



Board Summary Report

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Gini Pingnot, Director, Open Spaces Department

Prepared By:

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Subject:

High Line Canal Trail, Stormwater Transition and Management Plan Funding

Purpose and Request:

The Open Spaces Department requests the Board of County Commissioners adopt a resolution authorizing the use of \$150,000 of Open Space Joint Project funds to support the High Line Canal Stormwater Transition and Management Plan (STAMP Plan).

On September 23, 2024, Open Spaces and Mile High Flood District (MHFD) staff presented a joint project request to support the STAMP Plan to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board unanimously supported moving the joint project request forward to public hearing for final approval.

Background and Discussion: The High Line Canal is a 71-mile historic irrigation canal, recreational trail, and linear natural area. In addition to serving as a regional recreational amenity and ecological resource, many sections of the High Line Canal receive inflows of stormwater and provide stormwater conveyance capacity as part of the regions stormwater management system.

The MHFD, Denver Water, the High Line Canal Conservancy, and local agency partners have worked together since 2014 to formalize the Canal's use for stormwater management and conveyance. Given the recent transfer of ownership of significant portions of the High Line Canal to Arapahoe County, the County and the Canal Collaborative jointly determined the need to complete a canal-wide model refinement and jurisdiction-specific planning effort to support current and future management of the stormwater functions of the High Line Canal.

The STAMP planning effort will be led by the MHFD in cooperation with local agency partners. The STAMP planning process will engage the following stormwater managers within Arapahoe County, the City of Littleton, South East Metro Stormwater Authority (SEMSWA), Greenwood Village, Cherry Hills Village, and the City of Aurora. The STAMP Plan will incorporate all previous planning efforts along with newly refined information to become the central planning document used to guide stormwater management in the Canal.

The STAMP plan will provide the following deliverables:

1. Canal wide stormwater management plan;
2. Jurisdiction specific stormwater planning reports with operations / maintenance recommendations and a prioritized capital improvement plan;
3. Updated existing conditions models; and
4. Proposed new jurisdiction specific condition models Interface with the Natural Resource Management Plan Geospatial files.

The MHFD is leading the planning process for the STAMP Plan and will also be facilitating the project management of the STAMP Plan. The MHFD advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to develop the STAMP Plan and selected the partnership of ICON Engineering, RESPEC, and Matrix Group as the consultant team for the project. The consultant team has scheduled 18 months to complete the STAMP Plan and its associated engagement process.

The MHFD has requested funds from all High Line Canal Collaborative partners to support the stormwater planning project. MHFD has committed \$250,000 to fund the STAMP. The following partners: Denver Water, Highlands Ranch Metro District, City of Littleton, SEMSWA, Greenwood Village, Cherry Hills Village, City and County of Denver, and the City of Aurora are expected to contribute a combined total of \$257,500 toward the planning effort. As a new owner of the Canal, Arapahoe County would like to provide a portion of the funding to support the STAMP Plan. The total project cost is expected to be \$657,500 with Arapahoe County contributing \$150,000 dollars (approximately 22% of the budget).

The Arapahoe County Open Space Department along with the County's Public Works Department are strong proponents for the development of the STAMP Plan. As a component of the County being a new owner of the High Line Canal, the County will take over management of the stormwater agreements that govern the County owned portions of the High Line Canal. The STAMP Plan will serve as a guide for County departments and our stormwater partners in the mitigation of risk, improvement of water quality, and the sustainable management of stormwater within the Canal in the future. The STAMP Plan will provide guidance for the County and its partners in establishing canal maintenance standards for water conveyance, balancing between landscape enhancement strategies and water conveyance goals, stormwater infrastructure capital improvements, and in establishing future stormwater management leases. These are the outcomes the County hopes to complete

during the two-year transition period, setting Arapahoe County up for success with managing the County owned portions of the High Line Canal.

Alternatives: Approve or deny the recommended STAMP Plan funding request. Denial of the funding request limits the Open Space Department and its stormwater agency partner's ability to manage stormwater within the High Line Canal as ownership and management transitions.

Fiscal Impact: The Open Space Acquisition and Development Fund would support the \$150,000 STAMP Plan Funding request. The fund balance is sufficient to sustainably support this joint project request.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

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

Concurrence: On August 26, 2024, the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board recommended the BOCC approve the joint project funding request to support the HLC STAMP Plan. The following Departments or agencies concur with this funding request: Public Works and Development and the Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority.

Resolution: Draft resolution is attached.