

NATURAL AREAS MASTER PLAN COMMENTS

CATEGORIES:

- General Plan
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General Plan:

Congratulations on a well thought-out plan! I appreciate your careful consideration of proportion for conservation areas.

The plan was well thought out, and the process logical. I think that, overall, the planned land purchases are well prioritized.

I think you have developed an excellent plan for future conservation! The views are closing in quickly around town and paying a little extra sales tax is worth keeping our town beautiful.

Thank you for providing an open forum on this very important issue concerning current residents and future generations.

The website is very good, especially the maps. I know you have many competing ends in choosing lands to preserve.

Excellent display. The Plan concept appears well-balanced, addressing the various roles of open spaces for the community and region. One small suggestion – the “LaPorte” label in area 1 is well North of the historic town area – perhaps the label could read “Bellvue-LaPorte” for the entire area?

I agree with the design of the plan which call for land being purchased both within and outside of the city limits. Clearly, Fort Collins citizens will benefit from protecting land that surrounds the city.

Good job – on the overall program and on this presentation. Glad to see what’s been done and what’s planned. Carry on.

Be careful about billing the program as one that “prevents development”, but rather that it is solely aimed at conservation.

Thank you for presenting the Master Plan today...I plan to provide "official comments" from my home email account tonight, and pass the word on to other friends to get their comments in by Friday. But to you personally I'd like to say, I'm relieved and thankful there are people in the "right" positions who have such forward thinking and conservation minded principals.

Please continue forward with the currently proposed plan. The Natural Resources department has devised a plan to preserve our wonderful lifestyle for generations to come.

I thought I would take this opportunity to send a last minute message on the Open Space aspect of the Land Conservation and Stewardship Master plan. As you know there is very large and very broad support for this

program in the community. There is also the feeling that our leaders have done a great job in providing open space opportunities. The purchases that have been done in the past, have helped define Ft. Collins and make it the charming place that it is.

Thanks for the opportunity to review your insightful draft Land Conservation and Stewardship Master Plan.

The plan demonstrates the considerable thought that went into creating this framework for future conservation.

Very best wishes with your planning process and many thanks for all that you are doing to make our city such a wonderful place to live.

Urgency

Land needs to be acquired now!

We can't do it all.

Natural Areas should be buying land now not sitting on the money – identify the bottleneck and get the job done.

Be aggressive right now, as soon as possible, jump in – the people of Fort Collins support this.

Please don't sit on the taxpayers' money. They have voted to increase open space, please buy land to protect our few remaining open spaces, now!

I would urge your team to prioritize at risk areas, areas that are vital to the program, those that are deemed important saves. Please assess these as quickly as possible and make the purchases and leverage the buying power by partnering with other organizations.

Wanted to let you know that I am in favor of your plan and encourage you to implement the plan as soon as possible.

Buy property as soon as possible – it's not getting any cheaper – sooner rather than later.

Grab as much as you can now.

Please buy land now! Please do not wait, only to lose parcels or pay higher prices for parcels. The City needs to move more quickly in implementing your plans. You have the money now to build an incredible open space program.

Please don't sit on the taxpayers' money. They have voted to increase open space, please buy land to protect our few remaining open spaces, now!

You have a plan. Now let's implement it!

It is imperative that we get out and buy the land NOW! Have several deals going at once.

Be aggressive!! Hit the ground running and multi-tasking – spend money now. Don't let funds sit idle.

Be aggressive in acquisition and conservation. Funding divisions are as good as any as long as you are free to pursue opportunities as they arrive.

The most important thing is to get busy and start protecting land. That's why the voters supported the continuation of the ¼ cent sales tax. Opportunities will be lost or land will become too expensive if the City doesn't get to acquiring the land

Identify at risk and high risk areas and act now.

Please buy land now! Please do not wait, only to lose parcels or pay higher prices for parcels. The City needs to move more quickly in implementing your plans. You have the money now to build an incredible open space program.

I am much less concerned about getting the right mix of habitat, recreation areas, agricultural land, etc. than I am about preserving as much land as quickly as possible – and buy what is most threatened first.

The time to act is now, spend the available funds, with so much important land to protect, you can hardly make a mistake.

So important to start buying land now. Please don't wait to finalize the plan before buying land. Important to seek out opportunities – not just wait. We will miss out on land opportunities forever if we don't start now.

March adoption schedule is way too long! There are no reasons to wait so long to go to Council with this plan. We need to be moving at a much more rapid pace on land conservation. Fund allocation seems to be right on the money. However, a more concerted effort needs to be made to protect lands before they're gone or are too expensive to afford protection.

Time is of the essence! Please move ahead with the plan in a aggressive manner to take advantage of favorable market conditions, and to purchase sensitive areas while they are still available.

We would like to encourage you to initiate the process of buying as much new property as possible in the very near future. The prices are presently down a touch, so this might be the best time to buy. You do have money available and possibly by joining up with the county, major acquisitions could be made. We would encourage you to spend. I know that it is an unusual thing to say to a staff, and elected officials but the word for the day is SPEND. Yes, I said that, hard as it may be.

Fort Collins has the ability, staff and elected officials to do more great things, so lets have at it. I'll say it again, SPEND.

Geography and Fund Allocation

I think that land purchases close to the core of Fort Collins have some of the biggest benefits, especially when these areas can be accessed by children in the community. While these areas my not be of great habitat value, they enable a "connection to place" that these children will take with them the rest of their lives. The same cannot be said for a conservation easement remote from the City.

Don't pass over properties that meet criteria.

Prioritize the 'at risk' sites no matter what the geographic location.

Regional Conservation: Eagles Nest are near county lands. Grab as much now and manage at a later time. Protect the North Fork of the Poudre.

Use some of the 6.75 million now – borrow ahead. May not have purchasing power five years from now. We can do the most conservation in the regional areas.

Split is appropriate.

Conservation easements make money go farther. Use in community separators (ag lands).

“Urban” vs. “local” areas

Connectivity between areas is important especially for wildlife along the Poudre.

Flexibility is key.

Urban natural areas have high maintenance and restoration costs.

Reduction of local emphasis makes sense in the second five years.

Regional provides increased opportunities for habitat protection.

Directional shift of money makes sense.

Local is as important as regional.

I am a citizen with a Fort Collins address, but technically live in the county by Horsetooth Reservoir. The majority of my purchases and time are spent in the city. Technical boundaries are only relative to the subject of discussion. The city natural areas program has a unique opportunity to plan for the long-term and think “outside the city”, and I think they should take every advantage of that now, before it's too late. As we are all local, regional, and even global citizens, we shouldn't limit our thinking and planning to narrow boundaries.

Thank you for a job well done so far. But, there is still much more work that needs to be done in an effort to preserve and protect open spaces and natural areas not only within Fort Collins, but also well outside of the growth management area.

What would it look like if you considered only the highest ecological priority? This critical as far as ratio of money spent.

Consider lands in jeopardy, wildlife linkages (key wildlife habitat) that are most in jeopardy in next five years. How many priorities should there be? - Could get watered down by too many.

Riparian corridors are important to identify, protect, and focus on.

Areas #7, #8, and #10 should be considered “local” areas and not regional, at least soon (3-5 yrs) if not now.

Community separators have less ecological value, but high aesthetic value. More emphasis should be placed on conservation easements vs. fee simple purchase in this area.

Community separators are very important to protect for some individuals in the group.

Need criteria for selection of land conservation sites to determine priority.

Need criteria for flexibility--basis for deviation; can't be unlimited flexibility.

Need flexibility, but 1/3-1/3-1/3 for first five years seems O.K.

Allocation for stewardship and management – don't know if this is a good split in allocation of land conservation monies because management costs are not stated. Need this information in document to evaluate land conservation allocations.

The limited availability of lands within the city are dwindling quickly and are quite expensive; however, areas outside of our area are still plentiful and less costly. Other areas for consideration are the community separators especially between the Fort Collins/Windsor parcels as well as the encroaching Wellington community.

Preserve northwest Fort Collins, Bellevue, LaPorte. Comparatively speaking, the northwest part of our area is still fairly pristine and undeveloped. I would encourage working to keep it that way as much as possible.

Somehow, some way we need to help preserve the rapidly disappearing farm/agricultural lands. One way to do this is to avoid "flag pole" developments that extend into previously undeveloped land. In my way of thinking these are about the worst thing that can happen because it sets the stage for further development and selling off of land because farmers and ranchers feel they are being crowded out and cannot continue their agricultural operations with subdivisions nearby. I realize this is probably more Larimer County approving this type of development than the City, but it goes back to the regional planning and cooperation.

The "Waverly GP" has formed to defend Waverly from annexation or an overly large GMA from Wellington. They may be partners interested in joining a rural conservation district that could become a partner with City and County Open Space programs. Contact Jane Clark.

As a biologist/ecologist I encourage wildlife habitat protection of the foothills – grassland region. This narrow band of habitat supports a suite of animals and plants that differ from the Foothills-mountain zone and the true shortgrass prairie. It is this zone that you get more of a mixed-grass prairie. It is also this zone that has high development potential. Protection of this in the local Fort Collins area is important.

Keep a strong focus on acquiring or preserving areas in town for recreational purposes. How wonderful to have natural areas so close and not to have to drive 20-30 min or more to get there – or pollute the air as we make our way there! Also, the young and the elderly need the places of beauty nearby, as they often don't have the means to get there by car.

It is now preferred to buy land outside of the Ft. Collins GMA. There are great opportunities to the west and north of Ft. Collins for protecting large tracts of land, at reasonable prices. The County would be a welcome partner in these areas. The plan calls for spending outside of the GMA - this is very good.

We need to get the community separators done. The Timnath/Windsor community separator is currently critical. If not protected soon, it will be lost forever to development. The Wellington separator is also important.

Community identity has been eroding with the invasion of large franchises, and I don't want to live in ANYWHERE, USA with unlimited sprawl along the highways from Canada to Mexico. It is time to place importance on the land for its own sake, and slow the relentless sprawl machine that fragments wildlife habitat, erodes community identity, and increases fossil fuel consumption. Fort Collins Natural Areas program has the ability and obligation to set the standard in Northern Colorado for smaller communities to follow and participate in, and a strong regional approach will help accomplish this. The future is here, along with 6 billion humans, we have to think big in order to make even the smallest difference.

Emphasize community separators to avoid northern Colorado cities growing into each other. Particularly between Fort Collins and Loveland, Windsor, and Timnath (which seems to be gearing up for big growth). Community separators are going to be sorely needed along I-25 between communities.

Regional land conservation planning and cooperation with surrounding communities. I think Fort Collins is doing a great job with natural areas conservation, but it seems to be a lower priority in Loveland and Windsor, for example. As the largest most dynamic city in this area, Fort Collins must be a leader in influencing land conservation policy in this region.

Focus mostly on regional to get more land for the money. Local and Community Separators are too expensive. Change the allocations to regional – 75%, Local and Community Separators - 25%.

Are there any opportunities for preserving the corridor along Highway 287 north of Ted's place where the "water buffaloes" want to put a reservoir? This is a beautiful scenic area with great cliffs, raptors and an entry to LaPorte and Fort Collins.

Focus on regional areas – they become "local" areas in the future.

New regional focus is very important – don't be shy. Be flexible – don't lose any good deals.

Go for more outright purchases in regional for more control.

Buy as much regional as possible. There's lots of it at a lower price. Plus, it gives recreational users more opportunity to get out of the city and enjoy nature/wildlife, etc.

Poudre River is a huge priority for community separators and regional.

I'd like to see more focus put on the regional conservation efforts. Although further from town, the conservation value is so much higher and the opportunities much greater.

The plan seems like a good balance geographically. I especially like the idea of conserving land in the Laramie Foothills. Also, the community separators are critical.

Look at regional cooperation beyond Larimer County – Weld, Boulder, and Wyoming.

Since funds are limited, more urban natural areas is not the best expenditure of money. They do not provide connectivity or corridors.

Need to incorporate preserving rural agricultural character of area when possible. Buy conservation easements from farmers, even if not in bubble area, to prevent further development and preserve aesthetic open space.

Five-year goals: Greatest goal for City should be in infill regulation/easements in the Poudre Corridor up to Bellvue; first between LaPorte and Owl Canyon. De-emphasize Rist Canyon – plenty of Forest Service land nearby.

De-emphasize community separators – they cost too much. 50% on local, 50% on regional.

Ten-year: to Meadow Springs-North County region, Laramie Foothills, Cooperative efforts with County.

Local: Poudre corridor to mouth of Poudre Canyon.

Some buyers split – 50% regional 50% local.

While local conservation concerns within the city limits are certainly important, I think more funds should be allocated to the regional areas and community separators during the short-term (2004-2008) as well as the long-term (2009-2013). The proposed split of 1/3 to each category in the short-term and 25/50/25 split in the long-term is reasonable, but I would suggest that even less should be concentrated on the local area for reasons of high acquisition costs. More “bang for the buck” can be achieved regionally, and that land is going fast.

I am concerned that local tax dollars are being used to fund purchases of land that are for regional use. If these types of lands are targeted than I believe there should be regional support and funding sources for this purpose. I would support Fort Collins paying a proportionate share based on population, or land area, or some other reasonable method of allocation. But if the regional governments are not going to support the purchase than either don't make the purchase or have a fee for non-Fort Collins resident's use.

Allocation split appropriate.

More regional and community separators in the short term.

More allocation now for local – focus on properties along the Poudre.

Do not take from regional to gain a community separator or small local.

Community separators could be created by local conservation areas.

Bellvue and Laporte are important.

Try to add to properties and not buy pockets here and there.

Not important to just maintain a pretty view for drivers along I-25 – only appropriate if it meets other criteria.

Allocations need to be flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities.

More money to regional and community separators.

Don't want to miss opportunities close-in.

Community separators will disappear quickly – start here.

Keep flexible – opportunistic (in a nice way).

Ok balance – leverage money and partnerships.

Different focus areas have different conservation values = accommodating different values.

Be on constant alert for protecting agricultural lands and water.

Land continuity and linkage of land is important. Prevent fragmentation.

The guidelines should not be a rigid prescription.

The monetary breakdown is arbitrary.

Think and focus on watershed scale and protection.

Local: feel balance is pretty good.

Look hard – try not to take funds out of regional

Mouth of Poudre and Bellvue are important.

The timing of acquiring the properties proposed in the regional plan seem dire to me, these rare ecological treasures are seemingly being gobbled up by the only remaining forward thinkers...the developers. To me, preserving these areas is crucial to keeping the regional area such a special place.

The regional areas program is an excellent plan. The City would benefit in so many ways if these areas were protected from the sprawl so much of the front range as succumbed to.

We feel that going outside the GMA is great and might mention we are hearing there are growing opportunities to the north and west. We have also a keen interest in continuing the purchase of separators between Timnath, Windsor, and Wellington as these communities have clearly developed the idea that growth will solve all problems no matter how willy-nilly it is.

Obvious it is hard to make choices when the needs for conservation are so considerable, but if there is one thing the plan seems not to adequately address is nature close to where people live. I believe there are opportunities to enhance areas like Spring pr Fossil Creeks -- and many other areas I don't personally know -- that would greatly enrich the lives of citizens because they are close at hand. Conserving regional conservation priorities shouldn't overshadow what can be done within the city. Yes, conservation can be more expensive here and the species may not be as glamorous as elsewhere, but something profoundly important to conservation can be accomplished. It's an issue ecologist Robert Michael Pyle calls "extinction of experience" (*The Thunder Tree, 1993*). "If a species becomes extinct within our own radius of reach...it might as well be gone altogether," he says. To which he adds, "I believe that one of the greatest causes of the ecological crisis is the state of personal alienation from nature in which many people live."

Glade Reservoir area is at risk. It should be protected and it's not currently in a focus area.

Poudre River corridor is a local priority, especially with land use changes.

Separation with LaPorte is a priority.

Urban growth boundary should be fixed through City Plan. Acquisitions should help define growth boundaries of Fort Collins.

Protect land around reservoirs.

Regional has more impact – wildlife value, buffers, corridors.

Local is important too – bike trails, near schools, pockets.

Tools for Land Conservation:

Regional areas--to what extent will there be cooperation with counties other than Larimer County (i.e., Weld, Boulder). Need a common vision with Weld and Boulder counties as well.

Criteria--what work is being done to inventory areas and include in evaluation the less visible groups of flora and fauna (e.g., snails, mosses, little fishes)?--could lose these areas that are important to these groups. Baseline data needs to be a "bioblitz" (include all flora and fauna groups).

Viewsheds and scenic values should be part of selection criteria.
Emphasize ecological values.

Pursue opportunities with the U.S. Forest Service to swap out acreages.

Who brings money and who manages?

What are the priorities for protection – recreation, habitat, agriculture, views?

Allocate some land conservation monies to evaluate sites for their ecological value.

Use modeling of land development trends to help determine priority.

Instead of allocating funds by region do it by risk.

Prioritize areas that are most at risk to lose the land the price to increase.

Flexible, safe.

Marketing push to sellers.

Don't be rigid.

Willing seller may not mean it's not on the market – actively seek willing sellers.

At risk and opportunity are equal factors.

Habitat/ecological value needs to be assessed on total spectrum of flora and fauna, not just the big dynamic species (e.g., raptors).

It's important to keep partnering to acquire these lands.

The goal for Meadow Springs should be conservation easement not outright acquisition. Management of Meadow Springs as a natural area needs to be addressed. Get some bison out there.

Terminology of "natural areas" and "open lands" needs to be addressed in this update. City Plan calls it "open lands" – need to define the terms.

Acquiring open lands limits sprawl, clusters development and contributes to opportunities for public transit.

There seems to be a changing emphasis toward open lands which is broader than natural areas. County has open lands program – should be integrated with City goals.

City needs to become more proactive in finding "willing sellers". Owners of desirable land should be actively recruited so that lots of land is in play, which may keep the market cost lower.

Selection criteria needs to be identified for people.

Community Separators and Local can emphasize conservation easements. If conservation easement, there should be access where appropriate.

Top priority should be to preserve wildlife, it is what we are most in danger of losing. Protecting wildlife means many of competing ends will be met. Thus corridors and biodiversity hotspots are most important.

I like the approach of dividing the areas into the three focus area types. I also like the idea of splitting the effort equally in the first time period and then shifting more effort to the regional conservation effort in the latter time period. By that time, we will need to be looking more at the regional scale, before those opportunities are lost. So, this is a great start and I look forward to seeing more.

Why not join with County and NR advising board, Ag. Advising board, Open lands, Land Trusts. And integrate working landscapes into the mission statement (i.e. helping minimize loss of agricultural lands and water while creating separators, habitat).

Do more press releases, marketing, education and public relations – you don't get the credit you deserve!

No information on sources of funding. No information on cost to maintain vs. outright purchase dollars. Would like to see a map that shows county parks – open lands, trust lands, other discrete parcels to see how they relate to the maps provided.

One underused land conservation tool is purchase and lease back- resale to conservation buyers or with deed restrictions or sans development rights. OSNA database might track potential parcels and promote this lower cost technique.

Lands need to be evaluated/inventoried to determine their priority for acquisition.

Contiguity between open spaces should be a priority.

Make attractive offers to landowners in priority areas. It sounds like this program has ample funds to work with the special tax, so competitive offers need to be made to landowners for priority lands to fend off commercial developers. Also, how about really featuring some land conservation success stories so far and publicize them with landowners to show what others have done, and hopefully influence their decision to be part of land conservation?

Use creative ideas to buy property and spread the financial burden out over time. Consider bonding. Leverage all appropriate partners.

What are the priorities? Focus local acquisitions on the Poudre corridor due to other local/separator areas have largely been acquired. Mining along the river is causing a transition of land use. There should be a community separator between FC and LaPorte.

Maintain habitat connectivity along the Poudre River and connect to adjacent habitats.

Poudre River corridor should be a priority.

The three areas should be four areas: local area #5 is very different from 1,2,3,4, and 6. I am in favor of giving equal weight and value to local if local means 1-4 and 6 but not 5. Priorities should be lands that provide connectivity, corridors and habitats.

Understanding the priorities of partners in acquisition of regional areas. Fort Collins' money is going to preserve land managed in cooperation with other parties – county, other municipalities. Who gets management control?

What preservation/conservation priorities are being used to determine the allocations? Info used? Inventory of lands per type? 03-08 allocations seem arbitrary (flexible). Recognizing both need for ability to buy lands as opportunities becomes available (fragmented lands) and importance of continuity corridors in natural areas.

Balance needs and wants of taxpayers.

Use open lands for renewable energy infrastructure – photo-voltaics, wind and bio fuels.

I'd like to see an overlay of the City Open Lands Master Plan with County Open Lands Plan. If they (county) focus on regional, maybe we can focus more on locally and for community separators.

I'd like to see more focus on the northwest area between Fort Collins and LaPorte along North Shields and North Taft Hill – particularly of land in conservation easements.

How about using private sectors brokers who go out and broker purchases without the seller knowing it's the city – you might get more done quicker and cheaper.

The expenditure of money in 2003-2008 should prioritize those lands most at risk of development and with the highest natural values or other appropriate values. This might suggest more focus on local and community separators in the early years.

Be very flexible with the allocation of funding.

The "Glade Reservoir" should be looked at as an important parcel to be saved.

Funding allocation should have much less emphasis on local, regional, community separator geography. Conservation should be prioritized based on level of "risk" regardless of where it is. This means that there must be more flexibility so that important land in danger of development or subdivision needs to get highest priority.

The ability to use open land protection as a means to influence the urban form of the region around Fort Collins should become a very important criterion for prioritizing conservation.

I voted for "Open Space Yes" because I want to preserve or conserve land for future generations.

Toot your own horn. Get regular press coverage as you proceed toward completing various components of your program.

Conservation easements would be an excellent method to protect vast open spaces with potential purchase down the road.

With the resources here at hand here in Fort Collins, I feel we have an incredible opportunity to do something extraordinary for/in the lives of our residents. For example, could your department take the lead in formulating a "green infrastructure" plan for the developed portions of the city -- a plan that would look across city agency jurisdictions and see the natural systems that are right out our doors? Could you help forge a vision for what nature could mean in our city. Pyle is right. More distant conserved nature is important, but greatly diminished if we have an "extinction of experience" right where we live. We spend most of our lives in the city. Don't we want to enrich the experiences we have right here? In many cases we are not talking about land acquisition, but unified management by city agencies that, with a shared vision, could more readily look at natural systems as systems. I live near Spring Creek and use it in teaching at the university. I can see what would be accomplished if there was a corridor-wide vision that integrated the efforts of those working on flood control, parks, natural areas, trails, water quality,... Because of my work and research in planning and natural resources around the world I know what can be accomplished for a community when greater attention and care are given to these places close at hand. Let's not overlook them.

I believe the plan should include an investment trust fund strategy for long term maintenance (not just spending on land acquisition). The possible acreage is astonishing which concerns me that future tax dollars will be taken from core city services to maintain land almost half the size of the city itself!

With the current city budget deficit and lack of funding for key city infrastructure...I don't believe the taxpayers understand the amount of money going to Open Space while other needs are not getting funded.

Recreation

Limit recreational opportunities in areas with high ecological value. (i.e. "regional" spaces) i.e. –NO trail use during migration seasons, NO disturbing sensitive areas.

Introduce bison in natural areas to the north. Coordinate open space with regional transportation authority.

Not all natural areas need recreational trails. People disturb ecosystems negatively.

There is a huge NEED in this community for open spaces for recreational use that would permit residents to have their dogs off leash. I am firmly convinced it is possible-desirable!- and not incompatible with the preservation of natural spaces to allow dogs off leash in clearly designated, large areas (not like the current pathetic dog park-sigh!). Please help with these needs. I support all open space initiative with my vote (and taxes) but never visit them because it is not relaxing or pleasurable to go there with my dog pulling me right and left, and there are so many like me! This suggestion is possible because many areas/towns/cities in the U.S. have resolved this by creating separate natural areas where dogs can run free.

I do not support a “dogs-off-leash” policy in Natural Areas, dogs have a large negative impact on wildlife.

Community Separators should have more recreational opportunity compared to the Regional areas. Community separators have less ecological value, so they should facilitate human recreation because the threat is less to ecosystem integrity.

Keep ecological integrity as a highest priority when developing trails, parking lots, etc.

Not all areas should be multi-use. No snowmobiles, ATV, 4-wheels, etc. Also need to limit activities in sensitive areas.

Please try to arrange asphalt or concrete bike trail extension from ELC south to Drake and Ziegler. This missing piece is a bummer. Thanks.

When planning for trails, please do not fragment the land any more than necessary. Put trails on edges as much as possible. Our landscape is already so fragmented and trails are just one more inroad.

1981 I helped support the county sales tax to buy Horsetooth Mountain Park. Now it costs \$6 to park and it still loses money – I say make it free and cover it from county budget. Plus now it’s illegal to go off trail in the “~~park~~” err, zoo. This REALLY annoys me. I know it’s county, not city, but please don’t pull this stunt on city natural areas. It’s fine to REQUEST “stay on trail”, such as Fromme Prairie. I do - it’s fragile. But allow free access in natural areas. At most - seasonal restrictions from nesting birds of prey where appropriate.

I believe government has a fiduciary responsibility to use our tax dollars to their highest and best use. As such one way to stretch these dollars is to combine recreational activities with the open space lands in areas where it makes sense, like community separators. Let's take the Long View Farm on South College for example. I believe that property could incorporate a recreational facility (soccer field, frisbee golf course, multi-functional game field, etc.) by embedding it in the middle of the property and screen it from the perimeter of the property by locating it in natural low spots in the land or creating very gentle rises for berming that can screen the activities. In this manner we are using our tax dollars to their highest use and giving the community the amenities that we have come to expect. I would not propose this for properties that are intended for preservation, but the Long View Farm is one that I believe would serve this purpose well, and I'm sure there are others.

We strongly support open space acquisition to protect habitat, wildlife, trails, views, etc. However, we have lived in the “country” for almost 20 years and have some difficulty with current “Open Space” trends. For example:

- some open spaces might best be used as farmland at least initially; a portion of proceeds going to food banks etc.
- closing all areas after purchase does not take into account previous use by local residents. This use may not be obvious precisely because we feel a stewardship to the land and use it lightly. Such use should be allowed to continue – it is much less destructive than vehicle use by rangers!
- not all off leash dog walkers are evil. We simply allow our pets to get their needs met. One kind of playground doesn’t meet every child’s needs!

I believe the majority of voters who passed this initiative anticipated accessible recreation areas within or very near the city. I am concerned with the Regional acquisition plan and areas secured via conservation easement that would not be available for use by those paying sizable tax dollars to secure it.

Ongoing problem of conflicting recreation--don’t mix on same site--don’t want to “Love the land to death” or “Kill the natural areas value.”

Would like to see limited recreation on high value ecological areas (regional).