



# PRELIMINARY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

3.22.16

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Preliminary Issues and Opportunities Summary is to document and confirm key issues that the Community Master Plan/Hazard Mitigation Plan (CMP/HMP) needs to address, as well as to serve as a starting point for future discussions. The issues and opportunities outlined below reflect feedback received during project kick-off meetings on February 10-11, 2016, which included a series of stakeholder focus groups, initial meetings with the Citizens Advisory Committee and Hazard Mitigation Planning Team, a Planning Commission work session, discussions with City staff and administrators, and a community meeting. Additional input was solicited through an online survey posted on the Plan Manitou website.<sup>1</sup> The Community Engagement Plan will include tools and strategies to increase public participation for the project.

This summary will be used to help guide the project team's work on the Community Profile, Capability Assessment, and Risk Assessment as part of Phase 2, which involves extensive data collection, mapping, and analysis, as well as subsequent steps in the process.

## OVERARCHING THEMES

While many of the issues and opportunities raised by participants during the first round of meetings were topical in nature (i.e., housing, parking) there were several overarching themes that emerged from the discussions.

- **Connect-the-dots between current and prior plans and studies.** The City and community have developed numerous plans and studies over the course of the last ten years, including *Manitou Springs Forward*. In addition, the Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan (POST MP) process is nearing completion, a

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<sup>1</sup> To date, 10 people have completed the survey.

Stormwater Master Plan is expected to kick off over the summer, and dozens of flood recovery projects are currently underway. The Plan Manitou process presents an opportunity to leverage the significant resources and human capital that has already been invested in current and prior efforts and to establish a comprehensive policy framework for decision making by “connecting-the-dots” between these various efforts. A first step in establishing this linkage will occur as related plans, studies, and organizations are documented within the context of individual topics under planning elements.

- **Identify priorities and establish plan for action.** In light of the discussion above about prior plans and studies, and *Manitou Springs Forward: A Vision and Planning Guide*, in particular, numerous participants noted that while *Manitou Springs Forward: A Vision and Planning Guide* clearly reflected the community’s vision in many areas, it lacked a clear implementation strategy and a champion to oversee its implementation. As a result, perceived and actual progress has been limited. There is a growing sense of urgency among residents, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders to identify community priorities and to systematically act on those priorities through the clear and consistent application of the CMP/HMP, and supporting regulations and other actions.
- **Clearly define roles and responsibilities.** Manitou Springs is a highly engaged community. There are currently more than 30 community boards, committees, organizations and non-profits operating in some capacity within the City. While participants noted that the presence of these organizations contributes to Manitou Springs’ strong sense of community, it was also noted that there is no single group that tracks and promotes coordination among these organizations. This lack of coordination can result in overlapping and occasionally conflicting efforts. The Plan Manitou process presents an opportunity to harness the potential of these various groups as part of the process and to clearly define their role in the implementation of Plan Manitou following its adoption. In particular, a clear distinction is needed between City-led and community-led initiatives.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A brief summary of issues and opportunities is organized below by topic, in no particular order of importance. Topics include: housing, transportation, growth and development, infrastructure, economic development, tourism and recreation, historic and cultural resources, hazard mitigation/emergency response, and natural resources/environment. The vast majority of these issues relate to improving the overall resilience and sustainability of the community, and as such, these topics are not specifically called out.

### HOUSING

#### Affordable/workforce housing

Many participants expressed concern about the lack of affordable/workforce housing in Manitou Springs and the practice of using the City’s many older motels as long-term rentals. In 2015, City leaders and housing advocates convened an Affordable Housing Task Force to explore the issue and to identify possible strategies for moving

forward. To date, the Task Force has established a series of goals and begun to define potential roles and responsibilities in carrying out specific tasks. The City also recently adopted an ordinance requiring motel owners to bring rooms used for long-term residential occupancy into compliance with the building code. Participants stressed that more information about current housing conditions and future needs was needed to help inform ongoing discussions and explore the extent to which affordable/workforce housing could or should be provided within the City limits, or through continued collaboration with other organizations in the region. There is also a need to define what affordable housing means for the community, and what demographic groups would be served by potential affordable housing policies.

### Quality/condition of existing housing stock

A large percentage of the City's existing housing stock is more than 100 years old and was built for seasonal occupancy. While conducting an inventory of existing housing stock, City staff observed that many homes are in need of significant repair/rehabilitation. The survey also found that the existing density of housing units in some parts of Manitou Springs is far greater than expected. In some cases, existing units are non-conforming, meaning they are not consistent with underlying zoning and may not have been permitted or meet building code requirements. This pattern was created gradually over time as large homes were divided into multiple dwelling units to meet changing needs, and through the creation of multiple accessory dwelling units.

### Residential building inspections

Building permits for new construction, major remodels, and most home improvement projects in Manitou Springs are issued by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD), not the City. This department was established to ensure a unified minimum standard for construction, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work and to help reduce the cost of providing these services for local governments within the region. Although permits are issued for all types of construction, PPRBD only conducts inspections for improvements that require a permit. Furthermore, a Certificate of Occupancy is required for new construction only, not for changes of use, so many remodeled structures do not trigger an inspection. In addition, PPRBD will only look at a current request; they will not enforce against other observed activities that do not meet building code requirements. Numerous participants expressed concern about the lack of local oversight and control afforded to the City under the current structure, particularly given the age of the City's housing stock and the limited opportunities for new construction. The inability to document whether or not homes that were known to have been inundated along Fountain Creek during the 2013 flood (and are currently occupied) had been inspected and cleared for occupancy was cited as a particular concern.

### Short-term rentals

Manitou Springs is currently exploring potential regulations to guide short-term vacation rentals in the City, as are many communities across the country. Although this issue is largely a regulatory consideration, the extent to which the City wishes to support alternative lodging (or not) should be addressed consistently within the CMP/HMP. This

topic raises broader issues regarding the need for master plan policies that balance commercial uses with neighborhood concerns.

### Conflicts with floodplain

Early development patterns in the City concentrated homes along Fountain Creek, creating many conflicts with the floodplain. A number of homes were inundated during the 2013 flood and continue to be at risk. Although some homes were purchased and removed as part of the City's ongoing flood recovery efforts, removing homes on a broader scale is not practical. Opportunities to implement additional flood proofing measures—either as part of ongoing recovery efforts, or by increasing awareness of flood proofing measures that can be implemented by private property owners and incentivizing the implementation of those improvements—should be explored as part of the CMP/HMP process.

## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### Parking

Parking and associated traffic congestion presents an ongoing challenge for residents and business owners in Manitou Springs during the summer months and major events and festivals. Heavy visitation to the Incline and Cog Railway presents particular challenges in Ruxton Canyon, despite the City's efforts to manage volumes. These efforts include encouraging visitors to take the free shuttle from public parking lots east of downtown and instituting a Residential Parking Program to help balance competing demands for on-street parking in the Canyon and in downtown. The City recently purchased the former Hiawatha Gardens site (with the Tajine Alami building) as an additional parking resource. A *Use and Impact Study for Ruxton Avenue* was completed in November 2015 (funded by the Friends of Ruxton Canyon in cooperation with the City, now the Ruxton Avenue Strategic Group) to collect critical information and conduct additional analysis about specific concerns. The Incline Management Plan provides additional input that is germane to this issue. The Ruxton Avenue study will be used to help inform potential policy choices as part of the CMP/HMP process.

### Circulation and access

Most people enter and leave Manitou Springs via Manitou Avenue, which can present circulation challenges during busy summer weekends and major events. Several participants noted that enhanced signage should be explored to encourage visitors to utilize connections to Highway 24 when leaving town. Other access alternatives have been proposed at Manitou Avenue and the west end of the City.<sup>2</sup> Other circulation challenges noted included: balancing

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<sup>2</sup> A proposal to relocate highway access near Rainbow Falls was discussed at length during one focus group; the City needs to determine whether this is an actual CDOT proposal, or an idea for discussion. The concept has a local champion but needs broader public input, guidance, and technical evaluation before it can be endorsed by the City.

parking, pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle circulation needs on narrow residential streets and improving bicycle circulation options through/around downtown. The City has implemented some *Safe Routes to Schools* projects to address targeted areas of concern, but additional focus is needed.

## Transit

Manitou Springs existing transit services include Route 3, which runs from downtown Colorado Springs along Manitou Avenue to the roundabout at the City's west boundary, and two shuttle routes within the City which operate on a seasonal basis.

The newly purchased Hiawatha Gardens site (which includes the former Tajine Alami restaurant building and parking area) will serve as a transit hub, with a sheltered bus stop and improvements, which is prompting service and route changes. Beginning in May 2016, Route 3 (Colorado Springs) will be shortened to end at 10 Old Man's Trail (Hiawatha Gardens). Summer shuttle service will run to mid-September; off-season service will start immediately after the summer service ends through April 30. Service and routes for the City's two shuttle routes will be changed to:

1. The Route 33 shuttle will begin at Hiawatha Gardens and travel west on Manitou Avenue to the Ruxton Avenue roundabout, up Ruxton to the Incline/COG area, down Ruxton Avenue and return via Manitou Avenue to Hiawatha Gardens. This will now be a year-round service with two vehicles operating during peak season, and one operating during the remainder of the year. Summer service will be from approximately 5:30am to 8:00pm, seven days a week. Summer service does not include Manitou Avenue between Ruxton and the western roundabout.

Route 33 off-season shuttle operation will be comprised of a single shuttle bus operating from 6:20am to 6:00pm seven days a week. The off-season shuttle will include the western end of Manitou Avenue to the farthest roundabout and then up/down Ruxton before returning to the Hiawatha transfer stop.

2. The Route 36 shuttle will begin at Hiawatha Gardens, travel east on El Paso Boulevard, turn right onto Garden of the Gods Place, turn right and continue west on Manitou Avenue past the Pool and Recreation Center, and return to Hiawatha Gardens. One shuttle bus will operate on this route from 9:00am to 8:00pm, five days a week; this route will run to 12:00am on Friday and Saturday evenings. This route will not operate in the off-season.

These service expansions translate to greater costs for the City, and it is not clear if they are sustainable.

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### Land capacity

Because the City does not have a Future Land Use Plan, opportunities for future development in the City are not well-documented. The City's compact and largely built out footprint means that future growth will mostly occur through a combination of infill development on vacant lots, through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and through the potential redevelopment of underutilized properties. There are also some large tracts of developable upland property in the western part of the City. Participants noted that many remaining sites in the City are constrained due to access limitations, steep slopes, or natural hazards. These and other factors will be used to help quantify future growth and development opportunities through the CMP/HMP process to help the community understand in real terms what the City's actual capacity for future growth is, and to explore possible tradeoffs associated with growth opportunities.

### Urban Renewal Area

In 2006, the City established an Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and plan to promote the redevelopment of the east end of Manitou Avenue. While some reinvestment in existing buildings along the corridor has occurred since 2006, the types of larger redevelopment projects contemplated by the plan have not yet materialized. Numerous participants noted the significant opportunity represented by the URA, expressing a desire to leverage this asset and explore ways to catalyze more significant activity in the area as the City plans for the future. The URA has been collecting tax increment funds in the urban renewal area since 2006, which includes significant proceeds from the City's two retail marijuana shops. It is expected that the *Westside Avenue Action Plan* (WAAP) will spur investment in the area, and a portion of URA funds has been dedicated toward lighting, bus stops, street furniture and other WAAP improvements. Thus far, however, the URA has dedicated funds toward only one new development project in the area, Adam's Mountain Cafe. The CMP/HMP can help identify a desired vision for the area and address some of the roadblocks to development to help increase interest from property owners, businesses and outside interests in the area.

### Opportunity sites

Aside from the URA or East End, participants expressed a desire to encourage the revitalization of a number of other areas and sites as part of the Plan Manitou process. Specific opportunities identified included: the West End (the former bottling plant building was called out several times), the Hiawatha Gardens/ Tajine Alami site, Higginbotham Flats, the Jenkins site near the Incline, and the "No Man's Land" area beyond the City's eastern boundary (not in Manitou Springs).

## INFRASTRUCTURE/FLOOD RECOVERY

### Streets

Many of the City's streets are in need of resurfacing or other improvements. The City's Streets Division conducts an annual assessment of existing roadways to identify specific needs, which informs maintenance plans. Manitou Avenue east of downtown will be addressed through two different projects. CDOT plans to replace existing deteriorating pavement and restripe Manitou Avenue from US 24 west to Mayfair Avenue, with one travel lane in each direction and a center turn lane (CDOT owns this portion of the roadway). The *Westside Avenue Action Plan*, a partnership between the City of Manitou Springs, El Paso County, the City of Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), will address the resurfacing and multimodal needs east of the US 24 interchange to the City limits. This project will eliminate a travel lane in each direction and provide a center turn lane, sidewalks, parking and a bike lane in the corridor. Both projects will address many of the City's needs with respect to improving safety for pedestrians and bicycles and enhancing the corridor's appearance. In the short-term, CDOT will continue to own the right-of-way west of US 24 and El Paso County will own the right-of-way east of US 24, so the City will need to coordinate maintenance responsibilities with these agencies. In the long-term, ownership of the entire Manitou Avenue corridor will transition to Manitou Springs.

There are also significant issues with the condition of neighborhood streets. Many streets were constructed around the turn of the century and were not constructed to current specifications; traverse steep slopes; and lack drainage facilities. Streets have become further eroded by residential parking adjacent roadways. The City has a plan for ongoing maintenance of these streets with Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) funding.

In addition, erosion of steep slopes above many City roadways has increased the potential for serious landslides that could affect ingress/egress during a major storm event.

### Bridges

The City has 15 historic bridges. In 2009, a *Bridges and Walls Assessment Report* was conducted which concluded that many of the City's bridges were structurally deficient and in need of critical repairs. In the 2013 events, many of the bridges were further damaged and some remain out of commission. In 2015, the City commissioned updated structural engineering assessments of 22 bridges which yielded proposed designs and detailed cost estimates. A plan and strategy is needed to address necessary repairs and to secure federal funding.

There are also many bridges built over creeks on private property that are not built to any type of structural standard. While the PPRPD requires a floodplain permit for these structures, a building permit is not required and PPRBD does not review other structural aspects. The bridges increase flood risk by trapping debris and preventing

sediment removal, and through potential for structural failure. The City needs a means for reviewing new bridge structures for flood resistant standards, as well as enforcement capability.

## Utilities

The City's aging water and sewer system presents a number of ongoing challenges for the City:

- 1) Sections of pipe are located under homes without easements, have unresolved property ownership issues, and/or conflict with other utilities;
- 2) Aging pipes are in need of almost constant repair;
- 3) Aging sewer mains allow for significant infiltration during rainy periods, increasing treatment costs for the City; and
- 4) Additional water storage is needed in case of emergency and for fire protection. Council will consider a proposal to increase treated water capacity from 2 to 2.6 million gallons at a cost of \$340,000.

Efforts are currently underway by the City and its Flood Recovery Team to improve documentation of existing infrastructure, document future needs, and identify and implement priority projects. Storm water needs and improvements have been identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

### Economic resiliency

The need to diversify the economy away from a reliance on tourism was frequently mentioned by participants. On a related note, many participants also expressed a desire to see businesses within Manitou Springs that cater to the everyday-needs of residents, not just retail shops oriented towards visitors and tourists. However, economic development efforts in the City face a number of obstacles. The largest is that much of Manitou Springs' downtown is located within the floodplain of Fountain Creek, creating additional costs to business owners from higher flood insurance rates (although flood proofing measures can reduce future damage and insurance costs), costs associated with recovering from flood events, and costs associated with evacuation orders. Despite these challenges, Manitou Springs has a number of tools it can employ to support economic development initiatives, such as the El Paso County Enterprise Zone and the Urban Renewal Areas designation. In addition, the City was the focus of an Economic Development Assessment Team Report (a program run by FEMA and the Economic Development Administration to help communities recover following a major natural disaster), which analyzed ongoing challenges and potential strategies the City could take to achieve its economic development goals. These and other resources provide an excellent starting point for the City and its partners (such as the Chamber of Commerce) to develop more detailed and targeted economic development goals and strategies as part of the Plan Manitou process.

### Creative District

Manitou Springs is one of seven communities currently being considered as a Candidate District for the Colorado Creative Districts (CD) Program. The designation will help the City to support its arts heritage and identify ways to



use its creative assets to help boost the local economy and further define its image. The designation has been locally driven and has generated significant excitement among area residents and business owners. Opportunities to leverage this designation should be explored as part of the Plan Manitou process. If the City is designated as part of the program, the next step will be to identify how to leverage the support to develop specific plans or programs. The CMP/HMP can help begin to identify the needs and desires of the art community to further the exploration of ideas related to the Creative District application

## Events

Manitou Springs hosts numerous events during the year that bring thousands of people to shop, eat, hike, and otherwise enjoy all that the City has to offer. Continuing to provide a welcoming environment for event organizers and participants while balancing concerns from year-round residents about congestion and parking is a particular challenge. Many participants acknowledged the critical role that these events play in the City's tourism economy, but were also wary that the community is being "loved to death." The Chamber of Commerce currently serves as a clearing house for information about events and activities and the City is hiring an events coordinator to help facilitate permitting and other logistical considerations for individual events, and help manage activity levels in public spaces.

## Homelessness/transients

The presence of homeless and transient individuals in downtown and along the creek corridor was cited as a concern related to issues of affordable/workforce housing, as well as from a public safety and tourism perspective. Some feel that the City's retail marijuana outlets have exacerbated the issue. Seasonal security officers were hired by the City last summer to patrol downtown and help locals and visitors address potential concerns as they arose. While several participants noted that this was a helpful first step, they also expressed the desire for the City to take a more active role to monitor and address the issue. For summer 2016, the Police Department is hiring interns from the UCCS Criminal Justice program to conduct foot patrols from 10:00 am – 8:00 pm daily. Homeless individuals also establish campsites in a number of outlying open space areas within the City.

The Manitou Springs School District administration notes that families who come to the community to reside on a short-term basis (for instance in motels) may cause economic hardship to the District, which must quickly budget for and provide educational resources for these students.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Historic Preservation

Manitou Springs has an active historic preservation program that is overseen by a Council-appointed Historic Preservation Commission. The City is a Certified Local Government and has conducted required historic property surveys that now require updates. There are currently 16 distinct Historic Sub-districts in the City's Historic

District. Alterations to existing buildings or new construction within the Historic District are informed by the City's Historic District Design Guidelines, which were last updated in 2009. Many participants expressed strong support for retaining the historic character of the City and for the work that has been done to-date to protect the City's historic resources. However, several participants noted that the cost of complying with the Design Guidelines was too onerous for some property owners and that a more flexible approach should be considered in some of the City's Historic Sub districts (i.e., residential neighborhoods outside of downtown). This question was discussed within the context of exploring alternative housing options in response to the City's affordable/workforce housing needs.

### Mineral Springs

The City's Mineral Springs are a significant community asset. The Mineral Springs Foundation, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, has actively worked to restore and develop the eight springs that are currently open to the public in collaboration with the City and private landowners. Protecting the integrity of the springs has added a layer of complexity to the City's recent flood control projects. Testing of ground water that emerges during construction projects is required to determine its source, and in Williams Canyon, infiltration basins were incorporated to recharge the mineral springs. Participants mentioned the goal of promoting greater awareness of the springs among tourists and residents through Plan Manitou, as well as a greater understanding and appreciation of their unique geochemical properties.

## HAZARD MITIGATION/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### Impacts of recent events

Many areas in Manitou Springs are vulnerable to natural hazards. The City and community have experienced a number of recent disasters that have had a large impact on businesses, structures, and infrastructure in the City, as well as on the psyche of its residents. The most notable of these disasters were the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012 and major flooding in 2013, although flooding and other smaller, less severe events have occurred since. On a positive note, many of the evacuation and emergency response procedures put into place since the Waldo Canyon Fire worked well during subsequent disasters, and loss of life was minimal (although damage to structures and infrastructure was significant). While the spring 2015 disaster was less significant in magnitude, it caused widespread impacts to public facilities and private property throughout the community.

### Flood Recovery/Mitigation

Since 2013, the City and its partners at the county, state and federal levels have undertaken a number of mitigation and recovery projects, and more are in the planning stages. A key challenge for Manitou Springs is the fact that several of the City's critical facilities—police and fire, as well as City Hall—are located within the floodplain, would be severely inundated in case of a 100-year flood, and sustained damage in past flood events. The City's Chief of Police has commissioned an architectural firm to determine departmental space needs, size of complex required, cost, and feasibility for building a new municipal complex on a specific site. New state regulations require

communities to move critical facilities out of the floodplain, and 44CFR55.60 recommends siting critical facilities outside the limits of the 500-year floodplain; however, the feasibility of implementing these requirements is complex. In addition, City Hall is a designated historic structure; there is concern that demolishing the structure would translate to a lack of support for numerous other historic properties in the downtown located along Fountain Creek in the floodplain. Under the City's Emergency Operations Plan, police and fire operations will be relocated to the Elementary School when a flash flood warning is issued by the National Weather Service. Notably, this occurred 17 times in 2013. Opportunities to prioritize future mitigation projects, incentivize private mitigation actions, and improve the City's storm water and public works specifications should be explored as part of the CMP/HMP process, in collaboration with the forthcoming Stormwater Master Plan process.

## Messaging

A number of participants expressed concern regarding the way in which the outside media and the community understand and communicate the true nature of the hazards and risks in Manitou Springs. It was noted that following the events in 2012 and 2013, much of the media coverage focused exclusively on the negative aspects of each disaster, which led to a perception that the City was not "open for business," despite the relatively quick recovery for many businesses following both events. Even among residents, fear and misconceptions about the risks and dangers faced by the community persist long after these events. City staff would like to see more research and discussion to better understand the public's perception of hazard risk. Through the Plan Manitou process and a joint Community Master Plan-Hazard Mitigation Plan, there is an opportunity to provide more accurate, detailed data regarding risks and vulnerabilities of the community to residents and businesses. However, a challenge moving forward will be to balance the need to inform the community about the risks present in Manitou Springs without creating undue concern or fear. The implementation of additional flood proofing measures can help reduce future risk, as well as address concerns about perception. Specific recommendations will be explored and prioritized as part of the HMP.

## Wildfire

The proximity of the 18,247 acre Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012 and significant damage incurred by that event, as well as the development of the El Paso County Hazard Mitigation Plan, amplified the need for the City to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This process has been initiated by Fire Department staff. In 2015, the City received CDBG-DR2 funding to improve aging waterlines in a large subdivision on the south side of the City that dates to the late 1800's. With the DR funding, the City will replace undersized and aging water infrastructure to improve resident water pressure, and will place fire hydrants to help in fire mitigation. There is particular concern regarding wildfire risk in the forested areas south of the City and around the COG/Incline area due to high fuel loads. The ongoing establishment of homeless encampments in open space areas heightens this risk. The City, in cooperation with the El Paso County Watershed Collaborative and other stakeholders, submitted an application for the Ruxton Watershed Resiliency Pilot Program to undertake wildfire mitigation for 300 acres. If funded, this effort

will include fire break maintenance, fire access augmentation to the Manitou Incline and involvement of forty area property owners in a residential fire mitigation program. Ongoing cooperation with El Paso and Teller Counties and other regional partners will be essential to implement some of the potential wildfire mitigation/fuels reduction actions needed in the areas surrounding the City.

## NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT

### Sustainability

*Manitou Springs Forward: A Vision and Planning Guide* established a strong foundation for community sustainability. Sustainable development practices, the use of alternative energy, local food production, and stewardship of the natural forest lands bordering the community are just some of the priorities cited in this prior work. Council has recently expressed support for public recycling, and possibly community composting. The desire to further explore existing City and community sustainability initiatives (e.g. the Climate Action Plan) as part of the CMP/HMP process, and to clearly define what being a sustainable community means in the context of the community's emphasis on resilience and other initiatives, was expressed by a number of participants.

### Parks, Trails and Open space

The open space resources and natural setting of Manitou Springs were noted as a significant community asset, and one of the primary reasons why people seek to live in the City. However, participants also expressed concern that some of these resources were not being properly managed, resulting in overuse or misuse. Overuse was cited as a primary concern around the Incline, although participants also noted that other trails in the City were also being heavily used. Graffiti and other forms of misuse were mentioned as concerns primarily for Rainbow Falls, which is managed by El Paso County Parks and Recreation. The soon-to-be-completed Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan (POST MP) will serve as a valuable resource for the Plan Manitou process in understanding the issues, priorities, and vision for the parks and open space system in Manitou Springs. Moving forward, it will be essential that the Plan Manitou process incorporate both the public feedback obtained throughout the POST MP process, and the goals and policies included in the final document to ensure the Community Master Plan supports the vision and intent of that plan.

### Wildlife

Manitou Springs' proximity to large tracts of open space and public lands means that conflicts between humans and wildlife are common occurrences. The need to educate residents about living with wildlife was cited as a priority by several participants. One recurring conflict that was cited was that between trash cans and bears.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>3</sup> City Council recently conducted a work session on this topic.

City's flora and fauna populations are not well-documented, so the City does not have solid data to use to preserve wildlife corridors and habitat areas.

### Water quality

Water plays a significant role in the City's built and natural environment, economy, and quality of life of residents. The presence of Fountain Creek, Ruxton Creek, Williams Creek, and Sutherland Creek, as well as the Mineral Springs, is a tremendous asset for the community. Protecting the quality of these waters from the impacts of runoff from the Waldo Canyon burn scar, as well as from potential impacts associated with future growth and development, is a critical issue for the City.

### Riparian corridors

The City is proud of its beautiful natural setting; however, development, impervious surfaces, minimal stormwater treatment, and the lack of a riparian buffer standard have caused Fountain and Ruxton Creeks to become more channel-like than natural. Reconnecting the community with the creek in some key areas would provide multiple community benefits, including potential flood mitigation. In addition, flooding and erosion has caused widespread damage to riparian and upland habitats.