

Trails, Open Space and Parks Program (TOPS) Ballot Question

City Council Meeting

Tuesday August 10, 2021

President Pro-Tem Richard Skorman

Karen Palus, Director

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department



24 Years of Trails, Open Space and Parks Program (TOPS)



- **Important Accomplishments To Date:**
 - 7,169 acres of open space acquired
 - 66 parks built or improved
 - 50 miles of trail constructed
- **First Open Space Purchase:** Stratton Open Space
- **Most Recent Open Space Purchase:** Black Canyon Quarry Property and Pikeview Buffer Parcels
- **Total Open Space Acres Purchased in 2020:** 894 acres

Public Meetings-Stakeholder Input



TOPS Working Committee Public Meetings

- September 2, 2020
- October 7, 2020
- November 4, 2020
- November 16, 2020
- December 2, 2020
- December 16, 2020

Parks Board Public Meetings

- September 10, 2020
- December 10, 2020
- January 14, 2021
- February 11, 2021
- March 11, 2021
- April 8, 2021
- April 14, 2021
- May 13, 2021
- June 2, 2021
- June 10, 2021
- July 8, 2021
- August 5, 2021

City Council Public Meetings

- June 10, 2021
- July 12, 2021
- July 26, 2021



Presidents Park Sustainability Commission



Held five meetings for commission member's input

Sponsored by:

President of City Council: Tom Strand

President Pro-Tem City Council: Richard Skorman

Thank you to the following individuals and the organizations they represented.

Members:

Tim Ashley

Daniel Bowan

Patricia Cameron

Susan Davies

Susan Edmondson

Regina English

Bob Falcone

Conor Hall

Tyrone Johnson

Chris Lieber

Mina Liebert

Jim Lockhart

Lee Milner

Carlos Perez

Judith Rice Jones

Joyce Salazar

Hank Scarangella

Tim Siebert

David Siegel

Jenny Stafford

Cory Sutela

Amy Triandiflou

Thayer Tutt

Kevin Walker

Ballot Question Elements



- Increase from 0.1% to 0.2%
- Extension of 20 years
- Maintenance of effort statement (so general fund dollars continue to contribute and are not replaced by the tax revenues.)
- Percentage of revenue changed
 - 5 % off the top for administration, planning and management
 - 25% off the top for operations and maintenance of all park, trails and open spaces properties
 - Remaining balance divided
 - 40% all Parks
 - 30% all Trails
 - 30% all Open Space

Proposed Question



SHALL CITY TAXES BE INCREASED \$11,134,000 ANNUALLY BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2022, AND BY WHATEVER AMOUNTS ARE RAISED IN YEARS THEREAFTER, BY INCREASING THE RATE OF SALES AND USE TAX DEDICATED TO TRAILS, OPEN SPACE AND PARKS (TOPS) FROM ITS CURRENT RATE OF .1% (ONE TENTH OF A CENT), OR ONE (1) PENNY ON EVERY TEN (10) DOLLAR PURCHASE, TO .2% (TWO TENTHS OF A CENT), OR TWO (2) CENTS ON EVERY TEN (10) DOLLAR PURCHASE, EXCEPT FOR PURCHASES OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, FOOD, AND OTHER PURCHASES EXEMPTED FROM SALES TAX, WITHOUT CHANGING THE PURPOSES WHICH INCLUDE:

- PRESERVING FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS, NATURAL AREAS, SCENIC VISTAS AND AREAS, FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITATS AND CORRIDORS, AND IMPORTANT AREAS THAT SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL RESOURCES AND LANDMARKS;
- CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES SUCH AS WATER AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS, SURFACE WATER, AND FOREST LANDS;
- ACQUIRING, IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING OPEN SPACE LANDS AND TRAILS; AND
- ACQUIRING, DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING PARKS;

WITH ALL EXPENDITURES BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SUBJECT TO INDEPENDENT AUDIT; WITH NO MORE THAN FIVE PERCENT (5%) OF REVENUES DERIVED TO BE USED FOR ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, AND NO MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT (25%) FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS OF ALL CITY PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE LANDS, AND THE REMAINING REVENUE DIVIDED INTO FORTY PERCENT (40%) USED FOR ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL PARKS, THIRTY PERCENT (30%) FOR ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL TRAILS, AND THIRTY PERCENT (30%) **FOR ACQUISITION, IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL OPEN SPACE LANDS, REGARDLESS OF HOW ACQUIRED**; AND WITH THE INTENT OF THE VOTERS THAT MONIES DERIVED FROM THE INCREASE SHOULD NOT OFFSET ANY EXPENDITURES FROM THE GENERAL FUND; AND EXTENDING THE EXPIRATION OF THE TOPS SALES AND USE TAX TO AND UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2041; THE ABOVE CONSTITUTING A VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE AND EXCEPTION TO ANY CONSTITUTIONAL, STATUTORY AND CHARTER REVENUE AND SPENDING LIMITATIONS THAT MAY OTHERWISE APPLY?

1997 TOPS Ordinance Purposes Repeated in the Proposed Ballot Question



B. To acquire water rights and water storage rights for use in preserving fragile ecosystems, natural areas, scenic vistas, and areas, fish and wildlife habitats and corridors, or important areas that support biodiversity, natural resources and landmarks, and cultural, historical and archeological areas:

F. Conservation of new open space lands shall be related to resource management including but not limited to water improvements (irrigation, domestic use and recreational use), preservation enhancements (fences, wetlands, and wildlife habitat improvements) and passive recreational uses, such as trail, trailhead parking and other access improvements and restrooms:

G. To manage, patrol, improve and maintain all new open space lands and trails acquired by TOPS

L. Open Space lands shall serve one or more of the following functions:

1. Linkages and trails, access to public lakes, streams, and other suitable open space lands, stream corridors and scenic corridors along existing highways;
2. Preservation of fragile ecosystems, natural areas, scenic vistas and areas, fish and wildlife habitats and corridors, or important areas that support biodiversity, natural resources, significant land formations and landmarks, and cultural, historical and archeological areas;
3. Creating spatial definition of and between urban areas;
4. Areas of environmental preservation, designated areas of concern;
5. Conservation of natural and visual resources, including but not limited to, forest lands, range lands, agricultural land, aquifer recharge areas and surface water;
6. Lands within or adjacent to a park or public open lands whose development potential is clearly incompatible with those lands;
7. Preservation of land for educational opportunities and outdoor recreation areas limited to passive recreational use, including but not limited to hiking, photography, or nature studies, and if specifically designated, bicycling, horseback riding or fishing.



Palmer Mesa Trail-under construction

Potential Trail Projects



- Acquisition:

Continue to acquire property, trail easements and implement the Park System Master Planned trails such as:
Black Squirrel, Chamberlain, Cottonwood Creek, Foothills, Pikes Peak Greenway, Homestead, La Foret, Palmer Mesa, Legacy Loop, Rock Island, Sand Creek, Sinton and Woodmen Road Trails

- Connection:

Corridors such as...Sand Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Rock Island, Legacy Loop, Shooks Run, Chamberlain, etc.

- Renovation:

Continue to renovate old asphalt trails to concrete such as Palmer Mesa Trail, Greenway, Homestead, Sandcreek, Sinton etc.



Pikeview Buffer Open Space



Potential Open Space Projects



- Acquisition:
Focus on the Park System Master Plan's Candidate Open Space areas, such as Corral Bluffs/Jimmy Camp Creek, Kettle Creek, Mountain Shadows (the City's western mountain backdrop)
- Master Planning:
Corral Bluffs/Jimmy Camp, Mountain Shadows Open Space including the Pikeview Buffer Open Space and Black Canyon Quarry, and the Blodgett Open Space, just to name a few.
- Development:
Continue to construct master planned elements in open spaces such as Austin Bluffs Open Space, Mountain Shadows Open Space, Ute Valley Park, etc.



Nancy Lewis Park

Potential Park Projects



- Continue to implement Park System Master Plan
- Begin to build out on master planned properties such as Acacia Park, Antlers Park, Alamo Square, Garden of the Gods, Palmer Park, etc.
- Begin work on backlogged promised parks. Examples include Greyhawk Park, Coleman Park, Larry Ochs Sports Complex, Skyway Park, Skyview Park, and Bradley Ranch Park.
- Continue to improve existing park sites through renovations such as play spaces, walking trails, water conscious irrigation, shade, spray grounds, signs, restrooms and fencing throughout each quadrant of the city.

Next Steps



- August 10, 2021- City Council Regular Session vote to submit the question to the ballot
- October 11th – Ballots Drop
- November 2, 2021 – Election Day

Discussion

