



## Board Summary Report

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**File #:** 23-645

**Agenda Date:** 11/7/2023

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**To:** Board of County Commissioners

**Through:** Shannon Carter, Director, Open Spaces

**Prepared By:**

Roger Harvey, Planning Manager, Open Spaces

**Presenter:** Josh Garcia, Planner, Open Spaces

**Subject:**

2:15 PM \*17 Mile House and Farm Park Deceleration Lane and Entrance Funding Request

**Purpose and Request:**

Staff will present the final design and estimated cost estimate and request approval from the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to expend approximately \$1,500,00.00 from the Open Spaces Acquisitions and Development Fund to construct the new deceleration lane and entrance at the 17 Mile House and Farm Park and to approve the submittal of an application for a CDOT new access permit.

**Background and Discussion:**

The 17 Mile House is a 160-year old farm that served as an important stop for pioneers traveling along the Cherokee/Smoky Hill wagon trails in the 1860's. The 17 Mile House has a long and significant history. When the 1859-1860 gold rush resulted in large-scale settlement of the state, a series of inns emerged along Cherry Creek to accommodate travelers and freighters. These "mile houses" were located every 3-4 miles along the Cherokee/Smoky Hill wagon trails from Kansas, all named based on their distance to the intersection of Colfax and Broadway. Upon arrival, travelers could get a meal, spend the night, rest their animals, and have minor repairs made to their coaches or wagons. Out of the original six mile houses, only 17 Mile House and 4 Mile House remain. The property was purchased by Arapahoe County in 2001. The farm is an Arapahoe County designated heritage site that includes interactive displays and historical artifacts for visitors to enjoy. The 17 Mile House property also provides parking for the nearby Cherry Creek Regional Trail.

Current plans are underway for the Prairie Point (formerly Known as Kings Point) residential and commercial development, in the City of Aurora, directly east of the 17 Mile House adjacent to SH 83 (Parker Road). This development will be constructing an extension of Aurora Parkway to the west connecting with Parker Road. A State Highway Access Permit was obtained for this construction by the developer with City of Aurora as applicant. The intersection of Aurora Parkway and Parker Road is required to be approximately 70 feet south of the existing access point to the 17 Mile House property to meet CDOT access criteria. The new intersection will require modifications to the existing median on Parker Road that will be constructed as part of the Aurora Parkway construction. Due to the required location of the new intersection of the future Aurora Parkway and Parker Road, the entrance to the 17 Mile House will have to be moved 70 feet to the south.

In addition, Arapahoe County is going to take this opportunity to construct a new southbound right turn deceleration lane for the movements onto the 17 Mile House access, which will increase safety for visitors entering the park while traveling south of Parker Road. As part of the initial project coordination with CDOT and the original developer (Kings Point), CDOT is requiring that the Aurora Parkway/Parker Road intersection, traffic signal, and the 17 Mile House deceleration lane and entrance relocation work all happen at the same time. This is because CDOT did not want Parker Road being under construction at two different time periods for what is essentially one larger project. Because of this, the County and Oakwood Homes, who is the developer, executed an intergovernmental agreement for these two projects in August 2023.

Under this agreement, Oakwood Homes will take the lead on both projects. They will oversee the construction of the Aurora Parkway Intersection, new traffic signal, and the 17 Mile House deceleration lane and entrance relocation projects. The County will pay for the 17 Mile House deceleration lane and entrance, 35% of the cost of the traffic signal, and a construction management fee of four percent for Oakwood Homes to manage the County's portion of the project. This new deceleration lane will increase safety for visitors who will want to make a right turn into the property as they travel south on Parker Road by letting them get out to the traffic lanes moving at 55 mph and use the deceleration lane to slow down and turn into the property. In addition, a new full movement traffic signal will be installed at the new intersection that will increase safety for visitor entering and exiting the property. This will provide a signalize/protected left turn onto northbound Parker Road for visitors who are exiting the 17 Mile House and it provide a signalize/protected left turn for visitors who are traveling on north on Parker Road and would like to turn left into the 17 Mile House property.

In 2020, the County was issued a State Highway Access Permit (Permit No. 120011) from CDOT for the deceleration lane and new entrance and the County is currently working to secure a Notice to Proceed from CDOT. Two extensions were granted for this permit in 2021 and 2022, however, due to ongoing delays with the Prairie Point project, which have delayed the start of the intersection work, the County's Access Permit has expired. CDOT has offered to grant the County a new access permit with the same terms and conditions as the permit that expired. We are requesting that the BOCC approve submittal of a permit application for the new access permit so this project can continue.

**Fiscal Impact:** By approving this request, the Board is approving \$1,500,000.00 from the Open Spaces Development Fund. The fund balance exceeds the amount requested.

**Alternatives:** The Board could decide to delay, modify, or deny funding for this project.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:**

- Be fiscally sustainable
- Provide essential and mandated service
- Be community focused

**Staff Recommendation:** Open Spaces recommends the BOCC approval of the proposed \$1,500,000.00 allocation for the construction of the 17 Mile House and Farm Park deceleration lane and entrance relocation project and approve the submittal of the application for the new access permit and signature of the application and new permit by the Open Spaces Director.

**Concurrence:** The funding for 17 Mile House Entrance Project was recommended by OSTAB for BoCC approval on October 23, 2023.