



Board Summary Report

File #: 26-345

Agenda Date: 7/6/2026

Agenda #:

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Gini Pingnot, Director, Open Spaces

Prepared By:
Sandra Bottoms, Grants and Acquisitions Administrator, Open Spaces

Presenter: Sandra Bottoms, Grants and Acquisitions Administrator, Open Spaces

Subject:
1:45 PM *2026 Open Space Grant Award Recommendations

Purpose and Request:

Open Spaces staff will present recommendations regarding the 2026 Open Space grant awards and request consideration by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) of nine standard grant proposals, two small grant proposals, and one planning grant proposal totaling \$4,510,919 as presented on the attached 2026 Open Space Grants ranking sheet. Staff requests the Board approve adding these recommendations to the consent agenda for formal approval.

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

Background and Discussion: In accordance with the Arapahoe County Open Space Resolution, 12% of Open Space Sales and Use Tax revenue is invested in Arapahoe County communities through a grants program. Each year, incorporated municipalities and special districts that provide outdoor recreation services are invited to submit proposals for eligible open space, park, and trail projects. An evaluation team made up of Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) members and Open Spaces staff review the grant applications and make recommendations to OSTAB and the BOCC regarding the approval, conditional approval, or denial of each application. Since 2005, the program has invested more than \$68 million in grant funding in 309 projects throughout the County.

In September 2025, the BOCC approved an allocation of \$5.5 million for the 2026 grant cycle.

This year, nine agencies submitted a total of 12 grant proposals (nine standard grants, two small grants, and one planning grant) requesting a total of \$4,510,919, with total matching funds of \$5,017,445 (53% of the total project cost).

After an initial staff review to confirm eligibility, a team of evaluators consisting of six OSTAB members and five Open Spaces staff members reviewed the applications, participated in site visits and evaluator meetings, and ranked the grant proposals. Ranking considerations included project scope, need and urgency, matching funds provided, user benefits, community support, the applicant's ability to complete the project on time and within budget, and the applicant's capacity to maintain the

completed project site. The results are provided on the attached 2026 Open Space Grants ranking sheet.

Out of 11 evaluators, two individuals did not recommend Dove Valley Metropolitan District's East Broncos Parkway Trail project for funding. The remaining nine evaluators chose to rank this project, so it was included in the funding recommendation presented to OSTAB on June 22, 2026.

Staff and OSTAB recommend grant awards for the following projects, totaling \$4,510,919:

Standard Grants:

- \$600,000 to Goodman Metropolitan District for Piney Creek Regional Trail Connection
- \$600,000 to City of Englewood for Belleview Park Playground
- \$600,000 to City of Greenwood Village for Arapahoe Station Pickleball Courts
- \$325,000 to Trails Park and Recreation District for Piney Creek Trail Connection
- \$437,500 to South Suburban Park and Recreation District for Heritage Village Park Improvements
- \$250,000 to City of Aurora for Inspiration Trail Connection
- \$600,000 to South Suburban Park and Recreation District for Sunset Park Improvements
- \$600,000 to City of Greenwood Village for Carson Park Pavilion Construction
- \$300,000 to Dove Valley Metropolitan District for East Broncos Parkway Trail

Small Grants:

- \$22,500 to Strasburg Metropolitan Park and Recreation District for Museum Site Amenities
- \$134,978 to Smoky Hill Metropolitan District for Crestline Park Reflection Garden

Planning Grant:

- \$40,941 to Strasburg Metropolitan Park and Recreation District for Strategic Plan Update

Alternatives: Approve, modify, or deny the recommendation.

Fiscal Impact: 12% of annual revenue from the Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax is dedicated to the grants program pursuant to the County Open Space Resolution. The fund balance exceeds the recommended awards.

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 recommend that the BOCC approve adding funding of nine standard

grants, two small grants, and one planning grant, totaling \$4,510,919, as presented on the 2026 Open Space Grants ranking sheet, to the consent agenda for formal approval.

Concurrence: OSTAB concurred with the staff recommendation at its meeting on June 22, 2026.