

John's Letter to PRAM 10/1/18

This plan of action developed, at least in major part, as a result of the many questions raised in multiple forums by those opposed to the current proposal. At the conclusion of the meeting, assignments were made to various Board members to set about addressing a number of the specific questions, though it was unclear to this observer whether the entire spectrum of questions was assigned (in part because the Board had run out of time). It is important to note that many of these issues that PRAM decided needed additional information would have been addressed earlier had the Special Interest Request Process been followed.

Importantly, in the public comments at that meeting and in the subsequent discussion by the Board, the strength of "community opposition" was noted, as was the depth of the division between "sides" that has developed.

On the point of community division, you may not be aware that within the effected neighborhoods there have been incidences of "drive by" name calling and many residents now have become afraid to discuss this topic with neighbors for fear of discovering they will be viewed as being on the "wrong side". At least one Board member noted, correctly in my view, that simply securing answers to all the "technical questions" that have been acknowledged as important, was in itself not going to heal the divisions.

It is our opinion that many of the issues acknowledged by the Board as demanding further examination require technical or policy making experience that is beyond the capacity of this volunteer Board acting on its own.

Examples include:

Developing a serious analysis of the true intention of this project, that is, the real population that would be served by the proposed installation, including numbers of citizen users and frequency of use, and comparing that to the "costs" – including the cost of removing natural open space from the City's asset base. It has become ever more clear that the intended served population of young riders is extremely small and geographically local to the proposed STS installation. This raises serious issues of a small localized benefit at a large expense to tax payers and current users of Kinney Run.

Determining the proposed projects consistency with the PRAM Master Plan, Golden CIP, Vision 2030 and other critical planning documents and guidelines. Most of these

guiding criteria are appropriately determined at Council level.

Determining trail design standards – this is clearly a fundamental determination that should be made by City Staff or consultants.

Developing a comprehensive cost estimate that includes initial installation, on-going maintenance and potential removal (which of course cannot be addressed until a trail design standard is selected)– again this is clearly outside the capacity of the PRMAB and should be developed by City Staff and or expert consultants.

Determining objectively the capacity of GGU to provide whatever level of support is committed once the total comprehensive cost estimate is provided and designing the necessary contractual boundaries for that support.

Assessing properly the scope of environmental impact – the initial pro-bono assessment provided by GGU is not comprehensive enough nor does it address wildlife issues such as the birding hotspot question recently identified.

Determining the short and long term impacts on this Golden open space/natural area balanced against its values and inherent assets that led to its classification of community open space/natural areas and the consistent community expression of support for such limited areas.

Considering objectively alternate sites that serve the same intent (also yet to be clearly articulated as acknowledged by PRMAB) – once a clear statement of intent is developed, the City Staff is the organization to conduct a comprehensive review of possible options. The list of alternate sites is long and includes consideration of a South Golden young rider bike park at locations like the Fossil Trace Splash Park – development of the CSM property to both provide the long sought “connector trail” and a dedicated young rider space – cooperation with Jeffco to expand the Apex Trail facility to include a dedicated young rider area...and many others.

These issues are complex in breadth and depth and fundamental to a decision about the proposed STS. In order to begin to heal the division created in our community it is essential that they are addressed in a thoughtful, substantial and objective manner by credible professionals.

Given the history of this initiative, if this work is done by PRMAB alone and or, as has been suggested, substantially by GGU, the outcomes will not be perceived as credible and the community divisions will become even more intense. If the work is conducted

by the City or third party experts as required it will be a large step in the direction of healing the wounds that have been created.