



Board Summary Report

File #: 24-241

Agenda Date: 7/23/2024

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Gini Pingnot, Director, Open Spaces

Prepared By:
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Subject:
High Line Canal Trail, Natural Resource Management Plan Funding

Purpose and Request:

The Open Spaces Department is requesting the Board of County Commissioners adopt a resolution authorizing the use of \$162,000 of Open Space Joint Project funds to support the High Line Canal Natural Resource Management Plan. On April 15, 2024, Open Spaces staff presented the Natural Resources Management Plan request to the Board of County Commissioners, who unanimously supported moving the request to move forward to public hearing for final approval.

Background and Discussion: Arapahoe County and the Open Spaces Department anticipate acquiring portions of the High Line Canal property in June 2024 from Denver Water. The Open Space Department and the High Line Canal Conservancy (Conservancy) are working with a consultant to develop a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRM Plan) for the High Line Canal. The NRM Plan will serve to guide future management and stewardship of the property.

Arapahoe County will be taking ownership of 47 miles of the 71-mile-long Canal (66% of the total length). The Open Space Department and the Conservancy are working to develop a NRM Plan for the High Line Canal. The NRM Plan will establish recommendations for the management of vegetation, the tree canopy, local wildlife, habitat restoration, and noxious weed management along the entire High Line Canal. The Conservancy advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to develop the NRM Plan in January 2024 and received responses to the RFP in mid-February 2024. A Steering Committee reviewed the RFP submittals, interviewed the top two consultants, and selected the Bio-habitats as the primary consultant for the project. The Conservancy has requested funds from Steering Committee members and other Canal Collaborative partners to support the NRM Plan. The total plan cost is expected to be \$355,000 with Arapahoe County contributing \$162,000 dollars (45% of the budget). The Open Spaces Department is a strong proponent for the development of a canal wide NRM Plan. The NRM Plan will serve as a guide for the County and its recreational / stormwater partners in the sustainable management of the Canal moving forward. Open Spaces staff met with members of the Open Space Trails Advisory Board, on April 1, 2024. The citizen board recommended the Board of County Commissioners support the approval of \$162,000 dollars of joint project funding to support the NRM Plan.

Alternatives: Approve, modify, or deny the recommended NRM Plan funding request. Denial of the funding request limits Arapahoe County's Open Space Department and its partners ability to manage and sustain the

natural resource values of the High Line Canal as it transitions ownership and management.

Fiscal Impact: The Open Space Acquisition and Development Fund can support this one-time \$162,000 dollar funding request to support the NRM Plan.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

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

Concurrence: On April 4, 2024, the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board recommended the BOCC approve the joint project funding request to support the NRM Plan. The following Departments or agencies concur with this funding request: Public Works and Development, County Attorney's Office, and Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority.

Resolution: Draft resolution attached.