



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

File #: 22-321

Agenda Date: 6/28/2022

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Shannon Carter, Director, Open Spaces

Prepared By:

Ray Winn, Open Spaces Planner II / County Bike and Pedestrian Planner, Open Spaces

Presenter: Ray Winn, Open Spaces Planner II / County Bike and Pedestrian Planner, Open Spaces

Subject:

2:30 PM *Kiowa Creek North Open Space Master Plan

Purpose and Request:

Staff will present the just completed Kiowa Creek North Master Plan, conceptual improvement plan and a request to approval from the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) to move forward with design and to complete the Location and Extent plan based on the conceptual plan laid out in the KCNOS Master Plan.

Background and Discussion: Kiowa Creek North is located on the northwest corner of Kiowa Bennett Road and Mitchell Road, in Bennett, Colorado, and is approximately 265 acres of unimproved open space. The property was purchased in 2009 to be maintained as an open space, for future passive use recreation. Project programming was determined through community outreach efforts and available budget. The site is unique because of its matrix of ecological communities and intact riparian corridor splitting the site. This riparian corridor provides abundant opportunities for enhancing and preserving essential wildlife habitat and a unique ecological setting amongst highly developed and fast growing rural agricultural communities.

OS staff worked with the consultant DHM to draft a Master Plan Concept for the Park. The concept was then presented to the public for input. The KCNOS Master Plan process utilized public outreach at Bennett Days as well as a project website with an online survey and comment portal. The feedback was overwhelming positive with over 100 in-person conversations at Bennett Days, 57 survey responses, and 13 website comments. In general, the public outreach indicates that residents want to preserve the precious ecological habitat of the open space while providing much needed passive low-impact recreational amenities. This much public input is

extremely rare in master plan processes and the overwhelming positive comments lets us know we are on the right track with design and substantiates the need and desire for the park.

The final park improvement concept (attached) includes many passive recreation amenities while preserving and showcasing the beauty of the riparian habitat of Kiowa Creek. We anticipate this park to be a major regional recreation destination in the eastern portion of the County. The amenities include an extensive crusher fines trail network and natural surface horse and mountain bike trail, picnic areas, pavilions/outdoor class room, wayfinding and interpretative signage, two parking areas including horse trailer parking, horse challenge course, boardwalks over riparian habitat, boulder seating, picnic tables, shade structures at major viewpoints, archery range, restrooms (vault toilet) and drinking fountain, horse hitching posts, horse water area, hammock posts, bike racks and bike repair station, and trash cans. All of these amenities presented in the Master Plan Concept were overwhelmingly supported by the public outreach feedback. When asked what folks would change the overwhelming response was “nothing” or “I can’t think of anything else to add.”

This park will also serve as a regional trail connection for expansion of the multimodal network eventually connecting Antelope Hills and adjacent planned development to Bennett and into the Adams County multimodal network. The town of Bennett is currently submitting plans to extend the trail from Antelope Hills down Kiowa/Bennett Rd. and through an underpass directly to the KCNOS Park. In the future, the Town of Bennett plans to connect to the KCNOS park from the north creating a regional multimodal connection between the residential developments in the south to the Town of Bennett and the Adams County multimodal network to the north. We anticipate this park to be a major recreational, ecological, and multimodal amenity for the fast-growing plains communities in the eastern portion of the County. Development in this portion of the County is growing at a rapid pace and providing this amenity now is critical to support the recreational and multimodal needs of current and future residents while also preserving precious riparian habitat that will likely be lost in future development.

The next step is to take the Master Plan Concept through the design process and submit the Location and Extent plan to the planning department (approx. six months). We will be issuing an RFP for this process to secure a consultant for design that is familiar with the Location and Extent process. Once design is complete, we will issue an RFP for construction and secure a contractor to start construction of the park anticipated in 2023.

Fiscal Impact: Design cost are undetermined at this point because an RFP is not issued.

Alternatives: Without this funding, we risk providing a diminished level of service for recreation that will be created by the rapid development of the area. We also will be forcing the Town of Bennett to create another trail to nowhere as the underpass and trail will stop at our property and not be utilized. Without this funding the regional multimodal connection north to Bennett will also not be possible.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

☒ Be fiscally sustainable

☒ Provide essential and mandated service

☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the BoCC approve the Kiowa Creek North Master Plan and concept design to move forward with design and to complete the Location and Extent Plan.

Concurrence: The Open Spaces Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) unanimously approved this request at the April 25th OSTAB meeting.