



Legislation Text

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Gini Pingnot, Director, Open Spaces

Prepared By:

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Presenter: Sandra Bottoms, Grants Administrator, Open Spaces

Subject:

1:00 PM *2024 Open Space Grant Award Recommendations

Purpose and Request:

Open Spaces staff will present the OSTAB/staff joint recommendation regarding 2024 Open Space grant awards and request BOCC consideration of the recommendation to fund nine standard grants, one small grant, and six planning grants totaling \$5,493,576 as presented on the attached 2024 Open Space Grants ranking sheet.

Background and Discussion: In accordance with the Arapahoe County Open Space Resolution, 12% of Open Space Sales and Use Tax revenue is invested in Arapahoe County communities through a grants program. Each year, incorporated municipalities and special districts that provide outdoor recreation services are invited to submit proposals for eligible open space, park, and trail projects. An evaluation team made up of OSTAB members and County staff review the grant applications and make recommendations to the BOCC regarding the approval, conditional approval, or denial of each application. Since 2005, the County has invested over \$57 million in grant funding in 278 projects throughout the County.

In September 2023, the BOCC approved an allocation of \$5.5 million for the 2024 grant cycle.

This year, 12 agencies submitted a total of 18 grant proposals (10 standard grants, two small grants, and six

planning grants) requesting a total of \$5,797,138, with total matching funds of over \$4.5 million.

After an initial staff review to confirm eligibility, a team of evaluators consisting of five OSTAB members and six County staff members reviewed the applications, participated in site visits and evaluator meetings, and individually ranked the grant proposals. Ranking criteria included project scope, need and urgency, matching funds provided, user benefits, the applicant's ability to complete the project on time and within budget, community support, and the applicant's capacity to maintain the completed project site. Finally, individual evaluator rankings were averaged to produce a final ranking (see attachment).

Based on evaluator feedback and the final rankings, the joint recommendation from OSTAB and staff is to fund 16 grants, totaling \$5,493,576. Grant awards are recommended for the following projects:

Standard Grants:

- \$600,000 to City of Sheridan for Bear Creek Trail Widening
- \$600,000 to City of Englewood for Bates Logan Park Renovation (Phase III)
- \$241,088 to City of Cherry Hills Village for Quincy Farm Pond Habitat Improvements
- \$600,000 to City of Glendale for Glendale Park Improvements (Phase III)
- \$500,000 to Cherry Creek Vista Park and Recreation District for Orchard Park Improvements
- \$600,000 to South Suburban Park and Recreation District for Cornerstone Park Improvements (Phase I Construction)
- \$600,000 to South Suburban Park and Recreation District for Cherry Knolls Park Improvements
- \$450,500 to Trails Park and Recreation District for Tall Grass Park Improvements
- \$459,500 to Trails Park and Recreation District for Ridge Park Improvements

Small Grants:

- \$78,988 to Strasburg Metropolitan Park and Recreation District for Five Acre Park Playground Phase II

Planning Grants:

- \$150,000 to City of Sheridan for Bear Creek Trailhead Development Project
- \$150,000 to South Suburban Park and Recreation District for Cornerstone Park Improvements (Phase II Design)
- \$148,500 to City of Greenwood Village for Carson Park Pavilion and Restroom Design
- \$135,000 to City of Littleton for Santa Fe Drive Regional Trail Connection
- \$135,000 to City of Littleton for Littleton Community Trail Extension
- \$45,000 to Town of Bennett for Future Park Phase III Construction Documents

The grant applicants recommended for funding have committed a total of \$4,473,777 in local matching funds -

45% of the total project cost of \$9,967,353.

Two proposals are not recommended for funding. Staff has provided evaluator feedback to the applicants.

Fiscal Impact: 12% of annual revenue from the Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax is dedicated to the grants program pursuant to the County Open Space Resolution. The fund balance exceeds the recommended awards.

Alternatives: Approval, conditional approval, or denial of each grant project.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

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

Staff Recommendation: Fund nine standard grants, one small grant, and six planning grants totaling \$5,493,576 as presented on the attached 2024 Open Space Grants ranking sheet.

Concurrence: On June 17, 2024, the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) and Open Spaces staff made a joint recommendation to the BOCC to fund \$5,493,576 in grant projects (attached).