

Appendix D: Public Responsiveness Process

The Hildebrand Ranch Park Management Planning Team held two public input meetings on the future plans for the park. The first meeting was held September 18, 2002, at Shaffer Elementary School from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This meeting was advertised as an open house to gather ideas and concerns about the future of the property. Maps showing the boundaries of the property, other nearby Open Space parks, natural and cultural resource inventories and general concepts-related potential facility development and future management approaches were displayed. Open Space staff members made themselves available to discuss and further explain the information set forth for public review. An important presentation tool was a table of topics, findings and proposed actions, which was to serve as a base for adding topics of public concern.

The meeting was advertised with a direct mailing invitation to all identified stakeholders, recognized homeowner and public interest groups, the Trails Task Force members, and property owners directly adjacent to Hildebrand Ranch Park. In addition, five large posters were placed at visible locations on the perimeter of the park. Dozens of smaller posters were placed on adjacent public bulletin boards and on Open Space information kiosks in the area. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting and most completed written comment cards with their reactions to the information available for their review.

Comments gathered by staff in conversation with meeting attendees were analyzed and condensed along with written comments to produce a broad list of topics. The planning team developed a response to each topic and a table was posted on the Open Space web site. At the same time, conceptual plan alternatives were developed by the planning team and posted on the web site. This proved a very successful communication tool as many inquiries from interested citizens were answered by referring to the web site.

The second public input meeting was an open house held on February 19, 2003, at Shaffer Elementary from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This meeting was advertised in a similar fashion to the first, with the addition to the direct invitation list of all persons who filled out the attendance sign-in sheet from the first meeting. Approximately fifty people attended this second meeting. No new topics of concern were identified at this meeting and a general sense of satisfaction with the conceptual plan alternatives and responses to topics of concern was evident. The following pages include the summary of topics/ findings and proposed actions which underlie the conceptual plan.

Hildebrand Ranch Park Topics/Findings/ Recommended Actions
Last Updated on July 16, 2003

Topic	Team Findings	Recommended Actions
Chatfield Bluffs Subdivision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Storm drainage from the subdivision spills onto Hildebrand Ranch. 2. A trail from the subdivision heads south and ends at Deer Creek Canyon Road. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construct a wetland or bioswale in the area. 2. Connect the subdivision's trail with a trail on Hildebrand Ranch (perhaps through Chatfield Nature Preserve).
Chatfield Green, AKA Trail Mark	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is located in the City of Littleton, is part of South Suburban Park and Recreation District, and served by Trail Mark Metropolitan District. 2. Trails are, or will be, constructed within the subdivision that lead to the park. 3. A prairie dog colony displaced by development borders the subdivision. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For information only. 2. Connect the subdivision's trails with Hildebrand Ranch trails in appropriate locations. 3. Manage the colony on Open Space property and cooperate with Trail Mark management efforts.
Oleo Acres acquisition opportunity	Board of County Commissioners (BCC) passed a resolution to negotiate for part of the property for a trail. The land owner is willing to sell only a portion of the area requested.	Open Space unlikely to pursue the acquisition because the portion offered was not suitable for trail construction. An alternative trail alignment will be developed.
State Land Board (SLB) lease	Open Space has a lease on 160 acres of SLB property for trail opportunities. The term of the lease has expired, but negotiations are underway for its continued use.	For information only.
Deer Creek Canyon Road bike shoulders project	Jeffco Highways and Transportation (H&T) is planning to construct bike shoulders along portions of Deer Creek Canyon Road.	Potential exists to work with H&T to tie the bike shoulders into the Hildebrand Ranch/ Deer Creek Canyon Park/ South Valley Park trail system.
Chatfield State Park (CSP)	Trail system exists on CSP. There is a potential for trail connections between Hildebrand Ranch and Chatfield.	Connect Chatfield's trail system with Hildebrand Ranch's trail system.

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Chatfield Nature Preserve (CNP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Master Plan for Chatfield Nature Preserve is being drafted by the Denver Botanic Gardens. 2. Trails exist on the Preserve that could be connected with Hildebrand Ranch trails. 3. Abundant parking exists at the Preserve. 4. Storm drainage from Chatfield Bluffs sometimes crosses the Preserve's property. 5. Foothills Park and Recreation District may offer programs at the Preserve. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunity to coordinate with the Master Plan effort is being pursued. 2. Connect trail systems if consistent with the Preserve's and Open Space's objectives. 3. Explore the possibility of shared parking. 4. Explore opportunities to mitigate storm drainage flows. 5. Explore the opportunity for cooperative efforts in programs for the Preserve and Hildebrand Ranch.
Chatfield Balloon Port Association	The Balloon Port Association, whose balloonists take off from Chatfield State Park, has requested the use of the east side of Hildebrand Ranch for "urgent" (non-emergency) landing situations.	The planning team concluded to allow only <u>emergency</u> landings because a less restrictive use may not be consistent with the vision for Hildebrand Ranch Park. This is consistent with the Management Directions of Appendix A which allows only emergency aircraft in all Management Units.
Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)	A portion of the funding for Hildebrand Ranch Park will be provided by GOCO and use restrictions will apply to some portion of the property.	Work with GOCO on developing a management plan that abides by the restrictions to be placed on some portion of the property.
Pegasus Program request	The Pegasus Program, which helps children with disabilities develop better coordination through horseback riding, has requested to use part of Hildebrand Ranch for its program.	The planning team concluded to deny the request because it would not be appropriate to restrict the use of the Hildebrand Ranch to only one user group.

Topic	Team Findings	Recommended Actions
Natural Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The riparian area along Deer Creek provides valuable wildlife habitat. 2. The Mill Creek drainage has several unique natural resource features. 3. Rare plant species exist on Hildebrand Ranch Park. 4. Two prairie dog colonies exist on the Hildebrand Ranch. The southern colony was decimated by plague, while the northern colony was less affected. 5. A Burrowing owl has been seen on Hildebrand Ranch Park in the spring breeding season. 6. One Golden eagle nest has been found on the property. 7. Several hawk nesting sites have been located on the property. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimize disturbance to the riparian area. 2. Since resource conservation is part of Open Space's mission, this area is designated Sensitive, which would prohibit recreational access and limit public access to Open Space sponsored interpretive and education programs. 3. Protect rare plant species. 4. Work with Jeffco Health Department and Lookout Mountain Nature Center to provide education about plague and ways to protect visitors and their pets. 5. Continue study of Burrowing owl presence and determine if nesting has occurred. 6. Protect and preserve this nesting site. 7. Protect nesting sites during breeding season, possibly with seasonal closures.
Prairie dog relocation	Requests have been received to relocate prairie dogs from Columbine High School to Hildebrand Ranch Park.	The plague decimated a prairie dog colony on the property, in 2002, and due to the continued presence of the plague, Open Space will not relocated prairie dogs onto the property.

Topic	Team Findings	Recommended Actions
Trail System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential exists for development of a large trail system that connects Hildebrand Ranch Park to South Valley Park, Deer Creek Canyon Park and Chatfield State Park. 2. Crossing the hogback on the south side of the park presents significant trail construction challenges. 3. Concerns expressed related to location of trails, including aesthetics, compatibility with resource management objectives, proximity to residences. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop regional trail system, with central parking at Deer Creek Canyon Park. Promote the system for equestrians since few such long-distance opportunities currently exist in the Denver metro area. Work with Jeffco Highways and Transportation to develop safe alternatives for roadway crossings. 2. Pursue negotiations with adjacent property owners to allow trail construction on their property to the south of the park. 3. The conceptual plan for the park reflects a sensitivity to these concerns.
Cultural Resources	Old buildings exist on the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess historical significance of the buildings. • Assess physical condition of the buildings. • Assess utilities available to the buildings. • Assess potential of buildings to be used for ranching activities.
Living history farm	A request was received at the September 18, 2002 open house to use the existing ranch buildings as a living history farm. This concept would include using the property for historic ranching activities, including grazing.	Currently, the buildings are being evaluated for ranching use, and grazing is envisioned as a resource management tool. A living history farm currently operates in Littleton. The Open Space program does not wish to compete with other jurisdictions offering comparable facilities in the vicinity.

Topic	Team Findings	Recommended Actions
Potential trail use conflicts	Public concern was expressed at the September 18, 2002 open house regarding the compatibility of equestrians and mountain bikers sharing trails.	The planning team will promote the multi-park trail system since few long-distance opportunities currently exist. Staff will research equestrian/mountain bike conflicts and determine whether these two user groups could share the trails. If staff concludes that these uses should remain separate, consideration will be given to segregated trails, alternating days of use, and/or other trail management alternatives.
Multiple use trail system	Questions were raised at the September 18, 2002 open house about multiple use trails.	Jeffco Open Space's philosophy is one of multiple-use. When possible, the agency provides trail opportunities for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. A variety of trail management schemes are used at Open Space. In some cases, hiker-only trails exist on parks. At Centennial Cone Park, which is not yet open, an alternating days scheme will be implemented. Staff will consider any management scheme that affords opportunities to each user group.
Trail along top of hogback	A request was made at the September 18, 2002 open house to construct a trail on top of the hogback.	One factor in Open Space's approach to trail construction is minimizing visual impacts. Construction of a trail on top of the hogback would be visually intrusive, and thus will not occur.
Tree planting	A request was made at the September 18, 2002 open house to plant trees in barren areas of the park.	Tree planting and other vegetation management is the responsibility of Open Space's Natural Resources section. The "barren" areas are actually historic grasslands, and Open Space seeks to maintain and/or restore native vegetation. Tree planting will only occur to restore native vegetation.

Topic	Team Findings	Recommended Actions
Motorized use on the park	Open Space prohibits motorized use on all of its park trails, except for emergency use by authorized personnel.	Consistent with Open Space rules and regulations, no motorized use will be allowed on this or other park trails.
Park opening to public use	Inquiries were made at the September 18, 2002 open house regarding when the park would be opened to public use.	Open Space policy is that all properties are open unless posted closed. Hildebrand Ranch is currently posted closed since it is leased for private ranching activities until March 1, 2004. Regarding the timing of future development, this property is not yet included in Open Space's five-year capital improvement plan budget, which is updated annually. Limited funds require that the development of Hildebrand Ranch be weighed against development of other Open Space properties, including North Table Mountain, Centennial Cone and other undeveloped properties.
Maintenance of Trail Mark trails	A recommendation was made at the September 18, 2002 open house that Open Space maintain Trail Mark's trails.	When the Trail Mark subdivision was approved by the City of Littleton, it included trails that would be maintained by the Trail Mark Metropolitan District and open to public use. Thus, the Trail Mark Metropolitan District will maintain the trails within the subdivision.
Horse droppings	Concern was expressed at the September 18, 2002 open house about droppings that horses leave behind and how that affects the quality of one's trail experience.	The planning team has discussed a requirement that equestrians use horse diapers to catch falling droppings. A decision has not yet been made.
Trail surfaces	Questions arose at the September 18, 2002 open house related to trail surfaces on the park.	Trail surfaces on Open Space parks may be either natural surface or concrete. Decisions have not been made regarding specific trails locations or trail surfaces, although trails within the GOCO covenant-restricted areas will be natural surface.

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International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)	A request to work with IMBA on planning the park was submitted at the September 18, 2002 open house.	All interested parties are welcomed to provide input on park planning. The planning team will consider and evaluate all input; however, final decisions made regarding use and development are the responsibility of Open Space.
Active recreation opportunities (e.g., playgrounds, ballfields)	A request to provide playgrounds on the park was submitted at the September 18, 2002 open house.	The Open Space program manages only passive open space, e.g., trails, picnicking, etc. Active recreation, e.g., playgrounds, ballfields, etc., is managed by area park and recreation districts. Thus, Open Space will not construct playgrounds on the property.
Light pollution	Concern was expressed at the September 18, 2002 open house about light pollution.	Open Space parks are not lighted, and the rules and regulations only allow for use until one hour after sunset. No lights for the purpose of nighttime use will be installed on the property.
Commercial development	Concern was expressed at the September 18, 2002 open house about the potential of commercial development on the property.	No commercial development will take place on the property. In response to public concern about the conversion of land purchased with Jefferson County Open Space funds to other uses, the Open Space Advisory Committee and Board of County Commissioners passed resolutions in January of 2002 requiring that any change from an Open Space purpose will require a vote by 8 of the members of the Open Space Advisory Committee which shall include a finding that the real property no longer meets an Open Space purpose. (See Section 7.3.2.6 of the Open space Policies and Procedures for more detailed information.)
Parking lot aesthetics	Concern was expressed at the September 18, 2002 open house regarding aesthetic qualities of parking lots.	Open Space design guidelines stipulate that facilities be designed to be minimally intrusive on a park's natural and cultural features. These guidelines will be followed in parking lot and other development on Hildebrand Ranch Park.

Topic	Team Findings	Recommended Actions
Fences around Trail Mark	A request was made at the September 18, 2002 open house to remove the existing fences around Trail Mark that border Hildebrand Ranch Park.	In an effort to maintain the integrity of the natural resources under Open Space's care, some fences to minimize uncontrolled public access from developed areas are necessary. As stated above, one of Open Space's objectives is to connect some of Trail Mark's trails with those on Hildebrand Ranch. If connections can be accomplished, they will be restricted to certain areas, yet allow residents access to the Open Space property.
Non-resident parking in Trail Mark subdivision	Concern was expressed at the September 18, 2002 open house about non-residents parking in the subdivision to access Hildebrand Ranch trails.	Experience on other Open Space parks demonstrates that if park visitors are not provided relatively convenient parking, they will park in front of residences to access the parks. The planning team is addressing this concern by considering alternative, convenient parking areas that would discourage visitors from parking in neighborhoods. One of these alternatives is a parking lot located at the southeast corner of Trail Mark. Visitors would then use Trail Mark trails to access Hildebrand Ranch trails. Another alternative is shared parking at the Chatfield Nature Preserve. No decisions have been made regarding these or other alternatives.