

COLORADO CDBG-DR WATERSHED RESILIENCE

2017 Deed-Restricted Buy-Out Property (DR.BOP)

Flood Recovery Project

Section I. BACKGROUND

Lyons, Colorado is a small town nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains at the confluence of the North and South St. Vrain Creeks. Historically a sandstone quarrying town, Lyons maintains its rich sandstone production history and is also now a thriving community known for its arts, music, culture, and natural beauty. Visitors from across Colorado and the region flock to Lyons to attend our annual music festivals, visit our restaurants, shops, and businesses, and to enjoy the parks and outdoor amenities. Each summer, hundreds of thousands pass through Lyons on their way to Rocky Mountain National Park on either State Highway 7 or US Highway 36, lending us our nickname “The Double Gateway to the Rockies.”

On September 12th, 2013, Lyons suffered one of the worst disasters in the town’s history. Beginning September 9th, more than 17 inches of rain fell along the Colorado Front Range. This historic rainfall triggered flash floods across Boulder County and the surrounding region. By the evening of September 11th, the volume of water in the St. Vrain Creek was ten times its normal amount. Floodwaters quickly inundated the town, and Lyons was cut off from its neighbors and left without power, telephone service, potable water, or other basic services. The widespread damage to our local and regional infrastructure led to an evacuation of our entire town on September 14, 2013. The first residents were not able to return until late October, more than six weeks after the flood.

The September 2013 floods impacted nearly every aspect of our community. One of our cherished residents, Gerald Boland, perished in the flood. Hundreds more were physically or emotionally injured. Roads, bridges, infrastructure, and utilities suffered significant damage. More than 200 homes were damaged or destroyed. Our business community was doubly impacted, first by the floods and second by the loss of revenue from the evacuation and subsequent decline in customers. Some of our most important venues for music, arts, and cultural events were affected. Our river bottoms were scoured and many of our ponds destroyed, along with other environmental assets like trees and riparian habitats. Numerous public facilities were damaged or destroyed, including our public works building, sewage treatment plant, town hall, and historic library. Our schools were forced to evacuate for nearly three months, with significant impact on our youth and families.

The Lyons park system was absolutely decimated, accruing over \$25 million dollars in damages. Nearly all community parks and facilities were affected in some way. Of the 80 acres of developed/in-development community parkland, 39 acres were severely impacted. Unfortunately, the 39 acres impacted the most are home to most of Lyons' major park facilities. The other 40+ were acquired for future development and house only a few facilities and amenities.



In addition to Lyons' existing network of parks, trails & open space will be 27 "deed-restricted buy-out properties." These are residential properties along the St. Vrain River that have been/will be acquired by the Town as a result of being substantially damaged or destroyed by the 2013 flood. The Town has received funding from FEMA's HMGP and HUD's CDBG-DR programs to acquire the properties, which upon closing will carry perpetual open space use restrictions.

Moving forward the Town of Lyons is dedicated to recovering stronger, more sustainably, and more resilient than before. We are a strong community, and have responded with great concern for one another. Volunteers and professionals provided the initial recovery effort. Our roads, bridges, utilities, and parks are in the repair process. Today, local businesses have reopened, residents have come back home, and our hardest-hit households and businesses have received the assistance they have needed to move forward.

Section II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Town has acquired 23 deed-restricted buy-out properties and expects to acquire an additional 4 properties through various Federal funding sources. The deed restrictions that are associated with the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and CDBG-DR 404 Buy-out Program require that the structures on these lots are removed and that the newly vacated land will remain open/recreational space in perpetuity. While the Town of Lyons is exploring a variety of ways to offset the loss of housing that this creates (especially the loss of affordable housing), we are in the midst of a specific project which has been focused on planning for the deed-restricted vacant lots - how they will be used, what design elements will be included on the lots and how they will be maintained. In the fall of 2016, the Town of Lyons hired Design Concepts out of Lafayette, Colorado to conduct a public planning process for the futures use, maintenance and management of these parcels (Dr. BOP Use & Management Plan).

The goal of this planning project is to engage the public in the development of a plan for the 'Deed Restricted Buy-Out Properties' (nicknamed Dr. BOP) in the St. Vrain River confluence. The following elements have been identified as critical project success factors:

- 1. Improved connectivity
- 2. Safe access to the St. Vrain River corridor
- 3. Resiliency to future flood events
- 4. Universal access for all abilities
- 5. An appropriate mix of passive and active recreational uses
- 6. Ecologically sustainable, low-impact planning solutions

This process has sought to identify a community vision and the consultants are now developing a plan to reach it. Input from stakeholders includes: neighborhood residents, community members at-large, local business owners, event organizers, Town policy makers, advisors, and Town staff. Based on this input, a plan is being developed that will focus on programming and conceptual designs that will improve livability, strengthen sense of place and community identity, allow for individual expression, ensure safety for residents and visitors, and is dependably maintainable.

The community planning firm, Design Concepts, has produced thoughtful, innovative design of public spaces for 35 years. Their focus is creating community. Their designs bring people together, promote a connection with nature, encourage healthy living and learning, and prioritize sustainability.

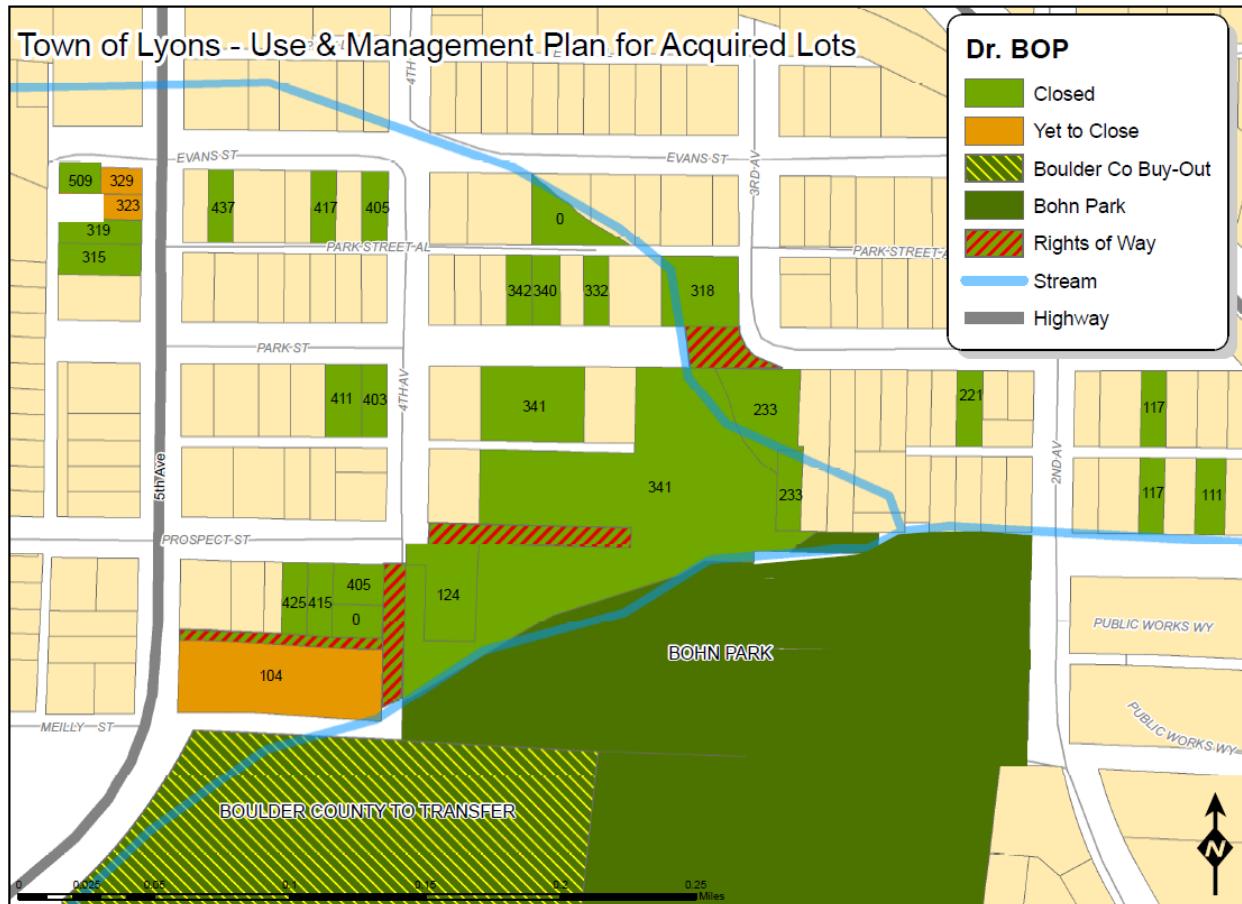
A final version of the Dr. BOP Use & Management Plan will be submitted by Design Concepts to the Town of Lyons in June 2017. The Final Plan will include:

- 1. Small Lot Neighborhood Development Guidelines including site specifications, approved design elements, use and maintenance expectations, and general information for the licensing of the 'checkerboard' buy-out lots adjacent to Town residents
- 2. Large Lot Community Site Concept Plan including a rendered plan, illustration and/or imagery for the preferred concept along with an estimate of probable costs
- 3. Management Plan including discussion of fiscal-impact, potential funding sources, and operations and maintenance implications of the recommended improvements

Some of the elements of the buy-out properties that have been identified are that they provide for significant local recreational opportunities; increased connectivity for local trails; and opportunities to improve water quality, mitigate future flooding and restore the river corridor's vital habitat. The selection of these properties as the next priority in Lyons flood recovery efforts is supported heavily by both the Town government and the public at large.

The buy-out properties are concentrated around the confluence of the N. and S. St. Vrain Creeks. A series of these parcels run east from the southwest town limits along the S. St. Vrain

Creek and are contiguous to Bohn Park. This contiguity to existing parkland offers opportunities for recreation and connectivity. However, because these parcels were part of a larger residential neighborhood, the type and intensity of recreational use is being given great scrutiny. In addition to these parcels, there are a few individual parcels that are located along the N. St. Vrain Creek or north of the confluence. These parcels are tucked in between existing residences and would not be appropriate locations for recreational amenities.



In addition to the 26 acquired properties included in the Town's buy-out program, this plan includes one additional property (approximately 9 acres in size) which is currently outside of Town limits, but contiguous to Lyons' Bohn Park. Boulder County has agreed to transfer this property to the Town after the demolition and clean-up process has been completed.

Section III. PROJECT PRIORITIES

Priority 1 | General Site Work –

Through the DR.BOP Planning Process, a “baseline treatment” of these parcels was identified as an imperative near-term step. At the outset of the buy-out program, once the properties were purchased and the homes were demolished, the parcels were graded and a low-maintenance seed mix was broadcast. However, this was a temporary measure and not all of the seeding was successful. In some cases there is still flood debris on the properties and invasive plants have been introduced. Additional resources are needed in order to get the parcels into a position where they provide their highest and most critical functions. These high priorities include:

providing necessary habitat along the riparian corridor and providing for proper flood mitigation and improved water quality. From a management perspective, the baseline treatment would allow for these benefits while also requiring a minimal amount of maintenance. Funding resources would be applied towards: grading, clearing/grubbing, top soil amendment, drought-resistant/weed-resistant native grass seed mix, and rainwater re-infiltration basins.

Priority 2 | Connectivity –

Access and connectivity between the buy-out properties, existing neighborhoods and the central business district is essential for local users and seasonal visitors. The features associated with this include primary and secondary off-street trails, on-street markings, wayfinding signage, and river crossings. The most critical of these facilities is the pedestrian bridge crossing over the N. St. Vrain Creek at 4th Avenue. This was an important community asset that was washed out in the flood of 2013 and is a critical component of the Town's trails network. Due to floodway constraints, the replacement cost of this bridge is three times the replacement value which was originally identified after the flood. In order for the Town to pay for this bridge with current flood recovery funding, it would have to redirect funds from other recovery projects. To avoid the fiscal impact that this project would have on the Town's flood recovery funding and in light of the importance that this pedestrian facility has on providing connectivity between the buy-out properties, the Confluence Neighborhood and Downtown Lyons, the Town of Lyons is seeking the CDBG-DR Watershed Resilience grant as an alternative funding opportunity for this project.

The cost of the pedestrian bridge replacement is further complicated by the impact that the bridge landing would have on the property at the corner of 4th Ave and Evans St. Physical and regulatory constraints have made the engineering of the bridge a challenge. In order to address these challenges, the new bridge design has a much greater impact on the area around this important pedestrian facility/river crossing. While the bridge and its landing could technically be housed within the existing right of way, there would be a significantly negative visual impact created by the ramp extending across the front lawn of 342 4th Ave. To eliminate the adverse impact that the new bridge would have on private property and in order to provide additional features that would allow a new bridge to provide an additional emergency river crossing for vehicles; the Town has identified the acquisition of 342 4th Ave as a priority.

Priority 3 | Recreation Features, Site Furnishings, & Landscaping –

In addition to the baseline treatment, additional recreational and landscaping features such as community gardens, botanical gardens, community orchards, children's natural play areas, water access points, gathering spaces, interpretive signage, benches, bike racks, additional re-vegetation and landscaping features should be introduced on the Dr.BOP properties. While these elements should be put in place as soon as possible, they should be done so after the properties have been securely established with a baseline treatment (see Priority 1). Some of these additional elements are already in the works with local and national partners such as the Rocky Mountain Botanical Garden Club (who has partial funding in place for a botanical garden) and the RETREET organization (who provide free trees to flood-impacted areas). However, other elements will need additional resources. Those that have been included as parts of this grant request are in the budget below.

Section IV. BUDGET

The following cost estimates have been compiled to provide a rough estimate for these elements as they relate to implementation of the Town of Lyons Dr. BOP Use and Management Plan:

ITEM	QTY	UNIT	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
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Priority 1

General Sitework				
Soils Analysis	30	EA	\$100.00	\$3,000.00
Clear & Grub	450,000	SF	\$0.10	\$45,000.00
Grading (Cut, fill, compact onsite material)	16,666	CY	\$3.50	\$58,331.00
Soil prep and native seed	900,000	SF	\$0.25	\$225,000.00
Strip and stockpile topsoil	10	AC	\$2,800.00	\$28,000.00
Respread stockpiled topsoil	16,666	CY	\$2.00	\$33,332.00
Water quality biofiltration basins	2	EA	\$7,500.00	\$15,000.00
			Subtotal	\$407,663.00

Priority 2

Connectivity				
Pedestrian bridge (4th Ave & Evans St)	1	LS	\$425,000.00	\$425,000.00
Bridge abutment land acquisition	1	LS	\$275,000.00	\$275,000.00
Multi-use trail - 10' crusher fines	32,000	SF	\$3.00	\$96,000.00
Natural trail - 2' crusher fines	7,400	SF	\$3.00	\$22,200.00
On-street bike/ped striping (4th Ave & 3rd Ave)	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Wayfinding signage	15	EA	\$300.00	\$4,500.00
			SUBTOTAL	\$827,700.00

Priority 3

Recreation Features				
Water access	1	LS	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00
Nature play elements	1	LS	\$9,500.00	\$9,500.00
Small gathering spaces	2	EA	\$4,750.00	\$9,500.00
			SUBTOTAL	\$33,000.00
Site Furnishings				
Interpretive signage	5	EA	\$500.00	\$2,500.00
Benches	3	EA	\$1,650.00	\$4,950.00
Trash receptacles	5	EA	\$1,150.00	\$5,750.00
Bike racks	3	EA	\$450.00	\$1,350.00
			SUBTOTAL	\$14,550.00
Landscape				
Trees deciduous	25	EA	\$450.00	\$11,250.00
Trees evergreen	12	EA	\$400.00	\$4,800.00
Trees ornamental	12	EA	\$325.00	\$3,900.00
Landscape boulders	10	EA	\$250.00	\$2,500.00
Stepping stones	10	EA	\$300.00	\$3,000.00
			SUBTOTAL	\$25,450.00