

**MEMORANDUM  
FROM THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD**

**DATE:** June 18, 2014  
**TO:** Mayor and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Joseph Piesman on behalf of the Natural Resources Advisory Board  
**SUBJECT:** Poudre River Downtown Master Plan

The NRAB has spent considerable time reviewing the key elements of the Downtown Poudre River Project, devoting portions of two regular meetings, one joint field trip with the Land Conservation Board, and with many of us attending multiple open houses on all or portions of the plan. On a vote of 4-0 (with one abstention), the Natural Resources Advisory Board supports adoption of the Poudre River Master Plan with some special considerations (listed below).

- The proposed restoration activities are very important and timely, and capitalize on the growing momentum for Poudre River rehabilitation.
- We very much applaud the collaborative effort between Parks and Recreation, Stormwater, and Natural Areas.
- We believe the designers have done a great job aiming at the Triple Bottom Line, with considerable benefits accruing to the social, economic and environmental dimensions.
- The designers have also done a great job leveraging sources of funds and weaving this proposal with previously funded and implemented restoration activities. But long-term costs for all the needed restoration along the Poudre, including instream flows, is a potential concern.
- We are, however, concerned about the intensity of development between College and the Burlington Northern Railroad Bridge. Though we recognize the need to be proactive in terms of reducing social trails and bank erosion, as well as the need for more parking, we recommend that the current design for this specific portion of the proposed project be scaled back considerably, especially to replace the broad extent of hard surfaces with dense erosion-resistant vegetation, and shrink the human use areas on the north side of the river. If warranted, we can always supplement a scaled-back design after several years' experience with a smaller implementation. We can still offer some kayak and rafting "whitewater features" and some parking, but blend restoration more harmoniously with the existing natural areas up and downstream and make a few family-friendly water features too. This would be a far more acceptable design.

In short, let's have a river that a wide variety of people can enjoy in an ecologically responsible way so that they become river advocates. Just as with open space, if we lock it all up instead of opening it to the public, the support for such expensive programs will wither. Fort Collins has a gem; let's polish it, not lock it up tight. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Please feel free to contact me regarding this recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted,

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