



City Council

November 10, 2025
Packet Addendum #1

From: [H M](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [H M](#)
Subject: Full Support for OSAB's Recommendations on Open Space Acquisition
Date: Monday, November 10, 2025 3:00:38 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] From outside of City of Louisville DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you validate the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City Council Members,

I write today in full support of the Open Space Advisory Board's recommendations that City Council and staff work proactively to:

- Establish relationships with property owners
- Explore and create acquisition opportunities over time
- Develop and manage funding strategies and reserves
- Build and enhance partnerships with Boulder County, neighboring towns, and property owners

These steps are essential to ensuring Louisville is well-positioned to acquire or protect key open space properties as opportunities arise.

During my 14 years of service on Louisville's Open Space Advisory Board, I witnessed firsthand how strategic foresight and relationship-building can shape the future of our community. We met with representatives from peer communities such as Boulder County, Jefferson County, and regional Land Trust organizations and learned from research about best practices from planning and land management experts. They explained that by setting clear priorities, cultivating trust with landowners, and creating flexible pathways for acquisition and protection they were able to collaborate and achieve their goals. Their best practices consistently emphasized early engagement, long-term planning, and collaborative funding models.

Louisville has the opportunity to build on this regional wisdom and best practices. By investing now in relationships, reserves, and partnerships, we can ensure that future councils and staff have the tools and trust needed to act when the moment is right.

Louisville voters approved the additional open space and parks dedicated sales tax, in part, to fund acquisitions.

This is not just about land. It is about legacy, resilience, and the kind of community we want to be. I urge you to adopt the OSAB's recommendation and commit to the proactive, strategic work it calls for. Our open spaces are not only ecological and recreational assets; they are also expressions of our shared values and vision.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Moshak

Former Member and Chair, Louisville Open Space Advisory Board (14 years)
Louisville Resident and Civic Volunteer

For your reference:

Academic Resources on Proactive Land Acquisition

1. Policy Instruments for Urban Growth and Open Space Protection

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Title: *Public policies for managing urban growth and protecting open space: policy instruments and lessons learned in the United States*

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Published in: *Landscape and Urban Planning* (2004)

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Authors: David N. Bengston, Jennifer O. Fletcher

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Summary: This paper reviews U.S. policy tools—such as conservation easements, land trusts, and growth boundaries—and evaluates their effectiveness in preserving open space.

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[Access via USDA Treesearch](#)

2. Open Space Preservation through Land Acquisition

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Source: Naturally Resilient Communities (NRC Solutions)

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Summary: Offers a practical framework for municipalities to identify, prioritize, and acquire open space, especially under development pressure. It emphasizes partnerships and flexible funding.

- [Explore the guide](#)

3. Land Acquisition Strategy in Urban Planning

- **Title:** *What is Land Acquisition Strategy? Understanding Its Importance in Urban Planning*
- **Source:** Harbinger Land Blog (2024)
- **Summary:** Discusses the legal, financial, and community engagement aspects of land acquisition, with emphasis on strategic negotiation and long-term planning.
- [Read the article](#)

4. Evaluating Proactive Acquisition in Flood-Prone Areas

- **Title:** *Buy them out before they are built: evaluating the proactive acquisition of vacant land in flood-prone areas*
- **Published in:** *Environmental Conservation* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)
- **Authors:** Kayode Atoba, Galen Newman, et al.
- **Summary:** This study analyzes how communities preemptively acquire vacant land to reduce future flood risk. It highlights the importance of strategic planning, funding mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination.
- [Read the article](#)

5. Open Space Management Guide – CU Boulder

- **Authors:** Gavin Smith, Abigail Black, et al.

- **Summary:** Focuses on converting hazard-prone housing into open space through FEMA-funded buyouts. Offers actionable guidelines for community-led open space management.

- [Download the guide](#)

From: [Tawnya Somauroo](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Fwd: No To OSAB's Proposed "Proactive Acquisition" Process
Date: Monday, November 10, 2025 12:15:21 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] From outside of City of Louisville DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you validate the sender and know the content is safe.

My apologies, an important correction to Chair McEachern's words below:

The use of open space acquisition to block housing isn't just theoretical. I attended the October open space meeting and was shocked to hear Chair Susan McEachern (also a LOSA member) refer to a Centennial Valley property as a "*sacrificial lamb for **affordable housing***" and argue that another property should be prioritized higher because otherwise four houses could be built on it. I hope that Council will agree that it is not acceptable that the OSAB chair would openly push for prioritizing properties for open space acquisition to block new attainable housing from being built. I hope that Council will tell OSAB to stay in their lane and make recommendations based on habitat preservation, ecological health, community access, and wildfire resilience, instead of using their recommendations as a tool to limit housing opportunities

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tawnya Somauroo <tawnya.somauroo@gmail.com>
Date: November 7, 2025 at 11:01:28 PM MST
To: Council@louisvilleco.gov
Subject: No To OSAB's Proposed "Proactive Acquisition" Process

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I urge you **not** to formalize or adopt the Open Space Advisory Board's proposed "proactive acquisition" process at this time.

The proactive acquisition process proposal would direct City staff and Council to begin contacting private property owners and real estate brokers in advance of any adopted framework or funding strategy. Implementing it would create a de facto land-acquisition policy that has not been publicly reviewed, budgeted, or balanced against other Council priorities such as housing, economic vitality, or sustainability.

The recent election provided a clear mandate on affordable housing in

Louisville. Voters treated ballot questions 300 and 301 as a referendum on whether the city should create more attainable housing, strongly signaling their desire to save affordable housing in Louisville.

The organizers of ballot questions 300 and 301 ran a toxic campaign, marked by lies (Louisville Together is funded by dark money and private equity), smears (demonizing Habitat for Humanity), and even misrepresenting Council actions (Council tried to stop ballot questions 300 and 301 from getting on the ballot). The tactics of the YES campaign were so offensive that the organizers lost the support of residents I know who held strongly anti-growth views pre-election.

Who organized 300 and 301? Among the names of people who gathered signatures and/or defended the initiatives in a protest hearing are: Cathern Smith, Helen Moshak, Tamar Krantz, and Matt Jones, the same residents that call themselves Louisville Open Space Advocates (LOSA). LOSA has been upmanaging the new proactive open space acquisition proposal and open space acquisition property recommendations through OSAB.

The fact that the same people who organized 300 and 301 are advocating for open space acquisition through LOSA should not surprise anyone. It was always the goal of the 300 and 301 organizers to block the Centennial Valley, Avista Hospital, and Red Tail Ridge properties from getting rezoned residential and then acquire these properties for open space in a one-two punch.

We don't need this new process; Louisville already has a structural imbalance in how community priorities are represented that bias the City towards open space acquisition away from housing priorities because:

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The City has a long-standing Open Space Advisory Board dedicated staff. This provides consistent attention, meeting time, and staff resources for open space.

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In contrast, Louisville has no advisory board, commission, or staff division dedicated to affordable housing. The 2024 Housing Plan is implemented through general planning staff, without a permanent advisory voice or regular public forum.

This imbalance means that open-space proposals already receive prioritized visibility and institutional support, while affordable-housing goals rely entirely on

Council initiative. Making OSAB's new acquisition process "official" would further bias City resources toward land banking and away from addressing the housing crisis and the affordability crisis.

The use of open space acquisition to block housing isn't just theoretical. I attended the October open space meeting and was shocked to hear Chair Susan McEachern (also a LOSA member) refer to a Centennial Valley property as a "**sacrificial lamb for open space**" and argue that another property should be prioritized higher because otherwise four houses could be built on it. I hope that Council will agree that it is not acceptable that the OSAB chair would openly push for prioritizing properties for open space acquisition to block new attainable housing from being built. I hope that Council will tell OSAB to stay in their lane and make recommendations based on habitat preservation, ecological health, community access, and wildfire resilience, instead of using their recommendations as a tool to limit housing opportunities

If Council wishes to refine the City's approach to land acquisition, that discussion should occur transparently through the Comprehensive Plan and budgeting processes. To be sure the City maintains a healthy balance, new open space acquisition recommendations should always be paired with an evaluation of how they might impact our housing goals and fiscal needs. If there is a particular property that Council wants to target, Council can do that. There is no need to create an entire new city process to prioritize open space acquisition at this time.

Thank you for your efforts to maintain balanced, transparent, and community-wide decision-making.

Respectfully,
Tawnya Somauroo

Cornerstone

From: [Cathern Smith](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: 2026 City Council Work Plan
Date: Monday, November 10, 2025 11:18:54 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] From outside of City of Louisville DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you validate the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor Leh and Members of City Council,

I see a disconnect between the City's Work Plan and the values of the community in that the Work Plan does not reflect residents' appreciation of the character of the community and its delightful small town feel. The people are the heart of any community and I believe they are looking for measured growth and continuation of the high level of services and amenities that Louisville provides. To me this means looking at traffic, rec center and library usage, water, and other aspects of the social and physical infrastructure of the community and figuring out how to pay for them. Other Colorado communities with high rates of growth are now struggling with the cost of building the necessary infrastructure to sustain their communities. Let's plan more carefully so that we can maintain the existing high levels of service and livable character of Louisville.

Another characteristic of the community is its interest in sustainability and the need to address climate concerns. With the federal government stepping away, there is a strong need for the City to step in. I would like to see the City Council pick 3 sustainability initiatives that you think will have the highest impact and support them whole-heartedly.

I would also like to see the City continue the conversation with the Police Department and other Departments about the use of technology. The Police Department's 2025-2028 Guiding Document embraces technological advances including drones and license plate readers. See pages 6-7 at <https://laserfiche.louisvilleco.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?dbid=1&id=1004872&page=1&cr=1>. As a first step, I suggest a City-wide survey of current uses of technology, including cell phone tower pings and drones, as well as a technological wish list with the end goal of developing policy that balances the privacy interests of people with research needs of Departments and the legitimate public safety concerns of the City -- all the while being mindful of the impacts on marginalized communities, the potential for surveillance abuses, and bias which can be built into these systems.

Finally, I am supporting the recommendations of the Open Space Advisory Board for water rights for Coal Creek and Hecla Lake. Last year, I walked the Coal Creek Trail during the height of spring run-off and found it bone dry. Riparian areas are precious. Less 2% of the surface area of our lands is riparian. And, yet 90% of invertebrates rely on riparian areas at some stage in their life cycle and aquatic life forms are clearly wholly dependent on water.

Thanks applying your talents and perspectives to the City.
Best,

Cathern Smith
Ward III

From: [Tawnya Somauroo](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: No To OSAB's Proposed "Proactive Acquisition" Process
Date: Friday, November 7, 2025 11:01:35 PM

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Thank you for your efforts to maintain balanced, transparent, and community-wide decision-making.

Respectfully,
Tawnya Somauroo

Cornerstone

From: [Susan Loo](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Ember Brignull](#); [Abby McNeal](#); [Adam Blackmore](#); [Diana Langley](#); [Samma Fox](#)
Subject: 2026 City Council Work Plan: Memorials
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 7:12:53 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] From outside of City of Louisville DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you validate the sender and know the content is safe.

I was recently contacted by a resident about current city policy on the purchase of memorial trees or benches located on city property.

My understanding is a memorial plaque--whether inscribed with just a name and/or dates or with a simple inscription—is now forbidden. I do not know when this new policy was adopted, but I cannot recall any public discussion or reasoning behind it. Years ago, I recall a controversy from some open space advocates that the benches were “cluttering up the scenery” and were not “natural” and therefore inappropriate on open space. I also heard some people were offended upon reading various inscriptions. If those allegations still exist, those offended people need to come forward publicly and put themselves on the record.

Aging and unable to complete walks without periodic stops to rest, I have appreciated many memorial benches and their inscriptions dedicated by family and friends to honor their loved ones. The inscriptions are always touching to me and make one appreciate the contributions of all people’s lives.

The primary question is why anyone would buy a memorial bench or tree in Louisville without a memorial plaque?

If not allowing memorial plaques is an underhanded, cynical attempt by the city to curtail memorial trees and benches, council needs to be honest and say, “We do not want memorial trees and benches in Louisville because XYZ.”

I suggest a survey of memorial policies in other municipalities to reveal current trends. For instance, the City and County of Denver does not permit memorial plaques in perpetuity. With adequate background, you should be able to review the topic and make a decision in 20 minutes or less.

Thank you for your consideration and hopefully including a discussion in your 2026 Council Work Plan.

Susan Loo