



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

File #: 25-650

Agenda Date: 11/24/2025

Agenda #:

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Bryan Weimer, Director, Public Works & Development

Prepared By:
Jim Katzer, Transportation Division Manager, Public Works & Development

Presenter:
Jim Katzer, Transportation Division Manager, Public Works & Development

Subject:
1:30 PM *Grant Opportunity: USDOT Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this request is for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to support and ratify the electronic submission of a grant application to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program (RTA) to fund the increasing of transportation safety by improving two stream crossings that are prone to flooding. These applications were a first come first served selection process.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure - Prioritize capital improvement projects (CIP) including deferred maintenance.

Background and Discussion: The Public Works & Development Department submitted two grant applications to the USDOT RTA to improve two stream crossing locations that are prone to flooding.

The RTA Pilot Program supports the adopted 2040 Transportation Master Plan of “Promoting an Efficient Balanced Transportation System and the strategy to “Implement Effective Safety Improvements.”

The RTA Program aims to help applicants develop transportation infrastructure projects in rural and tribal communities for design phase activities or construction. There is \$54.2 million available without the requirement of a local match. The minimum and maximum applications are from \$250,000 up to \$2.5 million. Funding is available starting in September of 2026 with a period of performance being 36 months.

The County has identified two high priorities where stormwater overtopping is a regular occurrence. The RTA grant will start the process of improving the conditions at these locations by funding the design work needed.

The Gun Club / Coal Creek location overtops multiple times a year. The road carries 12,000 cars per day and is projected to carry close to 17,000 by 2040. At the Coal Creek crossing, the roadway is

regularly impacted by flooding. The crossing is currently served by four 36-inch culvert pipes that together provide an estimated capacity of 200 CFS. This system is undersized and only handles nuisance and low flows to the point that flows from a minor 2-year storm exceed its capacity, resulting in backwater conditions, expansion of the floodplain, and frequent overtopping of the roadway. These conditions lead to closures of the road during major rain events, disrupting mobility and emergency access.

The County plans to solicit proposals from qualified engineering firms to provide advisory services for Phase I - Engineering and Design of this project, with Phase 1 scope of work expected to take 18 to 24 months to complete. The cost for Phase I is estimated to be \$1.5 million. Arapahoe County is seeking the full \$1.5 million in RTA grant funds for this phase, which will advance the project from its current conceptual state to approximately 30 percent engineered design. The scope will include environmental review to define permitting needs and baseline impacts, subsurface utility investigations, floodplain analysis, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling to verify Coal Creek design flows, bridge structural analysis, and preliminary right-of-way mapping to identify acquisition needs. Public engagement also will be conducted with local stakeholders to ensure the design reflects community priorities and regional operational requirements.

The second location is Watkins Road / Muskrat Gulch. During 2023 flooding, three vehicles were washed off the road with one resulting in a fatality. The grant funding will include environmental review to define permitting needs and baseline impacts, subsurface utility investigations, floodplain analysis, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling to verify design flows, and preliminary right-of-way mapping to identify acquisition needs. Public engagement also will be conducted with local stakeholders to ensure the design reflects community priorities and regional operational requirements. Completion of final design will materially advance the overall project by delivering construction-ready documents, accurate cost estimates, and necessary approvals that positions the County to secure construction funding. If awarded, the grant will supplement the funding allocated in the proposed 5-Year plan for this project.

The grant opened on September 8, 2025, with a notification of funding opportunity issued on August 7, 2025. The grant was advertised as a first-come first serve basis. It was not until the end of August that the County was comfortable that we were eligible for the RTA Pilot Program. With very little time to get the grant submitted in a manner to take advantage of the first come, first serve nature of the grant, the Transportation Division decided to submit the Gun Club / Coal Creek project on September 8, 2025. The information required for the grant was mostly compiled for this project as a result of a previous grant pursuit effort.

Ongoing concerns exist with regard to potential terms that may conflict with BOCC policy direction as it pertains to extraneous requirements placed on the County. After performing outreach to others in the industry, and discussions with BOCC, it was determined that the County's concerns could be addressed by requesting language additions to the intergovernmental agreement, if the County was selected for the grant. At this time, it is unclear if this will be accepted by the USDOT and will navigate this once and if we are awarded this grant.

Alternatives: The Board could direct Public Works and Development to withdraw the two County grant submissions.

Fiscal Impact: If approved as presented, the fiscal impact to Arapahoe County will be a small amount of staff time to perform project management duties related to the projects that grant application were

submitted to. The County will receive \$1,500,000 for the Gun Club / Coal Creek project and \$730,000 for the Watkins / Muskrat Gulch project in grant funds if the application is successful. There is not a local match required for either of these grants.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend moving forward by not withdrawing the two grant applications as presented. If the grant(s) are awarded, staff will review the IGA language and suggest modifications accordingly and if not acceptable to the County decline the award.

Concurrence: N/A