



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
COLORADO'S FIRST

Board Summary Report

Date: July 11, 2019

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Shannon Carter, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations Director

From: Josh Tenneson, Grants and Acquisitions Manager

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

Request and Recommendation

Open Spaces staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners (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.

This item was approved by the BOCC at a drop-in on July 8, 2019.

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.

Fiscal Impact

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

Attorney Comments

None

Reviewed By

Josh Tenneson, Grants and Acquisitions Manager
Shannon Carter, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations Director
Tiffanie Bleau, Assistant County Attorney
Janet Kennedy, Finance Director

Attachments

Resolution
Project Maps

RESOLUTION NO. _____ It was moved by Commissioner _____ and duly seconded by Commissioner _____ to approve a Great Outdoors Colorado Connect Grant application for the High Plains Trail/Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project and approve \$1,000,000 in Open Space Acquisition & Development funds for the project. Additionally:

If the grant is awarded, Arapahoe County strongly supports the completion of the project;

Arapahoe County authorizes the expenditure of funds necessary to meet the terms and obligations of any Grant awarded;

The project site will be owned by Arapahoe County, the City of Aurora, and the Town of Parker (together the “Partners Group”) and will continue to be owned by the members of the Partners Group for the next 25 years;

Arapahoe County recognizes that as a recipient of a Great Outdoors Colorado Connect Initiative grant the project site must provide reasonable public access;

Arapahoe County and the other members of the Partners Group will continue to maintain the High Plains Trail/Cherry Creek Regional Trail Connection Project in a high-quality condition; and

If the grant is awarded, the Board of County Commissioners for Arapahoe County hereby authorizes the Arapahoe County Open Spaces & Intergovernmental Relations Director, Shannon Carter, to sign the grant agreement with Great Outdoors Colorado.

The vote was:

Commissioner Baker, ___; Commissioner Conti, ___; Commissioner Holen, ___; Commissioner Jackson, ___; Commissioner Sharpe, ___

The Chair declared the motion carried and so ordered.