



STAFF REPORT

To: Summit County Council

From: Jessica Kirby, Public Lands Manager
Wes Siddoway, OSAC Chair
Tonja Hanson, OSAC Vice Chair

Date of Meeting: October 19, 2022

Type of Item: Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) update on regional priority

Requested Council Action:

Provide direction on questions posed in the staff report below to help the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) and Interim County Manager further develop the Notice of Intent (NOI) process for land purchases and conservation easements.

Background:

Summit County voters overwhelmingly approved an up to \$50 million General Obligation (GO) Bond for open space in November 2021. The Summit County Council adopted an ordinance establishing the Summit County Open Space Advisory Committee (“OSAC”) and three regional advisory groups for the purpose of serving the Public Interest by advising and providing recommendations to the County Manager regarding the identification, evaluation, and possible acquisition of Property Interests with GO Bond dollars. The regional advisory groups were also tasked with the development of Evaluation Standards for OSAC to consider and approve. The Evaluation Standards, which are representative of regional priorities and values, created by each OSAC Regional Advisory Group were formally adopted by OSAC on September 19, 2022.

The purpose of today’s presentation to the County Council is to review and articulate those Evaluation Standards as well as seek direction from the Council on aspects of the NOI process to guide OSAC in finalizing that process with the Interim County Manager per the County’s ordinance.

Discussion:

OSAC, at the request of the Interim County Manager, is pleased to present the Evaluation Standards of the three (3) Regional Advisory Groups representing the North, South, and West areas of the County as defined by the OSAC ordinance 2-42-4-B-3.

North Regional Committee’s Evaluation Standards

- 1) Water: Protect water quality and quantity

- 2) Development Pressure: Protect property to offset development pressure
- 3) Agriculture Preservation: Provide ongoing opportunity for properties that are farming/ranching/grazing
- 4) Wildlife Corridors and Habitat: Connect corridors with other protected areas and protect habitat
- 5) Protect Viewshed and Recreation Opportunities

South Regional Committee Evaluation Standards (*in no particular order*)

Water: Protect watershed, manage usage, protect wetlands and agricultural preservation

Heritage: Farming/ranching (grazing, crop/hay production), family

Growth: Management/mitigation, Sprawl

Connectivity/Recreation: Transportation trails, recreation trails, agricultural tourism, wildlife habitat/riparian lands, open space areas, access corridors

Leverage: Other entities/organizations, value

West Regional Committee Evaluation Standards

- 1) Community Benefit and Enhancement:
 - a) Prioritize passive recreation opportunities over active recreation amenities
 - b) Accessible to underserved and under resourced populations
 - c) Provide space for small community gatherings
- 2) Open Space Enhancement and Connectivity:
 - a) Adjacent to, or expand, existing open space
 - b) Provide connectivity/corridors between existing open space parcels
 - c) Protect sensitive land, aquatic resources, and wildlife habitat
 - d) Reduce development encroachment into the wildland-urban interface
- 3) Governance Considerations:
 - a) Leverage other funding sources
 - b) Maximize value for money
 - c) Avoid conflicts with affordable housing initiatives

Requested Discussion:

Staff and OSAC request a discussion with County Council regarding next steps for OSAC's work:

1. OSAC is currently working to finalize the NOI process and is requesting direction and advice in regard to how and when Council would like to be approached/made aware of properties brought forth to OSAC.
2. OSAC requests direction and clarification from Council to guide the process and discussion of property brought forth to OSAC. Specifically, 1) When is it appropriate for OSAC to discuss property in closed session and when is an open session discussion appropriate? Please also discuss why these actions should be observed, 2) Apart from OSAC Members, Staff and Ex officio Members, who should be present in closed sessions for property discussions and under what circumstances can other individuals, such as

landowners, fund leveraging partners (i.e. land trusts, NRCS, etc.) or others, be invited to closed session to discuss property?

3. OSAC would like clarification and direction regarding the process requested by Council related to “recruitment” or solicitation of proposals to the NOI process. Specifically, should there be an organized effort to educate the public about the OSAC process? And if so, will Staff lead this effort or should OSAC be charged with this task?
4. OSAC would like direction regarding the timeframe for submission of NOIs. Should the NOI process be confined by a “due date” to encourage NOI submission, or shall the process be fluid, i.e. accept and evaluate opportunities as they come in?
5. What should be done with the NOIs or properties OSAC decides not to recommend to the County Manager and Council for consideration of GO bond funds due to not meeting the Evaluation Standards and what public process should be invoked?

Once OSAC and the County Manager finalize the NOI process, we will come back before the Council to present the proposal.