



Board Summary Report

File #: 25-142

Agenda Date: 3/10/2025

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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

Presenters: Sarah White, City of Littleton, and Melissa Reese-Thacker, South Suburban Park and Recreation District

Subject:

1:00 PM *Joint Project Request - Lee Gulch Trail Pedestrian Underpass

Purpose and Request:

The City of Littleton (City) and South Suburban Park and Recreation District (SSPRD) will present a joint project funding proposal to construct a pedestrian underpass of the Lee Gulch Trail at Broadway and associated trail connections. Open Spaces staff and the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) support the proposed project and recommend the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approve \$2,108,079 in Open Space Acquisition and Development funding.

Background and Discussion: The Lee Gulch Trail is an important piece of western Arapahoe County’s trail network, providing an east-west connection extending approximately 4.3 miles from S. Clarkson Street in Centennial to the South Platte River/Mary Carter Greenway and intersecting with the High Line Canal Trail just west of Broadway. Currently, the Lee Gulch Trail crosses Broadway using an at-grade crosswalk at W. Jamison Avenue, which requires trail users to detour approximately 1,800 feet (0.34 miles) along Broadway to cross safely and return to the trail. This intersection also serves as the vehicular entrance to the emergency department at AdventHealth Littleton Hospital, which creates unpredictable and potentially unsafe conditions for pedestrians. An estimated 34,000 to 37,000 vehicles use Broadway per day.

In late 2024, the City became aware of a critical issue involving a deteriorated stormwater pipe under Broadway at Lee Gulch that requires immediate replacement. The City and Mile High Flood District are

funding this work, which is planned to begin in March 2025 and will require that Broadway be open-cut and extensively excavated to install the new stormwater pipe. The City, in partnership with SSPRD, has identified this as a unique opportunity to also install a 10' by 10' box culvert under Broadway to serve as a pedestrian underpass that would allow Lee Gulch Trail users to safely and efficiently cross under Broadway. In addition to the underpass, the City and SSPRD propose to construct a trail connection to the existing Lee Gulch Trail on the west side of Broadway, including approximately 230 feet of new concrete trail and a 65-foot pedestrian bridge over Lee Gulch. All work is expected to be complete by May 2026, and SSPRD would maintain the underpass, trail improvements, and new bridge.

The Lee Gulch Trail has approximately 92,000 annual users and provides safe access to multiple schools and parks, the Mary Carter Greenway, the High Line Canal Trail, residential neighborhoods, and commercial areas. The proposed project is supported by the High Line Canal Conservancy and Mile High Flood District. Additionally, multiple City and SSPRD plans have identified the need for improved trail infrastructure and connectivity, both generally and targeted to the Broadway corridor.

The County's funding would represent 50% of the total underpass and trail project cost of \$4,216,159. The cost of the entire project to replace the stormwater pipe and install the underpass is more than \$7.8 million. Due to the emergent nature of the project, the City and SSPRD are each working to secure \$1,054,040 in matching funds for the underpass and trail portion of the work. All County and matching funds would support that work and would not be applied to the stormwater pipe replacement.

The proposed project takes advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to install a pedestrian underpass incidental to an emergency road repair, significantly improving access and safety for trail users at a much lower cost than is typical for trail underpass projects. The City does not anticipate any future roadway projects that would provide a similar opportunity.

Fiscal Impact: Up to \$2,108,079 from the Open Space Acquisition and Development Fund. The fund balance exceeds this amount.

Alternatives: Approve, conditionally approve, or deny the funding request.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

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

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the BOCC award \$2,108,079 in Open Space Acquisition and

Development funds for the Lee Gulch Trail Pedestrian Underpass project. BOCC approval would be contingent upon the City and SSPRD securing matching funds (expected in March 2025) and the execution of an intergovernmental agreement between the County and City.

Concurrence: OSTAB heard this request on February 24, 2025, and concurs with the staff recommendation. As mentioned in the report, the City of Littleton, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, High Line Canal Conservancy and Mile High Flood District support this proposal.