. Patton, Director

Eric R. Stone, Resource Systems Division Manager

Mark D. Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor

Joseph J. Mantione, West Trail Study Area Planner / Project Manager

J. Dean Paschall, Communication and Public Process Manager

ATTACHMENT:

A. Neighborhood Representative Recommendations Endorsed by OSBT in the October 14, 2009 Memo

Attachment A

Neighborhood Representative Recommendations Endorsed by OSBT in the October 14, 2009 Memo

Neighborhood Representatives. In order to provide the kind of fair and responsive representation that is required for the CCG process to succeed, the recommended approach to dealing with questions raised about the neighborhood caucus election is to *trust and verify*. OSMP recommends that the elected CCG neighborhood representatives should be expected to:

- Commit to represent the full range of neighborhood interests.
- Demonstrate early and ongoing progress with the neighborhood communication/outreach program to members of the neighborhood caucus and other interested neighborhood representatives.
- Provide information to the CCG that documents the ideas and concerns provided by neighborhood residents in the various input opportunities. This could involve providing summaries of input received.
- During meetings with neighborhood residents, participants should be recorded and notes should be taken by someone, such as a secretary of a neighborhood association, which is then transparently provided to the CCG and other interested community members.

There will be an opportunity at the start of each CCG meeting for members of the public to share their thoughts, interests or concerns. These public input opportunities will allow the public to weigh in on how well the CCG members are representing the various communities of interest.

Rationale: The success of the CCG process will be enhanced if people who expect effective neighborhood representation trust the elected neighborhood representatives. This success will also be enhanced by ensuring that the commitments are matched by actions. Elected neighborhood representatives have worked together to set up an email list serve and blog and have scheduled a neighborhood listening session on October 22.

It should be pointed out that all CCG representatives have the same responsibility to effectively represent the full range of opinions held by their respective community of interest. Accountability with results will apply to everyone. Each CCG member has been asked to develop effective communication methods to inform and connect with people who want to provide input to the CCG. The OSMP Department has already assisted CCG representatives in developing and implementing communication and outreach methods by providing the email addresses of people who participated in the caucuses and providing neighborhood contacts to the neighborhood representatives.