

SUBJECT: OPEN SPACE DIVISION OPERATIONAL UPDATE

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2024

PRESENTED BY: ADAM BLACKMORE, PROS DIRECTOR
EMBER BRIGNULL, OPEN SPACE SUPERINTENDENT

SUMMARY:

Per City Council's request staff will present information on the Open Space asset inventory, an operations overview, and provide project updates.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational staff presentation - no action is required.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Presentation

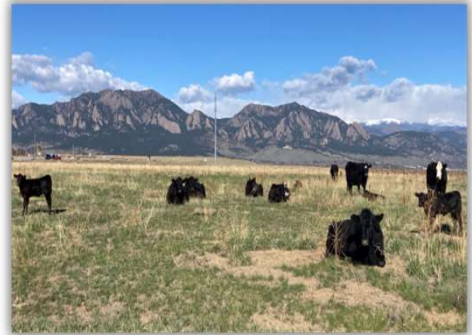
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:

☒		Financial Stewardship & Asset Management	☐		Reliable Core Services
☐		Vibrant Economic Climate	☒		Quality Programs & Amenities
☐		Engaged Community	☐		Healthy Workforce
☐		Supportive Technology	☒		Collaborative Regional Partner

Open Space Operational Update

December 17, 2024

Adam Blackmore,
Director of Parks, Recreation, & Open Space
Ember Brignull,
Open Space Superintendent



Open Space is.....

**24% of the City's Land Use but
100% the Heart of the community**

- ▶ Trails
- ▶ Biodiversity
- ▶ Solitude
- ▶ Great Views
- ▶ Land Acquisition
- ▶ Bobcats
- ▶ Prairie Grasses
- ▶ The reason I live here
- ▶ Biking & Alternative Transportation
- ▶ Pollinators
- ▶ Raptors & Wildlife
- ▶ 5am Run
- ▶ Peace
- ▶ Nature
- ▶ Carbon Sequestration



City of Louisville Open Space Division

Open Space Vision: An Open Space program funded for future generations that enriches the experience of living in Louisville by providing opportunities for citizens to reconnect with nature and their cultural heritage while also enhancing their mental and physical well-being.

Open Space Mission: To conserve and restore Open Space through land acquisition and management for the protection of natural and cultural resources and to provide opportunities for education, volunteering and appropriate passive recreation.



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How Far We've Come.....



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Current Portfolio – By The Numbers

Trails

- **32 Miles of City Trails**
 - 25 Miles Maintained by Open Space
 - 15 Miles Soft Surface
 - 10 Miles Hard Surface



Properties

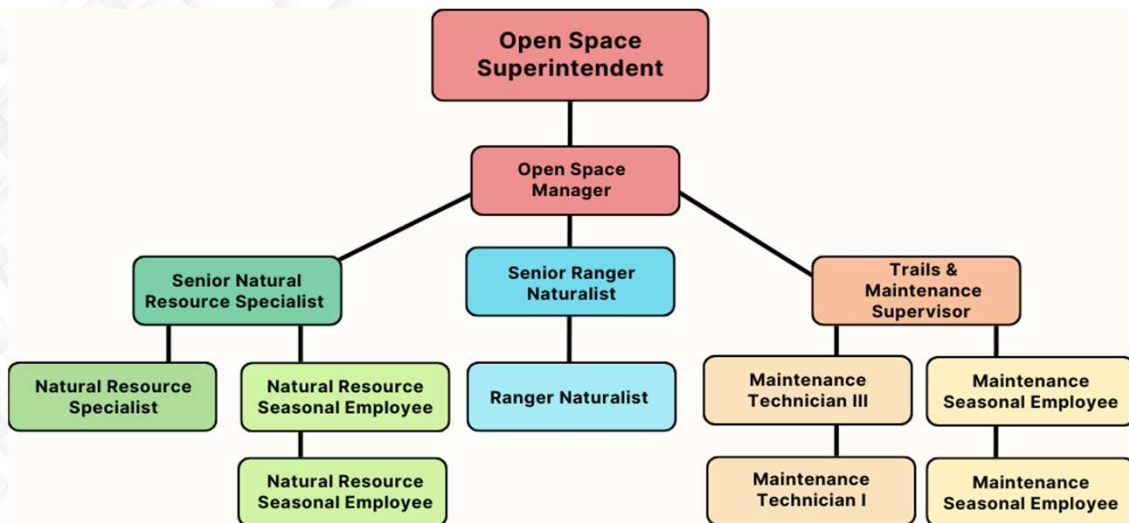
- **29 Total Properties**
 - 17 City Owned Properties
 - 12 Jointly Owned Properties
- **2,000 Acres**

Staff

- Nine Full-Time Employees
- Four Seasonal Employees

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Open Space Division Organizational Chart



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Natural Resource & Fire Mitigation

Wildfire Risk Assessment (WRA): Wildfire Mitigation Work:

- Assignments for Open Space
 - 86% Complete
 - First Priority Assignments 100% Complete

Grants Received:

- CSFS Wildfire Mitigation Incentives For Local Government
- Boulder County 1A - Strategic Fuels Mitigation Grant Program

- Removal of Grasses (through enhanced mowing & grazing)
- Removal of Shrubs and Trees Along Property Lines
- Removal of Downed Woody Materials in Forest Stands
- Native Reseeding & Low Flammability Plantings
- Smooth Brome Conversion Study
- Native Seed Collection Program



<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/47b11c7f1abe45bcb54d6e9abea1d6e>



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Natural Resource & Fire Mitigation

Why Grazing

- **Fire Mitigation:** Reduces fuel loads, such as dry grass and shrubs, which lowers the intensity and spread of wildfires.
- **Natural Resources:** Controls invasive plants, promoting native plant growth, and improving soil and water health.
- **Land Management:** Replicates the natural grazing patterns of wildlife, like the bison that once roamed here, restoring soil health and biodiversity.



Nate can explain it better in this video



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Partnerships

NRCS & Conservation Districts:

- Grazing rates, utilization, forage sampling, and soil sampling

Bird Conservation of the Rockies:

- Grazing strategies to enhance vegetation height and cover for bird communities
- Develop bird monitoring protocols for the 2025 grazing season

Earth Lab at CU Boulder:

- Evaluating post-fire changes in invasive vegetation, carbon sequestration goals, and strategies to reduce grassland fire risk



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Visitor Use & Safety

The Ranger program builds community through positive interactions that inspire **learning, stewardship, and safety.**



ENCROACHMENT MONITORING

ACCESS & USE PERMITS

Rangers are a vital part of our Education & Outreach program!



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Education & Volunteer Programs

Education Programs

- 1,500 Education Attendees
- 51 Programs Offered



Volunteer Programs

- 1,362 Hours Contributed
- Single Day Events
 - 6 public volunteer events and
 - 6 private volunteer events
- Multi Day Programs
 - Adopt-An-Open Space
 - Raptor Monitoring
 - Weed Whackers
- Open Space Advisory Board



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Outreach & Communication

Website

Open Space Division

Click here for current Trail & Property Closures

TRAILS & MAPS | PERMITS, RULES & REGULATIONS | DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS

EXPLORE OPEN SPACE | VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES | WEED WHACKERS

Educational Booths

Brochures & Stickers

Educational Campaigns

Social Media

1.9 K FB SUBSCRIBERS

Interpretive Education Panels

Trail Signage

PERMANENT & TEMPORARY

Latest Buzz e-Newsletter

1,400 RECIPIENTS



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Additional Annual Operational Objectives

Natural Resources

- Noxious Weed Control
 - 636 total hours
- Wildlife Monitoring & Management
 - Prairie Dogs
 - Raptors
 - Coyotes
 - Fish Stocking
- Restoration
 - Grasses 7 Acres
 - Shrubs
- Development Review

Work Forces

- BOCO Parks & Open Space Youth Corps
- Bridge House: Ready To Work

Trails & Maintenance

- Parking Lot Maintenance & Resurfacing
- Trail Maintenance
- Trail Edge Mowing & Vegetation Clearing
 - 121 Miles
- Upkeep of:
 - Over 200 Signs & Kiosks
 - 51 Benches
 - Replaced Over 22 Outdated Signs
- Waste Disposal of 29 total trash cans
 - 3,072 Trash Cans Emptied Annually
- Human Dimension Studies:
 - Tracking Monthly Use at Davidson Mesa
- Vault Restroom Maintenance
- Snow Removal



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Sales & Use Tax - Budget Amendment

Hecla Phase I Improvements

- Wildlife Habitat Fencing
- Pocket Prairie
- Restoration

Vegetation Transects

Trail Master Plan

Two New Full-Time Employees

- Open Space Manager
- Open Space Maintenance Technician I

Restoration Equipment

- Seeding Equipment
- Trailer



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Looking Forward.... 2025

Capital Projects:

- PROS Long Range Plan
- Trails Master Plan
- Vegetation Transects
- Wayfinding Signs
- Hecla Trail Resurfacing
- Parking Lot Maintenance
- Signage Upgrades

Operational Projects:

- Wildfire Risk Assessment (WRA) Projects
 - Grazing
 - Mowing
 - Weed Control
 - Restoration
- Establish Acquisition Policy
- Amenity Maintenance & Inventory
- Enforcement
- Education & Outreach
- Natural Resource Scientific Partnerships



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THANK YOU

To conclude, please join us on a quick visual journey through 2024 as we celebrate the incredible accomplishments of our Open Space staff!

From enhancing trails to preserving natural habitats, this video highlights a year of **progress, teamwork, and stewardship** on Open Space; showcasing the hard work, **dedication, and achievements** that made a lasting impact on our community and environment.



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