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LISTEN Engagement Summary

Thank you to everyone who participated in the second phase of public engagement for the Arapahoe County Open Spaces (ACOS) Master Plan Update, which began in April and ended in August. We hope you took advantage of the opportunities to complete one or both of the online surveys, the mailed statistically valid survey or the youth adventure workbook.

We missed the chance to meet with you in person, but hopefully there will be future opportunities to touch base face to face. Your feedback to date has been instrumental in creating the plan framework and focusing our efforts moving forward, including the vision, values, strategy ideas and content for the final Master Plan.

Stay up to date on these opportunities and the planning process by visiting the ACOS Master Plan webpage (www.arapahoegov.com/osmasterplan).
COMMON THEMES & PRIORITIES

- Maintain & improve what we have already
- Protect & restore wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems and riparian* corridors
- Continue to provide new trail connections & recreation opportunities
- Distinguish priorities between urban & rural geographies
- Improve awareness & communication

* Riparian areas are wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams.

COVID-19 IMPACT

In the interest of public safety, we shifted from in-person workshops and activities to online outreach, mailed surveys and phone interviews. Nearly two in 10 public survey respondents mentioned COVID-19 concerns were preventing them from visiting these spaces more often.
PUBLIC SURVEYS

DATES: May 18 – June 19, 2020

GOAL: To understand how users feel about the quality and condition of the current system of open spaces, parks and trails they visit and what they enjoy doing in these spaces.

HOW WE LISTENED: Signs were posted in parks at 14 ACOS properties with URL and QR codes, allowing people to immediately link to the survey. The survey was also advertised via social media channels and newsletters.

WHO WE HEARD FROM: Just over 300 people responded. Most were between 25-40 years old and accessed the survey after visiting Cheyenne-Arapaho Park.

79% of respondents indicated they have a park, trail, or open space within walking distance of their residence, even if it is not directly managed by ACOS.

MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying nature and/or wildlife</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercising, walking dogs</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking, spending time with family and friends, relaxing, meditating</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities not listed in survey</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized sports, swimming, horseback riding, hunting, educational events, large group gatherings</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROGRAMMING & AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS

• Respondents overwhelmingly thought the condition of trails is great.

• Access to and quality of water and restroom facilities are where ACOS needs to focus most of their improvements and maintenance resources.
PUBLIC SURVEYS

DATES: 2020
June 19: Pre-notification postcards
June 24: First wave survey mailed
July 1: Second wave survey mailed
July 24: Data collected

GOAL: To collect information that provides statistically valid indicators of the opinions of the adult population living in Arapahoe County regarding the Open Spaces program.

HOW WE LISTENED: A statistically valid survey, in both English and Spanish, was sent via USPS to 2,000 randomly selected Arapahoe County households.

WHO WE HEARD FROM:
330 residents or a 17% response rate - typical rates are between 12-25%.

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

VISITING ARAPAHOE COUNTY OPEN SPACES, PARKS & TRAILS

- Residents usually visit the same two or three open spaces, parks and/or trails.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The highest percentages of people participated in the following activities:

- Enjoying nature or wildlife: 67%
- Using walking and hiking trails: 62%
- Spending time with family and/or friends: 56%

1. Enjoying nature or wildlife
2. Using walking and hiking trails
3. Spending time with family and/or friends

USAGE

- Use of open spaces, parks and trails is pretty much equal among the various age groups – no major differences in use related to age
- Residents who own their homes are twice as likely to use trails for biking versus those who rent. Renters find it twice as hard to get to open space opportunities compared with owners.

OPEN SPACES & DEVELOPMENT

- Residents feel that the most important reasons for future permanent land acquisitions are the protection of waterways and wildlife/habitat.

PROTECTING WATERWAYS & WILDLIFE

6 out of 10 respondents feel it is absolutely essential to acquire and preserve land to protect waterways or to preserve and protect wildlife.

Over 90% feel these are absolutely essential or very important reasons to do so.
PUBLIC SURVEYS

FUTURE BUDGET
If developing a budget for ACOS, using $100 as the total allotment and assuming all options cost approximately the same, residents would allocate the money in the following way:

$29.17
Maintaining and improving conditions of current open spaces, parks and trails

$25.49
Reducing negative impacts to the natural environment to protect and restore wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems and riparian corridors

$19.64
Providing more trails and parks with recreation opportunities and developed amenities (playgrounds, athletic fields, etc.)

$13.10
Preserving working farms and ranches

$12.60
Providing education, outreach and volunteer programs

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION & FUNDING
Residents’ appreciation for open spaces is not directly correlated with their knowledge of the Shareback program or use. Even respondents that do not visit the properties often or are not specifically aware of the Shareback program still appreciate the value of open spaces to the larger community.

• Over 85% support extending the Open Space Sales and Use Tax by 10 years, while over 75% support extending it indefinitely.

• Nearly 50% of respondents say they rarely or never visit ACOS properties.

• Only 10% of respondents previously knew about the ACOS 50% Shareback program.

PROGRAMMING & AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS

• Respondents gave high marks to the job being performed by Arapahoe County Open Spaces – 95% agreed that ACOS does a good job of providing opportunities to enjoy nature.

• Restrooms garnered the lowest ratings but were still viewed positively by half of respondents.
PUBLIC SURVEYS

DATES: July–August 2020
July 8: Advertisements posted online, via email, newsletters, social media and newspapers; July 24: Survey closed

GOAL: To invite anyone to respond. It included the same questions that were asked in the statistically valid survey and was available online in English and Spanish. This type of survey typically draws in responses from open space and trails interest groups and current ACOS users at a higher rate than the statistically valid survey.

HOW WE LISTENED: ACOS provided a link to the survey on the Master Plan webpage, accessible to anyone.

WHO WE HEARD FROM: 931 responses - 14 completed the Spanish version; 917 completed the English version

ONLINE OPEN USER SURVEY

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
While the top three activities were the same for both the online open user survey group and the statistically valid survey respondents, the open user respondents were more likely to say they like to enjoy nature and wildlife or use trails, while they were less likely to say spending time with family and friends is a top activity.

1. Enjoying nature or wildlife
2. Using walking and hiking trails
3. Spending time with family and/or friends

USAGE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS
Online open user survey respondents were more likely to have visited an Arapahoe County park, open space or trail at least once in the past 12 months than statistically valid survey respondents.

Online Open User Survey
Statistically Valid Survey

90%
73%

Providing more trails and parks with recreation opportunities and developed amenities.
Maintaining and improving conditions of current open spaces, parks and trails.
STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

DATES: May 2020

GOAL: These survey results were used to develop the questions for the public surveys and to gain insight into key constituent values, vision and initial strategies for the plan.

HOW WE LISTENED: Online survey link was sent to each respondent via email

WHO WE HEARD FROM:
8 respondents

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC) SURVEY

OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD (OSTAB) SURVEY

PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION & FUNDING

• Strong support across the board for Dedicated Open Space Sales & Use Tax
• Funding should be mostly used to provide publicly accessible areas and to acquire and develop trails/open spaces.

ACOS SUCCESSES & ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

• Generally, respondents think the County has been most successful at providing, maintaining and improving trails.
• East-west trail connectors and more neighborhood trails could be a future focus.
• ACOS is very good at regional collaboration, especially when it comes to relationships with municipalities and metro districts.

PROGRAMMING & AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS

• Responses varied, but more than one group mentioned agricultural preservation as important, especially in the eastern half of the County, where development pressure is steadily increasing.
• Across the board, respondents value water and the preservation of and access to it.

TOP 3 AREAS TO DIRECT CONSERVATION & ACQUISITION EFFORTS FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

- Prevent development of environmentally sensitive or special areas
- Provide wildlife habitat/ ecological conservation
- Conserve agricultural and ranch lands; tied with Provide easy to access places for people to spend time in nature

43% 43% 29%
STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

DATES: May 2020

GOAL: These survey results were used to develop the questions for the public surveys and to gain insight into key constituent values, vision and initial strategies for the plan.

HOW WE LISTENED: Online survey link was sent to each respondent via email

WHO WE HEARD FROM: 35 respondents focused on the following areas: Land Use; Maintenance & Stewardship; Reauthorization; Strategic Acquisitions

FUTURE GROWTH

9 out of 10
Land Use stakeholders feel that the most important role of open spaces to direct future growth is to provide places near urban environments for people to spend time outdoors.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP SURVEYS

PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION & FUNDING

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INTERVIEWS

RIPARIAN CORRIDOR & GREENWAYS SMALL GROUP

DATES: Aug. 27, 2020

GOAL: To understand priorities ACOS should focus on in terms of acquisitions, stewardship and maintenance as they relate to riparian corridors, providing recreation options and protecting wildlife habitat.

HOW WE LISTENED: GoTo Meeting and Mentimeter live online polling

WHO WE HEARD FROM: Eight participants representing various organizations and municipal entities focusing on water resources

DEVELOPERS

DATES: Week of Aug. 24, 2020

GOAL: To gain insight into how the development community feels about open space, parks and trails in relation to their projects in the County, and to inform initial strategy ideas as they relate to dedication requirements and the development process.

HOW WE LISTENED: Individual phone interviews focusing on the development process, dedication requirements and fee-in-lieu options as they relate to open spaces, parks and trails.

WHO WE HEARD FROM: Selected members of the development community. All but one of the respondents are involved in large residential subdivision development and all but two are involved in rural development.

RIPARIAN CORRIDOR & GREENWAYS SMALL GROUP

The public should be engaged through education and stewardship to truly understand the role that water and conservation play in ACOS. Cherry Creek is a priority area due to high population in surrounding areas.

Management of riparian areas should be proactive rather than reactive.

Regional collaboration and partnership is key for the conservation of water and protection of riparian areas.

Eastern riparian areas need more conservation whereas the western areas need restoration.

DEVELOPERS

Pursue dedication requirements based on geography.

Explore expansion of the types of acceptable dedications.

Increase accountability for completion of improvements.

Phased improvements should be allowed.

By-right fee-in-lieu should be allowed for small dedication requirements.
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

#YOUTHACOS ADVENTURE WORKBOOK & PHOTOGRAPHY CHALLENGE

To make sure that Arapahoe County’s open spaces, parks and trails are places that everyone—including kids, wild animals and insects want to spend time in and enjoy, we decided to ask youth to go on an adventure outside, have fun, and document what they found outdoors in a workbook and photography challenge.

DATES: August 2020

GOAL: To engage youth in the outdoors and understand what they enjoy doing in nature and what they would like to see in the future.

HOW WE LISTENED: Youth Adventure Workbook - link to downloadable pdf on ACOS website and hard copies available at the ACOS building. Photography Activity – link included in Youth Adventure Workbook and on the ACOS website.

WHO WE HEARD FROM: The activities were geared toward children ages 7-12, but kids of all ages were invited to participate.
OUTREACH

A variety of outreach materials were used to spread awareness of the planning process and notify residents about the user and statistically valid surveys, and youth engagement.

From April 1 through August 20, 2020, the ACOS Master Plan webpage was visited 2,101 times. In the previous five months, it was only visited 82 times.

PRINT MEDIA

- Wire signs with QR codes in open spaces, parks, trails (14 locations)
- Newspaper Ads: Villager, I-70 Scout, Aurora Sentinel, Colorado Community Media
- Rack cards at the Arapahoe County building
- Mailed postcards for statistically valid surveys

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Nextdoor
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Partner websites, digital newsletters

Open Spaces Master Plan Survey

IMPACT YOUR SPACE.

IT ONLY TAKES 15 MINUTES TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!
Help us shape the future of Arapahoe County’s parks, trails and open spaces for the next decade and beyond.
You can take our survey anytime between July 8th-24th. Even if you don’t visit these places often, we want to hear from you. Your anonymous responses will be used to help guide how your Arapahoe County parks, trails and open space lands are preserved, enhanced and enjoyed.

Available in English and Spanish on our website:
www.arapahoe.gov/osmasterplan

#greatoutdoorsarapahoe #planningforthefuture
#coloradoproud #73milesofnewtrails
#160parksandtrailheadprojects
#31,000acresofopenspace

IMPACT YOUR SPACE.

What would you like to see in the future?
Take our survey.

In English: www.bit.ly/acos2020
In Spanish: www.bit.ly/acos2020espanol

ENVISION YOUR SPACE
Go to arapahoe.gov/osmasterplan to find out how you can continue to get involved.