



Town of Blue River Memorandum

TO: Mayor Decicco & Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Citizen Advisory Committee

DATE: May 29, 2024

SUBJECT: **Citizen Advisory Committee Survey Report**

Mayor & Board of Trustees

In January 2024, the Citizen Advisory Committee was asked to conduct a survey of the citizens as it relates to the priorities set by the Board of Trustees for the 2024 fiscal year. There were a total of 158 unique validated responses. A summary of the results were provided and each member was assigned a section to evaluate the written responses and provide a summary and recommendation. Below are those reports.

Short Term Rentals

102 Comments were received on the topic of Short Term Rentals in the Citizen Advisory Survey. Comments sorted into five categories based on favorability.

Short Term Rental Comments	#	%
Pro	33	32%
Pro w/ Regulatory Enforcement	24	24%
Neutral	13	13%
More Regulation / Limits / Cap	23	23%
Against	9	9%

32% of comments supported Short Term Rentals, their regulation, and number, as it exists currently, and the continued ability for property owners to utilize their property as they see fit.

24% of comments generally supported current Short Term Rental regulations and numbers, but with improved enforcement of ordinances related to Short Term Rentals and ordinances related to all residents and citizens.

13% of comments did not express an opinion for or against Short Term Rentals or provided comments both for and against Short Term Rentals.

23% of comments indicated a preference for added regulation, permit limits, or a hard cap on the number of permits issued for Short Term Rentals.

9% of comments opposed to Short Term Rentals and believe they should not be allowed in the Town of Blue River.

Summary

All comments received are consistent with data gathered in previous surveys or fielded from residents at meetings. There is general favorability for Short Term Rentals in Blue River, albeit with improved enforcement of existing town ordinance and permit requirements.

The Board might consider methods for communicating directly with Short Term Rental guests regarding their responsibilities and expectations, perhaps a required affidavit hosted on the TOBR website or creating an employee position whose responsibility includes outreach to Short Term renters or responding to violation reports, funded through Short Term Rental-specific tax revenue.

Additionally, concerns among those opposed or seeking limits may be addressed by the Board considering a formal review of Short Term Rentals, documented in a public report that addresses key concerns. Reconciliation with the TOBR Mission Statement, financial analysis, and the recognition of key impacts of Short Term Rentals on the experience of full time residents could help to more clearly distinguish between renter behavior and land use policy.

Trustee Hopkins
Liaison, Citizen Advisory Committee

Goose Pasture Tarn & Trails

As far as the tarn responses are concerned, the overriding theme is the need for enforcement of existing code and rules.

The citizens want staffing from town at the tarn to make sure only residents are accessing it.

They want sufficient and safe parking access.

There were requests for seating and bathroom facilities at the tarn

Many wanted to make sure the tarn will be properly stocked each year.

Finally, as a broader point the respondents want to make sure trail access is maintained and improved in Blue River.

In conclusion, the citizens that responded want appropriate staffing and visibility by the town at the tarn to maintain and confirm only access by actual residents.

Thank you again-Trevor Kraus-Chair

Blue River Roads Comments

Paved	14
Grading	7
Plowing	5
Speed/parking Enforcemnt	7
Easement Rights	6

Areas of Concern from Residents

Junction of Royal & Blue River	
Timber Creek Estates - some cracking	2
Curve on Coronet Hill	

Drainage 97 Circle & culverts	
Louisie Placer & Spruce Creed Road	2
Grading Lakeshore Loop	
Spruce Valley Ranch	
Regal & Coronet - curve	2
Spruce Creek	3

See .pdf with highlighted comments.

Former Member & Vice Chair/Now Trustee-Jodie Willey

Blue River Citizen's Survey: Wildfire Component Comments Summary

Here are my observations from reviewing the results. Different readers may find different emphases. I try to present a broad and balanced perspective on my read of the results here, including minority opinions. It is worth reading all the responses, in addition to my comments, to develop a strong sense of the commonalities and, where they exist, differences within the community to inform future decisions on the matter.

- Not to diminish the results below, but a sizable number of respondents indicated confusion on how to interpret and report using the scale described for completing the survey. A number of respondents indicated this confusion and then, to be sure, wrote responses such as these two: "I assume that this was meant to be high, medium and low as the others above - high concern for me" and "I don't know what your choices mean. It's obviously VERY important."
- There is a solid consensus in the responses of the importance of wildfire mitigation resources and activities by individuals, neighbors and the town. Examples of written comments, that were highly varied and reflected more a theme than a consensus on any specific mitigation activity included: fire mitigation incentives, removing trees within 30' of one's residence, protection of homes, cisterns, insurance premiums, activities by forest service.

Not everyone supports tree removal. Three separate residents wrote:

"The forest service has already ruined our view with its slaughter of live trees. NO MORE CUTTING" and "The mitigation efforts seem to be needlessly ugly and perhaps useless. They were never explained adequately." and "Stop cutting all trees. A plan to thin trees might be welcome."

More numerous, others wrote: "I know not everyone likes the fire mitigation but I think it is necessary and needs to be done. Samewith the chipping program." and "All fire mitigation should be a vital part of mountain communities." and "safe zonesr around homes is essential and continuing slash cleanups"

- Concerns were expressed about the actions of others, such as the risk posed by people throwing lit cigarettes out the window on highway 9, activities of neighbors including renters or campers on trails (presumably) building campfires.
- Finally, my read of the consensus in the comments is that citizens have a favorable view of the town government's and other interested entities (e.g. forest service, Red, White and

Blue, etc.) activities. For example: “The town has done a nice job coordinating the wildfire mitigation efforts. It was a big impact having the logging trucks on Spruce Creek road but they did operate within the designated hours and did not speed.”

In closing and on behalf of my fellow BRCAC members and the town’s elected trustees, wildfire risks and risk mitigation are on the minds of our fellow citizens in the town and they consider it to be a very important concern. This is captured in a number of comments, such as this one for example: “Very important with where we live. The current programs we stand behind and hope that they continue to make our town more fire safe. I hope that we continue with the chipping program in the future. The trees marked along the street we hope are removed (*sic*).”

-Stephen D. Kucera, Ph. D.

Safety & Code Enforcement

1. 40% of the responses addressed Highway 9 as their largest safety concern (No Surprise). Specifically speed was mentioned consistently and the need to reduce the speed limit to be more in keeping with a residential area. The need for wider shoulders and safer crossing options or adjustments to bus stops to reduce need for pedestrians to cross the highway.
2. 40% thought that Blue River was "safe" or were complementing the police or didn't understand the question.
3. Remainder were comments that were so off the mark that they weren't relevant to the question. For example there were several comments about trash cans being left out over night.

In summary most respondents were concerned about the highway and the hazards related to speed and operation of vehicles on the road.

hope this helps

Bruce

Constant Contact Survey Results

Campaign Name: Untitled Survey Page Created 2024/02/19, 11:35:20 AM MST

Survey Starts: 588

Survey Submits: 187

Export Date: 03/19/2024 02:58 PM

OPEN QUESTION

Blue River Address

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

187 Response(s)

OPEN QUESTION

Email

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

187 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Roads (maintenance, rights and easements)

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
High			109	59%
Medium			57	30%
Low			18	9%
Total Responses			184	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Comments

What does "Roads" mean? Before the Town spends any time/money on "roads" it MUST determine the legal rights and right-of-way boundaries on existing roads. Continued creeping of road maintenance summer/winter is causing damage to private property.

BOT incumbents & candidates at the 3/7/24 Forum all agreed to "site-specific" management guidelines that address diverse neighborhoods & environmental characteristics." Instead of bureaucracy, property owners & contractor(s) should make decisions.

As long as the pot holes and ruts are not as deep as the Grand Canyon that rattle my car to pieces I am happy. The snow removal is not as efficient as it has been in the past.

91 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

2. Short-term Rentals

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
High			66	36%
Medium			58	31%
Low			59	32%
Total Responses			183	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Comments

Before making any STR decisions based on "the court of public opinion", the Town needs to objectively define the issues/concerns and focus on a path forward that follows the Mission Statement "... conserving our natural residential environment."

Many voting residents live here because of what is in the Mission Statement. STRs have contributed significantly to the erosion of the M.S. Instead of community-damaging Town government STR policies, follow community-caring policies, i.e. fewer STRs.

I am not a fan of STR...I like our nice quiet local neighborhood. The STR put a lot of wear on our resources. There should be a limit on nights occupancy per year and it needs to be managed.

107 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

3. Tarn Management and Use Trails

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
High			99	53%
Medium			66	35%
Low			19	10%
Total Responses			184	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Comments

Topic is vague/nebulous. The Town doesn't own the water surface nor shoreline. Before spending time/money on this or anything related to open space/trails, engage landowners and informed neighbors, and not focus on "the court of public opinion".

I agree with the "Blue River Open Space & Trails Master Plan" recommendation: "...Goose Pasture Tarn is a relatively undisturbed wetland/riparian complex... and is important wildlife/waterfowl habitat. Do not encourage use nor future trail development..."

I like to be able to enjoy our trails and natural resources our neighborhood offers. I would like to see a safe corridor for us to get to town. Someone is going to get killed riding their bike on the highway. Tarn for locals only. Winter parking

90 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

4. Safety Enhancement and Plans

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
High			51	28%
Medium			85	47%
Low			44	24%
Total Responses			180	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Comments

What does this mean? "Safety" is a high priority in anything/everything the Town does. Without a clear understanding of specific "enhancements" or "plans", the topic is too vague/nebulous to rate and give comment. Take it off the list.

Keep in mind that the best safety plans honor the environment plus honor the current infrastructure, i.e. emergency vehicles can safely travel on the current roads. Drivers of other vehicles can easily find a pull-out to allow for emergency vehicles.

I am not really sure what this means. People fined for pushing snow out onto road, trash cans management. They should not be put out the night before.

67 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

5. Code Enforcement

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
High			60	33%
Medium			77	42%
Low			44	24%
Total Responses			181	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Comments

Town must adhere to rules, regulations, policy, and guidelines defined by law and the Land Use Code. Not enforcing the law is a dereliction of duties. Like "Safety", this topic is a stand-alone function and need not be on the priority list.

The Town is famous for not enforcing code. Town government is famous for including provisions in the code documents that the Town has no intention of enforcing. Existing code is enforced for some but not others. Enforce code equally for all.

Generally good presents is noted with police making rounds in the neighborhood. I do notice a lot of aggressive drivers passing inappropriately on the highway.

55 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6. Wildfire Mitigation

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Answer 1			102	64%
Answer 2			36	22%
Answer 3			20	12%

OPEN QUESTION

Comments

"Mitigation" means lessening the impact caused by wildlife. Without a clear understanding of specific "mitigation", the topic is too vague/nebulous to rate and give comment. It is a part of the "Safety" topic and need not be on the priority list.

Town government appears to justify illegal/unauthorized tree removal & wetland willows as "wildfire mitigation." Factors, such as nearness to waterways, should be considered acceptable mitigation practices. Implement acceptable mitigation practices.

Fire pits should not be allowed, especially at rental properties. Cars should be ticketed for parking on roads - this is hazardous for fire trucks. I like the fire mitigation incentives provided tree management companies.

87 Response(s)

OPEN QUESTION

7. Please note any other priority you would like to see the Town address.

The "Survey" is poorly drafted. It does not tie in with the Town Mission Statement and does not give info on type of respondents; landowners, renters (long and short-term), full and part-time residents, visitors, etc. Topics listed are vague and nebulous, leading to too much interpretation of the issue. Many topics are actually components of the Safety topic, which is obviously a high priority. Hire a consultant to conduct an appropriate "survey" which will give meaningful actionable results.

--All policies & practices need to be connected to the Mission Statement, which is currently not happening.

--There is no mention of the environment in these BOT priorities. FYI- On a 2019 Citizen Survey, 85.4% of the respondents marked "yes" to supporting "conservation efforts and policy development." Respondents were in favor of conserving the natural day and night environment.

--Promote best stewardship practices that align with the Mission Statement: enhancing the quality of life for all.

The town needs to have a professional put a survey together, or at a minimum give the CAC ample opportunity to craft a thoughtful survey. This survey doesn't warrant response because it just appears to be looking to rank priorities. The question about wildfire makes no sense because it doesn't even list high vs low. Please do better.

101 Response(s)