

Clear Creek County Planning Department
Staff report for
Board of County Commissioners
regarding a work session on
December 15, 2010

PROPOSAL: Clear Creek County Cultural Resources Management Plan

**PROJECT
MANAGER:** Trent L. Hyatt, Senior Planner

DATE: December 9, 2010

BACKGROUND

Review of the Interstate 70 mountain corridor project brought to light the number of cultural resources that were damaged or lost with the construction of the interstate in the 1960's. Afterwards, many found it important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural resources located in the County in order to make informed discussions regarding the resources in the future.

Project Tasks

In the fall of 2008, the County Land Use Division applied for a 75/25 matching grant from the State Historical Fund to embark on an evaluation our cultural resources. In April of 2009, \$80,500 (\$60,375 (grant request) / \$20175 (County match) was awarded to the County to complete a cultural resources management plan with the following tasks: 1) collect baseline information on the County's cultural resources, 2) identify priority cultural resources, 3) assess potential effects on cultural resources, 4) identify goal, and 5) provide a management plan document with recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. The Cultural Resources Management Plan document (CRMP), drafted by SRI Foundation (project consultant), is attached for your review and consideration.

Steering Committee

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed stakeholders of the public, interested and/or knowledgeable about the County's history and cultural resources, to the Cultural Resources Management Plan Steering Committee (SC). The SC was intended to guide the project. Many different organizations and interests were represented on the committee.

Cultural Resources/Historic Preservation Options

The SC has identified numerous options regarding the County's cultural resources. These options are outlined below. Historic preservation can include many differing programs, both regulatory (ordinances, design standard, and/or other regulations) and voluntary (heritage tourism, historic signage, tours). **The SC has made it very clear that they do not feel that a regulatory historic preservation program is appropriate for the County.** Instead, they favor focusing on voluntary programs when permission is granted by individual property owners.

Option 1: *Conduct additional cultural resources inventory and research, where landowner permission is granted, to expand knowledge about cultural resources in Clear Creek*

County. Option 1 and the following tasks under this option are recommended by the CRMP Steering Committee.

- *Assign responsibility to address inventory tasks*
- *Find funding for inventory tasks*
- *Develop long-range inventory plan*
- *Prioritize Inventory*
 1. *Further identify significant/priority cultural resources*
 2. *Evaluate/Re-evaluate individual study areas*
 3. *Prioritize study areas*
- *Develop guidelines to identify significant/priority cultural resources*
 1. *Develop inventory evaluation methodology acceptable to OAHF*
- *Conduct research/analysis on identified cultural resources*
- *Address misinformation about inventory/evaluation*
- *Encourage cooperation with private property owners so that rights to mineral development are not impaired by use of the inventory*
- *Report findings to the public*
- *Notify owners of property which potentially contain cultural resources*

Option 2: *Create economic benefit through heritage tourism to encourage historic preservation and economic development.*

Option 3: *Encourage historic preservation so that more of the county's cultural resources may be protected.*

Option 4: *Promote education and outreach to educate the public about the county's history and the importance of preserving the county's tangible links to that history.*

Option 5: *Assign CRMP oversight and integration to the Planning Department so that information on cultural resources can be used for planning Option 5 and the following tasks under this option are recommended by the CRMP Steering Committee.*

- *Review and consider updating the County Master Plan 2030 for cultural/historic resources considerations*
- *Monitor historic preservation agreements like the I-70 Programmatic Agreement*
- *Continue assessment of state and federal projects*

Option 6: *Establish partnerships to help achieve the purposes of CRMP and to identify sources of funding and technical support.*

Option 7: *Do nothing; continue the County's present policies and practices.*

Steering Committee Recommended Options

At this time, the only options actually recommended by the SC are Option 1: "Conduct additional cultural resources inventory and research, *where landowner permission is granted*, to expand knowledge about cultural resources in Clear Creek County" and Option 5: "Assign CRMP

oversight and integration to the Planning Department so that information on cultural resources can be used for planning.” Due to issues found in the data maintained by the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Option 1 was identified by the SC as the priority option.

Project Opposition

Many concerns have been raised regarding the project and its potential impact on economic development and private property rights in the County. Please note, there is no action required by the County for the project and the CRMP document itself will not impact development or property rights in any way. However, historic preservation can contribute significantly to a local economy. The CRMP outlines the significant monetary contribution of historic preservation to the state. The benefits of historic preservation should be considered in any economic development program.

BOCC Action

Certification, adoption, and/or formal action by the BOCC regarding the CRMP document **is not required**. The document is intended to provide information regarding the County's cultural resources, historic preservation possibilities, and recommendations from the SC. However, if the BOCC determines that the implementation of options identified/recommended in the CRMP are of value to the County guidance for action/implementation would be appropriate.