

BMA COMMUNITY GROUP FORUM DRAFT VISITOR MASTER PLAN INPUT

The BMA board is very pleased to be a part of this process. We believe that the representatives and their groups will help staff create a plan that is not just acceptable to, but considered exceptional by most of the community of Boulder.

Throughout the Visitor Plan process, BMA has worked closely with BATCO. To save time, we will state that we are in complete agreement with the document presented to this group by BATCO and its comments pertaining to the VMP draft plan, and the Condition, Compatibility & Trends Analysis presented by staff to VPAC 2. (These documents are available on the BATCO website). We believe in BATCO's mission to promote non-motorized, multi-use, environmentally friendly trail systems in Boulder County; to help preserve, create, and enhance environmentally responsible trail systems; and believe trails are a valuable community resource that provide recreational and environmental benefits that enhance the quality-of-life of area residents and visitors.

To this end, we have been sponsoring volunteer trail projects and educating the community about responsible trail use since 1992. With this in mind, we will limit our comments to aspects of the plan that directly pertain to bicycles.

What interests does your group have that you would like to see met in the final recommendation:

BMA's interests are in preserving existing multi-use trails which are open to bicycles, gaining access to some existing trails which are not currently open to bikes, and helping Boulder OSMP design and build new multi-use trails which are open to bikes which connect the existing local and regional infrastructures and to create a better user experience.

The "Condition, Compatibility & Trends" (CCTA) analysis presented by staff to VPAC 2 described the bicycling experience as "Fair". "Fair" was described as an **unacceptable** condition. Many in the bicycling community would describe it as "poor". Although the current trail mileage open to bikes (41 miles, 1/3 of the system) is somewhat acceptable, the "trails" are primarily dirt roads and connectivity is poor meaning that cyclists frequently drive to trails that they could easily ride to if connecting trails existed. We are grateful for the existing trail resource which is good for beginners and many of the open trails are quite scenic. However, as described in the CCTA, "there is very little steep or mountainous terrain or singletrack trails available for bicyclists. This diminishes the quality of the visitor experience for cyclists. ... The quality of the visitor experience would be greatly improved if trail linkages were built from Boulder to the West." We (and BATCO) will also suggest in detail how regional trails, and access to a very limited number of existing trails will greatly improve the cycling experience.

We would also like to see an end to the blanket ban on bikes in the Mountain Parks properties. Jim Crain described this ban as not based on any scientific evidence and 100% political in nature. We would like to see staff and the community make decisions pertaining to bike access

by comparing the benefits to the community of improved access with the science available pertaining to actual impacts on trails and ecosystems, and on real evidence of user conflict, not survey questions that ask the public what conflict they imagine might exist.

Given those interests, what parts of the draft plan satisfy those interests and what parts do not:

There is much language in the Draft VMP, such as "work with community groups to examine the feasibility of possible mountain biking/multiple-use trails..." that connect to Walker Ranch and allow access west of 93, and "as new trails are being planned, give consideration to the appropriateness of designating and constructing them to include bicycling". It also appears that some limited funds have been budgeted to do so. We are pleased to see this language included in the plan as these suggestions, if implemented, would lead to an improved visitor experience.

Our past experiences however have led us to believe that language does not always lead to action. Just this year we volunteered to build a section of new trail that has been a **priority trail** since 2000, and were denied with reasons that are not valid. We would like somehow to see the language in the draft VMP made more explicit, or for specific strategies to be outlined as to how these ideas, which would lead to an improved visitor experience, will be seriously looked at and potentially realized.

We do see several trails listed as **priority trails** on maps that will lead to an improved visitor experience. We would like to see potential timelines for their construction in the VMP. We also see many corridors that have been under consideration for years that are not listed. We would like to see the addition of the West Beech corridor which will give access to Left-hand Canyon and Heil Ranch, and we would like the City to support a County environmental assessment of the UP Railroad Line to help determine its feasibility as a trail corridor. The UPRR will provide trail access to existing Boulder OSMP trails east of Boulder.

We like the language pertaining to organizational capacity. We suggest that specific staff additions be listed. In particular, an individual whose specific educational and work experiences are in Recreation Planning or Management.

Offer specific suggestions your group recommends be adopted by the plan; that is, what would you rather see instead:

In addition to some of the suggestions listed in the previous sections, we would like to see all of the recommendations listed in the BATCO document considered by this group for inclusion in the final VMP.