



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

File #: 25-523

Agenda Date: 10/14/2025

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Gini Pingnot, Director, Open Spaces

Prepared By:

Michele Frishman, Grants and Acquisitions Manager, Open Spaces

Presenter: Michele Frishman, Grants and Acquisitions Manager, Open Spaces; South Suburban Park and Recreation District

Subject:

2:30 PM *Joint Project Request for Construction of Two Replacement East Trail Bridges in South Platte Park

Purpose and Request:

South Suburban Park and Recreation District (SSPRD) will present a joint project request to support the replacement of two pedestrian bridges along the East Trail in South Platte Park in Littleton. Open Spaces staff and the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) support the project and request that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) award \$97,500 in South Platte Working Group funds to SSPRD.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Good Governance - Understand and respond to community needs, interests, and values.

Background and Discussion: In 2023, OSTAB recommended and the BOCC approved setting aside \$2 million of Open Space Acquisition and Development funds to support projects originating from the South Platte Working Group through 2028. This pledge was envisioned to build on previous successes of the working group that were supported by \$11 million in Open Spaces funds, including projects at South Platte Park, Reynolds Landing, and Riverside Downs in Littleton, along with River Run and the East Bank Trail in Englewood and Sheridan. The current \$2 million pledge remains available for new projects proposed by members of the working group.

The East Trail is a soft-surface trail off the main Mary Carter Greenway, providing access to a natural area south of Mineral Avenue as well as a connection into the trail system from nearby neighborhoods. The two pedestrian bridges cross Jackass Gulch, a tributary to the South Platte River. The trail corridor in this area of South Platte Park is very popular and sees more than 1,000 users per day. Use of the East Trail bridges is expected to increase due to new residential developments near Mineral Avenue and Santa Fe Drive.

In 2024, SSPRD completed a study of potential trail improvements along the Mary Carter Greenway, with the support of previous South Platte Working Group funds. The study prioritized the replacement of the two wooden bridges along the East Trail because they are deteriorating, too narrow, and not

ADA-accessible. Furthermore, the need to replace the two bridges was frequently mentioned by trail users who SSPRD surveyed. Besides the safety benefits, maintaining the trail connections in these locations would help to prevent visitors from venturing off-trail into sensitive wildlife habitat. The new bridges also are designed to accommodate increased water flows in Jackass Gulch as a result of the nearby developments.

The designs for the replacement bridges are complete. SSPRD plans to install two pre-fabricated bridges by spring 2026. The bridges are expected to last up to 40 years, and SSPRD would be responsible for maintaining them.

SSPRD has requested that the County contribute \$97,500 toward the construction, which is half of the total project cost of \$195,000. Open Spaces requires at least a 50-percent match for joint project funding, and SSPRD would provide the matching funds of \$97,500.

Alternatives: Approve, modify, or deny the proposed recommendation.

Fiscal Impact: \$97,500 in South Platte Working Group funds, which reside in the Open Space Acquisition and Development Fund. The fund balance exceeds this amount.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: The attached framework helps Arapahoe County institutionalize values-based, transparent decision-making, documenting how we make decisions and carry out actions to achieve the County's strategic plan.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the BOCC award \$97,500 in South Platte Working Group funds to SSPRD to support the replacement of two pedestrian bridges along the East Trail in South Platte Park.

Concurrence: OSTAB concurred with the staff recommendation at its meeting on August 25, 2025. Additionally, the City of Littleton, the South Metro Land Conservancy, and Bike Jeffco support the proposed project.