

# Growing Up Boulder's Role in Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Master Plan Engagement: Values, Hopes, & Concerns

February 21-March 30, 2018

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## Project Summary

The City of Boulder's OSMP department is engaging in a multi-year Master Planning process. In 2016 and 2017, GUB and OSMP partnered to research *how* young people wished to be engaged in the process. Building upon findings from this work, the two organizations partnered again in spring of 2018 to support community outreach efforts during the first engagement window of the Master Planning process.

During the first engagement window, the community was asked to share their values, hopes and concerns for nine topic areas that help communicate OSMP purposes defined by the City of Boulder's Charter: scenery, natural resources, water and floodplains, visitor enjoyment and facilities, agriculture, limiting sprawl, cultural resources, connections with nature, and acquisitions and funding. Feedback will be used to develop five draft focus areas - or management themes - with the intention of making OSMP's future one that is guided by responsible stewardship and diverse community input. GUB's role was twofold: to support OSMP with the creation of child and youth-friendly engagement materials (ie. easy to understand imagery and language), and to facilitate engagements with young people and their families.

## Phase 1: Methods for Engaging Young People | July 2016-March 2017

The first phase of GUB's involvement in the OSMP Master Plan process was to ask youth if they would like to be involved in the process, and if so, how they would like to participate. Youth overwhelmingly felt it was important that they be involved in the Master Plan process and expressed the desire to be engaged in familiar locations, such as schools, libraries, and hiking trails. Having youth identify ways they would like to be approached for engagements provided ideas for the next phase in the process. A variety of micro-engagements (short interactions to gather input and information) in the first engagement window were then planned to meet youth in locations where they were already present.

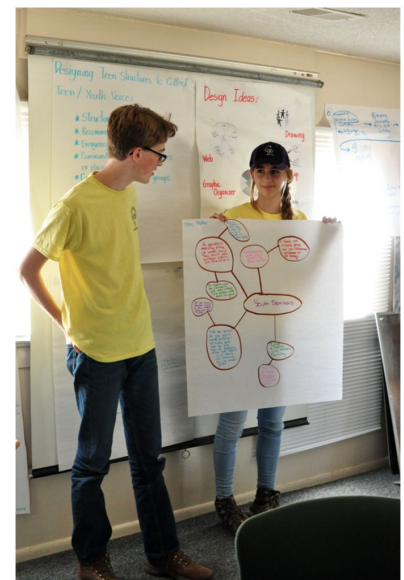


Photo Credit: Sarah Bartosh

## Junior Ranger Program | July 27, 2016

GUB and OSMP worked with twelve Junior Rangers between the ages of 14-17 in July 2016 to gather feedback on whether young people were interested in participating in the Master Planning process, and if so, how engagement opportunities should be structured. Teens overwhelmingly endorsed creating a year-round framework for youth input to OSMP, whereby a Teen Advisory Board would meet one to two times a month. They shared that art, writing, and technology were the preferred methods for young people to share their voice, and they wished that adults would listen to and act upon young people's recommendations more often.

## Foothills Elementary School 4th Grade Class | March 2017

In March 2017, GUB worked with 4th grade students at Foothills Elementary School to find out whether or not they wanted to be involved in OSMP Master Plan process, and if so, how they would like to participate. Children were quite interested in participating in the Master Plan. Locations where the students wanted to participate included familiar places, such as the YMCA, public libraries, schools, hiking trails, coffee shops, and parks. When asked how they wanted to participate, student answers focused on activities such as youth councils, games, speaking to people in the community, drawing, and writing letters.



Photo Credit: Will Oberlander

## Phase 2: Values, Hopes, and Concerns | February 21-March 30, 2018

### General OSMP Tools of Engagement

For the first series of OSMP Master Plan engagements, outreach centered on questions of values, hopes and concerns for the City's open space and mountain parks. OSMP staff, with input from GUB and Trestle Strategy Group, created a toolkit to engage community members in conversation, capture feedback, and inform the public about the Master Plan process. Different components of the toolkit were used at various outreach events. The toolkit's primary activity was a questionnaire that listed the nine topic areas within OSMP's purposes defined by the City of Boulder's Charter. Participants were asked to choose their top three topic areas and to identify what they valued about each, as well as what hopes and concerns they hoped to see addressed in the Master Plan draft focus areas.



Photo Credit: Aria Dellepiane

Other toolkit materials included:

- OSMP topic area "Snapshots" with photos, graphs, and information to inform participants about the nine topic areas
- Pre-addressed envelopes with take home questionnaires

- Business cards with a link to the Master Plan website, information on how to sign up for the Master Plan email list, and the project manager’s contact information
- OSMP Master Plan System Overview Executive Summary
- Engagement evaluation forms

## GUB Tools of Engagement

Because the Master Plan will establish a strategic approach to OSMP management over the next decade and beyond, it was important for OSMP’s process to capture child and youth input and values. Building off of the information and materials provided in the OSMP engagement toolkit, GUB generated a “Kid-friendly Snapshot” booklet with images and words that describe the nine OSMP topic areas. The document was used by GUB staff in one-on-one interactions with children to guide conversations and facilitate the completion of the questionnaire. GUB and OSMP staff found that the booklet proved helpful, not only in conversations with youth, but with adults and families as well.



Photo Credit: Danica Powell

## Summary of GUB Engagements

### I Have a Dream Foundation Casey Middle School Engagement | March 6, 2018

GUB engaged with 15 students from Casey Middle School’s I Have a Dream Foundation (IHAD) program on March 6, 2018. GUB staff presented an introduction of the OSMP Master Planning process to Dreamers and adult volunteers using a powerpoint slideshow that included many photographs. Casey Dreamers come from Latinx backgrounds. Staff spent the beginning half of the engagement defining Open Space and Mountain Parks to the youth before continuing on to the Master Planning process and questionnaire. Students enjoyed learning about the history of open space in Boulder (“What’s a greenbelt?”) and OSMP programs (“I didn’t know that someone in a wheelchair could go on a hike!”). They were attentive during the slideshow, and photographs proved an effective learning tool. Students filled out the Values, Hopes, and Concerns questionnaire using the “topic descriptor sheet.” The descriptor sheet gave a detailed explanation of each topic, and was a critical tool for students to successfully complete the questionnaire. Many students were challenged by the density of the questionnaire, and it was helpful to have adult volunteers present to give them the one-to-three guidance they needed. Overall, students expressed that they enjoy the outdoors and being in nature. Staff wished that the engagement had either been outside (at a trailhead) or centered-based, with realia or objects to touch that represented each topic, to further support learning styles within the group.

### Imagina Open Space | March 18, 2018

On March 18th, 2018, OSMP held an engagement event at Civic Area Park in front of the Boulder Public Library. After a Jeff and Paige concert for children, families visited multiple stations that offered information on the nine topic areas. Upon visiting at least three topic stations, visitors were asked to make their way to the Values, Hopes, and Concerns table and



write their thoughts on poster pages. OSMP and GUB staff were present to guide the conversations and encourage youth to express their values, hopes, and concerns about the topics most important to them. A professional weaver-textile artist was present to help interested community members weave an Earth Loom (pictured right). Participants wove colorful pieces of fabric, along with rolls of paper with their feedback written on them, into the loom to create an artistic expression of their vision for OSMP. Questionnaires and poster papers were used as tools to record the community's feedback.



Photo Credit: Danica Powell

## EXPAND Parent Engagement | March 23, 2018

GUB facilitated an engagement at the East Boulder Community Center (EBCC) on March 23rd, 2018 for families who are part of the Exciting Programs, Adventures and New Dimensions (EXPAND) community. EXPAND is a city recreational program for people with disabilities. The EBCC hosts a Friday Night Fun event for children, youth, and their families who participate in the EXPAND program. In order to understand the needs of our diverse community and promote inclusion, it was important to gather feedback from this group. After dropping their kids off at the Friday Night Fun event, GUB gave parents a quick introduction into OSMP and the Master Plan process. They were then asked to fill out the Values, Hopes, and Concerns questionnaire to share which of the nine topic areas were most important to them. The Snapshots and the Master Plan process timeline were provided for reference. After the engagement, parents completed engagement evaluation forms so that OSMP staff could understand what approaches worked well and how engagement approaches could be improved and refined for future windows of engagement. The parents were excited to voice their opinions, and they provided valuable feedback for the Master Plan process. Several parents shared that they would go home and engage in the topic with their children and then complete an additional questionnaire online.

## Next Steps in the Master Plan Process

GUB always enjoys working collaboratively with OSMP staff on city projects, and the Master Plan engagements throughout this first engagement window were no exception. The staff is organized and knowledgeable, resulting in the achievement of the broad goals of this engagement window, which were to 1. listen well and inclusively to broaden connection with the community and 2. share information and communicate clearly. In the next step of the Master Plan process, OSMP staff will take input gathered from the questionnaires and engagements to develop themes related to the values, hopes, and concerns. Those themes, as well as findings from the System Overview Report, will be used to develop draft focus areas to guide OSMP management over the next decade. The draft focus areas will be refined over the next few

months, culminating in final approval from City Council this summer. During the second engagement window (May 7 to May 20), community members are asked to help confirm these focus areas through an online questionnaire. This feedback will be shared with the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) and City Council to support a joint study session with both bodies on Tuesday, June 12, 2018. The goal of the joint study session will be to review the draft focus areas developed from public input to date - prior to formal action by OSBT and City Council to confirm final focus areas. To stay involved in the process, receive updates, and participate in upcoming engagements, please visit OSMP's website at: [OSMPmasterplan.org](http://OSMPmasterplan.org).

The following timeline highlights the first window of engagement on which this report focuses and shows all of the planned windows of engagement throughout the Master Plan process. Timeline provided by OSMP.

