EagleVail
Parks and Playgrounds Master Plan

MASTER PLAN UPDATE NARRATIVE

The Eagle Vail Parks Master Plan process is underway. The effort was launched in December of 2012 when Zehren and Associates was been engaged to assist the community of EagleVail with developing a master plan for improvements to community pocket parks and playgrounds. A committee of several residents, including the Community Manager and the Parks Supervisor is helping guide the effort working directly with the consultant.

Goals: The goal of the effort is to develop a long term master plan for making improvements to the parks throughout the community in a phased manner, and that identifies and prioritizes the greatest needs and desires of the community and its residents. In the short term, the goal of the effort is to define the most pressing park improvements identified by community residents and their leaders, and include some of these as may be appropriate in a grant request to Greater Outdoors Colorado (GOCO).

Process: The master plan effort will analyze existing conditions at the community’s (6) pocket parks, to understand usage patterns, and gather community input on needs, priorities, and desires relative to parks. An open house and a community survey will be part of the effort to collect community input and share a range of potential ideas for park improvements. Additional meeting(s) with the Board of Governors will be scheduled to review the findings of the survey and open house and to review the grant application.

Parks Committee: To date and since late November of 2012 there have been (3) parks committee meetings, in addition to several face to face staff meetings, some site visits to discuss the scope of the effort, and determine its overall direction. The Parks Committee has been asked to participate directly in documenting existing conditions, discussing the effort with their neighbors to generate interest and support, and to assist the process during the open house.

Project Mapping: Base mapping of the overall community, park locations, and each individual park has been compiled including topographic maps referenced to aerial photographs. Walking distances of 1/8 and ¼ mile centered on each park have been mapped to understand the distribution of parks, their proximity to one another and to residential areas of the community. Existing conditions are being inventoried with the help of the Parks Committee and individual residents who are emailing their own thoughts, observations, ideas, wishes, and desires. Additional feedback will be collected via the community open house, the survey, email and during Board of Governor meetings.

Assessment of Existing Conditions: An initial round of documentation of existing conditions has been drafted by the Parks Committee and Zehren and Associates. Inventory of existing play equipment, site characteristics, general observations, and possible range of improvements has been identified for each park. This information will be shared at the Community Open House to allow confirmation with residents, and additional information to be layered into the assessment, and make sure each park is thoroughly documented based on the direct experience and observation of residents.

Brainstorming of Needs and Wish List Items: Existing needs, and new ideas and possibilities for improvements are being brainstormed by the Parks Committee at this time to share (see list below). There has been enthusiasm and broad range of thinking and creative brain storming about the type of improvements to be made to the parks. The Parks Committee has discussed the most basic
improvements that need to be looked at as top priorities, such as upkeep of play equipment, maintenance of landscaping, additional shade, bathrooms, and other similar improvements. Likewise, new and creative possibilities have been debated, from creating a destination park at either or both ends of the community, and to make the parks recreation and fitness oriented for all ages, and possibly to incorporate new technologies to the extent possible as unique differentiators and lifestyle gestures to improve the community and its appeal. The list of potential improvements is being prepared to share with the community at the Open House (see below).

Community Open House: The Community Open House is a key milestone in the process. The open house is intended to gather community support for the effort, obtain information on actual and perceived needs for each park, and to help prioritize which improvements should be accomplished first and where. The Community Open House is scheduled for January 24, 2013 at the EagleVail Pavilion from 4 to 6:30pm. The meeting will be structured into (7) work stations, with one station for each park, and a station for the overall community (including the golf course as a winter recreation and park space). Each station will be ‘managed’ by a Parks Committee member. Each station will have a base map corresponding to the park, a summary of existing conditions and a list of needs and potential improvements that have been considered to date. The overall community station will be managed by the Consultant, and include information on the goals of the effort, the process, the schedule, and the GOCO grant.

The Consultant will make a brief introductory presentation at the onset of the effort (circa 5pm) and repeat if necessary based on level of attendance during the open house. A preferences and ranking exercise will be conducted at the open house using a ‘dot’ methodology. Meeting attendees will be provided a hand-out with instructions for their participation in the Open House and (5) dot label stickers labeled 1 through 5. They will be asked to place the dot label stickers on the list of potential improvements, in the order of preference and opinion they feel is most pressing or needed. Participants will need to decide which park improvements to place their dots, and start to narrow down which parks are in need of greatest improvement(s) within the context of the overall community. The results of the dot exercise will be compiled, analyzed and shared with the community as part of the survey questionnaire (see below). Results will be looked at across the board, and to understand the top ranked improvements desired and on which parks, and the level of importance of each relative to basic needs and overall community context.

In addition to the dot exercise, there will be a flip chart for comments and suggestions at the overall community parks station. Likewise, at each individual park station there will be a comments form specific to each park. All information generated in the flip chart and comment forms will be compiled, shared and reviewed with the community and the Board of Governors after the open house.

Parks Survey Questionnaire: A basic survey will be conducted after the open house, roughly from January 28 through February 8. The survey will seek to gather additional feedback from community members not able to attend the open house, and further confirm preferences, needs and desires about park improvements. A list of potential questions will be drafted for discussion with the board, and will be refined as part of the open house. The survey will be introduced at the Open House and it will be introduced to the Community more broadly via email. Result of the survey will be compiled along with the Open House materials, and shared with Board in February.

GOCO Grant Application: A GOCO grant application is a key part of the master plan effort, to attempt to secure additional funds for the improvements identified as highest priority during the master plan effort in 2013. EagleVail Metro / POA currently has approximately $60,000 budgeted for an initial phase of park improvements in 2013. The intent is to include this sum as a 50% match in the GOCO grant application request, in order to try to obtain an additional $60,000 for a total budget of $120,000 for
park specific improvements as part of Phase One implementation intended in 2013. It is important to note the master plan is being developed with a long term vision beyond just the 2013 grant application. While it will serve as the basis for the current 2013 GOCO grant application, it is attended to stage other similar grant applications in the future.

The grant application deadline is March 6, 2013, and a major part of the reason for the aggressive schedule of the Parks Master Plan effort. In order to successfully complete the grant application the project must stay on track in the remainder of January and February. Key components of the grant are the Board of Governor’s support for the effort, clear demonstration of need for the improvements included in the grant application, community support for the improvements, among the various other grant requirements. A major part of the master plan effort is geared specifically at obtaining the type of information that is required for the grant. It will be important to include the highest priority improvements that are identified by the master plan process in order to make EagleVail’s grant request competitive.

**Future Steps:** Upon a thorough understanding of existing conditions surrounding each park and understanding site specific neighborhood concerns, ideas and desires for each park, a concept plan for improvements for each park will be developed along with a tiered list of improvements to be accomplished over time. With the assistance of community members during the open house and using a basic survey questionnaire thereafter, a matrix of improvements will be created. Order of magnitude costs will be developed for improvements, park by park. In short order the Park Committee, the Consultant and the Board will need to prioritize which improvements need to be made sooner and later, and to be included in the grant application to Great Outdoors Colorado.

**Eagle Vail Parks History:** As part of the grant application effort it will be important to include a historical recap of parks in EagleVail, that details the community’s effort, commitment to parks, and general expenditures over the years and to build up a strong rationale and need for the requested improvements. A very preliminary draft has been started for this purpose to be further developed with the assistance of the Board and long time residents. The current draft is a place holder and needs substantial help to be as accurate as possible. If ‘spun’ in the right manner it may significantly help the grant application. It’s also important to document the parks history for the future and put the master plan effort into proper context.

Here is the very preliminary draft of EagleVail’s park history:

“EagleVail is a master planned community dating back to 1972. The community is Planned Unit Development, and lies in the eastern fringes of unincorporated Eagle County. As part of the original development, two parks were incorporated, one on the west end and the other on the east end of the community. Over the years with the growth and maturation of the community, a need for additional pocket parks within reasonable walking distance to the majority of the residential areas within the community emerged. In the mid to late 1980’s at the request of several residents, the EagleVail Metropolitan District set aside (4) unsold residential zoned lots throughout the community for use as pocket parks. Basic park equipment and landscaping was installed and these parks have served the community significantly. In 2011 after over 20 years of the use of these residential zoned lots as community park space, in amending the PUD guide for the community, the EagleVail Metropolitan District and Property Owner’s Association re-zoned the pocket parks lots from Residential land uses to a ‘Recreation’ land use designation. This will enable the pocket parks to exist and be a part of the community for perpetuity. It is estimated the value of the lots to be XXXXX based on present day real estate conditions in the EagleVail marketplace. A basis for the GOCO grant request the inherent value of the land for parks uses as Metro District’s contribution to the effort, as well as the continued maintenance and upkeep costs.”