

## **Determining Level of Service and Facility Development on Open Space Properties as Part of the Acquisition and Management Planning Processes**

**Purpose:** To determine the level of services regarding facility and infrastructure development on open spaces with the intent to: 1. Effectively respond to and manage public expectations based on the overall property vision and budget; and 2. Improve projections of both development and long-term management costs. Currently adopted management plans include a vision statement that defines the property's overarching management philosophy. In future management plan documents and planning processes, it is proposed that this section will be expanded to clarify level of facility development, infrastructure and services that match the management vision. This is an adaptive document to be used over time with management plan updates and adjusted with time and information available.

### **Management Planning Process**

**Step 1: Project Guiding Vision and Values.** This step of the Management Planning Process for Open Lands, Parks, and Trails occurs when a property is acquired or management plan is updated (5-10 year basis). At this step, the overarching reasons for acquiring the property are identified and the vision developed that guides how the property will be developed and managed, including level of service and facility development. Criteria/requirements proposed to be used to help determine the level of facility and infrastructure development/services may include:

- Legal or required improvements (county regulation, application to historic structures).
- Acquisition or Management Partnerships (part of the acquisition agreement, a conservation easement, IGA, management partnership or other agreement).
- Existing infrastructure and site capability
- Location of the property (proximity to city limits or GMA's, remoteness)
- Proximity to other open spaces/natural areas/parks/regional trail facilities
- Projected use levels/visitation
- Diversity of experiences and area identity provided for in the Department's portfolio (rustic to developed)

Level of facility development can be specified in management plans by the criteria/requirements outlined above informing the overarching management philosophy of a specific property. Throughout all the steps of the management planning process, the level of facility development and service provided will be tested to ensure we are still on track as public, stakeholder, OLAB and other comments are received.

#### **STEP 1. PROJECT GUIDING VISION AND VALUES**

*Board of County Commissioners/Open Lands Advisory Board/Department Staff*

- Refine preliminary vision for area envisioned in evaluation and acquisition process.
  - Communicate preliminary vision with key adjacent landowners for both the acquisition process and the management planning process.
  - Acquire pertinent existing conditions information as part of the project evaluation for the acquisition process.
- Suggested Addition:**
- Expand acquisition process evaluation sheet to include information on existing infrastructure/services such as (proximity to water, sewer, power, etc.) and projected development costs.

**Example Table: Trailhead/Access Road Facilities Compared at Three Open Spaces**  
 (would be completed to extent possible as part of Final Review in Acquisition Process)

Criteria/Requirement	Property		
	Soderberg OS	Eagle’s Nest OS	Devil’s Backbone OS
<b>Legal or required improvement</b>	Paved trailhead and 1200’ of access road.	Construct road to CR standard G	Worked with CDOT to re-stripe Hwy 34 to provide required left hand turn lane.
<b>Acquisition or Management Partnership</b>	Planted screening trees at south end of trailhead.	Road maintenance agreement with neighbors.	Bern construction; Road maintenance agreement with neighbors.
<b>Existing infrastructure/capability</b>	Water line adjacent – water tap	No water available	Water line adjacent;
<b>Location of property; proximity to GMA’s</b>	Moderate proximity to GMA – less popular than main HTMOS trailhead.	Remote	Close proximity to Loveland GMA – higher patrol/maintenance
<b>Proximity to other open space facilities</b>	Main HTMOS trailhead provides more heavy access.	Not adjacent to other open spaces	Two other trailheads feed this trail system – need to account for carrying capacity.
<b>Projected or Current use levels/visitation</b>	Moderate use	Low use; lower patrol/maintenance	High use – larger lot size within carrying capacity; water tap; more freq patrol/maintenance
<b>Diversity of experiences within Dept.</b>	Historic component	Rustic; No bikes	Education emphasis; relatively urban.

**Step 2: Information Needs Identification and Accumulation.** This step further tests the validity of the vision with stakeholders (partners, user groups, etc.), subject experts (CNHP, DOW, historian, etc.) and staff input. During this step, stakeholders are asked questions related to the vision, facilities proposed and overall management such as: What are we not accounting for?; What needs are not being met?; What is appropriate?; and, What opportunities exist given the natural, cultural and other resource values on site?

**STEP 2. INFORMATION NEEDS IDENTIFICATION AND ACCUMULATION**  
*Department Staff/Coordinator*  
*Stakeholders*

- Identify pertinent existing conditions information.
- Identify appropriate technical advisory team members (resource experts, user groups, others)
- Accumulate information from advisory team and other sources (field trips, interviews, etc).

**Suggested Addition:**

- More specifically evaluate acceptance of level of service and facility and infrastructure development.

**Question:** Does this step adequately address refinement of the level of facility and infrastructure development and services with subject expert and stakeholder input?

Based on concerns raised at November 2008 OLAB meeting regarding levels of facility development, the following is proposed:

1. **NEXT STEPS:** Staff will develop a general classification/description of Levels of Development/Service (1, 2, ..etc.) that meet the criteria above, and reflect the carrying capacity of an area, visitor expectations as set by the management plan vision, management zoning models and the current level of visitation. Some areas may have the same facilities but different level of service needs (for example, Soderberg and Eagle’s Nest open spaces have nearly the same trailhead facilities but different levels of patrol, cleaning, maintenance, etc. needs due to low visitation – related to distance from population primarily). In this example, ENOS would be ranked at a lower level than Soderberg OS. Similarly, Devil’s Backbone Open Space has significantly higher use levels than either of these areas and is very close to Loveland GMA and warrants a higher level of facilities and associated maintenance.
2. **LONG-TERM:** The best overarching model is to phase facilities at an area. If we knew then what we know now, we may have phased in the number of parking spaces and permanent restroom at ENOS since visitation is so low. Similarly, the visitor expectation at a more remote and rustic area should be identified in the management plan and thus correspond to lower facility development (at ENOS there is no water for example). We are doing this now at RMOS – we have an ultimate design based on carrying capacity, but since we don’t yet know the demand/level of visitation we are phasing the parking in at ~1/2 the full capacity. Similarly, we are setting the level of visitor expectation by this being a more remote property – you can know you will encounter fewer people (capacity of TH) and that the facilities will be more rustic/limited than another open space of this size and number of trail miles.

**Level of Facility Development Classifications**

Classes	Standard Facilities in Developed Zone	Optional Facilities based on criteria	Examples of Existing Open Spaces
<b>Level 1</b>	Unpaved Parking; Port-o-let; Regulatory/wayfinding sign; Gate	Kiosk; Fencing; Trash can	Ramsay-Shockey Open Space
<b>Level 2</b>	Unpaved parking; vault toilet; kiosk; gate; fencing; Trash can;	Picnic tables; Outdoor classroom	Devil’s Backbone, Red Mtn, Eagle’s Nest, Soderberg, etc. open spaces
<b>Level 3</b>	Unpaved-paved parking; Vault-Flush toilets; Kiosk; Gate; Fencing; Picnic tables	Bike rack/pump; Bus parking; Picnic/sun/wind shelter; Outdoor classroom	Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space