



Board Summary Report

Date: June 28, 2019

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Shannon Carter, Open Spaces Department Director

From: Josh Tenneson, Grants and Acquisitions Manager

Subject: High Plains Trail/Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project – GOCO Resolution and Matching Funds Approval

Direction/Information: Provide information and request a resolution and funding approval from the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to support an Arapahoe County Open Space grant application for a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Connect Grant for the High Plains Trail/Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project.

Note: The BOCC approved a letter of support for this project on March 25, 2019. The letter of support was required for the first step in the competitive two-step GOCO Connect Grant process. GOCO invited Arapahoe County to submit a full project proposal (one of only six projects out of 25 projects throughout the state that was invited to submit a full proposal), and GOCO now requires a formal resolution from the BOCC.

Request and Recommendation

Open Spaces staff recommends that the BOCC pass a resolution in support of a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Connect Grant application for the High Plains Trail/Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project and approve \$1,000,000 in matching funds for the project.

Background

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers and open spaces. GOCO is currently running a competitive trails grant cycle, known as the GOCO Connect Initiative, and GOCO requires that applicants obtain resolutions from their governing bodies for their applications. Open Spaces requests that the BOCC pass a resolution and approve matching funds for a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Connect Grant for the High Plains Trail/Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project.

Links to Align Arapahoe

- Increase Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Increase Community and Regional Partnerships
- Improve Park, Trail and Open Space Opportunities
- Optimize Use of Resources
- Enhance Quality of Life

Discussion

The easternmost portion of the Denver Metro Area - especially the area surrounding E-470 within Arapahoe and Douglas Counties - is largely isolated from the rest of the Denver Metro Area's open space, bicycle, and pedestrian network. Many bicyclists and pedestrians have to travel on or along busy roadways and make numerous at-grade crossings to access the regional trail network to the west (including trails like the Centennial Trail, Cherry Creek Regional Trail, High Line Canal Trail, and South Platte/Mary Carter Greenway Trail). Furthermore, E-470, Parker Road, and many other roadways act as significant barriers to east-west connectivity altogether. Compounding this issue is the rapidly expanding population of the area. The City of Aurora, Town of Parker, City of Centennial, and surrounding portions of unincorporated Arapahoe and Douglas Counties are all experiencing significant population growth.

A new regional trail, the High Plains Trail, is being developed along the E-470 corridor. The trail is part of the recent E-470 Widening Project. The E-470 Public Highway Authority designed, funded, and constructed the regional trail from Quincy Avenue to approximately the county line between Arapahoe and Douglas Counties during the road-widening project in 2018 (and Arapahoe County Open Spaces and E-470 just finished making five important local connections to this existing segment of trail). This trail will ultimately continue to the Adams County line to the north adjacent to E-470 (construction planned for 2020/21) and will connect to the Cherry Creek Regional Trail on the south via the proposed project. However, the recently developed segment of the High Plains Trail is currently isolated from the rest of the Denver regional trail network - and so are area residents - which is why this project is so important and urgent.

We preliminarily estimate that the project will cost approximately \$7,500,000 to design and construct. Arapahoe County has already secured \$2,000,000 in DRCOG Regional TIP funding. We have requested an additional \$2,000,000 from GOCO through the proposed Connect Initiative grant application. The project partners (including Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Douglas County, City of Aurora, Town of Parker, and E-470 Public Highway Authority) will share the remaining project cost.

We request that the BOCC approve up to \$1,000,000 of Arapahoe County Open Space Acquisition & Development Fund dollars for the project. Here is a breakdown of other partner commitments to the project:

Partner Contributions:

| Source | Funding | Status |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Douglas County Open Space | \$750,000 | Secured |
| Town of Parker | \$500,000* | Secured |
| City of Aurora | \$500,000 | Secured |
| E-470 | \$438,000 | Secured |
| DRCOG Regional TIP | \$2,000,000 | Secured |
| DRCOG Subregional TIP (Douglas County Subregion) | \$375,000 | Secured |
| GOCO | \$2,000,000 | Pending |
| Arapahoe County Open Spaces** | \$1,000,000 | Pending |
| Total | \$7,563,000 | |

*Parker has already spent an additional \$100,000 on design; Parker is managing the design portion of the project

Alternatives

Approve, modify, or deny the request.

Concurrence

OSTAB unanimously recommended that the BoCC approve up to \$1,000,000 of Arapahoe County Open Space Acquisition & Development Fund dollars to design and construct the High Plains Trail / Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project.

Fiscal Impact

\$1,000,000 of Arapahoe County Open Space Acquisition & Development Fund dollars would be used to design and construct the High Plains Trail / Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project. The fund balance exceeds this funding request.

Attorney Comments

None

Reviewed By

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Intergovernmental Relations and Open Spaces

Tiffanie Bleau
Assistant County Attorney

Josh Tenneson
Grants and Acquisitions Manager

Janet Kennedy, Director
Finance

Attachments

Project Maps