



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

TO: The Mayor and Members of the City Council

DATE: November 20, 2013

SUBJECT: Briefing and Post-City Council Briefing Agenda for November 25, 2013

PREPARED BY: J. Brent McFall, City Manager

Please Note: Study Sessions and Post City Council briefings are open to the public, and individuals are welcome to attend and observe. However, these briefings are not intended to be interactive with the audience, as this time is set aside for City Council to receive information, make inquiries, and provide Staff with policy direction.

Looking ahead to Monday night's Briefing and Post-City Council meeting briefing, the following schedule has been prepared:

Welcome Reception for Jody Andrews, PWU Director	5:00 P.M.
Dinner	6:00 P.M.
Council Briefing (<i>The public is welcome to attend.</i>)	6:30 P.M.

POST BRIEFING (*The public is welcome to attend.*)

PRESENTATIONS

1. Proposed City of Westminster 2014 Legislative Policy Statement, Legislative Issues Guide, and Lobbying Protocol
2. Presentation on America's Great Outdoors: Feasibility Study for Connecting Urban Refuges to the Denver Greenway Trail Network
3. Review of Previously Adopted 2014 Water Tap Fee Increase

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

None at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None at this time.

INFORMATION ONLY

None at this time.

Items may come up between now and Monday night. City Council will be apprised of any changes to the post-briefing schedule.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall
City Manager



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

Post City Council Meeting
November 25, 2013



SUBJECT: Proposed City of Westminster 2014 Legislative Policy Statement, Legislative Issues Guide, and Lobbying Protocol

Prepared By: Ben Goldstein, Management Analyst
Steve Smithers, Deputy City Manager

Recommended City Council Action

1. Review the proposed City of Westminster 2014 Legislative Policy Statement (Attachment A), provide feedback and/or proposed modifications, and direct Staff to return to a City Council meeting to officially adopt the 2014 Legislative Policy Statement.
2. Review the proposed 2014 Legislative Issues Guide and provide feedback to Staff on any City Council proposed changes.
3. Review the proposed lobbying protocol and provide feedback on any potential changes City Council would like to see implemented.

Summary Statement

- The proposed Legislative Policy Statement identifies general legislative issues of interest to the City of Westminster and articulates the City's policy principles on these issues. Staff uses the Policy Statement as direction when reviewing and analyzing bills that may have an impact on the City's interests.
- Adopting the proposed Legislative Policy Statement will allow Staff and Council to move quickly when legislation is introduced at the State Capitol. The ability to act in a timely manner increases the City's overall effectiveness when it comes to influencing legislation that affects municipalities.
- The proposed State Legislative Issues Guide is a one page handout utilized at the Annual Legislative Dinner hosted by City Council. This document highlights two key issues of concern for the City.
- The proposed Lobbying Protocol provides guidance for City Council and Staff in promoting official City positions at the Legislature, including testimony and/or lobbyist interaction.

Expenditure Required: \$ 0

Source of Funds: N/A

Policy Issue

Should City Council adopt the proposed City of Westminster 2014 Legislative Policy and lobbying protocol?

Alternatives

1. Do not adopt a City of Westminster 2014 Legislative Policy Statement. This is not recommended, as the adoption of a Legislative Policy Statement is an important component of the City of Westminster's legislative program and allows Staff to act promptly to proposed legislation.
2. Direct Staff to revise the proposed Policy Statement and/or lobbying protocol to reflect any changes that Council wishes to make.

Background Information

In 2007, City Council adopted the first City of Westminster Legislative Policy Statement. The goal of the Policy Statement is to identify general legislative issues of interest to the City of Westminster along with the City's policy principles on these issues. These issues could have been addressed in the past at the Legislature or they could be issues that are anticipated in the future. Staff's goal for this proposed document is to be broad, yet as inclusive as possible to capture important issues to the City. Staff did make some changes to the proposed 2014 Legislative Policy Statement as compared to the 2013 version, with most of the changes being made under the Fire and Police sections.

Staff will utilize the City Council-approved Legislative Policy Statement as a guiding policy when reviewing and analyzing bills introduced in the General Assembly that may have an impact on the City. When significant legislation is identified, Staff will provide City Council with a brief summary of legislation of substance and will recommend official City positions that are consistent with the principles of the adopted Legislative Policy Statement. If Council does not express any concerns with the positions that Staff has recommended on specific bills, Staff will communicate these positions to the City's State Legislators, lobbyist, and CML, and update the City's legislative scorecard posted in The Weekly and on the City's website to communicate the City's positions to the public. If a majority of City Council expresses concerns about a specific position that Staff is presenting, discussion on the item will be scheduled for a subsequent meeting with City Council, and no lobbying on the issue will take place until Council direction is received.

Staff has attached the proposed 2014 State Legislative Issues Guide, which serves as a brief marketing piece for Council and Staff to use in effort to educate legislators on the City's legislative priorities. This one-page document is distributed at the Annual Legislative Dinner as a small takeaway for the City's Legislators.

Finally, Staff has attached the proposed Legislative Protocols, which outline the expectations for Council during the legislative session, as it relates to participating on the City's behalf. These Protocols were developed several years ago with City Council and Staff to provide a uniform approach and outline of expectations when representing the City, a professional association, or a personal interest. If City Council wants to modify this Protocol, Staff requests direction on proposed modifications.

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As State legislation can have a significant impact on the City of Westminster and its citizens, the proposed City of Westminster 2014 Legislative Policy Statement supports all five of City Council's Strategic Plan Goals: Strong, Balanced Local Economy; Safe and Healthy Community; Financially Sustainable City Government Providing Exceptional Services; Vibrant Neighborhoods in One Livable Community; and Beautiful and Environmentally Sensitive City.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall
City Manager

Attachments

- Proposed Legislative Policy Statement
- Proposed State Legislative Issues Guide
- Proposed Lobbying Protocols



WESTMINSTER

**PROPOSED
CITY OF WESTMINSTER 2014
LEGISLATIVE POLICY STATEMENT**

November 25, 2013

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OVERVIEW

The City of Westminster's Legislative Policy Statement identifies general legislative issues of interest to the City of Westminster along with the City's policy principles on these issues. The following policy statements are necessarily broad and by no means all-inclusive. Staff will utilize the Legislative Policy Statement as a guiding policy when reviewing and analyzing bills that have an impact on the City's interests. The City of Westminster will take Official City Positions on a limited number of significant bills. The City will have discretion in determining which specific bills to take Official City Positions. Official City Positions are not automatically assumed on bills simply that are congruent with the policy statements contained in this document. When significant legislation is identified, Staff will provide City Council with a brief summary of the substance of the legislation and a proposed Official City Position that is consistent with the principles of the Legislative Policy Statement. If Council does not express any concerns with the position, Staff will communicate this position to the City's lobbyist and update the City's legislative page on the website to communicate the City's position to the public. The City will continue to contact legislators regarding Official City Positions on specific bills throughout legislative session.

The City of Westminster welcomes the opportunity to discuss the City's legislative positions with Legislators. In addition to communication on specific bills, this Legislative Policy Statement provides a reference tool for Legislators to use when considering legislation that may impact the City of Westminster. For more information on the City's legislative program, please contact Deputy City Manager Steve Smithers at 303-658-2001 or Management Analyst Ben Goldstein at 303-658-2007.

CITY OF WESTMINSTER STRATEGIC PLAN

Each year, the City of Westminster City Council reviews and recommits the City organization to a five-year Strategic Plan. The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan identifies the City's underlying principles on which decisions are based and includes goals to be achieved through 2018. Each goal is further defined by a set of objectives and short-term actions to be taken to achieve the associated goal. The Strategic Plan reinforces long-term planning for both day-to-day operations and services, and long-term investment projects such as road construction, water distribution and sewer maintenance programs. As a statement of City Council's goals and vision for the City, the Strategic Plan helps Staff successfully plan City projects and budgets to achieve this vision and associated goals. Accordingly, the City of Westminster Legislative Policy Statement is intended to be consistent with and support City Council's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports legislation that is consistent with and supports the achievement of the City's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- Opposes legislation that runs counter to or prevents the achievement of the City's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.

The following is a summary of the five major goals and corresponding objectives that are identified in the City's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.



WESTMINSTER

Strategic Plan

2013-2018

Goals and Objectives

STRONG, BALANCED LOCAL ECONOMY

- Maintain/expand healthy retail base, increasing sales tax receipts
- Attract new targeted businesses, focusing on primary employers and higher paying jobs
- Develop business-oriented mixed use development in accordance with Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Retain and expand current businesses
- Develop multi-modal transportation system that provides access to shopping and employment centers
- Develop a reputation as a great place for small and/or local businesses
- Revitalize Westminster Center Urban Reinvestment Area



SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

- Maintain citizens feeling safe anywhere in the City
- Public safety departments: well-equipped and authorized staffing levels staffed with quality personnel
- Timely response to emergency calls
- Citizens taking responsibility for their own safety and well being
- Manage disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery
- Maintain safe buildings and homes
- Protect residents, homes, and buildings from flooding through an effective storm water management program



FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE CITY GOVERNMENT PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES

- Invest in well-maintained and sustainable city infrastructure and facilities
- Secure and develop long-term water supply
- Focus on core city services and service levels as a mature city with adequate resources
- Maintain sufficient reserves: general fund, utilities funds and self insurance
- Maintain a value driven organization through talent acquisition, retention, development and management
- Prepare for next generation of leaders; managers and employees.
- Maintain and enhance employee morale and confidence in City Council and management
- Invest in tools, training and technology to increase organization productivity and efficiency



VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS IN ONE LIVABLE COMMUNITY

- Develop transit oriented development around commuter rail stations
- Maintain and improve neighborhood infrastructure and housing
- Preserve and restore historic assets
- Have HOAs and residents taking responsibility for neighborhood private infrastructure
- Develop Westminster as a cultural arts community
- Have a range of quality homes for all stages of life (type, price) throughout the City
- Have strong community events and active civic engagement
-



BEAUTIFUL AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE CITY

- Have energy efficient, environmentally sensitive city operations
- Reduce energy consumption citywide
- Increase and maintain green space (parks, open space, etc.) consistent with defined goals
- Preserve vistas and view corridors
- A convenient recycling program for residents and businesses with a high level of participation



Mission statement: We deliver exceptional value and quality of life through SPIRIT.

HOME RULE AND LOCAL CONTROL

The City of Westminster believes strongly in the principles of home rule authority and local control. Article XX of the Colorado Constitution grants home rule municipalities such as Westminster “the full right of self-government in local and municipal matters.” The City of Westminster believes that home rule authority increases the effectiveness and efficiency of local government services, enhancing the quality of life in the community and the value provided to local taxpayers.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Expects State legislators to uphold and support home rule and Colorado’s tradition of local control.
- Supports legislative efforts to strengthen home rule authority of municipal governments.
- Opposes legislation that attempts to weaken municipal home rule authority and flexibility.
- Opposes legislation that mandates state intervention in matters of local concern, especially when that intervention unnecessarily or adversely affects the City’s ability to manage these matters pursuant to its home rule authority.

STATE AND FEDERAL MANDATES

Programs and regulations mandated by the State or Federal government have the potential to stretch the financial resources of the City of Westminster. If additional costs brought about by these mandated programs or regulations are not paid by the State or Federal government, they can have a direct negative impact on the City budget. This can prevent the City of Westminster from meeting the needs of residents and businesses and achieving the City’s strategic priorities.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports the TABOR Constitutional requirement for the Colorado General Assembly to reimburse municipalities for the cost of State mandates and to make this requirement clear in State fiscal notes prepared for the General Assembly.
- Opposes unfunded State and Federal mandates that impose unfair financial burdens on municipalities and their citizens.

GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY

The City of Westminster recognizes that the complexity and diversity of City operations and services required to meet the needs of citizens may expose the City, its officers, and employees to liability for damage and injury. The City strongly believes that public officers and employees need to be assured that municipal liability will not impair the lawful and proper provision of necessary services to the public.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports legislation that protects the interests of municipalities, their officers, and their employees in the lawful and proper performance of their duties and responsibilities.
- Supports legislation that discourages baseless and frivolous claims and demands made against municipalities, their officers, and their employees.
- Supports the availability of public liability insurance at reasonable costs and the ability of municipalities to reduce these costs through self-insurance.

- Opposes legislation that expands or increases municipal liability, or, conversely, further limits municipal immunity.

SALES AND USE TAX

The City of Westminster levies, administers, and collects its own sales and use taxes under its home rule authority. Sales and use tax revenue is the primary source of funding for City of Westminster services and operations, comprising over 60% of general fund revenues. Appropriate actions at Federal, State and local levels must preserve or enhance this critical local revenue.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports legislation that maintains local control over imposition, collection and administration of sales and use taxes.
- Supports legislation that allows state and local governments to require businesses to collect state and local sales and use taxes on remote sales.
- Supports voluntary, cooperative efforts among Colorado municipalities to standardize sales and use tax practices and utilize technology for the convenience of taxpayers, the business community, and municipalities.
- Opposes legislation that preempts local authority to impose and collect sales and use taxes.
- Opposes legislation that grants jurisdictions other than the State, cities, and counties the authority to impose sales or use taxes.

GENERAL FINANCE

The City of Westminster is a full-service community. While sales and use tax revenue comprises the primary funding source for general government services, the City's wide variety of services are also funded through a balanced array of other taxes, user fees, and other financing sources. Consequently, the City of Westminster is impacted by State and Federal financial policies.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports the continuation of existing local government financing methods and the addition of new methods for local government to support the provision of municipal services to citizens.
- Supports equitable sharing with municipalities of existing and future State revenues derived from traditional State-collected, locally shared revenues, such as the cigarette tax, Highway Users Tax Fund, and the lottery.
- Opposes State-granted exemptions or other State actions that erode municipal sales taxes, use taxes, property taxes, and other revenue sources unless the State provides adequate replacement revenues.
- Opposes State-mandated reductions to the current property tax structure without specific revenue replacement provisions.

LAND USE, DEVELOPMENT, AND REVITALIZATION

The City of Westminster works constantly to achieve the Strategic Plan Goals of "Vibrant Neighborhoods in One Livable Community" and "Strong Balanced Local Economy." The City believes that local control with land use planning contributes greatly to the achievement of this goal and the overall quality of life in the City of Westminster. In addition, two of the City's Strategic

Plan Objectives are to “develop transit oriented development around commuter rail stations” and “revitalize Westminster Center Urban Reinvestment Area.” In order for redevelopment and revitalization efforts to succeed, the City feels very strongly that appropriate urban renewal tools need to be preserved and strengthened.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports legislation that removes barriers to local land use planning and land development regulation.
- Supports appropriate legislation that facilitates the creation of Transit-Oriented Developments (TOD).
- Supports legislation to enable cooperative urban renewal projects between multiple jurisdictions.
- Supports appropriate legislation and funding that encourages and facilitates historic preservation and rehabilitation.
- Opposes legislation that prescribes comprehensive land use and other community planning at the State level.
- Opposes legislation that would inappropriately limit local government authority to impose growth impact fees.
- Opposes legislation that would unreasonably restrict the use of tax increment financing or eminent domain for redevelopment projects.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Westminster strives to develop and maintain a “Strong, Balanced Local Economy” per its Strategic Plan. Whether it is maintaining a healthy retail base or retaining and expanding targeted businesses and primary employers, the City recognizes the importance of a healthy economic climate to the overall quality of life.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports the development of a statewide economic development strategy that addresses issues of business climate and economic direction at the State level but allows for local control of economic development.
- Supports appropriate State tax policies and incentive programs, including enterprise zones, business incentive agreements, or other legislative initiatives, that encourage business expansion and retention through primary job creation, investment in capital equipment, and employer facility development.
- Supports workforce development, including higher education funding and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) High Schools.

WATER RESOURCES AND TREATMENT

Since the 1950’s, the City of Westminster has invested substantial public funds into the creation and protection of an independent water supply. Westminster has an obligation to provide the highest quality water and wastewater services in a financially sound, reliable, safe, and environmentally respectable manner. The City supports legislative measures to further this goal.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports the constitutional doctrine of prior appropriation, the constitutional priority given to domestic water use, the right to purchase and change the use of water rights within the State, and supports legislation and policies to ensure fair treatment of all water rights holders.
- Supports water quality legislation that results in appropriate, cost effective water quality control regulations with measurable water quality benefits.
- Supports legislation that reasonably limits liability exposure of and protects investment in water and wastewater operations.
- Supports legislation and regulations that promote the appropriate and beneficial use of reclaimed water and wastewater biosolids.
- Supports legislation that protects water supplies from the environmental and operational impacts of aquatic nuisance species such as zebra and quagga mussels.
- Supports legislation to proactively reduce wildfire risks.
- Supports continued Federal and State funding for water and wastewater treatment infrastructure to reduce local costs and expedite construction of necessary treatment, distribution, and collection facilities to comply with Federal and State mandates.
- Supports appropriate water conservation efforts and sustainable water resources management practices by all users.
- Supports sufficient appropriations and adequate fee-based revenue so the State may continue administration of its water programs including those federally mandated water and wastewater environmental regulatory programs, such as the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts delegated to the State to administer, and can fund the protection of critical infrastructure through an equitable distribution of program costs between State general fund monies and user fees.

TRANSPORTATION

The City of Westminster believes that the movement of goods and people is vital to the continued economic success of the State of Colorado and to the maintenance of the high quality of life that Coloradans enjoy. In order to preserve these, the State Legislature must be willing to make significant investments to maintain and improve the State's transportation network including roads, bridges, and other multimodal systems. With the Colorado Department of Transportation's funding challenges, municipal and county governments have taken on greater construction, maintenance, and financial responsibilities. For example, two interchanges on I-25 at 144th Avenue and 136th Avenue were built and paid for entirely by the Cities of Westminster and Thornton. The City of Westminster has demonstrated that it is willing to partner on projects, such as contributing \$500,000 as part of a \$5 million local funding commitment to the North I-25 Managed Lanes project, but is against efforts to pass along additional State roadway construction or maintenance responsibilities to local governments without increased and adequate funds to meet these additional responsibilities.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports an appropriate State-wide transportation plan that not only funds repair and maintenance needs, but also commits to network and multi-modal mobility improvements and expansions, including actions that address congestion relief in the Denver metropolitan area.

- Supports legislation to enhance transportation funding equity within the State and Denver Metropolitan Region.
- Supports equitable administration of the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Managed Lane Policy. U.S. 36 and North I-25 are gaining capacity improvements under a tolled, HOV3+ approach, and other potential capacity improvement projects should include a toll component.
- Supports legislation and regulatory action that maintains or increases the level of funding provided by the State or passed through the State by the Federal government to transportation activities at the local level.
- Supports State and Federal investments in the U.S. 36 and North I-25 managed lanes projects. This includes CDOT RAMP funding for the extension of the I-25 managed lanes to State Highway 7.
- Supports State and Federal investments in addressing the bi-directional commute challenges on the existing I-25 HOT/HOV lanes.
- Supports appropriate additional funding efforts to complete the Northwest Commuter Rail Project (FasTracks) in a timely manner.
- Supports efforts to pursue a Statewide ballot issue and/or the creation of a Metropolitan Transportation District (MTD) for the Denver Metropolitan area, provided regional equity is adequately achieved for a potential project list and MTD governance structure. Multimodal improvements, including acceleration of the Northwest Commuter Rail Project, would need to be included as eligible items for potential future funding efforts.
- Supports State and Federal assistance and funding for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and bikeway improvements on U.S. 36. This includes acquisition of an appropriate BRT vehicle fleet.
- Supports State and Federal funding assistance for the implementation of railroad crossing quiet zones. Supports legislative efforts to modify rulemaking to allow for a more attainable quiet zone crossing designation.
- Supports Transportation Demand Management (TDM) efforts and investments for U.S. 36 and North I-25.
- Opposes any efforts to eliminate the Northwest Commuter Rail project or to pursue other transit investments in the region that would result in pushing completion of Northwest Commuter Rail further down the road.
- Opposes legislation to transfer maintenance responsibility of State-owned roads to municipalities without adequate short and long-term funding to meet these additional responsibilities.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The City of Westminster recognizes the importance of telecommunications services to economic development and the quality of life in the City. The City of Westminster supports increased competition in the cable and video market and has taken steps in preparation to work with companies who are interested in providing video service in our community. However, the City's view is that statewide franchising should not override the City's authority to ensure the best possible service to its citizens and to regulate the use of public right-of-way.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports the retention of municipal franchising and regulatory authority over cable television systems.
- Supports legislation that preserves municipal control and autonomy over public rights-of-way and other assets, along with the right of local governments to receive fair and reasonable compensation for their use.
- Supports the ability of municipalities to require “reasonable” build-out for potential new video providers per the Federal Communications Commission’s executive order.
- Opposes State or Federal restrictions on municipal franchising, regulatory, and taxing authority over telecommunications systems.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

The City of Westminster recognizes that the Colorado Workers’ Compensation Act was developed as a no-fault system established “to assure the quick and efficient delivery of disability and medical benefits to injured workers at a reasonable cost to employers, without the necessity of any litigation, recognizing that the workers’ compensation system in Colorado is based on a mutual renunciation of common law rights and defenses by employers and employees alike.” The City self-insures its Workers’ Compensation program up to a certain limit and then purchases excess commercial insurance coverage to ensure the most cost effective, efficient delivery of these benefits to employees. The City is concerned about any legislation that will erode the ability of an employer to control their claim costs and inhibits an employer’s ability to get competitive quotes from the market for quality insurance coverage.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports legislation that maintains the spirit of the Colorado Workers’ Compensation Act, for the protection of both Colorado employers and employees.
- Opposes legislation that creates presumptive eligibility coverage within the law.
- Opposes legislation that increases insurance premium costs to employers.
- Opposes legislation that adds administrative burdens or taxes to self-insurance programs.
- Opposes legislation that promotes litigation.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Employees are the City of Westminster’s most important resource. The City is an equal opportunity employer and works to ensure excellent and fair salaries and benefits for employees, along with growth and development opportunities. Like with most other organizations, the City of Westminster’s budget is continuously pressured by increasing compensation and benefit costs. The City constantly balances fair compensation and benefits with responsible expenditures of tax dollars.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports legislation that maintains or reduces the employer and employee Fire and Police Pension Association (FPPA) pension and retiree health insurance costs.
- Opposes any legislation that interferes with a municipality’s ability to determine the terms and conditions of municipal employment.
- Opposes legislation that mandates collective bargaining rights for public employees.

- Opposes mandated Social Security coverage for public employees, mandated benefit levels or funding standards for municipal employee pension plans, or other unreasonable burdens or restrictions in connection with the administration of municipal employee benefit plans.
- Opposes legislation that reduces current State funding of death and disability benefits for emergency services personnel or legislation that shifts the funding of this State responsibility to local governments.

OPEN SPACE

As stated in the City’s Strategic Plan, Westminster works to maintain and develop a “Beautiful and Environmentally Sensitive City.” Increasing and preserving open space is a high priority in the City of Westminster. As build-out approaches, the City is striving to achieve its goal of maintaining 15% of the City’s land area as open space. Open space, along with trails, contribute greatly to the quality of life in the City of Westminster.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports maintaining funding, and adding additional funding where appropriate, to State and Federal land conservation programs that will help to increase the amount of open space within the City, thereby helping to achieve the goal of “Beautiful City.”
- Supports legislation that generally enables and empowers the use of conservation easements.
- Supports legislation that provides further incentives to preserve open space.

ENVIRONMENT

For the City of Westminster, the environment is a priority, as is shown in the City’s programs and services that secure clean air, water, and land. Westminster is one of the most environmentally-friendly cities in the area and has signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The City of Westminster recognizes the importance of working cooperatively with other governmental entities to implement and manage efficient, cost-effective, and scientifically-based environmental control programs. It is the intent of the City to meet or exceed compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations. However, the City does not support State or Federal programs that place a severe financial burden on municipalities.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

- Supports appropriate legislation and regulations that promote pollution prevention.
- Supports legislation and regulations that provide incentives for green building and sustainable design without imposing unfunded mandates.
- Supports energy conservation efforts and appropriate legislation that accelerates the development of clean, economical energy resources and fuel-efficient technologies such as wind and solar energy, waste to energy, fuel cells, and other appropriate and effective technologies.
- Supports reasonable legislation and regulations that increase the fuel efficiency of motor vehicles.
- Supports legislation that limits liability for waste cleanup costs under Federal law where the municipality demonstrates due care and absence of fault in connection with waste disposal at a site and provides an early and fair means of settlement for municipalities named as liable parties at waste cleanup sites.

- Opposes legislation or standards that weaken current air quality standards or regulations.
- Opposes legislation that limits the ability of local government to regulate the activities of private waste or recycling collectors or to provide waste or recycling collection or processing services to citizens.

PUBLIC SAFETY

“Safe and Healthy Community” is one of the goals identified in the City of Westminster’s Strategic Plan. The City works diligently towards keeping citizens safe anywhere in the City. The City of Westminster recognizes the critical importance of maintaining public order, providing a safe environment, and protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Westminster. The role of the Police Department is to enforce the law in a fair and impartial manner, recognizing both the statutory and judicial limitations of police authority and the constitutional rights of all persons. The Westminster Fire Department works to minimize injuries and property losses due to fire, to provide quality emergency medical care and transport services, and to provide other services including fire inspections and emergency preparedness planning. Finally, the City of Westminster’s Municipal Court works to ensure that justice is carried out fairly and effectively.

Therefore, the City of Westminster:

POLICE

- Supports legislation that provides resources and support to victims of domestic violence.
- Supports legislation regarding the Public Safety Spectrum that support nationwide, interoperable, wireless broadband network.
- Supports legislation that protects society against Identity (ID) Theft.
- Opposes legislation that inappropriately transfers immigration and illegal alien enforcement responsibilities from the Federal government to local government and diverts local law enforcement resources from other priorities.
- Opposes legislation that restricts and limits automated license plate reader technology and data retention by law enforcement.

MUNICIPAL COURT

- Opposes legislation that limits the authority of municipalities to enforce their own ordinances in municipal courts.
- Opposes imposition of State surcharges on municipal court fines for the purpose of funding State programs.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

- Supports legislation that assists in the development of interoperable communication systems for public safety.
- Supports legislation to require the installation of appropriate fire protection systems in structures to enhance life safety and property protection.
- Supports legislation that strengthens the City’s ability to prohibit the use and sale of all fireworks, along with legislation that allows counties and fire districts to prohibit and otherwise control fireworks.
- Opposes legislation that restricts the City from adopting local strategies and regulations for safely addressing hazardous materials or legislation that restricts the City’s ability to review and approve the location of facilities that use or store hazardous materials or hazardous waste.

CITY COUNCIL CONTACTS

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Vacant Councillor Seat
(The vacancy will be filled
by early December)

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2014 STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES GUIDE



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WESTMINSTER

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- **Redevelopment: Our Future Depends On It**
- **Home Rule: Strengthening Local Communities**

(For more information, see inside)

CITY OF WESTMINSTER: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Incorporated in 1911, Westminster's progressive council/manager form of government is consistently recognized for excellence in management and delivery of full services to businesses and residents, without the need for additional service districts. The City provides police, fire, parks, recreation, library, streets, water, and wastewater services.

The City of Westminster approved its Amended 2014 Budget in October 2013. The City's 2014 Budget totals over \$185 million. The City's property tax mill levy will remain unchanged for the 22st consecutive year at 3.65 mills, one of the lowest property tax rates in Colorado.

A recipient of the International Livable Communities Award and noted as one of *Money Magazine's "Top 100 Places to Live,"* Westminster is a great place to live, work, and play. Dramatic mountain views and generous open space, trails, parks, and golf courses capitalize on Colorado's outdoor-oriented lifestyle. The City is well planned with beautiful residential neighborhoods and streetscapes, enhanced landscaping, and interesting architectural details.

Increasing and preserving green space is a high priority in the City of Westminster. In November 2006, Westminster voters approved an extension of the Parks, Open Space, and Trails 1/4th cent sales tax, allowing the City to issue \$20 million in bonds for the maintenance and expansion of the City's existing 63 miles of trails, 3,050 acres of open space, and 65 community parks and facilities. We are within 1% of reaching our goal of 15% designated open space within the City limits.

With the approval of RTD's FasTracks program, the City is working on planning efforts for Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) at rail stations that will be located in south Westminster, City Center (adjacent to the former Westminster Mall site), and Church Ranch (adjacent to the Shops at Walnut Creek). The planned rail stations in south Westminster and at the Westminster Mall site both promise to provide exciting new opportunities for redevelopment. The Westminster Station, located at approximately 70th and Irving, is scheduled to open by March 2016 as a spur of the Eagle P3 Project.

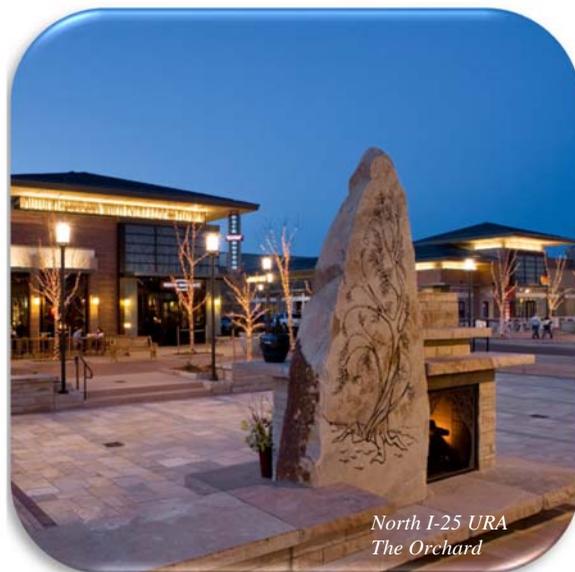
CITY OF WESTMINSTER STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

- **Strong, Balanced Local Economy**
- **Safe & Healthy Community**
- **Financially Sustainable City Government Providing Exceptional Services**
- **Vibrant Neighborhoods in One Livable Community**
- **Beautiful and Environmentally Sensitive City**

REDEVELOPMENT: OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT

The use of urban renewal areas (URAs) and tax increment financing (TIF) has been critical to the inception and success of several projects within the City of Westminster. These well-established tools of redevelopment get a project off the drafting table and into the community, eliminating blighted areas and providing opportunities for jobs and economic growth.

- The City of Westminster requests that state legislators protect the use of URAs and TIF to eliminate blight in the community and for future economic development and job creation.
- The City urges state legislators to refrain from obstructing the use of these vital tools by imposing additional unnecessary requirements upon urban renewal authorities.
- URAs and TIF are often necessary in curing deficiencies in public infrastructure, addressing unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or mitigating contamination.
- In almost all cases, development and redevelopment would not take place without the use of URAs and TIF, depriving the City, and other jurisdictions in which the area resides, of much needed revenue.
- Without the use of URAs and TIF, sites such as the former Westminster Mall can deteriorate into caustic urban blight with the potential to spread to surrounding businesses like a cancer creating an economic black hole.
- By issuing TIF-related debt, the City and its urban renewal authority assume risk. Yet the State, RTD, and counties benefit risk-free from sales tax revenues generated within the URA.
- Surrounding areas also benefit from resulting infrastructure improvements, increased property values, and job growth. Attractive developments can be valuable to neighboring jurisdictions by stimulating economic activity on a regional basis.
- Urban renewal authorities are required to operate transparently under State open records and open meetings laws, and are subject to State budget and financial reporting laws. URAs are also required to provide impact reports to the county in which the URA is located.



North I-25 URA
The Orchard

NORTH I-25 URA BY THE NUMBERS

- ✓ \$50 MILLION IN HIGHWAY AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS MADE
- ✓ 2 HIGHWAY INTERCHANGES CONSTRUCTED
- ✓ \$7 MILLION GENERATED PER YEAR IN SALES TAX FOR THE STATE, RTD, SCFD, AND ADAMS COUNTY
- ✓ OVER 2,000 PEOPLE EMPLOYED WITHIN THE AREA
- ✓ AN ADDITIONAL 800 HEALTHCARE JOBS ANTICIPATED BY THE NEW MEDICAL COMPLEX

HOME RULE: STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER:

- URGES STATE LEGISLATORS TO UPHOLD AND SUPPORT HOME RULE AND COLORADO'S TRADITION OF LOCAL CONTROL.
- SUPPORTS LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN HOME RULE AUTHORITY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS.
- OPPOSES LEGISLATION THAT ATTEMPTS TO WEAKEN MUNICIPAL HOME RULE AUTHORITY AND FLEXIBILITY.



The City of Westminster believes strongly in the principles of home rule authority and local control. In 1902, an amendment to the Colorado Constitution provided the right to citizens in cities to adopt home rule, and in 1912, supporters of home rule initiated a clarifying and strengthening amendment that rewrote Section 6 of Article XX to specifically enumerate various municipal home rule powers with a powerful “catch-all” paragraph. Another important home rule amendment was approved by voters in 1970 that added a new Section 9 to Article XX to extend the right to adopt home rule to the citizens of each municipality, regardless of population or when incorporated.

- Article XX of the Colorado Constitution grants both general and specific powers to home rule municipalities, providing them greater flexibility when seeking solutions to local problems.
- These powers allow home rule municipalities to shape such solutions to fit local needs, without involving the state legislature or being subjected to undesirable limitations imposed statewide. Home rule allows municipalities to respond more quickly to changed circumstances or emergencies by allowing legislative solutions at the local level through ordinances or charter amendments, rather than waiting for action by the state legislature.
- Home rule municipalities are not required to follow state statutes in matters of local and municipal concern and therefore enjoy freedom from state influence regarding local and municipal matters.
- Home rule is the embodiment of the principle that the best government is the one that is the closest to the people.
- Finally, by empowering local citizens more directly, home rule enhances citizen control, interest, involvement and pride in their municipal government and community.

PROPOSED LOBBYING PROTOCOL

Official City Position

Throughout the legislative session, the City takes official positions in support of or opposition to legislation before the State Senate and/or House of Representatives. It is important that policy issues be reviewed with City Council to assure that they are priorities of the City. Prior to stating any official City position, Staff will review the legislation to determine the potential impact on the City. After thorough review, Staff will provide City Council with a brief summary of the legislation and a recommendation. In order to release an official City position, the majority of City Council must agree upon a position of support, opposition or neutrality on the legislation or issue.

Often official positions on specific issues have a time sensitivity that requires Staff to utilize emails to City Council. As noted above, Staff will review the legislation, summarize the issue, and provide City Council with a recommendation. It is very important that City Council respond with their position via email to Staff as quickly as possible in order to allow the City to affect the outcome on a piece of legislation. Once City Council takes an official position on a piece of legislation or issue, the City's legislative scorecard will be updated and made available to legislators and the public.

Testimony at the Capitol

Often City Council, Board and Commission members, or Staff are requested to testify in support or opposition of various pieces of proposed legislation at the State Capitol. When requested to testify, City Council, Board and Commission members, and/or Staff should notify the City Manager's Office to ensure that City Council has taken an official position on the legislation or issue. Additionally, by notifying the City Manager's Office, Staff can ensure that both City Council and the City's lobbyists are advised that a City representative will testify on a particular item. It is important that lines of communication between Staff and the lobbyists remain open at all times to ensure that the City's lobbying efforts are as effective as possible and that we coordinate our efforts with other groups, including the Colorado Municipal League.

Lobbyist Interaction

In order to streamline interaction and avoid confusion with City Council, the lobbyists, and Staff, City Council and Staff will coordinate all correspondence with the lobbyists through one person designated by the City Manager. This individual will coordinate the tracking of legislation, obtaining City Council's official position, and conducting other miscellaneous research/support as necessary in presenting the official position(s) of City Council. The lobbyists, in turn, will coordinate all of their correspondence with City Council and Staff through the same designee.

Prior to utilizing the lobbyists in taking a position on legislation, City Council will be surveyed to ensure that a majority of the City Council concurs with moving forward with a position on a particular issue.

Any interaction (either City Council, Board and Commission members, or Staff) with State Senators or Representatives on behalf of the City must have City Council's approval/concurrence that the issue is a priority. Staff needs to be kept apprised of any contacts made on specific legislation in order to ensure that the lobbyists are well informed to maximize their effectiveness.



Staff Report

Post City Council Meeting
November 25, 2013



SUBJECT: Presentation on America's Great Outdoors: Feasibility Study for Connecting Urban Refuges to the Denver Greenway Trail Network

Prepared By: Sarah Washburn, Landscape Architect II
Richard A. Dahl, Park Services Manager

Recommended City Council Action

Listen to Staff presentation and provide feedback to Staff regarding the Feasibility Report for the Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail linking Two Ponds and Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuges as proposed by the Department of Interior and prepared by the Federal Highway Administration, prior to public release.

Summary Statement

Development for the western segment of a trail aimed to physically connect Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) as proposed by the Department of Interior is the focus of a Feasibility Study and subsequent Feasibility Report described herein. The project was funded and undertaken by the Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFL) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), with local stakeholder involvement.

Key points in this presentation are:

- An initiative undertaken in 2012 by the Department of Interior is the connection of urban refuges in the Denver Metro Area with a "Rocky Mountain Greenway" (RMG) trail system. A segment of the RMG linking Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR to Sand Creek Trail in east Denver is complete. The focus of this Feasibility Study and Report is the RMG's western corridor between Two Ponds and Rocky Flats NWRs.
- Staff representing the cities of Westminster and Arvada, the City & County of Broomfield, US Fish & Wildlife (FWS) and CFL guided project development. A politically-appointed RMG Steering Committee and a broad range of other State, County and Municipal agencies also assisted. A status update for this project was presented by Elijah Henley, Transportation Planning Team Lead, CFL Division of the FHWA, to City Council on March 18, 2013.
- The Feasibility Report, developed by a team of stakeholders including the City of Westminster, identifies a built and unbuilt trail alignment in Westminster at Standley Lake and through Westminster Hills Open Space. CFL is informing all stakeholder City Councils of the Study's recommendations, with intent of receiving concurrence with the proposed trail alignment and improvements, endorsement of the study, and support of the Report's release to the public.

- A \$1.735M Federal Transit Administration grant will substantially fund construction. Arvada and Westminster will seek additional improvements through a \$1.0M Great Outdoors Colorado Grant in early 2014 pending City Council approvals.

Expenditure Required: \$0

Source of Funds: N/A

Policy Issues

Should City Council support the Feasibility Study and the priority project components outlined within the study?

Should City Council support the continued involvement of Staff as liaison to the FHWA into the next phases of project development, including design and environmental review, and eventually construction?

Alternatives

1. City Council could reject the finding of the feasibility study? Staff recommends support of the Feasibility Study and development of the proposed components outlined within the Study if outside funding can be obtained because the federally-funded management and coordination of this project directly benefits the City and Strategic Plan Goals. The City’s 2012 Citizen Survey indicates the availability of trails and open space to be an important attribute for living in Westminster, and the Parks, Recreation and Libraries Department consistently seeks to maintain or enhance the trail network available to residents to support the Strategic Plan. Developments proposed within this project’s Feasibility Study create valuable linkages, including costly and important street crossings, to provide access to open space in locations where none currently exists, and enhance the overall trail network
2. City Council could direct Staff to discontinue involvement in the project. Staff recommends continued involvement of Staff time throughout technical development and construction phases of the project. Although the FHWA /CFL is spearheading the project, they cannot develop the trail independently. The breadth of background knowledge and trail development expertise Staff has already brought to the project has affected the Feasibility Study to ensure the City’s interests and the interests of its residents are best served. As a key stakeholder in this project, devotion of Staff time is essential to ensure planning and development considers all factors including those factors unique to the City of which FHWA may not be aware.

Background Information

President Obama launched the “America’s Great Outdoors” initiative to develop a 21st Century Conservation and Recreation Agenda. Part of the Initiative’s Vision is to “Connect Americans to the Great Outdoors.” A key focus of the Initiative in Colorado proposed by former Secretary of Interior Salazar and unveiled in 2011 is creation of a “Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail”, a continuous multi-modal trail between the National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) at Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Two Ponds, and Rocky Flats, with greater vision to eventually expand to Rocky Mountain National Park.

The Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFL) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) managed a core team of stakeholders including the City of Westminster to develop a Feasibility Study evaluating possible trail alignments for a 9-mile segment along the corridor specifically between Two Ponds and Rocky Flats NWRs. Completion of the Feasibility Study in

September 2013 signifies the first step toward implementation of the ‘Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail’ within this identified corridor.

The RMG alignment is depicted in Attachment 1. At the eastern terminus starting at 80th Avenue and Wadsworth Parkway, the trail follows Little Dry Creek Trail and passes Two Ponds NWR on existing on and off-street infrastructure in Arvada. The trail passes into Westminster at 86th Avenue & Kipling, runs through Standley Lake Regional Park along the east and north sides of the lake, transects Westminister Hills Open Space on an alignment bearing generally northwest, and terminates in Broomfield’s Great Western Reservoir Open Space at the eastern boundary of Rocky Flats NWR.

Using a funding scenario of \$1.735M from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant already received, the Feasibility Study outlines the new improvements necessary to complete the trail from Two Ponds to Rocky Flats NWR, listed below. While much of the proposed trail along the 9-mile corridor uses existing maintenance roads or trails, the needed new improvements lie almost exclusively within or immediately adjacent to Westminister:

Improvement No.	Jurisdiction	Design Option	Cost Estimate
1	Arvada	Wayfinding	\$42,000
2	Arvada	Trailhead & gravel parking at W. 86 th & Kipling	\$100,000
3	Arvada / Westminster	W. 86 th Pkwy & Kipling underpass at Arvada/Westminster border, & benched soft trail along Standley Lake south shore eastward to maintenance road.	\$617,000
4	Westminster	Soft trail from Standley Lake Nature Center to Indiana St., including ditch crossing & 100 th Ave at-grade crossing.	\$825,000
5	Westminster	Wayfinding	\$14,000
6	Broomfield	Rocky Flats overlook turnaround	\$10,000
Recommended construction package total (Allows flexibility should estimates increase during detailed development)			\$1.608M

As identified above, the Feasibility Report recommendations, developed with city staff input, program the City of Westminster to receive the bulk of trail improvements.

The FTA grant will be administered through the FHWA and includes environmental analysis, public engagement, design development, and project construction. Depending on the extent of unforeseen issues that may arise during the pre-construction process, CFL anticipates a bid package for construction to be ready as early as 2015. Local agencies including the City of Westminster will continue to act as core stakeholders without responsibility for Capital Funding toward the project.

Stakeholders have identified other funding opportunities to expand the reach and quality of the trail, and will seek them as those opportunities arise. The Cities of Westminster and Arvada, with support

from CFL, submitted a concept paper seeking invitation to submit a \$1.0M grant proposal for Great Outdoors Colorado’s (GOCO) special opportunity “Paths to Parks” grant program. The concept paper proposed to leverage the existing \$1.735M FTA funding to construct additional off-street trail improvements. On October 15, 2013, the GOCO Board accepted this concept paper and moved this co-sponsored proposal on to the formal application phase. Staff will bring the formal grant proposal to City Council in early 2014 prior to submittal.

This project continues to be a top priority for the Department of the Interior. The Feasibility Study and the trail connections proposed supports the City’s Strategic Plan Goals of “Financially Sustainable City Government Providing Exceptional Services” and “Beautiful and Environmentally Sensitive City.”

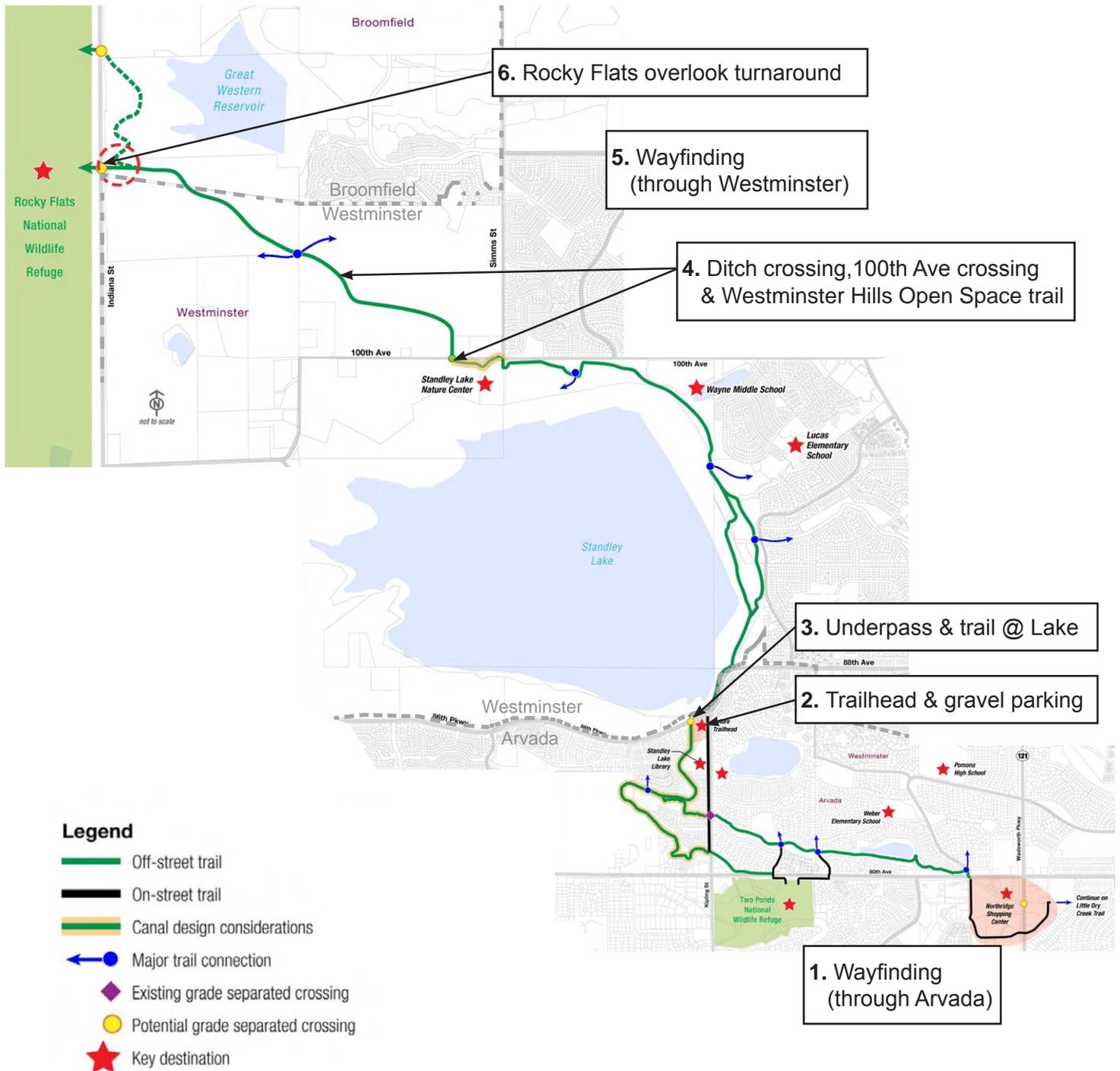
Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall
City Manager

Attachments Proposed Improvements Map
America’s Great Outdoors Feasibility Study

Proposed Improvements funded by the
Federal Transit Administration Grant for construction of:

Rocky Flats and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge Trail Connection,
part of the AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS Initiative



For details refer to
America's Great Outdoors:
Feasibility Study for Connecting Urban Refuges to the Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail Network
Rocky Flats and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuges
September 2013

America's Great Outdoors: Feasibility Study for Connecting Urban Refuges to the Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail Network

Rocky Flats and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuges

Feasibility Report

September 2013

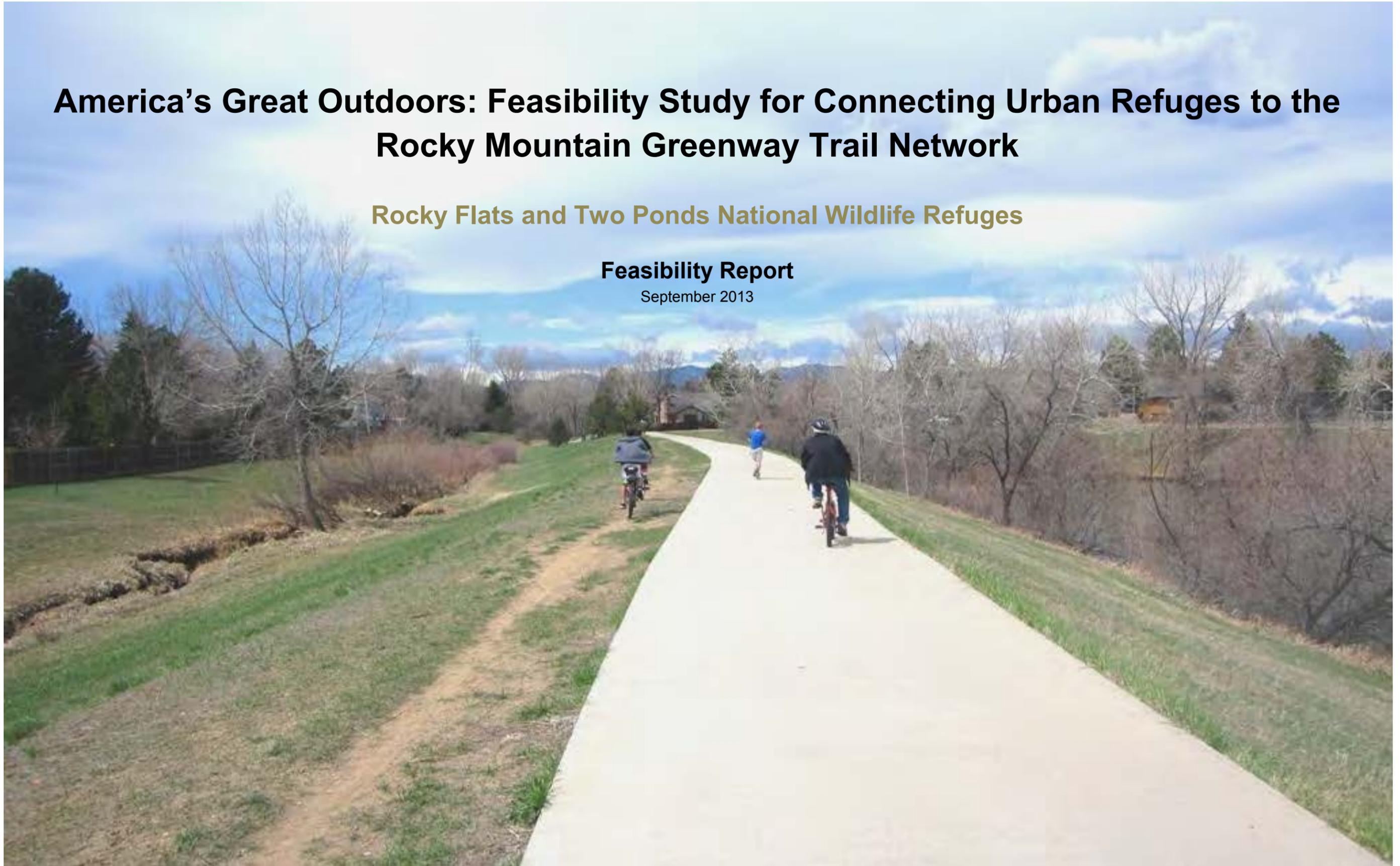


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1. Executive Summary

The Refuge to Refuge Trail Project is a result of the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative. AGO is an effort undertaken by the federal government to partner with states, tribes, and local communities to protect and encourage recreation and conservation activities across the country. AGO seeks to empower local agencies to improve access to natural resources, such as open space and wildlife refuges.

In March 2012, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper formalized the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project, a federal, state, and local partnership to create a continuous trail/transportation connection between Rocky Mountain National Park and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. A steering committee, appointed by the Governor's office, is in the process of establishing an overall vision for the trail. Although this vision was not yet formalized at the completion of this study, the Steering Committee and partner agencies have established a project scope and guidance for moving forward with the study of feasible trail connections.

The trail studied in this report is a key component of the broader Rocky Mountain Greenway Project, linking Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to the Rocky Flats NWR. For the purpose of this study, this trail will be referred to as the Refuge to Refuge Trail. However, an official trail name for branding and signing purposes will be determined at a later date.

The feasibility study area, identified in Figure 1, includes the City of Arvada, City of Westminster, City and County of Broomfield, City of Boulder, City of Superior, Boulder County, and Jefferson County. The area is roughly bounded by Wadsworth Boulevard to the east, State Highway (SH) 93 to the west, West 80th Avenue to the south, and SH 128 to the north. Two Ponds NWR is located in the City of Arvada at the southeast corner of Kipling Street and West 80th Avenue. Rocky Flats NWR is located in Jefferson County, southwest of the intersection of SH 128 and Indiana Street.

1.1. Core Team

Local agency representatives served a major role in the development of this feasibility study. They collaborated throughout this study to share information, interests, and values related to the Refuge to Refuge Trail. The Core Team is made up of federal, state, and local representatives from the following agencies:

- City of Arvada Parks and Recreation
- City and County of Broomfield Open Space and Trails
- City of Westminster Department of Parks, Recreation, and Libraries
- City of Boulder Parks and Recreation
- Boulder County Parks and Open Space
- Jefferson County Parks and Recreation
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
- Colorado State Parks
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFL)

The Core Team identified a set of values to frame the purpose and design of the Refuge to Refuge Trail. The following values were identified for the overall trail:

- Allow the existing site conditions and constraints to guide the physical properties of the trail.
- Maintain an aesthetic quality that showcases natural and cultural resources.
- Give the trail a unique identity through wayfinding and/or design continuity across the entire trail system.
- Provide multi-user access to bicycles and pedestrians.
- Prioritize high-quality design with the phased implementation to distribute costs over time.

These values guided the development of Refuge to Refuge Trail improvements.

1.2. Trail Segments

A series of site visits were completed with staff from the City of Arvada, City of Westminster, City and County of Broomfield, City of

Boulder, and Boulder County Open Space. The intent of these site visits was to identify potential trail alignments and trailhead locations, identify areas of concern within the trail networks, and identify any project constraints that may exist within each jurisdiction.

Several characteristics about trail users were considered to determine the breakdown of trip purposes that are likely to occur along the trail. The following trip types were identified:

- Utilitarian bicycle trips
- Recreational bicycle trips
- Utilitarian pedestrian trips
- Recreational pedestrian trips

Utilitarian trips include work, shopping, and school-related trips. All other trips are considered recreational. Utilitarian bicycle trips are assumed to occur more consistently than recreational bicycle trips.

Usage forecasts were based on an average weekday in late spring and/or early fall during a non-holiday week, with school in session, and with good weather.

This analysis assumed that a trail alignment exists in the future, and that trail accessibility is equal for pedestrians and bicyclists. It did not consider the differences between types of bicycles, such as mountain bikes whose riders are more likely to navigate an unpaved trail than a road bike rider would be.

Trip production and attraction rates were based on the number of existing households, places of employment, schools, and retail locations. Rates for recreational trips were assumed to originate and conclude at people's residences.

The results of the analysis show that trail use will vary across the length of the trail and between bicycle and pedestrian users. According to the analysis, on an average weekday, the trail will attract close to 300 daily users. A majority of the users are bicyclists and the most frequent use is recreational trips. The least frequent uses of the trail are for shopping and personal service trips. The southern section of the trail, within Arvada, will likely have the highest trail usage for all users. The northern section of the trail through open space is expected to have less weekday use than in developed areas.

However, CDOT trail count data for similar open space trails indicate high weekend recreational use.

Combining the usage results with information about existing trail conditions and surrounding characteristics included in the Scoping Report, three logical trail sections have been defined:

- **Section 1: Arvada** consists of alignments through Arvada, primarily following the existing Little Dry Creek Trail between the Two Ponds NWR and Standley Lake Regional Park.
- **Section 2: Standley Lake** consists of trail alignments through Standley Lake Regional Park. Much of this section currently exists either as a maintenance road or as maintained crushed gravel trail through the park.
- **Section 3: Open Space** in the northernmost section connects Standley Lake Regional Park and the Rocky Flats NWR. This section of trail currently exists as informal social trails through the open space and is not yet developed or maintained as a trail.

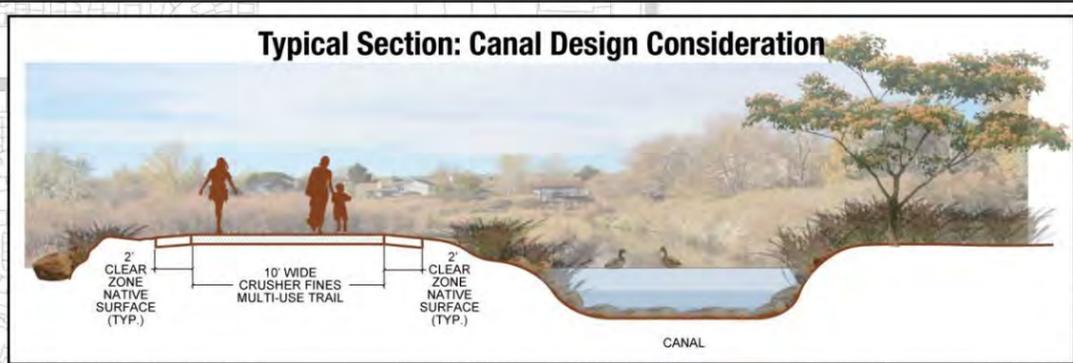
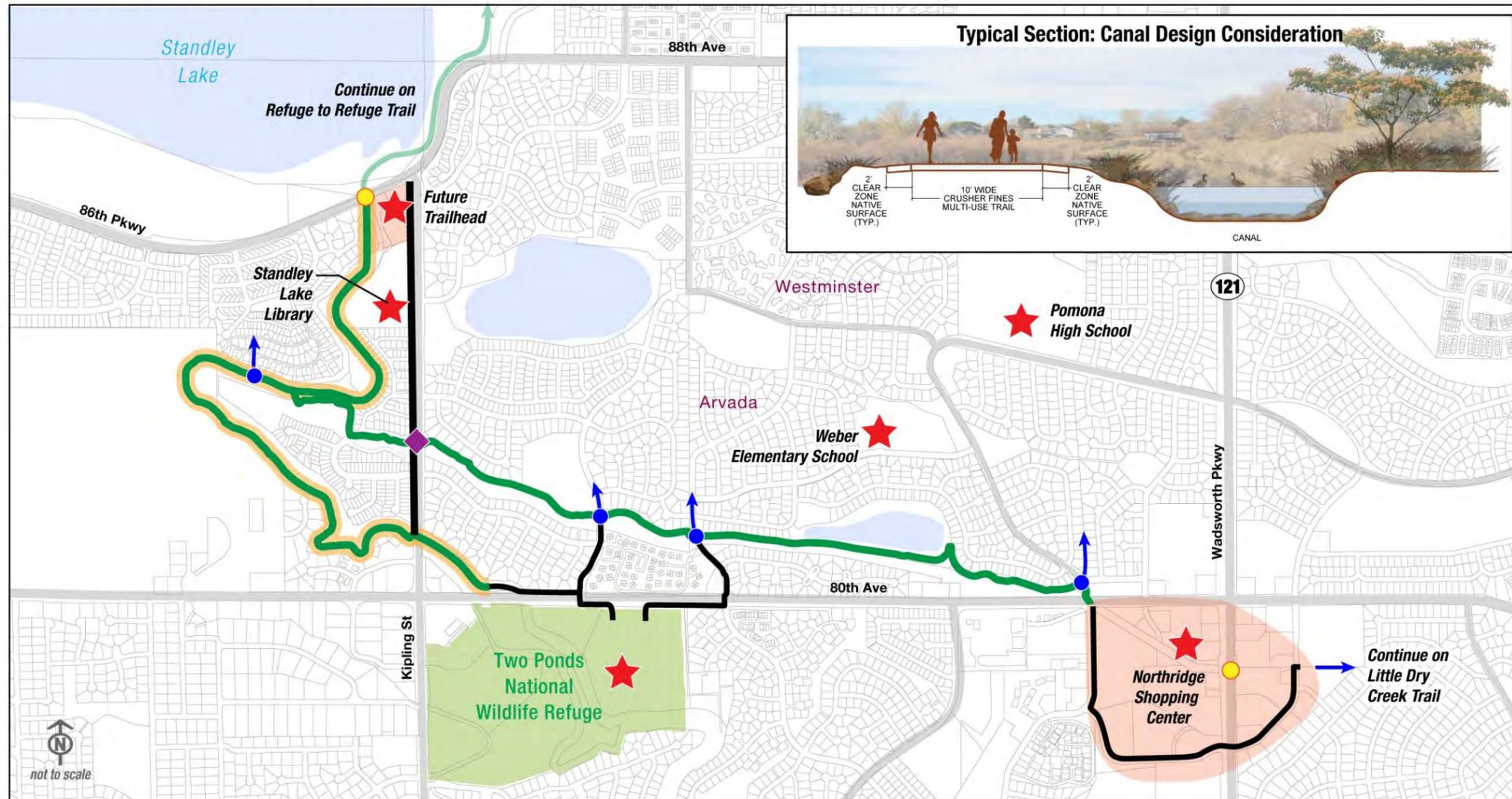
1.3. Project Funding

As of February 2013, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Complex was awarded \$1.7 million through the Federal Transportation Administration's (FTA) Transit in the Parks Program to construct the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project trail. This grant will only cover a portion of the proposed trail. Additional financing for construction will likely include a combination of state and federal grants, as well as technical and financial assistance from foundations and advocacy groups. Several funding sources have been identified based upon projects awarded through 2012. Many of these programs will likely continue into the future and a similar funding environment will be available during project implementation.

Figure 1. Study area overview



Section 1: Arvada



Core Values

- Enhance accessibility
- Improve safety
- Create wayfinding
- Expand trail connectivity

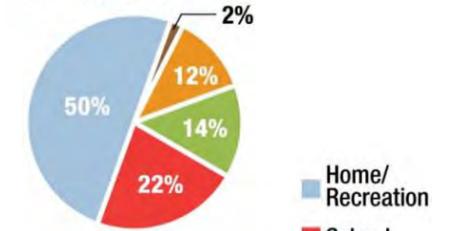
Trail Statistics

User Profile (projected)

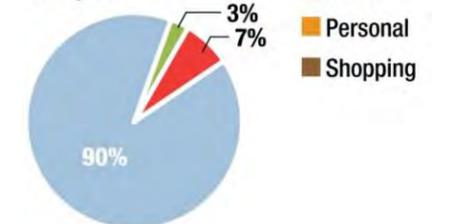
- Utilitarian
- Recreational
- School

Trip Types

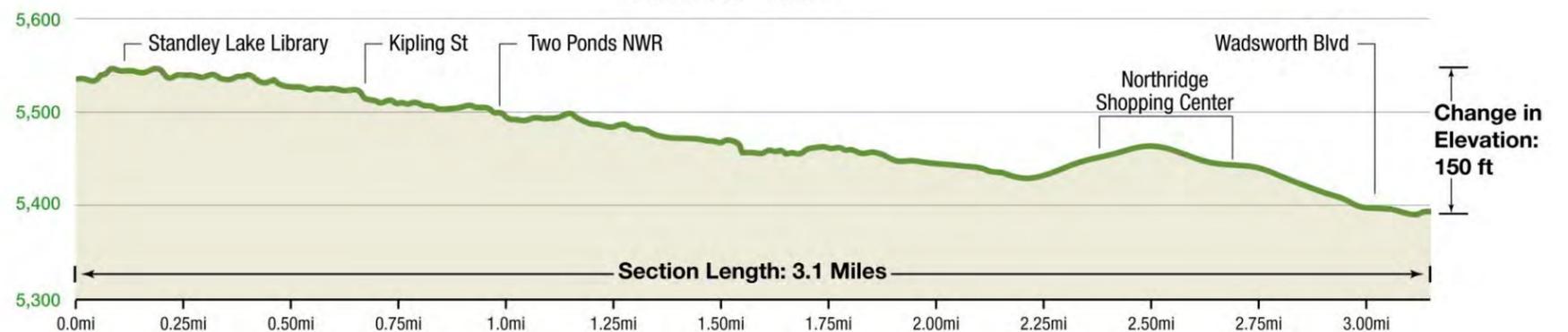
Pedestrian



Bicycle



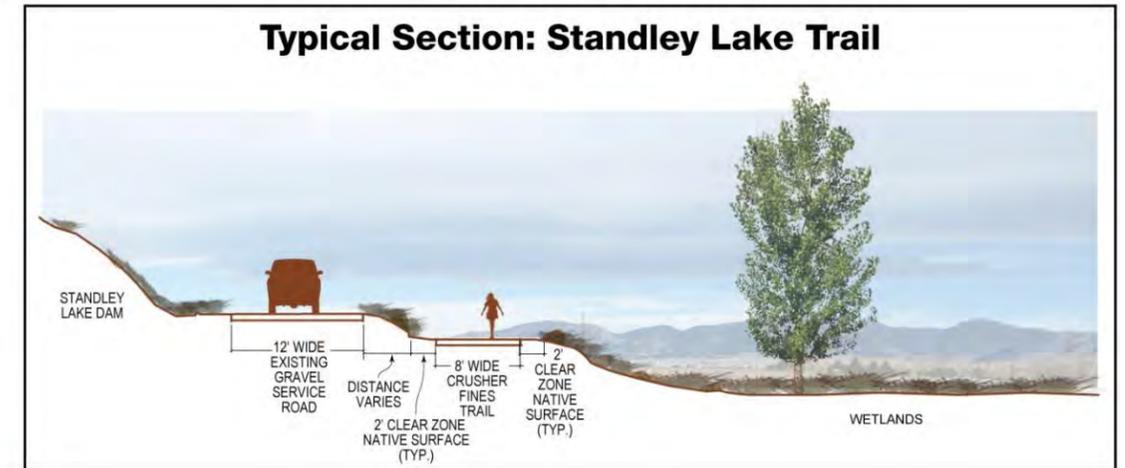
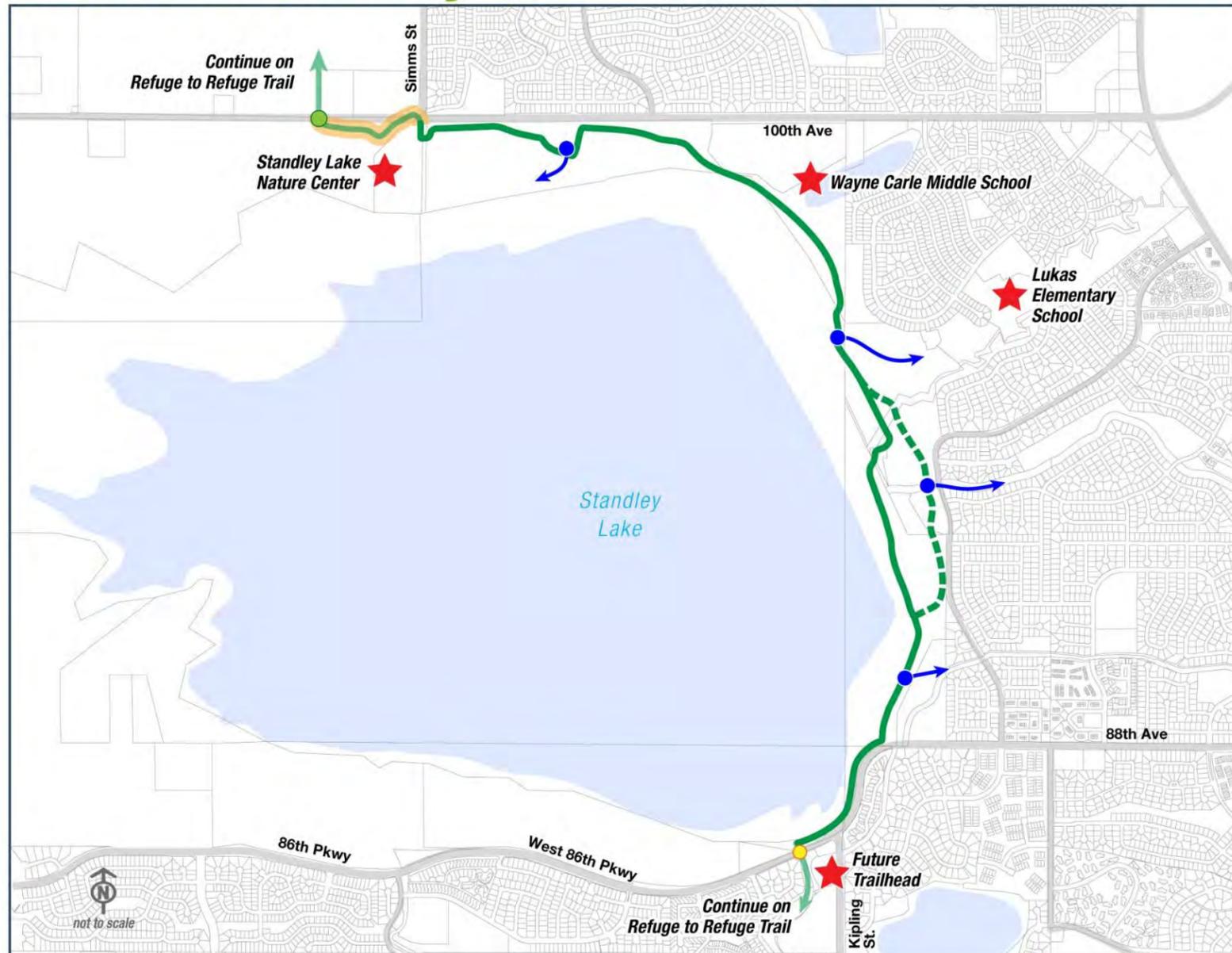
Elevation Profile



Legend

- Off-street trail
- On-street trail
- Canal design considerations
- ← Major trail connection
- ◆ Existing grade separated crossing
- Potential grade separated crossing
- ★ Key destination

Section 2: Standley Lake



Core Values

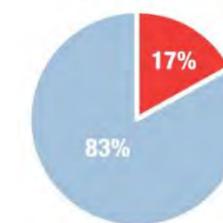
- Preserve natural resources
- Highlight view sheds
- Create high-quality design
- Expand trail connectivity

Trail Statistics

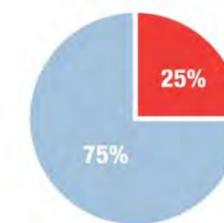
- User Profile (projected)
- Recreation
 - School trips

Trip Types

Pedestrian

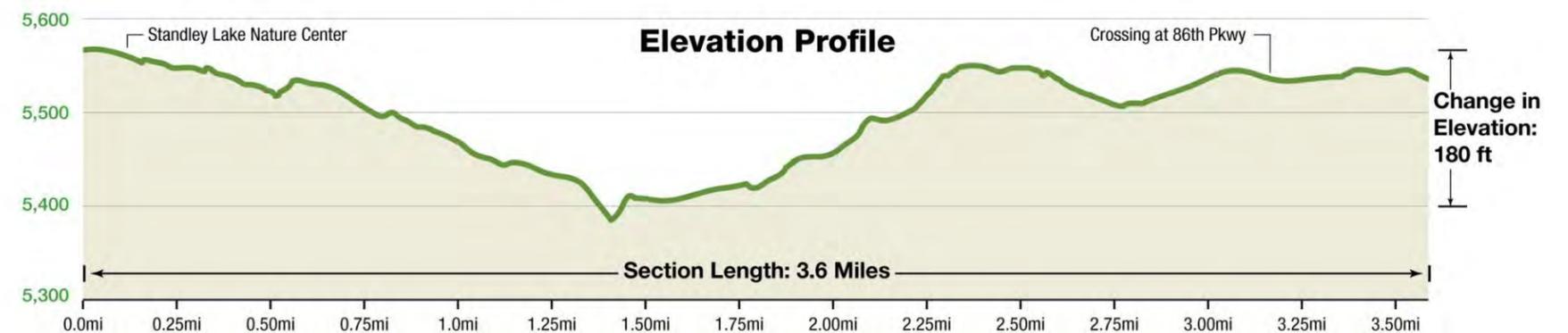


Bicycle

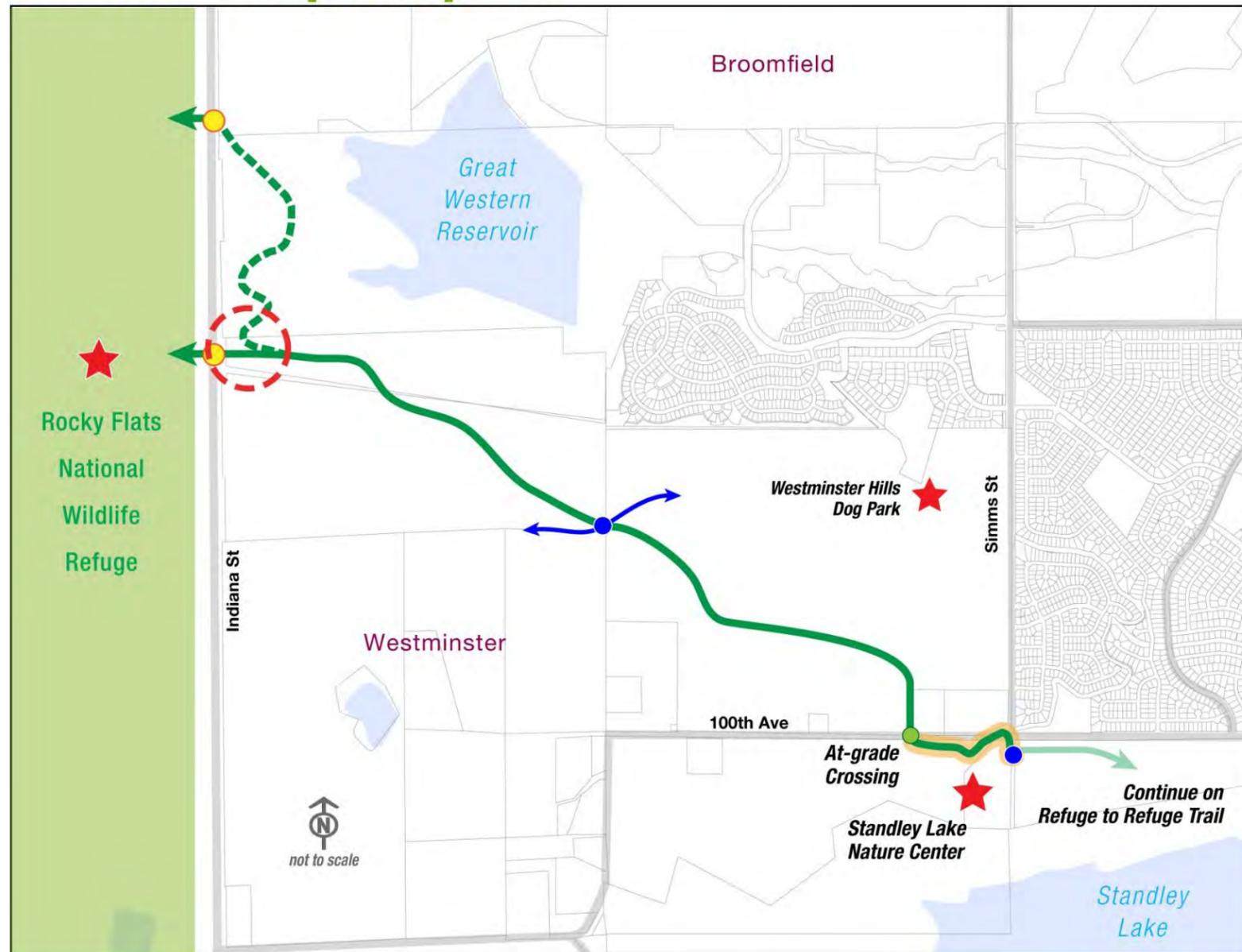


Legend

- Off-street trail
- - - Alternative off-street trail
- Canal design considerations
- ← Major trail connection
- Potential grade separated crossing
- Potential at-grade crossing
- ★ Key destination



Section 3: Open Space



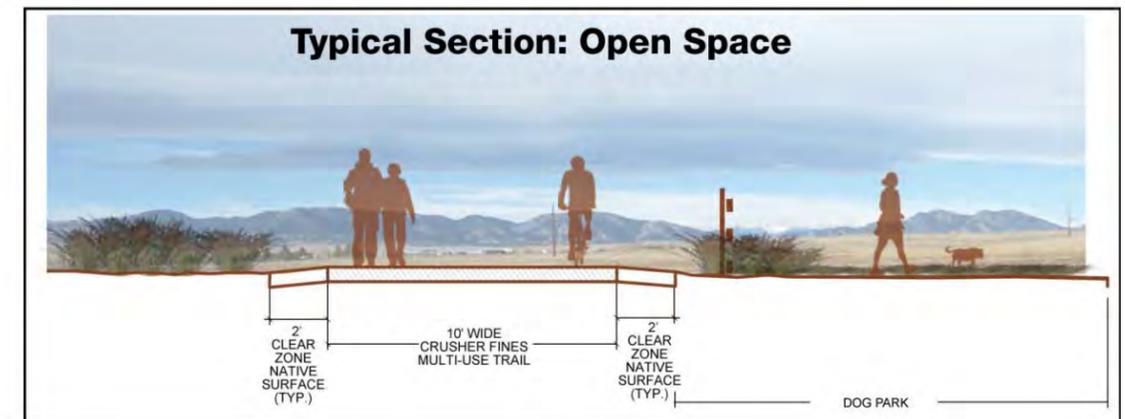
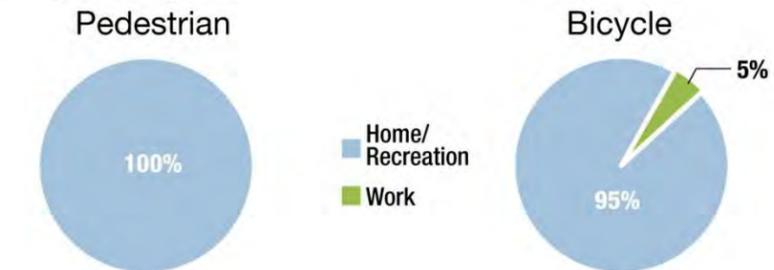
Core Values

- Preserve natural resources
- Provide ADA accessible amenities where possible
- Minimize maintenance cost

Trail Statistics

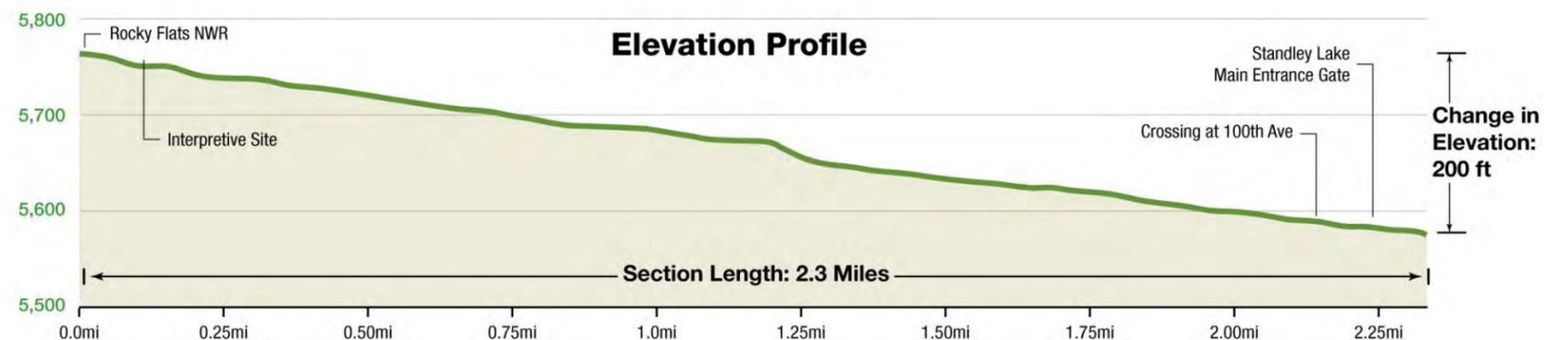
- User Profile (projected)
- Recreation

Trip Types



Legend

- Open space trail
- - - Alternative alignment
- Canal design considerations
- Major trail connection
- Potential grade separated crossing
- Potential at-grade crossing
- ★ Key destination
- Interpretive Site



2. Introduction

The Refuge to Refuge Trail Project is a result of the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative. AGO is an effort undertaken by the federal government to partner with states, tribes, and local communities to protect and encourage recreation and conservation activities across the country. AGO seeks to empower local agencies to improve access to natural resources, such as open space and wildlife refuges.

In March of 2012, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper formalized the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project, a federal, state, and local partnership to create a continuous trail/transportation connection between Rocky Mountain National Park and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. A steering committee, appointed by the Governor's office, is in the process of establishing an overall vision for the trail. Although this vision was not yet formalized at the completion of this study, the Steering Committee and partner agencies have established a project scope and guidance for moving forward with the study of feasible trail connections.

The trail studied in this report is a key component of the broader Rocky Mountain Greenway Project, linking Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to the Rocky Flats NWR. For the purpose of this study, this trail will be referred to as the Refuge to Refuge Trail. However, an official trail name for branding and signing purposes will be determined at a later date.

The feasibility study area, shown in Figure 2, includes the City of Arvada, City of Westminster, City and County of Broomfield, City of Boulder, City of Superior, Boulder County, and Jefferson County. The area is roughly bounded by Wadsworth Boulevard to the east, State Highway (SH) 93 to the west, West 80th Avenue to the south, and SH 128 to the north, as shown in Figure 2. Two Ponds NWR is located in the City of Arvada at the southeast corner of Kipling Street and West 80th Avenue. Rocky Flats NWR is located in Jefferson County, southwest of the intersection of SH 128 and Indiana Street.

In February of 2013, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) awarded \$1.7 million to the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project for the Refuge

to Refuge Trail connection. These funds are to be used for trail construction improvements in the study area.

This feasibility study identifies potential trail alignments and eliminates unfeasible trail options based on:

- Expected trail use
- Preliminary cost estimates for trail design options
- Ongoing stakeholder collaboration
- Plausible funding sources for trail planning and construction

2.1. Core Team Collaboration

Local agency representatives served a major role in the development of this feasibility study. They collaborated throughout this study to share information, interests, and values related to the Refuge to Refuge Trail. The Core Team is made up of federal, state, and local representatives from the following agencies:

- City of Arvada Parks and Recreation
- City and County of Broomfield Open Space and Trails
- City of Westminster Department of Parks, Recreation, and Libraries
- City of Boulder Parks and Recreation
- Boulder County Parks and Open Space
- Jefferson County Parks and Recreation
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
- Colorado State Parks
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFL)

The Core Team held meetings throughout the development of this study to define the purpose of the Feasibility Study, review project deliverables for consistency and correctness, and collaborate to eliminate unfeasible design options and alignments for the trail. Additionally, the Core Team worked together to share information with City Council members to discuss impacts of the project specific to each jurisdiction.

These presentations occurred on the following dates:

- March 18, 2013—City of Westminster
- April 8, 2013—City of Arvada
- April 23, 2013—City and County of Broomfield

The Core Team identified a set of values to frame the purpose and design and guide the development of the Refuge to Refuge Trail. The following values were identified for the overall trail:

- Allow the existing site conditions and constraints to guide the physical properties of the trail.
- Maintain an aesthetic quality that showcases natural and cultural resources.
- Give the trail a unique identity through wayfinding and/or design continuity across the entire trail system.
- Provide multi-user access to bicycles and pedestrians.
- Prioritize high-quality design with the phased implementation to distribute costs over time.

2.2. Background

Future trail development must be consistent within the spatial and political context of the current project. It is important that the outcomes and decisions made through upcoming planning processes are compatible and consistent with the established plans designated by each community and metropolitan region. Each jurisdiction provided relevant plans and available spatial data for the study area.

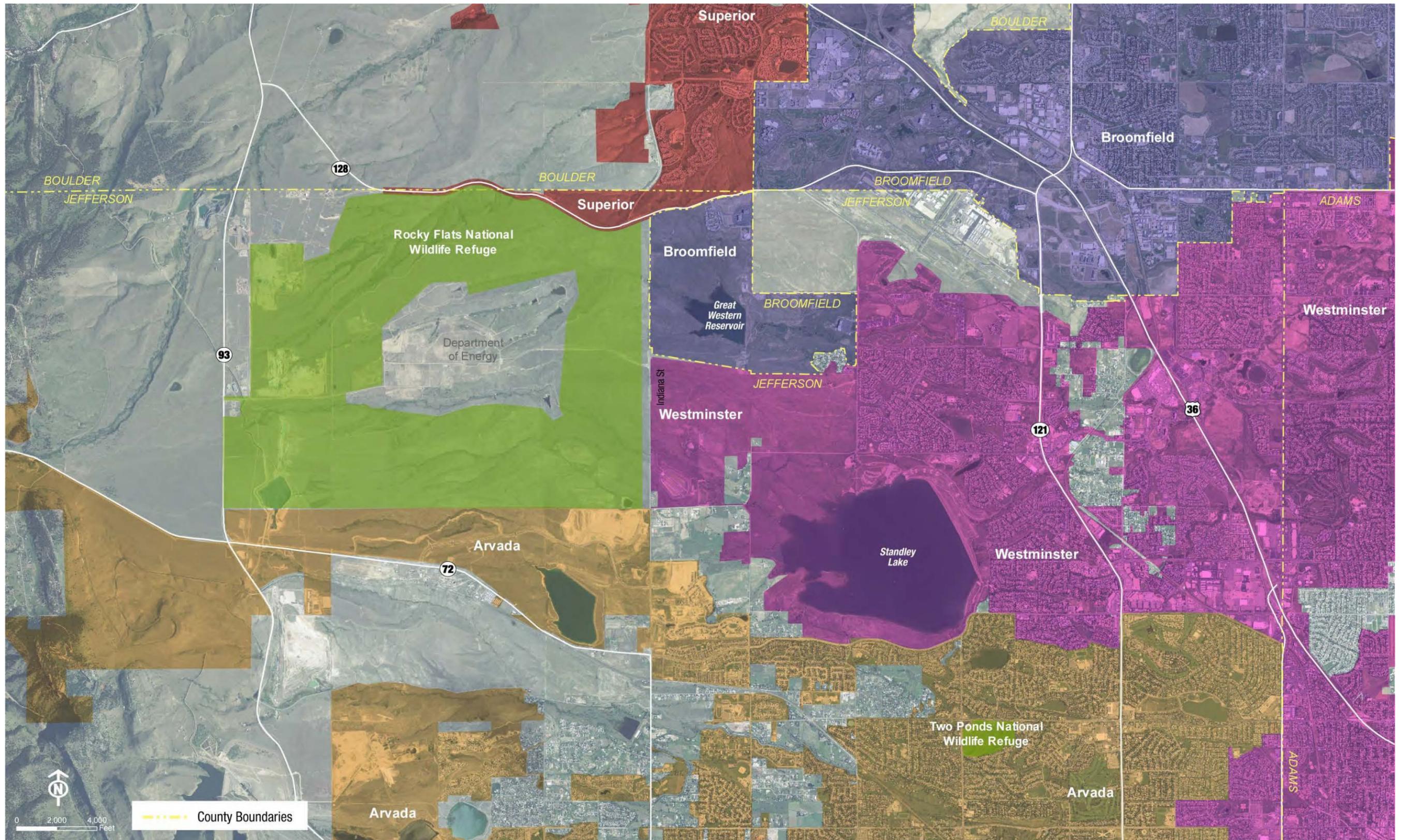
2.2.1. Spatial Data

Geographic information was gathered for jurisdiction boundaries, existing public facilities, demographic data, and transportation behavior. These data included:

- Municipal boundaries
- Existing trail network
- Existing road network
- Land use categories
- FWS unit boundaries

Data was provided by DRCOG for relevant transportation analysis zones (TAZs). These data include information about population, travel behavior, and employment that was used for the trail use analysis.

Figure 2. Study area jurisdictions



2.2.2. Relevant Plans

A review of the existing plans shows that, in general, each jurisdiction has considered topics of transportation, community development, human health and fitness, outdoor recreation, and multi-modal enhancements for their communities. Several plans make specific reference to proposed and existing trails that align with sections of the Refuge to Refuge Trail. These references are of particular importance as decisions are made about trail design, construction, and funding.

The City of Arvada *Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan* recommends completing the Little Dry Creek Trail from east to west. Arvada also mentions that linking the Two Ponds NWR with other environmental assets within the community is complimentary to their larger environmental education goals.

The City and County of Broomfield refers to both Standley Lake Regional Park and the Rocky Flats NWR as regional assets in its *Open Space, Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan*. This plan also states that 79% of those responding to a City survey about recreational and open space assets ranked off-street multi-use recreational paths as a major priority for the community.

Standley Lake Regional Park is a major open space and recreational asset to the City of Westminster, and its *Master Plan* makes several specific references to future development of that area. Of note are recommendations to complete the loop trail around the lake and proposed pedestrian connections on the east and north sides of the lake, both of which will be aligned with the Refuge to Refuge Trail.

The proposed Jefferson Parkway will intersect western alignments of the Refuge to Refuge Trail near the access points for Rocky Flats NWR. Although the ultimate trail network for the refuge has not yet been established, an ideal design of these intersections will be coordinated through both the Jefferson Parkway project and the Rocky Flats NWR trail system plans.

Finally, the Regional Mountain Trails Master Planning Process that began in 2012 will identify a network of trail corridors and access points in the mountains and foothills of Boulder County that can be implemented incrementally and opportunistically. This planning

process will explore potential links between Rocky Flats and Rocky Mountain National Park that can be considered for the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project.

While several of the researched plans shown in Table 1 identify portions of the Refuge to Refuge Trail network, this trail is not included in all relevant plans. Coordination with agencies should be completed to include this trail in updates to existing plans as certain funding sources require that a project be included in these plans to qualify for funding.

In the spring of 2013, students from the University of Colorado at Denver conducted a Feasibility Study for the trail connections analyzed in this report as an Advanced Landscape Ecology Workshop. Using a study of similar trails, existing environmental information, land use, and demographic data, the students developed three possible trail alignments connecting Two Ponds NWR and Rocky Flats NWR. Several design criteria were identified that included context sensitivity to existing ecology and accessibility for multiple types of trail users. A copy of the report is included in Appendix A.

Table 1. Relevant plans

Plans with a Relationship to the Refuge to Refuge Trail	Year (Last Update)
2005 Broomfield Comprehensive Plan Document (as amended)	2011
Arvada Comprehensive Plan	2005
Arvada Cultural Master Plan	2002
Arvada Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan	2001
Boulder County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (as amended)	2009
Boulder County Transportation Master Plan	2012
Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan	2010
Broomfield Open Space, Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan	2005
Broomfield Public Art Master Plan	2004
Broomfield Transportation Master Plan	2005
CDOT's plan for Highway 36 corridor (including the bikeway and underpasses, ROD)	2009
City of Louisville Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan	2012
Coalition Trails Plan (update process beginning in 2013 as South County Grasslands Management Plan)	Started in 2013
Colorado Front Range Trail Comprehensive Implementation Plan	2007
Greenways Program Master Plan	1990
Jefferson County Comprehensive Master Plan	2012
McCaslin interchange plans	2010
Metro Vision 2035 (update in 2013-14)	2011
Regional Mountain Trails Master Plan (Boulder County)	Started in 2012
Parks and Recreation Master Plan (City of Boulder)	2006
Regional Trails Plan/Program (Boulder County)	2012
Rock Creek/Coal Creek Master Plan (and Regional Trails Plan)	2012
Sustain Arvada Plan	2012
Sustainability Plan (Boulder County)	2013
Town of Superior Comprehensive Plan	2006
Town of Superior Transportation Plan	2012
Westminster Comprehensive Land Use Plan (as amended, update expected 2013)	2004
Westminster Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2010
Westminster Vision 2025	2012

3. Scoping and Design Considerations

This chapter will discuss existing conditions in the study area, expected trail use, and potential trail alignments by trail section. Combining the usage results with information about existing trail conditions and surrounding characteristics included in the Scoping Report, three logical trail sections have been defined:

- **Section 1: Arvada** consists of alignments through Arvada, primarily following the existing Little Dry Creek Trail between the Two Ponds NWR and Standley Lake Regional Park.
- **Section 2: Standley Lake** consists of trail alignments through Standley Lake Regional Park. Much of this section currently exists either as a maintenance road or as maintained crushed gravel trail through the park.
- **Section 3: Open Space** in the northernmost section connects Standley Lake Regional Park and the Rocky Flats NWR. This section of trail currently exists as informal social trails through the open space and is not yet developed or maintained as a trail.

3.1. Existing Conditions

An inventory of existing conditions was completed to identify opportunities and limitations for the Refuge to Refuge Trail. Local jurisdictions provided information on existing trails, proposed connections, and potential alignments.

The following principles were evaluated while scoping the conceptual trail alignments, trail connections, and potential trailheads:

- Provide a continuous, non-motorized, multi-use trail accommodating, where feasible, wheeled uses and pedestrians along the length of the trail. The trail shall conform to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) trail design and construction standards. Wherever possible, a minimum trail tread width of 10 feet should be accommodated.
- The trail system should serve as a main spine trail from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR running east and west to the Rocky Flats and Two Ponds NWRs. It should also connect to

the Colorado Front Range Trail west of Rocky Flats, local trail loops, tributary trails, and safe on-street routes that lead to communities and other destinations along the length of the Little Dry Creek Trail, when feasible.

- Trails and trail facilities should be designed to minimize adverse impacts to the natural environment.
- All trail and trail improvements should balance reasonable financial constraints with design excellence. Trails should be safe and economical to build and maintain.
- All trail improvements should be designed for minimal visual intrusion and impact on the surrounding environment.
- The trail should be properly designed to avoid/minimize user conflict and overcrowding.
- Where feasible, at-grade road crossings should be avoided. Grade-separated crossings—such as underpasses and overpasses—will be considered.
- Where feasible, the trail will serve multiple objectives such as recreation, transportation, drainage way maintenance, and emergency access.

3.1.1. Site Visits

A series of site visits were completed with staff from the City of Arvada, City of Westminster, City and County of Broomfield, City of Boulder, and Boulder County Open Space. The intent of these site visits was to work with agency staff to identify:

- Potential trail alignments and trailhead locations
- Areas of concern within trail networks
- Any project constraints that may exist within each jurisdiction

Dates and locations of the site visits are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Site visits

Date	Jurisdiction
October 29, 2012	City of Westminster
October 29, 2012	City and County of Broomfield
October 30, 2012	City of Arvada
October 30, 2012	Boulder County, Boulder County Open Space, and City of Boulder
November 28, 2012	Multi-jurisdictional

Prior to completing the site visits, data were collected from each agency regarding their existing trails, proposed connections, and alignments. Figure 3 displays the existing trail networks within the study area. Figure 4 shows the potential trail alignments based on community plans and input from project stakeholders.

Site visits provided information about physical connections between the refuges and the local trail network. These site visits and existing conditions are discussed in more detail within individual trail discussions for Arvada, Standley Lake, and Open Space sections. A full scoping report is included in Appendix B.

3.2. Trail Usage

The purpose of the trail usage analysis is to assist decision-makers in understanding the overall use of the Refuge to Refuge Trail, and the specific travel modes (bicycle or pedestrian) and trip purposes (recreational or utilitarian) that are likely to occur at various points along the proposed trail. Trail usage was also used to identify sections of the trail with similar travel patterns and character.

Estimating future bicycle and pedestrian use poses several challenges. The limited historic data for non-motorized trips that is available shows significant variation between trip rates for each unique location. Thus, the analysis completed for this report was based on population and employment travel analysis, as well as non-motorized counts for existing trails in the region.

The following resources were used to develop the methodology for estimating trail use:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) *Guidebook on Methods to Estimate Non-Motorized Travel* (Pub. No. FHWA-RD-98-166, July 1999)
- NCHRP Report 552, *Guidelines for Analysis of Investments in Bicycle Facilities*
- Several online examples of non-motorized travel forecasting approaches
- Data and trends from the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS, 2001 and 2009)

Figure 3. Existing trail network

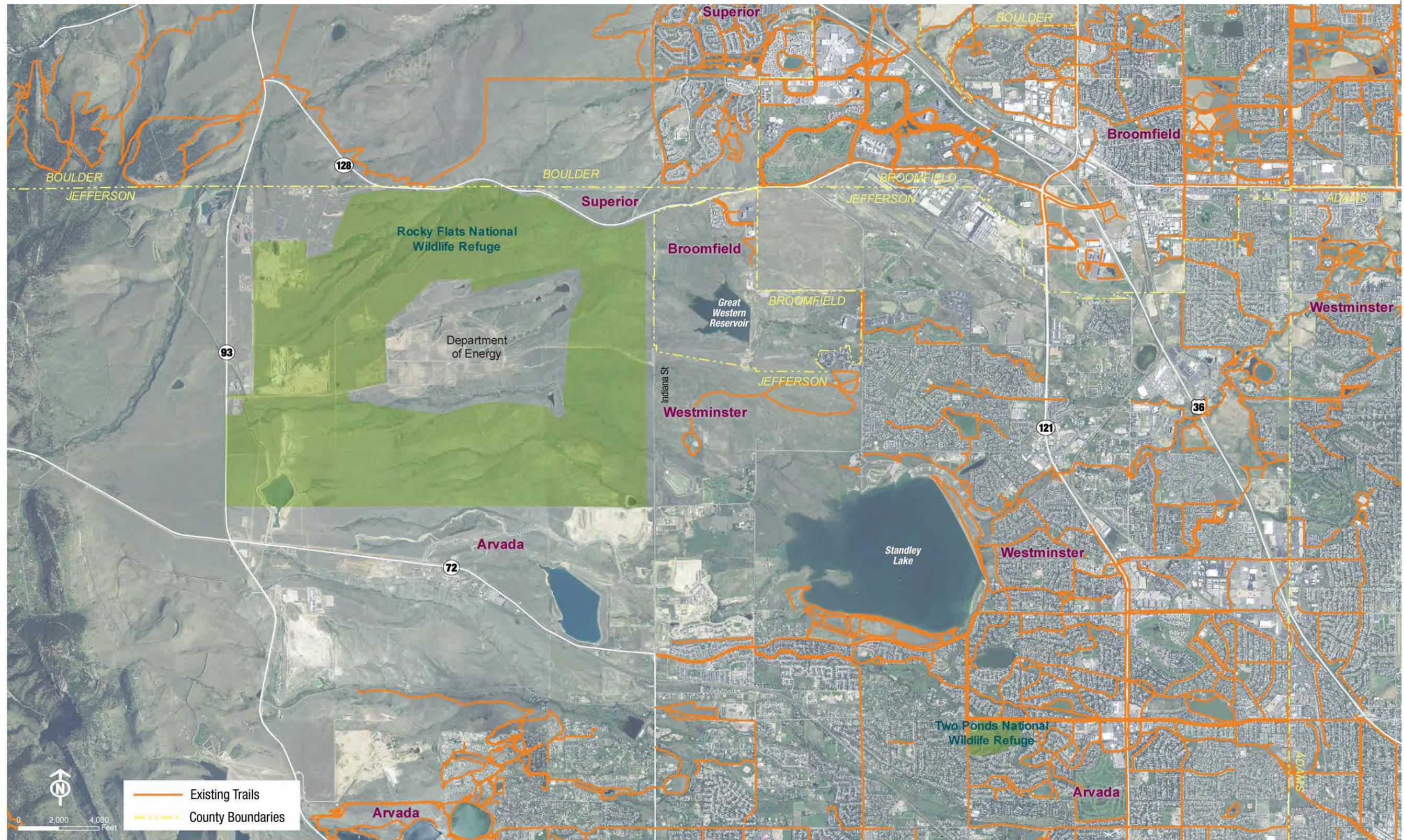
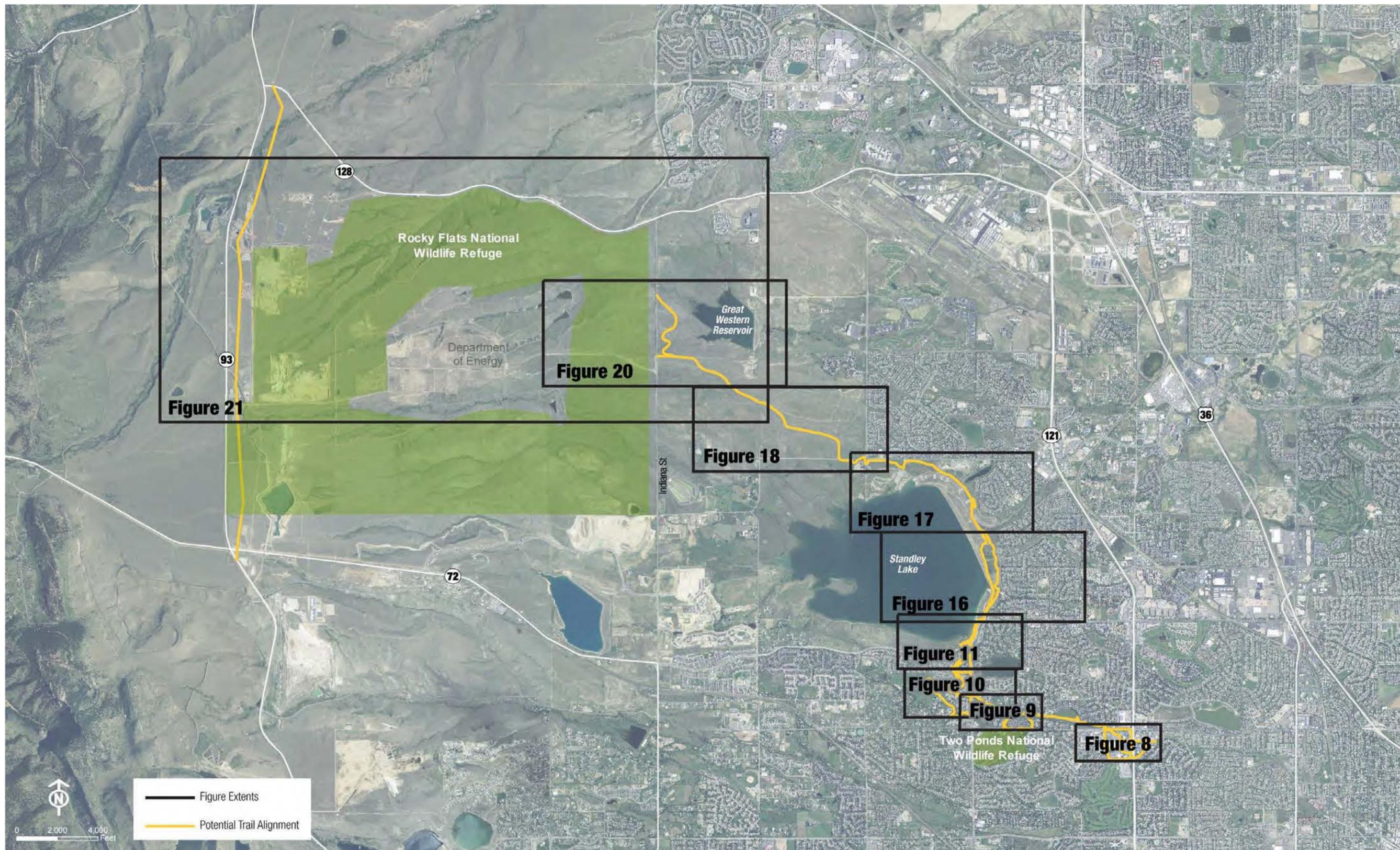


Figure 4. Potential trail alignments



3.2.1. Analysis Method & Process

The method used to analyze future trail use for the Refuge to Refuge Trail is summarized in this section. For further details, refer to Appendix C, which contains the analysis methodology presented to the Core Team on November 17, 2012. Two approaches from the FHWA Guidebook were used to estimate non-motorized travel:

- Sketch plan methods—Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was used to evaluate relationships between trail use and land use.
- Comparable trail use—Existing trail count data was used to estimate trail use on sections of the trail that are more likely to be recreational destinations.

The analysis consisted of the following steps:

- Step 1: Trip Production and Attraction—How many trips do the surrounding land uses generate? Attract?
- Step 2: Trail Access—Where do these trips enter and exit the trail?
- Step 3: Trip Type Distribution—What is the purpose of each trip?
- Step 4: Trail Use by Trip Type—Which routes are preferred by each trip purpose?

3.2.2. Considerations and Limitations

Several characteristics about trail users were considered to determine the breakdown of trip purposes that are likely to occur along the trail. The following trip types were identified:

- Utilitarian bicycle trips
- Recreational bicycle trips
- Utilitarian pedestrian trips
- Recreational pedestrian trips

Utilitarian trips include work, shopping, and school-related trips. All other trips are considered recreational. Utilitarian bicycle trips are assumed to occur more consistently than recreational bicycle trips.

Usage forecasts were based on an average weekday in late spring and/or early fall during a non-holiday week, with school in session, and with good weather.

This analysis assumed that a trail alignment exists in the future, and that trail accessibility is equal for pedestrians and bicyclists. It did not consider the differences between types of bicycles, such as mountain bikes whose riders are more likely to navigate an unpaved trail than a road bike rider would be.

Trip production and attraction rates were based on the number of existing households, places of employment, schools, and retail locations. Rates for recreational trips were assumed to originate and conclude at people's residences.

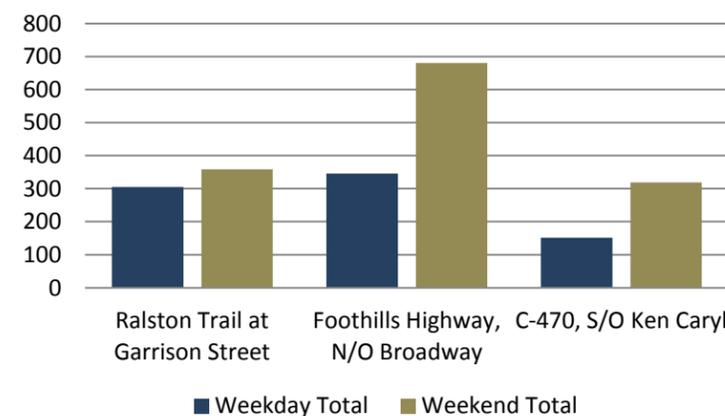
3.2.3. Existing Trail Comparisons

The analysis revealed some limitations in attraction factors as previously mentioned. Open space, in particular, is a prevalent feature of the northern part of the trail and will likely attract recreational users to make trips not specifically identified in the analysis. These trips include:

- Weekend trips
- Trips where users drive to a location to use the recreation area

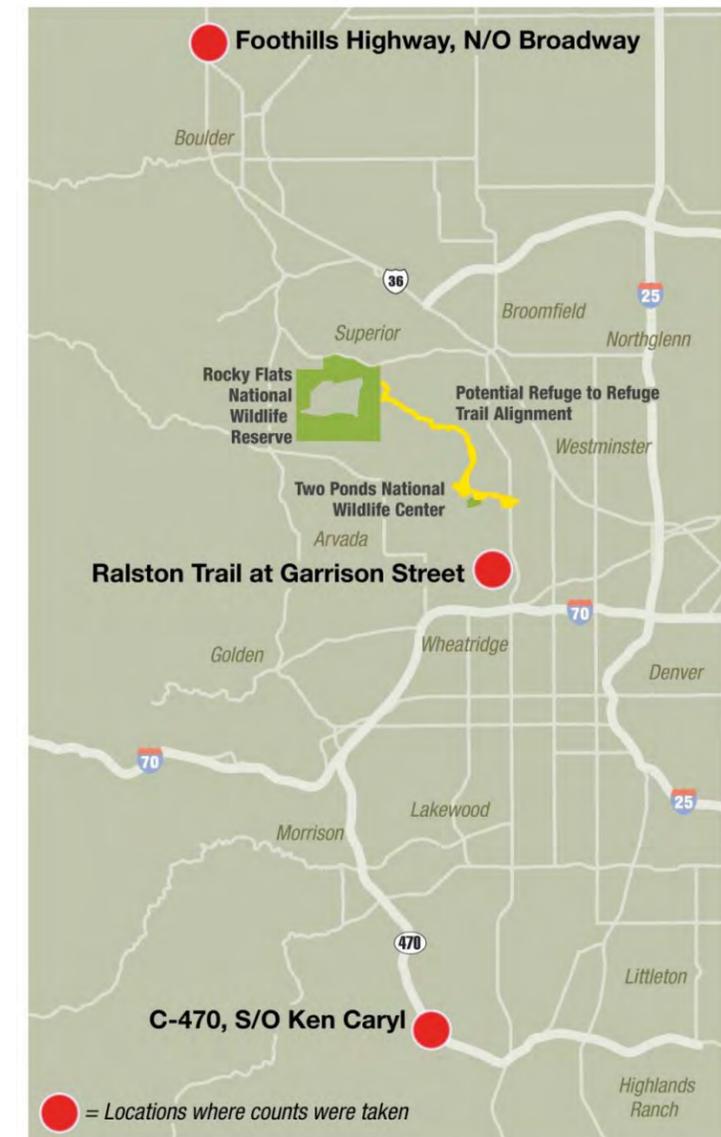
To better understand the potential use for the Refuge to Refuge Trail, data from the CDOT bicycle and pedestrian counter program was analyzed. The counter program provides daily non-motorized counts for both weekdays and weekends at locations along existing trails in the Denver region, as shown in Figure 5. A comparison to three similar trail locations provides context and a general idea for demand on the future trail alignment. Locations where these counts were taken are shown on the map in Figure 6.

Figure 5. CDOT bicycle and pedestrian counts



At all three locations, counts are significantly higher on weekend days. Ralston Trail at Garrison Street is located near Olde Town Arvada and likely serves trips destined for shopping, restaurants, and jobs, as well as recreational trips. This location is most similar to the Arvada section of the trail that serves a higher household and development density.

Figure 6. Comparable trail sites



The Foothills Highway and C-470 trail locations primarily provide access to suburban neighborhoods, parks, and open space; and are the most similar to the future trails in the Westminster and Broomfield areas. There are about twice as many trips on weekend days versus weekdays at both locations, suggesting that recreation is the primary use for these trails. Due to the “out-and-back” nature of the Refuge to Refuge Trail, the counts at these locations are higher than expected for the last section of the future trail alignment. However, high demand for weekend recreational trips is expected on this section of the trail, since it will provide access to open space and Rocky Flats NWR when it is open to the public.

Communities in the Denver area take pride in maintaining open space for residents and visitors to enjoy the natural environment. Boulder County reported approximately one visitor for every two acres of open space each day in 2004. The future trail alignment provides access to over 8,600 acres of open space. Applying the same visitation rate yields roughly 4,300 daily visitors. It is likely that many of these visitors to the open space accessed by the trail alignment drive from households in surrounding communities and park their cars before biking or walking on trails. The last section of the future trail alignment will serve recreational trips that are not identified in the analysis.

3.2.4. Usage Results

The results of the analysis indicate that trail use will vary length of the trail and between bicycle and pedestrian users. According to the analysis, on an average weekday, the trail will attract close to 300 daily users. As shown in Figure 7 and

Figure 8, a majority of the users are bicyclists and the most frequent use is recreational trips. The least frequent uses of the trail are for shopping and personal service trips. The southern section of the trail, within Arvada, shows the highest trail usage for all users. The northern section of trail through open space is expected to have less weekday use than in developed areas. However, CDOT trail count data for similar open space trails indicate high weekend recreational use. Further details about the findings of the trail usage analysis are described in subsequent trail section discussions. A full discussion of trail usage is included in Appendix D.

Figure 7. Estimated daily trail use (weekdays)

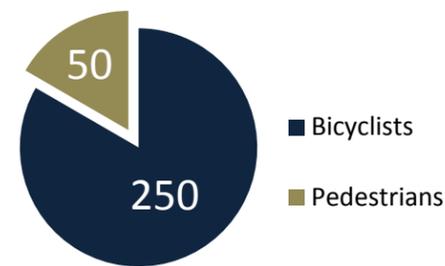
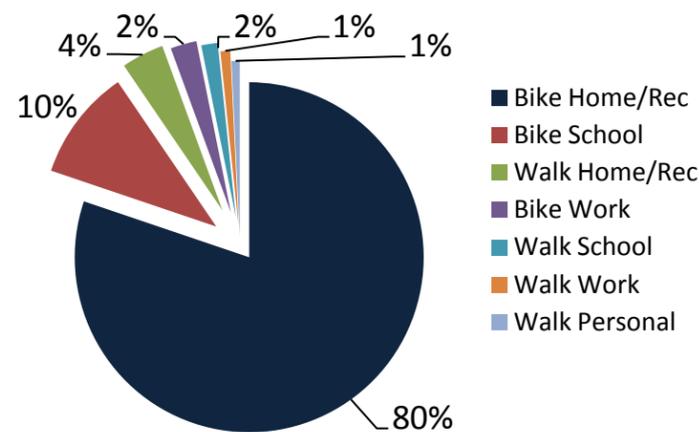


Figure 8. Trail usage by user type



3.3. Rules and Regulations

Because the Refuge to Refuge Trail crosses several jurisdictional boundaries, it is important to consider where municipal codes that regulate trail activities might change from city to city. In general, these guidelines are consistent between jurisdictions in the study area and are based upon common courtesy and safety. All jurisdictions have the following regulations:

- Non-motorized vehicle use is allowed on public trails except where specifically prohibited.
- Trail users are recommended to yield to slower users and to stay on designated trails through natural areas to protect environmental resources.

- Pet owners are required to keep dogs on a leash at all times except in designated dog parks.

Some communities enforce a curfew in parks and open spaces. The City and County of Broomfield allows trail use between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Daily permitted entrance times for Standley Lake Regional Park and Two Ponds NWR change by the season. In general, both areas are open year round from dawn until dusk and open later in the summer months. It is expected that the Rocky Flats NWR will have similar permitted entrance hours. Some communities have established curfews for minors, with exceptions on the weekends. Dogs are not allowed within the Two Ponds NWR.

3.4. Design Considerations

Design considerations applicable to the entire Refuge to Refuge Trail were identified by the Core Team. Standards for safety, consistent wayfinding, AASHTO design, and access for maintenance crews should be design priorities throughout the entire trail system. While this feasibility study does not include specific design treatments, these areas should be considered during the design phase of the project.

3.4.1. Safety

Safety is among the highest priorities for trail improvements. Where the trail crosses a roadway, every effort should be made to provide a safe, accessible means for crossing. Grade-separated crossings are preferred where feasible. Other safety considerations should include:

- Railings
- Lighting for underpasses
- Trail user speeds
- Trail user interactions
- Surface
- Sight distance
- Grades
- Curve radii
- Intersections

3.4.2. Wayfinding

To brand the Refuge to Refuge Trail and alert users to trail connections, wayfinding should be consistent throughout the trail. A

successful wayfinding program should involve a range of treatments including benches, lighting, signing, similar plantings, and so forth. If the Steering Committee develops a logo for the Rocky Mountain Greenway, it could be included on signage for this segment of trail.

3.4.3. Design Standards

The trail should be designed to conform to AASHTO design standards. A well-designed trail is more likely to improve safety and use of the trail. Specific items to be considered include:

- Slope (no greater than 5% for paved trails)
- Surface type (crusher fines versus paved)
- Avoidance of switchbacks and retaining walls
- Drainage
- American Disabilities Act requirements
- Intersection design

3.4.4. Maintenance

Access for routine trail maintenance must be considered in trail design. Some sections of trail may also provide access to otherwise inaccessible utilities and drainage. If trail alignments exist through ditch company property, trail design should accommodate regular maintenance vehicle use. Maintenance agreements will likely be needed for several portions of the trail.

3.5. Section 1: Arvada

Two Ponds NWR is located in the City of Arvada in the southeast portion of the study area. The Little Dry Creek Trail is the main trail running east-west through the City of Arvada, a few blocks north of Two Ponds NWR. To connect Two Ponds NWR to Rocky Flats NWR, the Little Dry Creek Trail is the primary existing alignment considered.

Currently, a gap exists in the off-street trail connectivity of the Little Dry Creek Trail near Wadsworth Boulevard. The current off-street trail alignment along the Little Dry Creek drainageway ends at Vance Street. The trail continues on the attached sidewalk until the at-grade crossing of Wadsworth Boulevard at West 77th Avenue, where it becomes a sidewalk and on-street bike lane. The City of Arvada has expressed an interest in continuing the off-street connectivity by continuing the trail along the Little Dry Creek drainageway. This

may include a below-grade crossing at Wadsworth Boulevard, at the location seen in Image 1. This connects the Northridge Shopping Center on the southwest corner of West 80th Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard to the Little Dry Creek Trail, as shown in Figure 9. Providing a grade-separated crossing along this alignment option will improve trail connectivity and the safety of trail users. However, trail improvements through this area will require the approval of the owner of the Northridge Shopping Center.



Image 1. The existing box culvert for the Little Dry Creek drainageway under Wadsworth Boulevard

Heading northwest from the Northridge Shopping Center at West 80th Avenue and Pomona Drive, the existing trail primarily runs parallel to Little Dry Creek through green space within an existing neighborhood, as shown in Figure 10. Two main options exist to connect trail users to Two Ponds NWR, as seen in Figure 10. A connection can be made south on Club Crest Drive and west on 80th Avenue or a connection can be made south on Hoyt Drive and east on West 80th Avenue to Two Ponds NWR. Both options are viable and sidewalks can be widened to accommodate a 10-foot wide multi-use path that leads to the refuge. If both alignments are improved, new signage can be added to guide users from the Little Dry Creek Trail to the “Two Ponds Loop.” The City of Arvada recognizes the need for new and improved wayfinding and indicated they are prepared to provide this.

Additional opportunities exist to provide a trail alignment through a more natural environment along the Farmers’ High Line Canal or the Croke Canal, as shown in Figure 11. While providing a trail alignment along the canals will enhance the user experience, it introduces a unique set of challenges. This alignment is within the right-of-way of the ditch companies and a significant amount of coordination and agreements will need to occur before moving forward with planning and design for an alignment along the canals. Multiple irrigation ditch crossings will be required to complete this proposed trail alignment. In addition, impacts to water quality and wildlife within this area will need to be identified (Image 2).

The City of Arvada has plans to develop a trailhead in the southwest corner of the Kipling Street and West 86th Parkway intersection, just north of the Standley Lake Library, as shown in Figure 12. Another alignment option involves improving the existing, detached sidewalk on the west side of Kipling Street. If improvements are made to the sidewalk along Kipling Street north to West 86th Parkway, just past the Standley Lake Library, the Little Dry Creek Trail can be connected to the potential trailhead. This alignment can be used with minimal improvements while negotiations with the ditch companies take place. The existing sidewalk is shown in Figure 12, picture 1.



Image 2. Trail alignment along the canals presents a unique set of challenges.

Figure 9. Northridge Shopping Center in Arvada

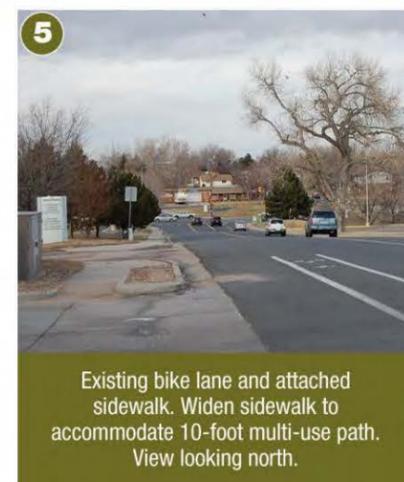
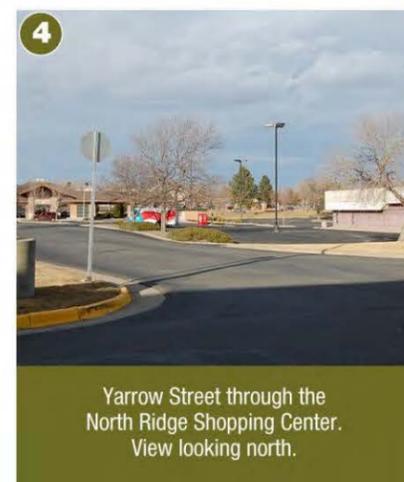
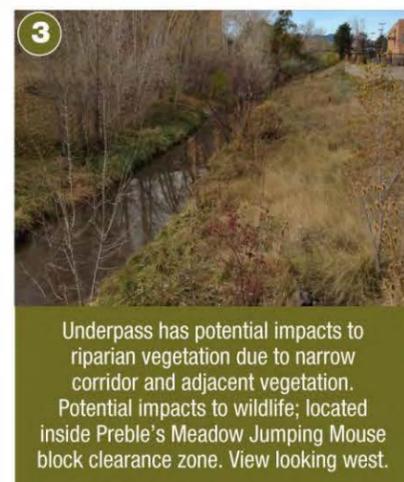
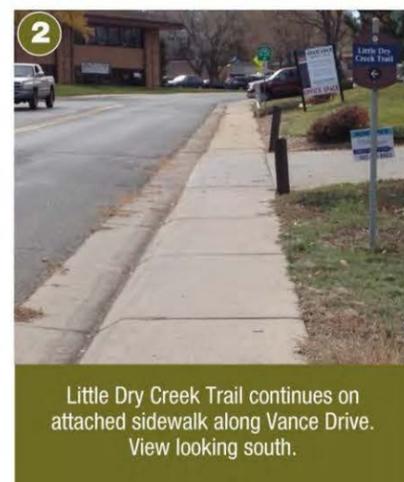
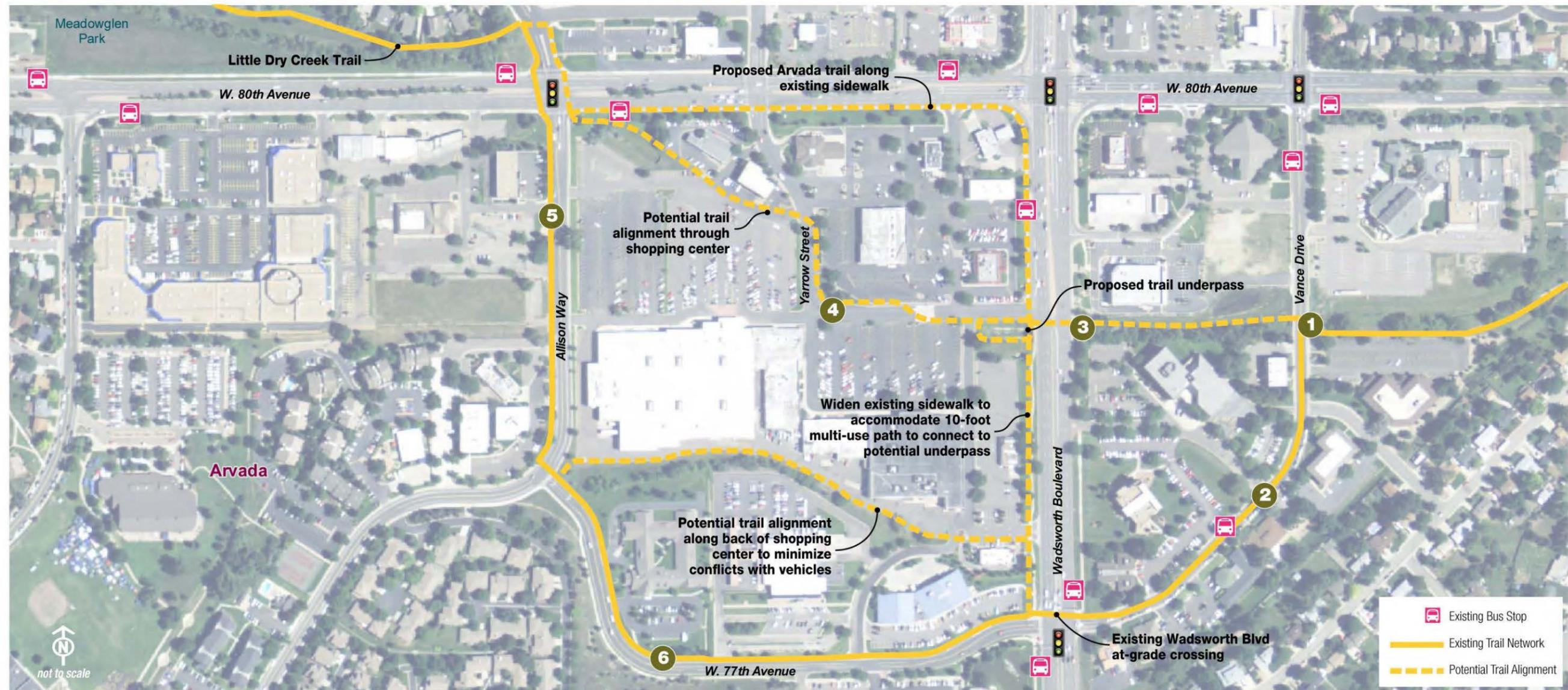


Figure 10. Potential Two Ponds loop

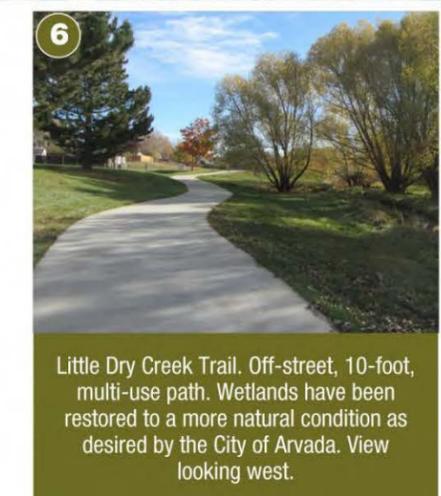
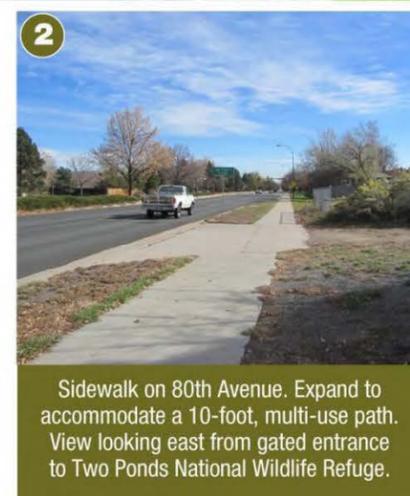


Figure 11. Farmers' High Line Canal and Croke Canal

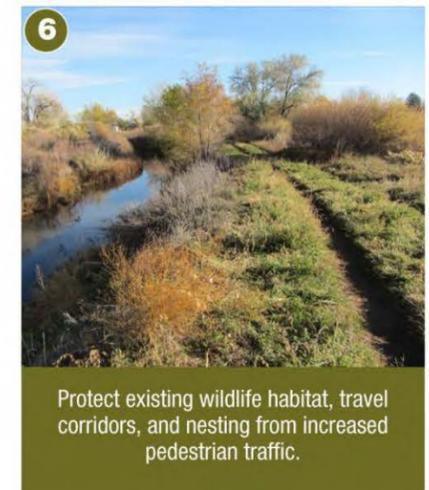
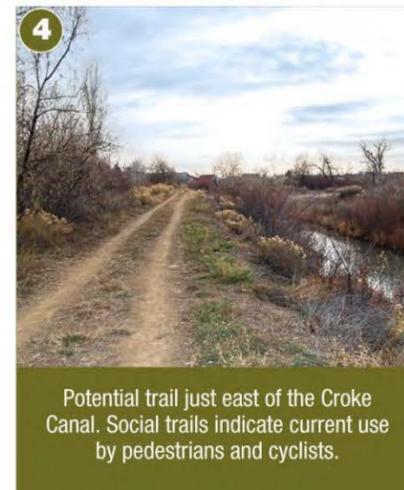
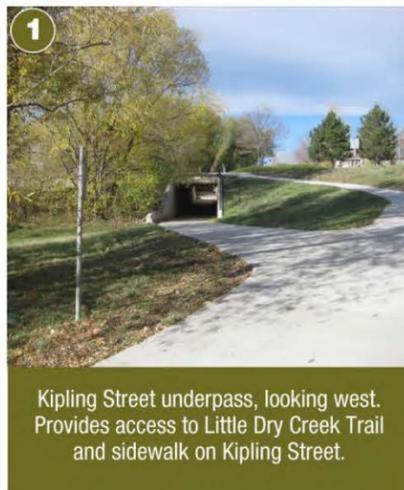
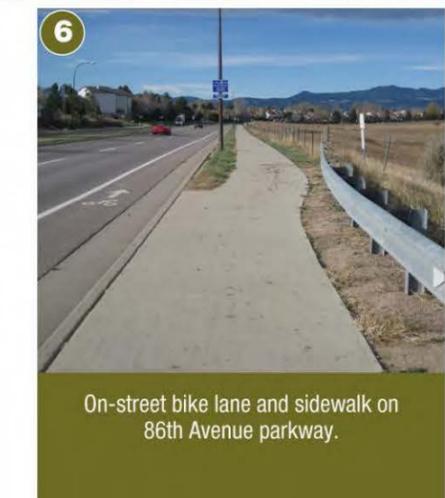
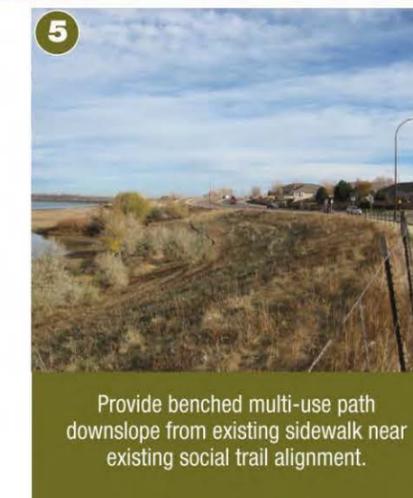
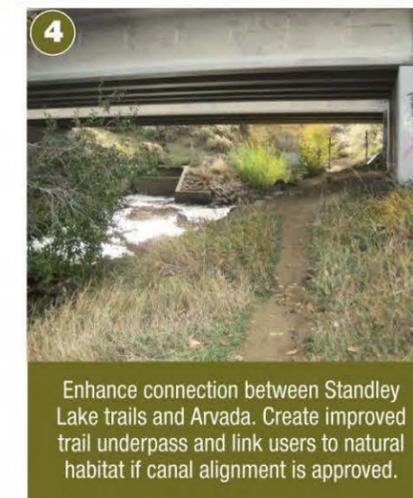
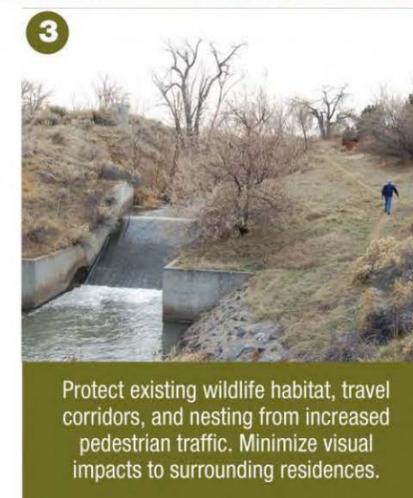
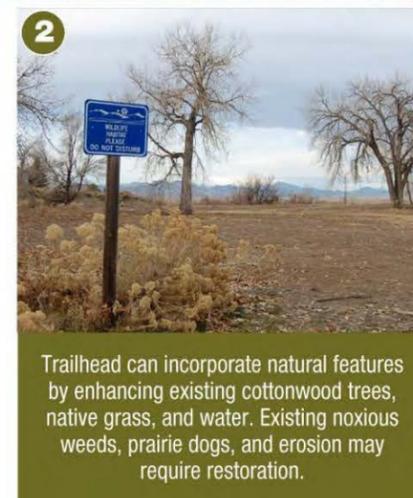


Figure 12. Standley Lake Library and Arvada's proposed trailhead



3.5.1. Trail Use

Based on the trail use analysis, this section will be the busiest section of the trail. This section includes existing alignments of the Little Dry Creek Trail using on-street routes to make connections between off-street sections. This section meanders through a shopping complex and neighborhoods and connects Two Ponds NWR, Lakecrest Park, and Standley Lake. As shown in Figure 13, compared to other sections of the trail, a relatively higher proportion of trail users will make utilitarian trips. Based on CDOT trail counts, it is anticipated that weekend use will be slightly higher than weekday counts, but will have less variation than the other two trail segments due to less recreational use in this section.

Results show that pedestrian trips are evenly split between recreational and utilitarian purposes. Both commuters and children on their way to school will use the trail.

Trail usage by bicyclists, similar to pedestrians, is highest on this section of the trail. Results show bicycle trips are expected to be primarily recreational, with a smaller percentage of utilitarian trips compared to pedestrians (Figure 14).

Figure 13. Section 1—Pedestrian trip types

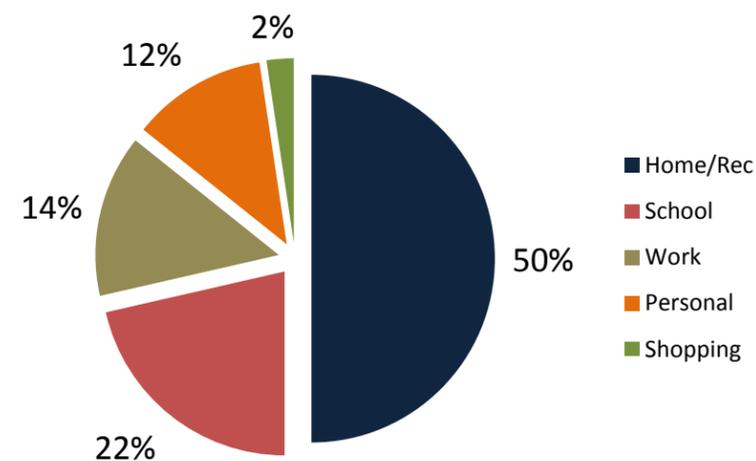
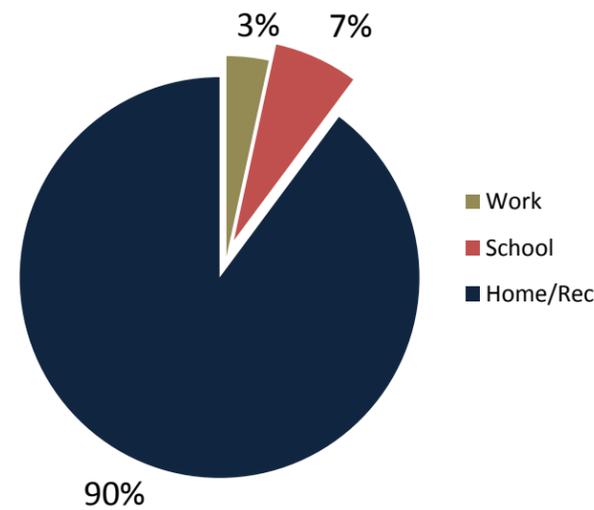


Figure 14. Section 1—Bicycle trip types



3.5.2. Typical Cross Sections

A majority of this section already exists as a paved, multi-use trail. One low-cost option is simply to improve wayfinding along the trail and use the existing sidewalk to connect to Two Ponds NWR. This option will not alter the existing trail cross sections.

Design options for the trail through ditch company property include a 10-foot crusher fines trail or a 10-foot concrete trail. Both of these options necessitate sub-surface improvements to withstand occasional maintenance vehicle use and provide adequate drainage. Figure 15 shows the typical section within ditch company right of way. The City of Arvada expressed a preference for the crusher fines trail through this area to maintain the natural feel. At the same time, consideration should be given to how a surface choice will impact certain trail user modes and ADA accessibility in this area. In addition to improvements to the trail surface, bridge construction is necessary to cross the ditch. A rendering of the potential improvements is shown in Image 3.

3.5.3. Improvement Costs

Cost estimates for improvements to the trail through Arvada, shown in Table 3, include basic wayfinding, a ditch crossing, and an established formal trail through ditch alignments between 80th

Avenue and 86th Avenue. Because a trail exists throughout this section, cost estimates for wayfinding do not assume trail improvements. Additional wayfinding costs may include a thorough branding scheme with interpretive signage, plantings, and benches.

To ensure trail connectivity through the area, designs for trail surface improvements along ditches should be coordinated with the underpass at West 86th Parkway, as well as with the planned trailhead at Kipling.

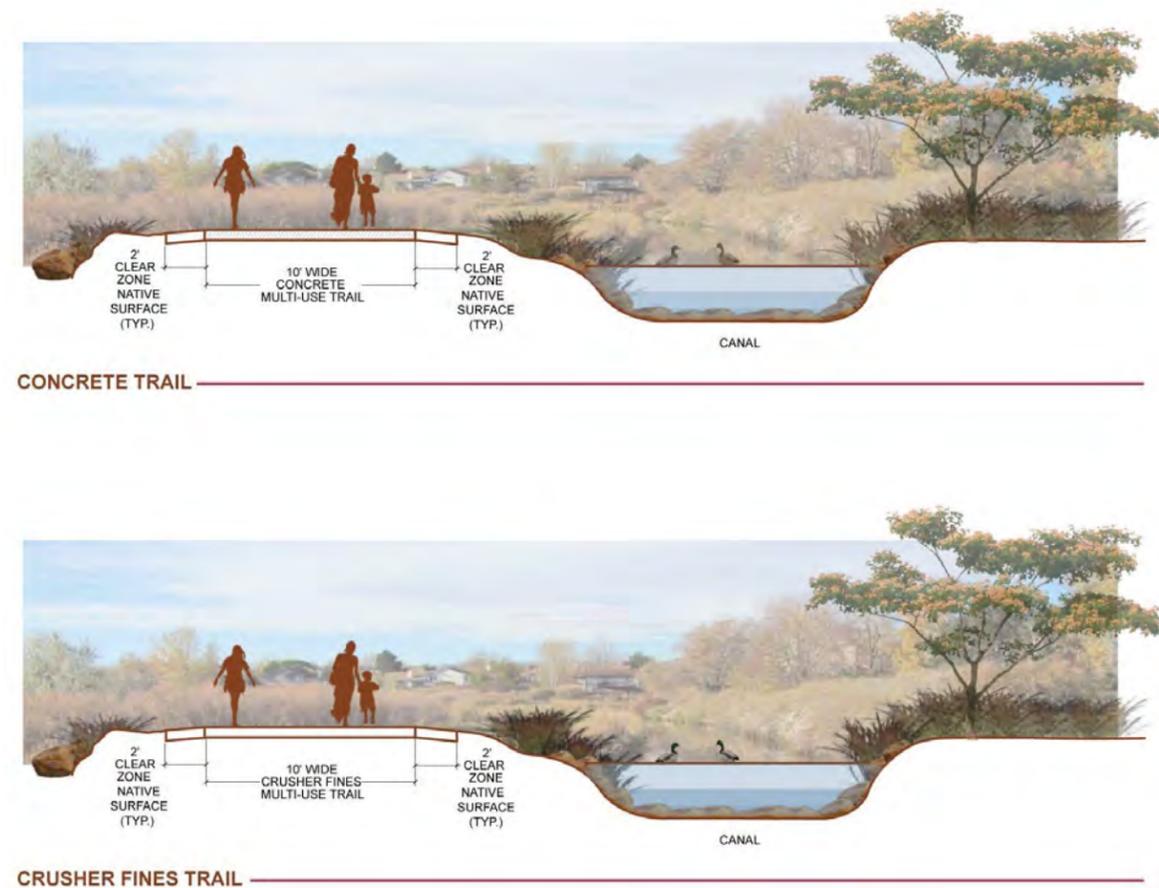


Image 3. Rendering of footbridge along ditch alignment

Table 3. Section 1 improvement options

Design Option	Cost Estimate	Design Assumptions
Wayfinding	\$42,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs and trail designations at all major trail and road intersections through the Arvada section
Ditch alignment with crusher fines surface Farmers' High Line Canal (80 th Avenue to 86 th Avenue Trailhead)	\$504,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-foot trail width • Installation of footbridge crossing south of Standley Lake Library • Signage
Ditch alignment with concrete surface Farmers' High Line Canal (80 th Avenue to 86 th Avenue Trailhead)	\$918,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-foot trail width • Installation of footbridge crossing south of Standley Lake Library • Signage
Ditch alignment with crusher fines surface Croke Canal (80 th Avenue to 86 th Avenue Trailhead)	\$435,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-foot trail width • Installation of footbridge crossing south of Standley Lake Library • Signage
Ditch alignment with concrete surface Croke Canal (80 th Avenue to 86 th Avenue Trailhead)	\$782,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-foot trail width • Installation of footbridge crossing south of Standley Lake Library • Signage
Trailhead at Kipling and 86 th Parkway with gravel surface	\$100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trailhead kiosk • Grading

Figure 15. Cross section for trail adjacent to drainage ditch



3.6. Section 2: Standley Lake

Between Arvada and Westminster, the character of the proposed trail alignment transitions from a built environment to a more natural setting with extensive mountain views around Standley Lake. The existing connection between Arvada and Westminster is an at-grade crossing at the signalized intersection of Kipling Street and West 86th Parkway. With the addition of a trailhead at this location, it is anticipated that the number of trail users will increase, making a grade-separated crossing under West 86th Parkway the preferred choice.

The trail alignment under the existing bridge at West 86th Parkway, shown in Image 4, will require additional design considerations. These considerations include the viability of a connection through the canal easement, trail and bridge height clearances, construction in a possible floodplain, potential excavation adjacent to existing abutments, and trail user safety within the ditch company's right-of-way. If the bridge underpass is considered unfeasible, the existing sidewalk and bike lane along West 86th Parkway is a possible trail connection between Westminster and Arvada.



Image 4. Existing social trail under 86th Parkway; a grade-separated crossing requires additional design considerations

The City of Westminster is located in the center of the study area and contains Standley Lake Regional Park and Westminster Hills Open Space. To connect Two Ponds NWR to Rocky Flats NWR, a trail alignment will likely go through these open spaces.

The existing trail system in the Standley Lake Regional Park consists of multiple unpaved trails and service roads. The existing trails

meander around Standley Lake and provide trail users access to recreation with multiple connections to adjacent neighborhoods and parks, as seen in Figure 16 and Figure 17.

A possible trail alignment option east and northeast of Standley Lake is to follow the existing maintenance road at the base of the dam. The trail will need to be constructed as far from the dam embankment as possible to account for potential future dam expansion.

A second option is to construct a trail that runs generally parallel to the maintenance road to avoid user conflicts with maintenance and intermittent resident vehicles, take advantage of viewshed opportunities, and bring the trail into a more inviting natural environment. The maintenance road climbs the spillway at grades that do not meet ADA requirements. The City of Westminster would be in favor of alternate trail alignments rather than a trail with switchbacks and retaining walls. Improvements to the existing unpaved trail system through Standley Lake Regional Park will provide connections to the trailhead located on West 100th Avenue and the Nature Center at Simms Street and West 100th Avenue. This intersection, shown in Image 5, is the main entrance into Standley Lake Regional Park. It has high use during the months of May through September, creating a high potential for user conflicts between vehicles, towed boat traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Since the surface recreation rights for Standley Lake Regional Park are owned by the Farmers' Reservoir and Irrigation Company (FRICO) and have been leased to the City of Westminster for use as a recreation area, any new trail alignment will need to be discussed with FRICO. In addition, an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) governs the water use and is managed by the Standley Lake Operations Committee (SLOC). Members of SLOC include officials from the City of Westminster, the City of Northglenn, the City of Thornton, Jefferson County and FRICO. Possible trail alignments will need to be discussed with SLOC and FRICO, since they may require changes to the existing IGAs.

The potential trail alignment heads northwest from the Nature Center into Westminster Hills Open Space. This will require a pedestrian crossing of West 100th Avenue that will likely be at-grade. The City of Westminster requires an offset of 1,350 feet from the intersection

of West 100th Avenue and Simms Street for an at-grade pedestrian crossing at the current posted speed; therefore, the trail alignment will need to cross West 100th Avenue no closer than 1,350 feet west of this intersection to meet Westminster traffic requirements.



Image 5. The non-standard intersection configuration and lack of pedestrian facilities at West 100th Avenue and Simms Street creates a safety concern for pedestrians and bicyclists during busy summer months

An environmental consideration at this location is a bald eagles' nest located in the northwest portion of the Standley Lake Regional Park. According to the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines from the FWS, no buffer is needed for non-motorized recreation and human entry outside of breeding season; however, a 330-foot buffer should be maintained during breeding season. Both a 330-foot buffer and a 660-foot buffer are shown in Figure 18.

3.6.1. Trail Use

Projected weekday trail activity will likely decrease when leaving Arvada and entering Westminster and the Standley Lake Regional Park. This section of trail lines the edge of suburban neighborhoods and provides access between homes and Standley Lake. New trail connections on the east and north of the lake will greatly increase accessibility to adjacent neighborhoods and schools, resulting in a fairly high percentage of trips to school for both bicycles and pedestrians. Recreational trips make up the majority of trips, as shown in Figure 19. Section 2 trail use Weekend activity is expected to increase substantially along this section of the trail, based on the CDOT non-motorized counts.

Figure 16. Eastern Standley Lake

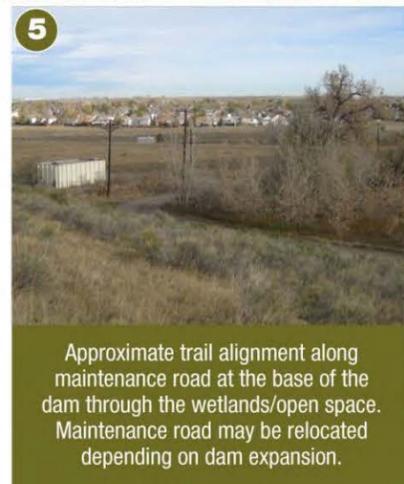
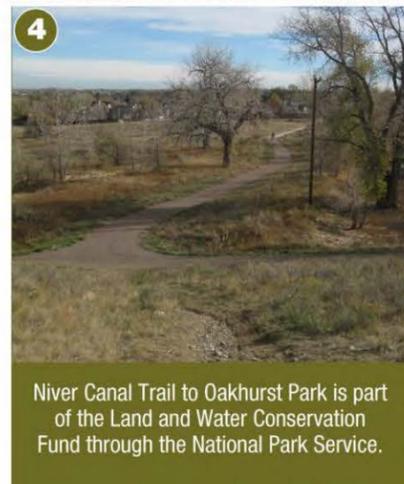
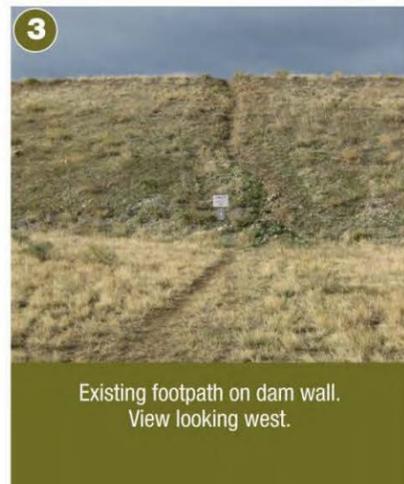
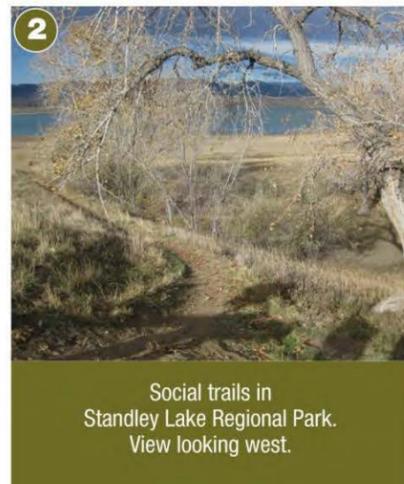
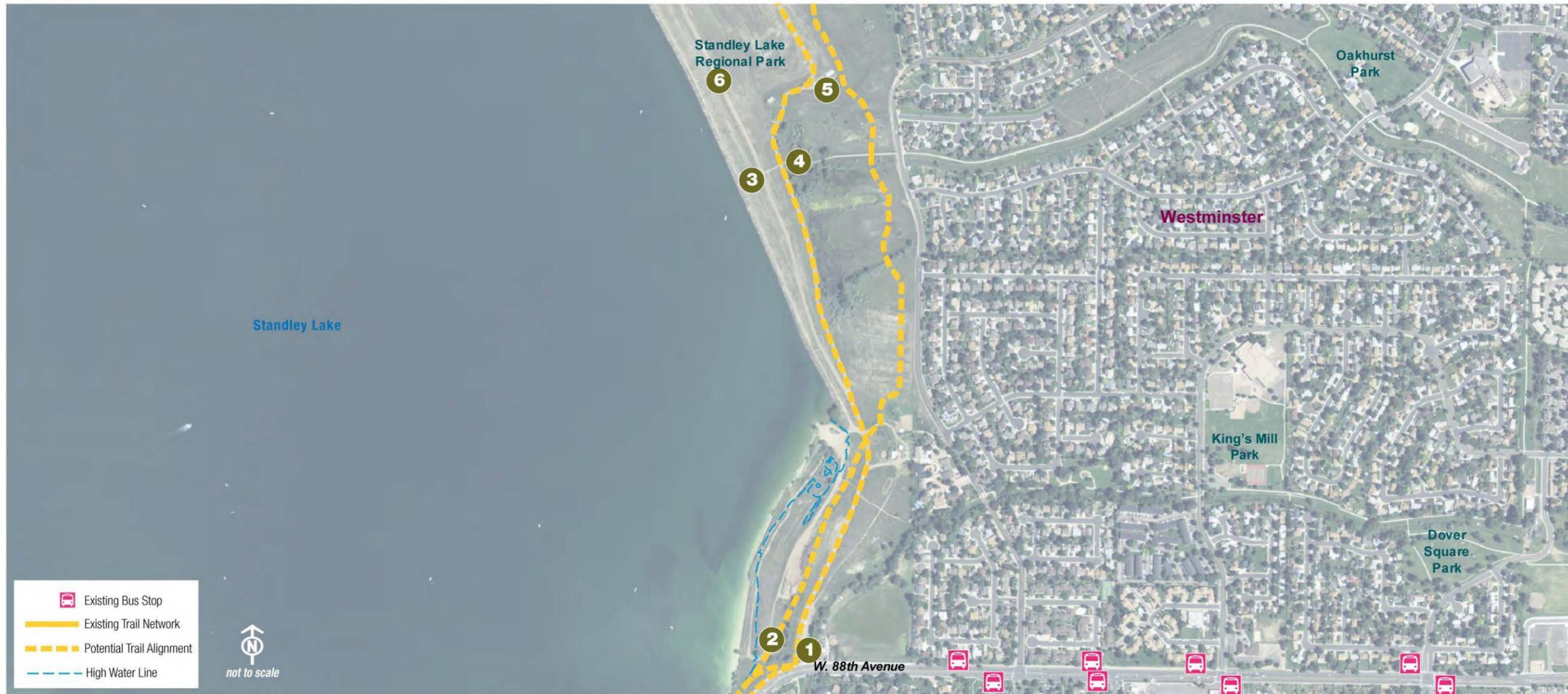


Figure 17. Standley Lake Regional Park

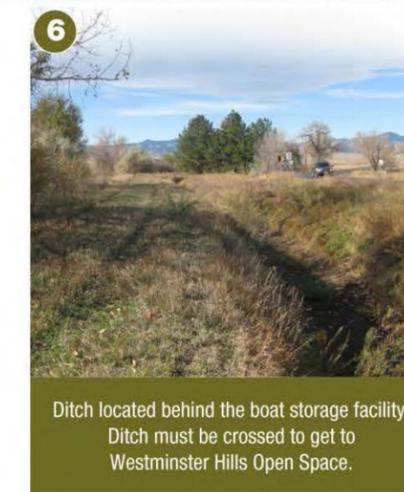
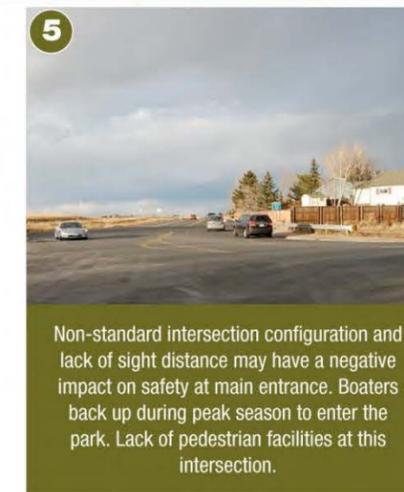
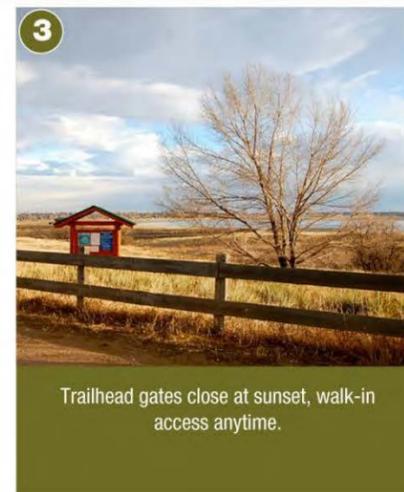
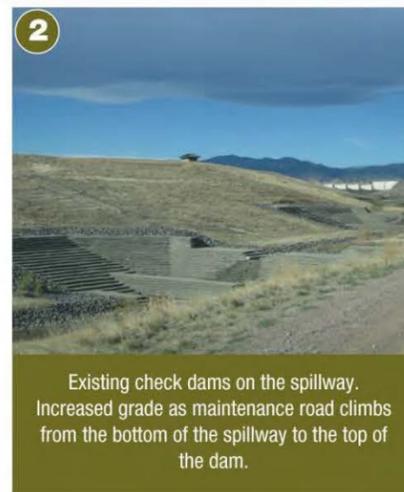
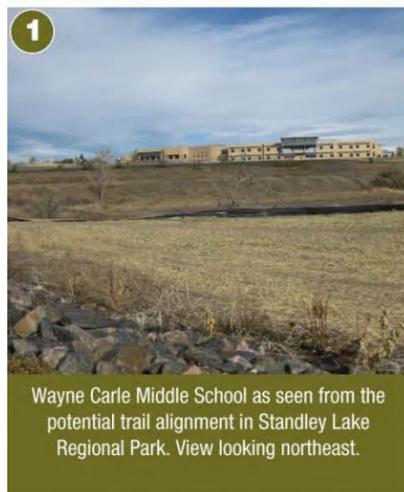


Figure 18. Westminster Hills Open Space

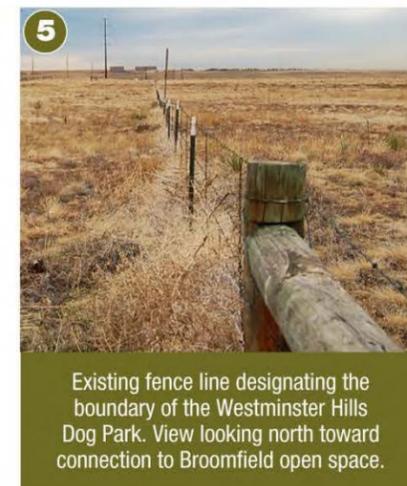
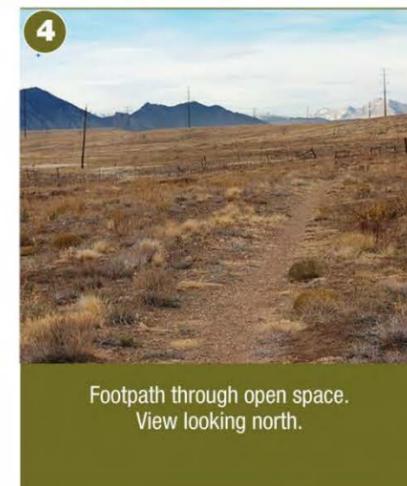
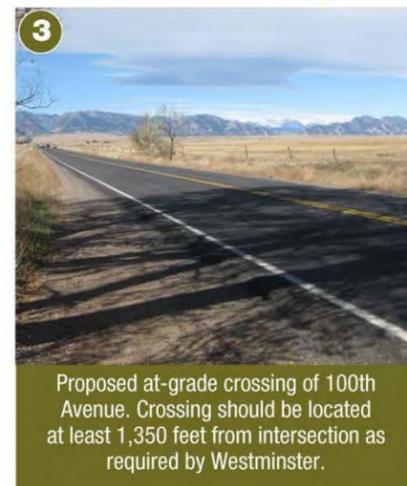
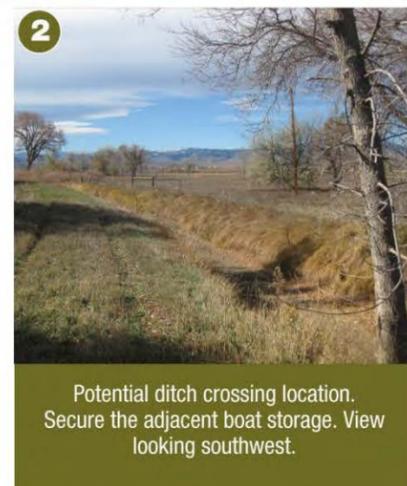
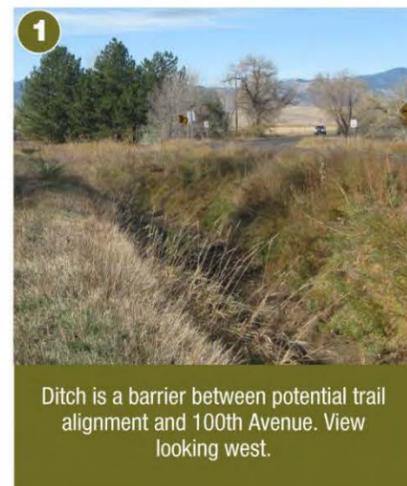
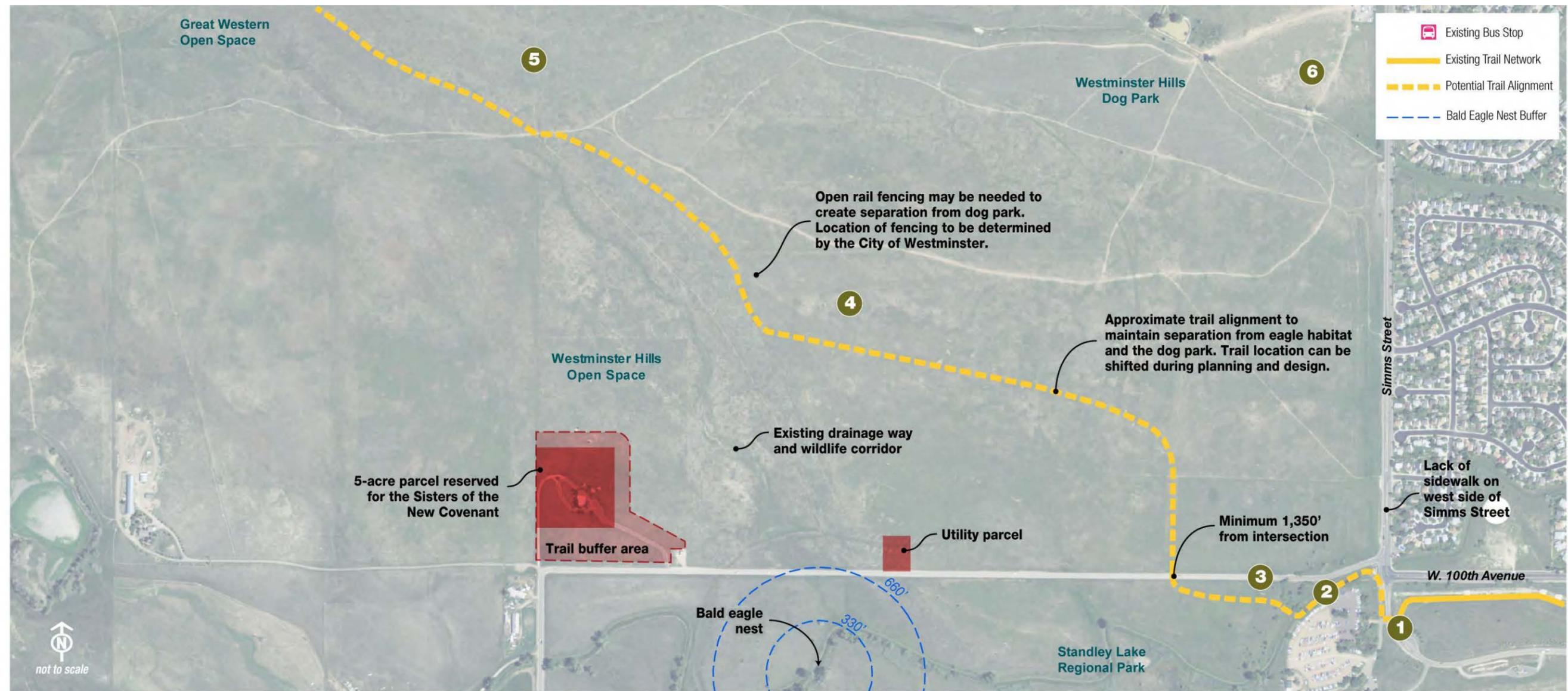
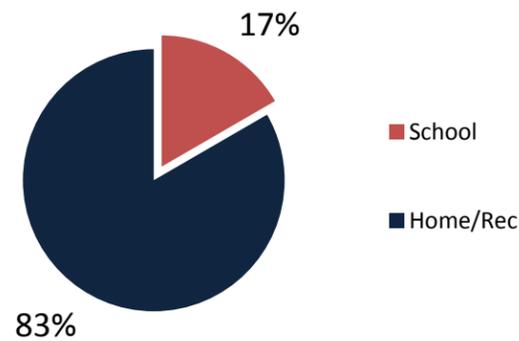
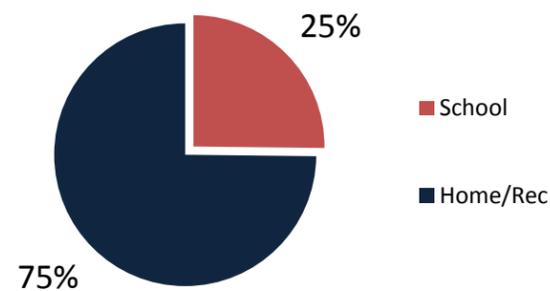


Figure 19. Section 2 trail use

Section 2—Pedestrian trip types



Section 2—Bicycle trip types

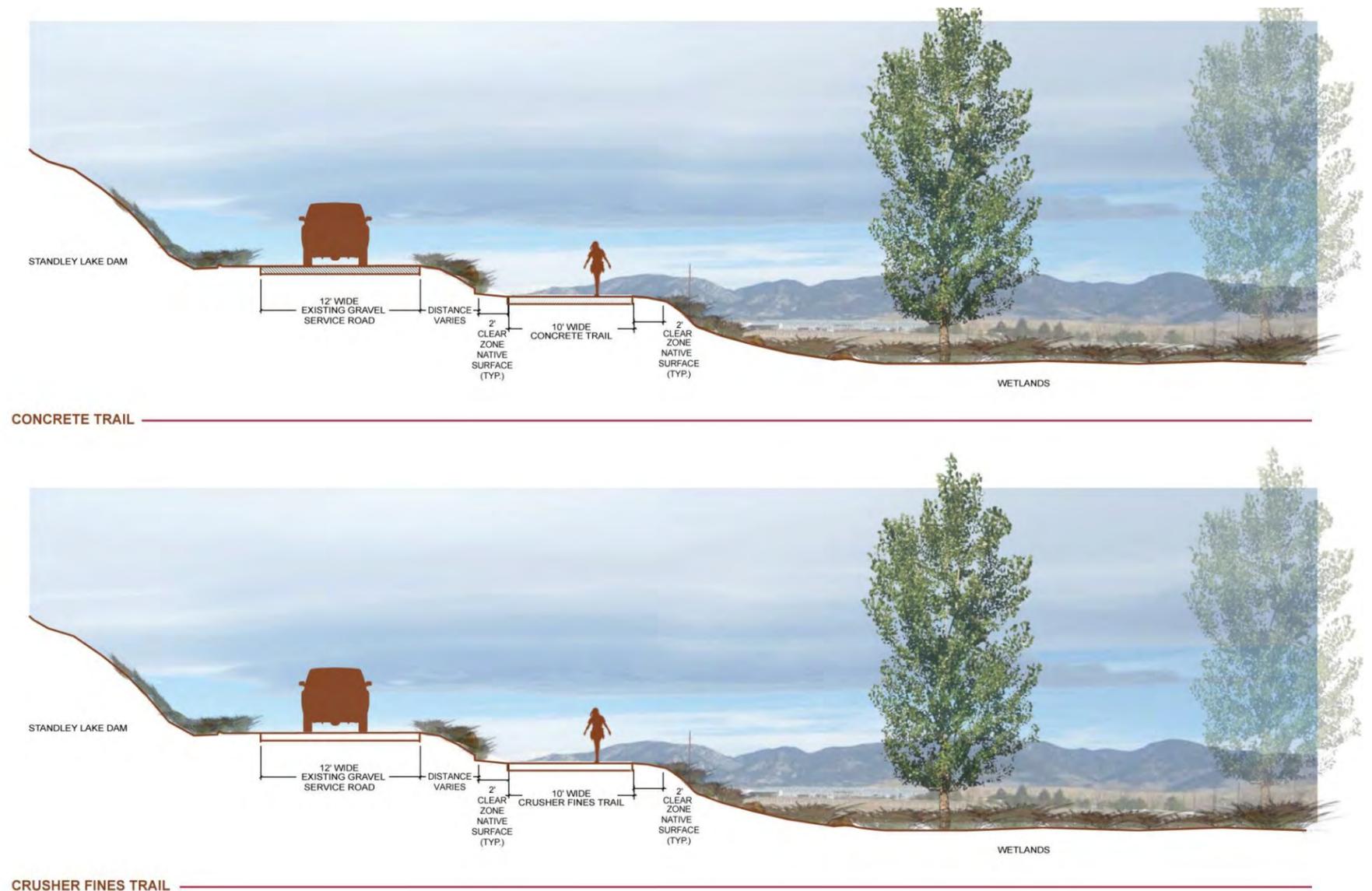


3.6.2. Design Considerations

From the underpass at West 86th Parkway, another bridge will be required for trail users to cross over the outfall. The trail can be benched into the slope north of West 86th parkway, or cantilevered using a boardwalk design. The decision about the trail treatment through this area will be made during the design phase.

Beginning at the gate at 88th Avenue, much of the trail is shared use along the maintenance road that travels to the top of the spillway. This portion of the trail also has periodic resident traffic for tree limb drop off and mulch pick up on the maintenance road. To avoid conflicts, a separated trail through this area works best. Opportunities exist to construct a parallel trail for portions of the alignment to reduce user conflicts along the maintenance road, enhance natural character, and take advantage of view sheds around the east side of the lake (see Figure 20). It is likely that some shared use will continue along this section of trail.

Figure 20. Cross section of a meandering trail at base of Standley Lake dam



Crusher fines and concrete are potential surface options for trail improvements in this section. For trail segments adjacent to the Standley Lake spillway, where gradients exceed 5%, alternate alignments need to be considered to achieve ADA accessibility and adequate drainage. Avoid improvements such as grading and retaining wall construction, since they would increase the potential impacts to the natural context of the area.

To cross the ditch near the Nature Center, a bridge is needed. The boat storage there will need to be secured since the trail will be near

the lot. An at-grade pedestrian crossing will need to be designed to meet the City of Westminster requirements to achieve adequate sight distance.

3.6.3. Improvement Costs

Table 4 shows cost estimates for Section 2. Improvements to this section include estimates for trail improvements between the future trailhead at 86th Parkway and the Standley Lake Nature Center. These estimates include the option for a meandering trail through open space along the base of the dam. They also incorporate other improvements that will be necessary to complete the connections at the south end of the section, including a crossing of the ditch outfall.

Table 4. Section 2 improvement options

Design Option	Cost Estimate	Design Assumptions
Wayfinding	\$14,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs and trail designations at all major trail and road intersections throughout the Standley Lake section, including cautionary signs where the trail shares use with maintenance road
Underpass at West 86 th Parkway and benched crusher fines trail through open space to junction with maintenance road	\$617,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footbridge over ditch outfall south of underpass
Meandering crusher fines trail adjacent to maintenance road at the base of the dam to Nature Center	\$1,407,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crusher fines trail surface
Underpass at West 86 th Parkway and benched concrete trail through open space to junction with maintenance road	\$719,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footbridge over ditch outfall south of underpass
Meandering concrete trail adjacent to maintenance road at the base of the dam to Nature Center	\$2,764,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete trail surface

3.7. Section 3: Open Space

After the trail crosses West 100th Avenue, it would be adjacent to the Westminster Hills Dog Park located northeast of Westminster Hills Open Space. The City of Westminster has determined that a city-standard open space fence may be needed to create separation between the dog park and trail users. An example of this type of fence is shown in Image 6.



Image 6. An example of the city-standard split rail fence, as seen at the trailhead to Standley Lake Regional Park

The potential trail alignment connecting the City of Westminster's open space and the City and County of Broomfield will likely begin at the southern border of the Great Western Open Space, south of the Great Western Reservoir. An abandoned railroad grade runs east-west across the southern portion of the open space and may be used as a potential alignment. The rail bed is located along a natural highpoint across the open space, provides scenic views in all directions, and will require less earthwork than placing a trail alignment downslope toward the Great Western Reservoir. As the rail bed approaches Indiana Street, there is a cut in the terrain for Indiana Street, which is a logical location for a grade-separated crossing. A grade-separated overpass crossing is preferred at this location due to existing grades and the speed of traffic along Indiana Street. This will provide a connection for trail users to the Rocky Flats NWR when it is open to the public.

Another potential alignment exists just west of the Great Western Reservoir. This trail alignment will follow the abandoned rail bed, and then it traverses the western side of the Great Western Reservoir

toward Walnut Creek. To avoid potential flooding of the trail, this alignment will need to be located outside of the high water limit of the reservoir and it should consider the possibility of future reservoir expansion. Currently, the City and County of Broomfield identifies the proposed high water line at 5,640 feet, as shown in Figure 21. The trail alignment could meander around the reservoir just to the west of the high water line and access Rocky Flats NWR using an underpass at Walnut Creek. This location was identified as a possible crossing option as part of the proposed Jefferson Parkway.

To improve regional mobility and accessibility, the trail should connect to the potential trail identified within the Jefferson Parkway alignment and to the trails identified in the Rocky Flats NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). The Jefferson Parkway is a potential highway connection between the existing Northwest Parkway and C-470. The Parkway is planned to include a 10-foot wide, multi-use trail that extends along the Parkway and eventually connects to the US 36 Trail, as identified in the environmental impact statement (EIS). The approximate alignment of Jefferson Parkway runs parallel to Indiana Street on the eastern side of Rocky Flats NWR and then heads northeast of the Great Western Reservoir toward the Northwest Parkway. The potential Jefferson Parkway alignment is identified in Figure 21 and Figure 22.

Any trail alignment should be coordinated with the Jefferson Parkway. The Jefferson Parkway Environmental Impact Statement has identified the underpass at Walnut Creek as a trail crossing; however, due to steep grades in the area south of the Great Western Reservoir, the potential overpass to the south on Indiana Street is the preferred crossing to avoid site impacts. Further analysis will ultimately identify which crossing of Indiana Street is recommended.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed a CCP for Rocky Flats NWR in 2007. A CCP is a planning document that describes the desired future conditions of a refuge and provides long-range guidance and management direction. The CCP identifies six potential connections to the regional trail system, two of which are located along Indiana Street. One of the potential connections is identified along Indiana Street to connect to the future Westminster trail system. The other is identified to connect to the Great Western trail system north of Walnut Creek at the northwest corner of the Great Western Open Space.

An additional connection is identified in the CCP along SH 128 near McCaslin Boulevard. This connection will allow users to connect to the Coalton Trail and the Boulder County trail network. Another connection is identified on the western side of the refuge connecting to the Colorado Front Range Trail potential alignment. Through coordination between FWS and other planning efforts, such as this study, the crossings identified as part of this report will be considered during design and implementation. Further analysis will identify which connections best serve the refuge.

Unincorporated Jefferson County is located in the northwest portion of the study area. In addition to an eastern connection to Rocky Flats NWR, Jefferson County has identified a proposed trail alignment along SH 93 as part of the Colorado Front Range Trail, as seen in Figure 22. The Colorado Front Range Trail is a Colorado State Parks initiative. Their vision is to create a multi-purpose trail from Wyoming to New Mexico that links communities, cultural and historic resources, parks, and open space along the Front Range. The proposed alignment runs parallel to Rocky Flats NWR, just west of the refuge along SH 93. If this connection is made, additional trail users from the north, south, and west will be able to access Rocky Flats NWR and connect to the potential alignment east of Rocky Flats NWR leading through Broomfield, Westminster, and Arvada to Two Ponds NWR.

3.7.1. Trail Use

This section of trail extends from Standley Lake to the proposed entrance of the Rocky Flats NWR, and is accessible from the Broomfield trail network. It also provides a rare opportunity to move through natural prairie while enjoying expansive views of the Front Range. Many opportunities exist for drawing attention to cultural, historic, and natural points of interest to enhance the user experience. This segment of trail is expected to have less weekday use than other sections. While the first sections are surrounded by a variety of land uses, household density, and utilitarian destinations, this segment primarily provides access to open space. Thus, recreation is the expected use for this section with less demand for weekday trail use. With increasing development in the surrounding areas, this section will have the potential for serving work and school trips.

Figure 21. Great Western Reservoir and eastern Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge

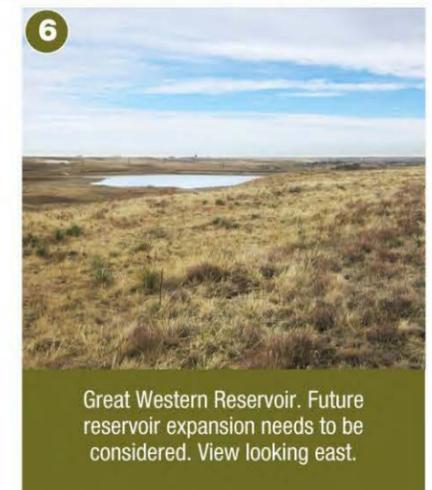
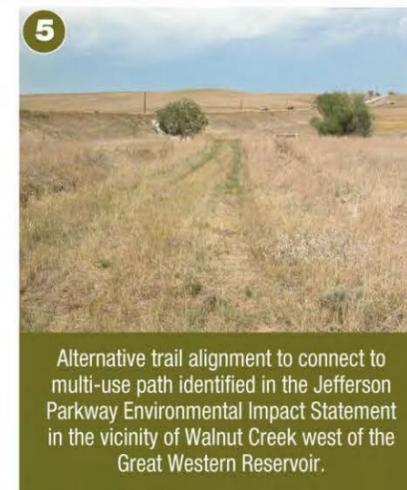
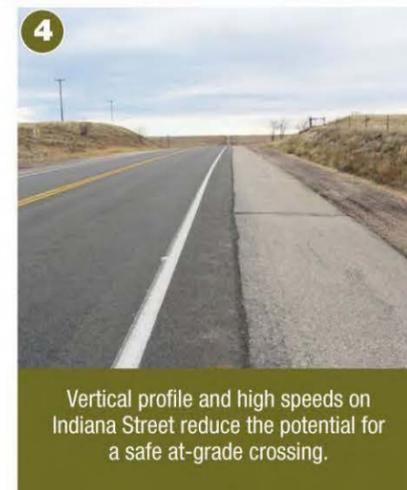
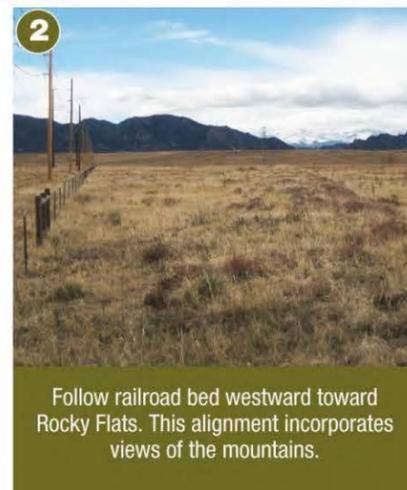
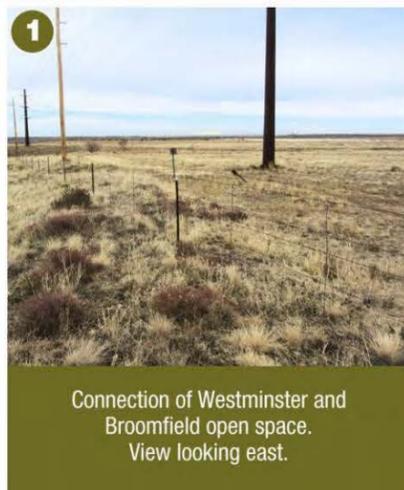
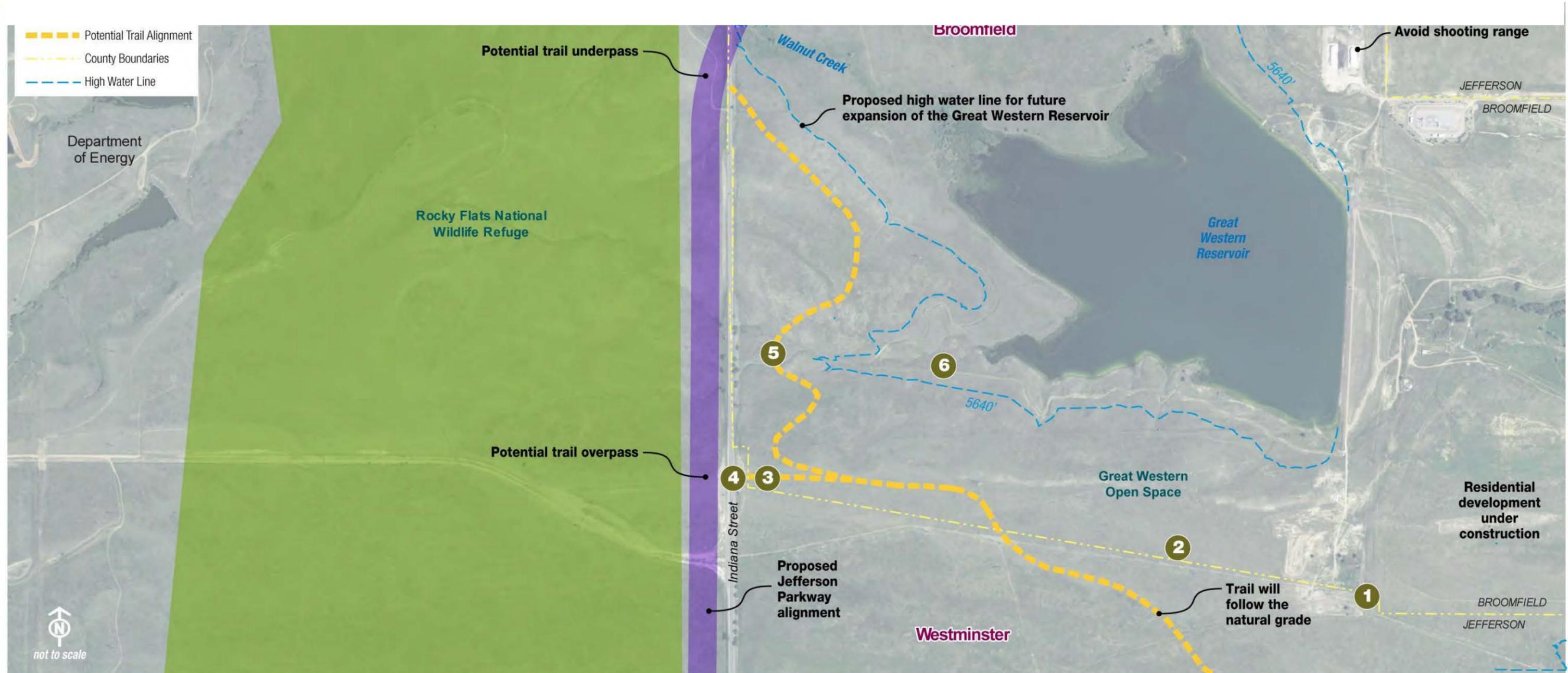
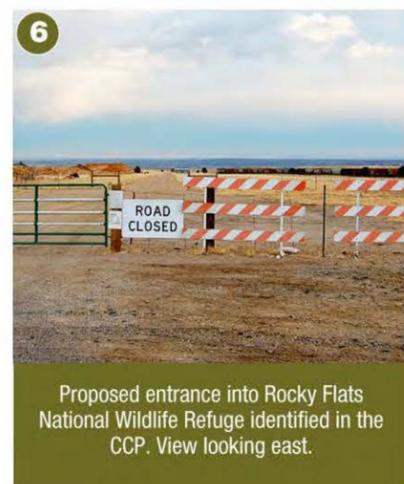
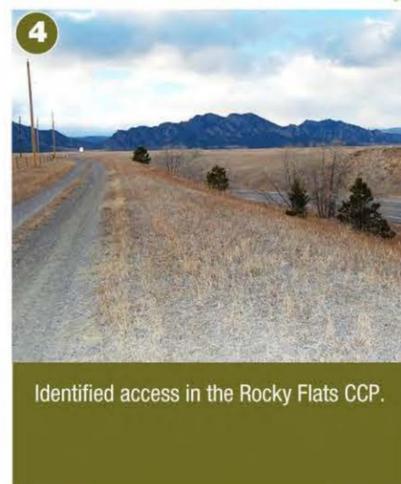
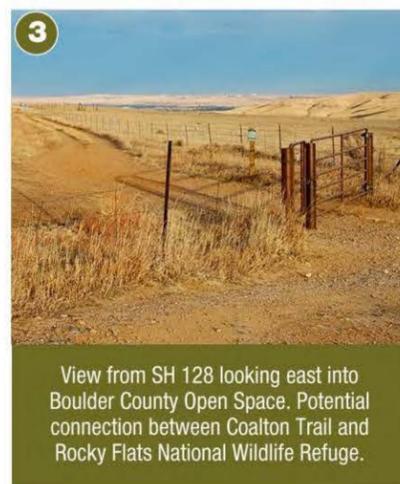
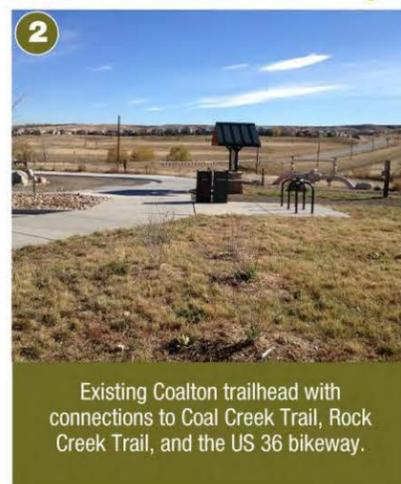
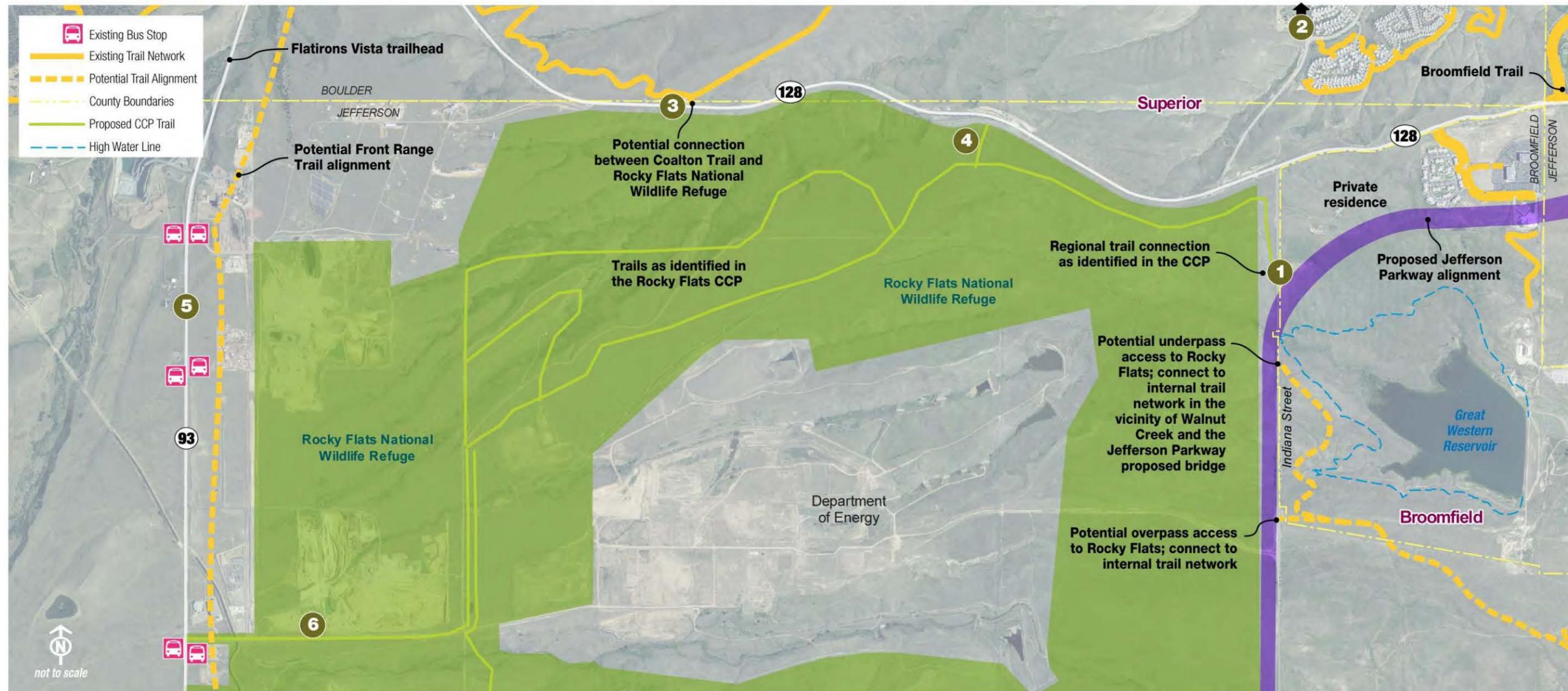


Figure 22. Northern Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge



3.7.2. Design Considerations

Although portions of this section of trail will be aligned with existing social trails and the abandoned railroad bed, much of the trail through this section will be constructed through undeveloped natural land. Major design considerations include eliminating conflicts between trail users and visitors to the adjacent dog park and preserving the natural character of the open spaces. Drainage is also a concern through the open space section for the maintenance of the trail. Due to the existing slopes through the area, designing the trail to avoid potential trail washout and steep grades needs to be considered. The typical section for this section of trail is shown in Figure 23.

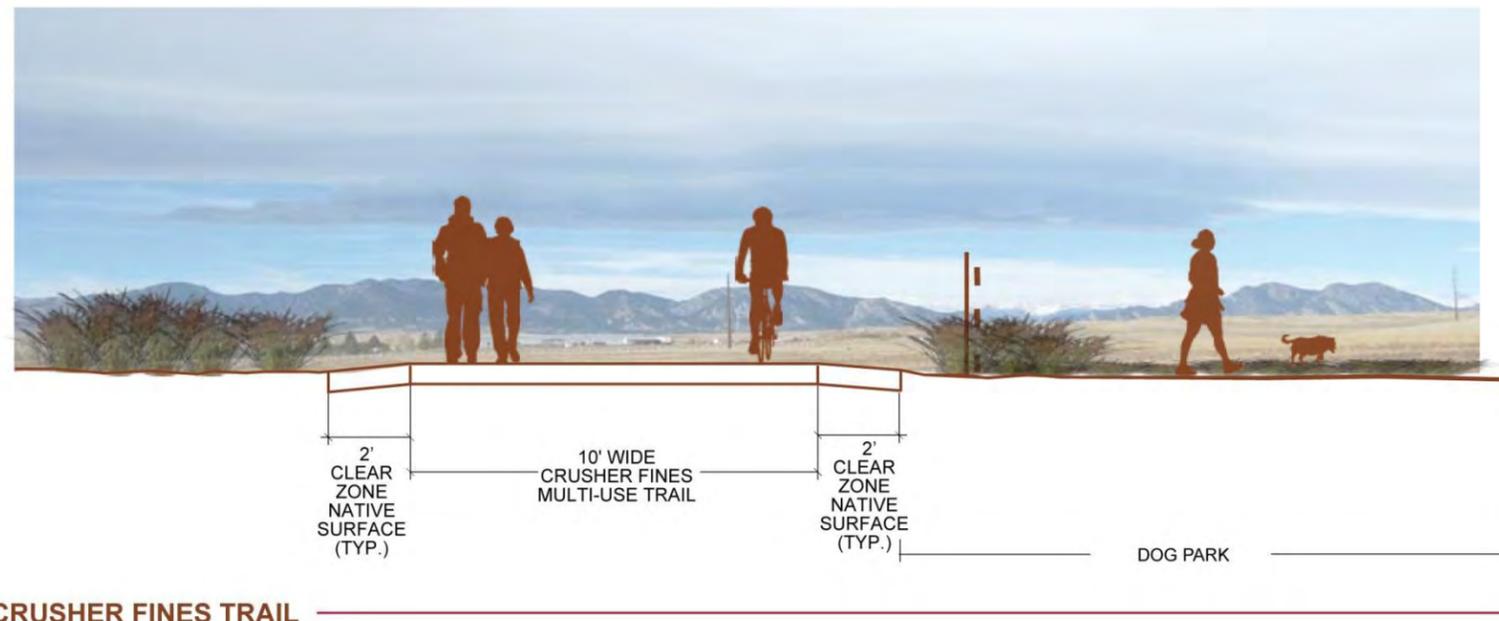
Design considerations for the crossing at Indiana should be coordinated with trail planning within Rocky Flats NWR. Until plans for the refuge trail system are in place, it may be desirable to terminate the Refuge to Refuge Trail at an improved overlook site (Figure 24 and Figure 25). This site will provide a point of interest and natural turn-around for trail users until the Rocky Flats NWR is open to the public.

Two potential crossings of Indiana Street exist: an overpass near the Jefferson/Broomfield County line and an underpass at Walnut Creek. Due to the grade differential, the overpass is the preferred crossing location (Image 7). The transition from the high point near the county line to Walnut Creek will likely require switchbacks and retaining walls. However, both options should be discussed and coordinated with Rocky Flats NWR CCP efforts and the Jefferson Parkway.



Image 7. Rendering of the preferred overpass crossing at Indiana Street

Figure 23. Open Space cross sections



CRUSHER FINES TRAIL

Figure 24. Rocky Flats overlook and turnaround

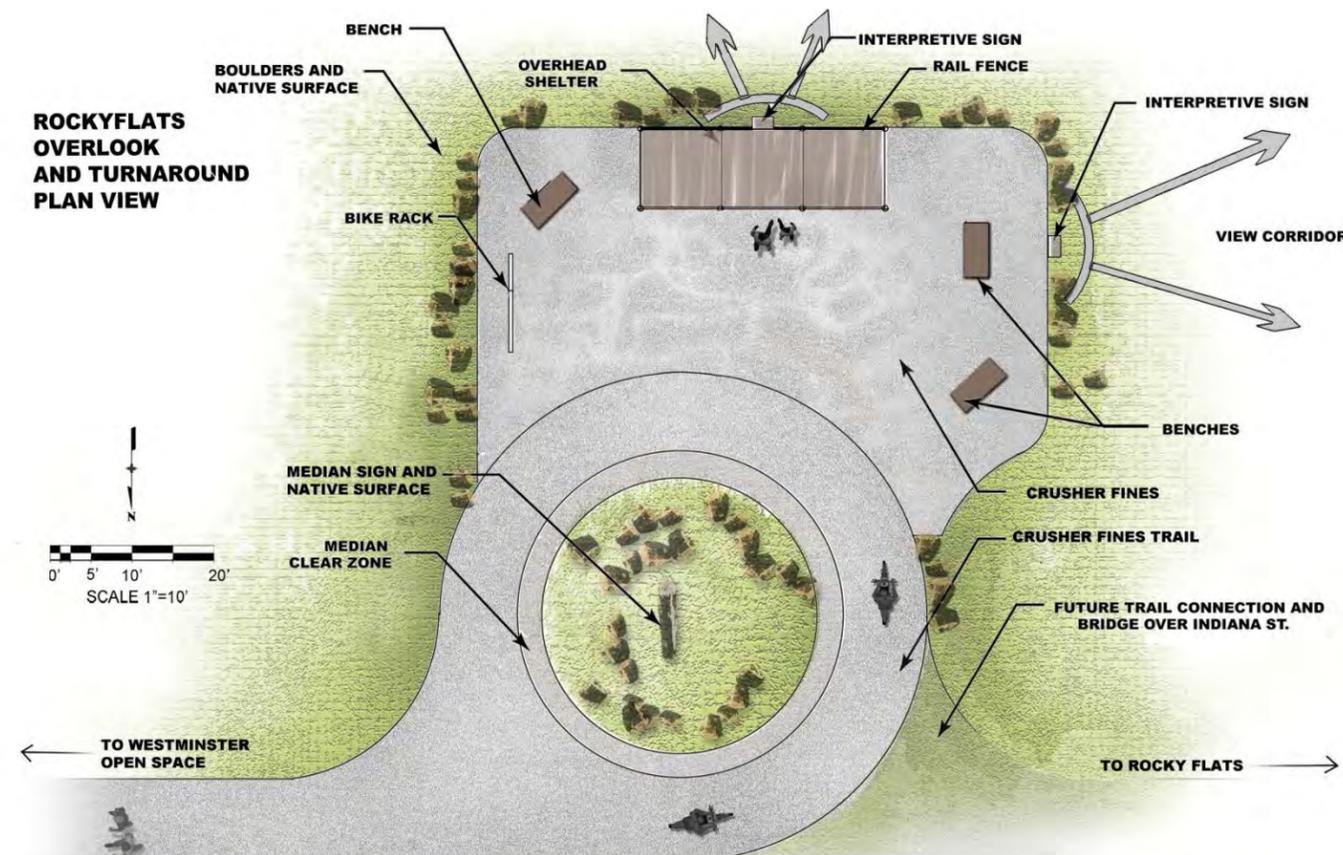
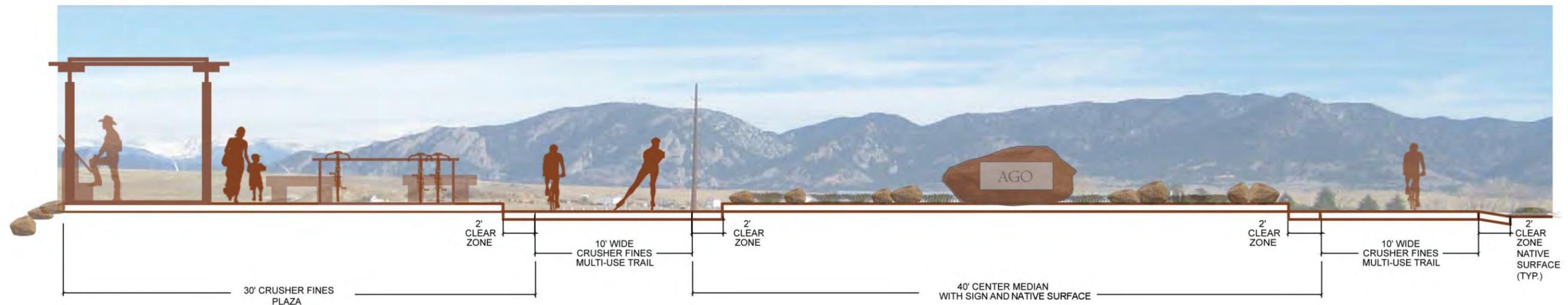


Figure 25. Conceptual cross section of Rocky Flats overlook



ROCKY FLATS OVERLOOK SECTION

3.7.3. Improvement Costs

Because there is no formalized trail through this section, trail improvement options combine ground preparation, trail construction, and basic wayfinding. Improvement costs also include the ditch crossing behind the boat storage, the crossing at West 100th Avenue, and the cost of a split rail fence adjacent to portions of the trail. Cost estimates do not include improvement to security at the boat storage facility.

Cost estimates for an improvement option of an alternative alignment and underpass at Walnut Creek include a crusher fines trail surface and grading through steep slopes descending to Walnut Creek.

Table 5. Section 3 improvement options

Design Option	Cost Estimate		Design Assumptions
Crusher fines trail from Standley Lake Nature Center to Indiana Crossing	Westminster:	\$715,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayfinding Split rail fence where adjacent to the dog park Irrigation ditch crossing south of 100th Ave At-grade crossing of 100th Ave
	Broomfield:	\$110,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayfinding 1,700 linear feet of trail Split rail fence north of trail
Overpass at Indiana Street	\$220,000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridge structure crossing of Indiana Street
Overpass at Indiana Street (Jefferson Parkway)	\$630,000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-span bridge structure over Jefferson Parkway
Rocky Flats overlook turnaround	\$10,000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crusher fines surface throughout site Design treatments (interpretive signs, overhead shelter, seating)
Alternative alignment to Indiana Street and underpass at Walnut Creek	\$384,000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crusher fines trail surface

4. Project Funding

Financial feasibility for the project, which will be conducted as part of the larger Denver Greenway Trail, will require collaboration between stakeholders to strategically gather and distribute resources across a phased implementation schedule. A successful financing program will be as diverse as the stakeholder groups that have interest in this project. Preliminary construction cost estimates for completing the Refuge to Refuge Trail vary depending on trail design, amenities, surface type, and alignment options.

As of February 2013, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Complex was awarded \$1.7 million through the FTA's Transit in the Parks Program to construct the Rocky Mountain Greenway trail. This grant will only cover a portion of the proposed trail. Additional financing for construction and maintenance may likely include a combination of municipal and county capital improvement funds, state and federal grants, and technical and financial assistance from foundations and advocacy groups. Several funding sources have been identified based upon projects awarded through 2012. Many of these programs will likely continue into the future and a similar funding environment will be available during project implementation. A full list of funding sources is included in Appendix E.

4.1. State Funding

From 2006 to 2011 the State of Colorado obligated an average of \$10.8 million to bicycle and pedestrian projects per year, spending \$2.15 per capita in the state (Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2012). The Colorado State Trails Grant Program and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) are popular sources of funding for outdoor recreational and open space improvements in the state.

In 2011, GOCO awarded \$13.5 million in Local Government Park, Recreation, and Environmental Grants and another \$500,000 to trail grants. A great deal of open space in the various jurisdictions has been purchased using GOCO funds and is managed through Jefferson and Boulder Counties. Both Jefferson and Boulder County were awardees of GOCO funds.

For FY 2013 and 2014, GOCO will be awarding \$5 million each year for trail planning and construction projects. These grants will be awarded in the spring with application deadlines in December.

The Colorado State Trails grant is awarded once a year (typically in the late fall or early winter) at three grant levels: large, small, and planning/maintenance grants. For 2014, large grants will be capped at \$200,000.

4.1.1. Map-21

FHWA funds are distributed through state Departments of Transportation or other federal agencies. Many of the current federal programs for funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements have been carried over from the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century in 1998 and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) is the most recent federal funding program for surface transportation projects. The Transportation Alternatives Program, similar to the expired Transportation Enhancements Program, creates set-aside funds for the Safe Routes to School Program and Regional Trails Program grants. These Acts encourage project objectives that are focused on increasing accessibility to multi-modal transportation, particularly for school children and traffic congestion reduction. Other grant programs fund projects that target improving air quality and access to federal lands.

MAP-21 programs are available to non-profit agencies, State DOTs, tribes, federal agencies, and school districts. As shown in Table 6, the funding eligibility depends somewhat on the purpose of the project to be funded. For example, projects that are focused on improving transportation are more likely to be funded by state and federal programs for improving mobility and reducing traffic congestion.

Whereas programs such as the Recreational Trails Program are available for improving recreational activities, the general requirements for projects funded through FHWA programs require a "transportation purpose" (23 USC SS 104). This means that eligible projects must show a general objective of enhancing a transportation system. Under Title 23 of the Code, bicycle and pedestrian improvements to local roads and trails (roads that are not on the

federal-aid highway system) are eligible for funding under the Surface Transportation Program, Congestion and Air Quality Improvement Program, and the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

For the Refuge to Refuge Trail, federal funds will be most applicable to larger scale projects—large infrastructure improvements or extended sections of the trail. Efforts to apply for these funds may require interagency collaboration.

4.2. Foundation, Advocacy, and Company Grants

In 2011, Colorado ranked 5th in the nation for its capacity of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy resources. Statewide, these organizations contribute \$0.15 per capita (Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2012).

Private foundations exist not only as grant sources, but also as means for leveraging federal funding, raising community interest, and strengthening collaboration between stakeholder groups. Involving philanthropic groups can be instrumental when planning to issue bonds or organize local referenda toward capital improvements.

Some examples of these organizations are:

- **Bikes Belong Coalition:** Creates grant funding for bike paths, mountain bike trails, and bicycle advocacy initiatives
- **Kodak American Greenways Program:** Provides funds for projects that link recreational, cultural, and natural features
- **American Hiking Society National Trails Fund:** Assists with organizing funds for protecting and enhancing hiking trails
- **REI:** Partners with and provides grants to local organizations that are involved with enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities
- **Walmart Foundation:** Awards small grants to organizations that are committed to improving a public amenity

4.3. Other Financing Opportunities

Other less conventional means for developing and maintaining a trail network exist and are still very popular. Below are several examples of these programs:

- **School Health and Wellness Programs:** As described in Figure 26, it may be possible to leverage school-age trail use data to augment a health and wellness program and trail improvement funding drive.
- **Special Events:** Trail builders and administrators can facilitate events to build interest and investment, such as bike races, foot races, nature walks, concerts, festivals, and so forth.
- **Adopt-a-Trail:** Many municipalities already have an established adopt-a-trail program. Other opportunities exist for partnering with a corporation or organization; these can be especially useful for ongoing trail maintenance and litter collection.
- **Public Art Funding Program:** Find local artists willing to donate art or seek funding from the larger public art foundations such as the National Endowment for the Arts to build ongoing stakeholder interest and investment.
- **Boys Scouts of America:** Local scout troops often participate in trail building projects and maintenance work.

Each section of the future Refuge to Refuge Trail has unique characteristics, surroundings, and expected user profiles. Opportunities and associated needs for each section may qualify for different funding sources. Taking a holistic approach that considers each setting will support creative funding efforts.

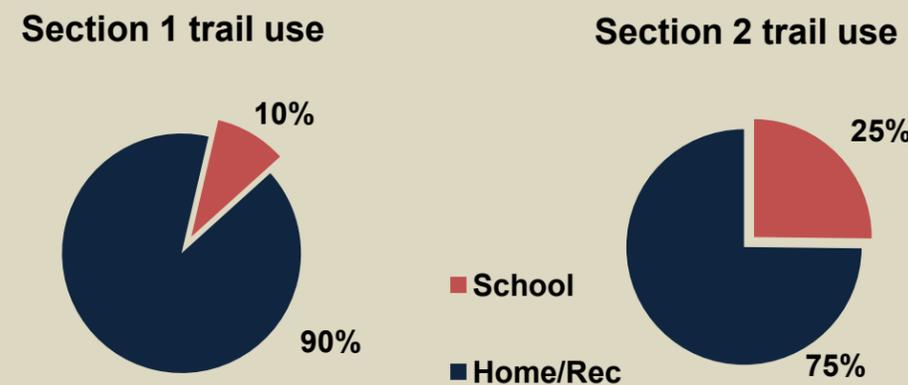
4.3.1. Section 1: Arvada

With a user profile that includes approximately half utilitarian users and half recreational users, grants that target projects to reduce road congestion and promote active transportation are recommended. Potential sources include the FHWA's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.

Because much of the trail is already well established, improvements to this section will include several smaller spot improvements and relatively short trail linkages. Therefore, smaller grant sources—including advocacy groups or private funds—can potentially be used to fund smaller scale improvements.

Figure 26. School health and wellness programs toward bike improvements

Sections of the Refuge to Refuge Trail may be very competitive for federal and private funding sources that target improving health and wellness for school children. Because of the large portion of anticipated school trips along the Arvada and Standley Lake sections of the trail, funding sources that promote comprehensive awareness and education around walking and biking to school may be used to create new biking infrastructure and interest in the existing community trail network.



Although the FHWA's "Safe Routes to School Program" has been folded into the general Transportation Alternatives Program, eligibility criteria for these funds have not changed. Local jurisdictions interested in targeting these funds for improving trails should consider partnerships in schools to broaden the availability of funding and increase the robustness of biking programs in their areas.

One program that has become recently popular in the U.K., called Bikeability, is a comprehensive biking education program that teaches students about biking safety. Bikeability is exemplary not only for successfully drawing upon both private and government funding, but also as it changes the way the local communities consider biking as a recreation activity and safe transportation resource. Such a program in the United States could draw a multitude of school wellness funding sources to employ similar programming.

To make improvements to local trail networks, local jurisdictions should consider combining plans for improving trail infrastructure with school biking safety programs like Bikeability. Such a move has the potential to increase safety and broaden the range of resources available for funding trail improvements.

School Health and Wellness Program Resources:

- Bikeability, U.K.: www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability
- Livewell Colorado: Local safe routes to school programs: about.livewellcolorado.org/livewell-toolbox/built-environment/safe-routes-to-school/safe-routes-to-school
- National Safe Routes to School Program information: www.saferoutesinfo.org

4.3.2. Section 2: Standley Lake

This section of the trail is primarily through existing open space and, according to usage analysis, will be used by recreational and school trips. For large-scale improvements—such as the underpass at 86th

and Kipling—the Safe Routes to School Program as it exists within FHWA's TAP may be applied with the assumption that these projects will enhance safety along popular school routes. Other recommended funding sources for school route enhancements and activities are the

Colorado Action for Healthy Kids, Fuel Up to Play 60 Program, and the Presidential Youth Fitness Program funded by the General Mills Foundation.

Smaller spot improvement projects, such as crossings at the main north entrance to the park and at 100th Avenue, may target smaller grant sources, with the intention of improving safety and wellness for school children or recreation priorities. Key funding sources for these types of projects will be private funds such as REI, the Alliance for Biking and Walking, and the Kodak American Greenways Program.

4.3.3. Section 3: Open Space

The anticipated use of this trail is primarily recreational. Funding sought for trail improvements should focus on the enhancement of recreational programs, environmental conservation, and access to natural resources. The FHWA's Recreational Trail Program and the Colorado Department of Natural Resource's Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Non-Motorized State Trail Grants and Mini Grants are potential funding sources. Improvements to this section are of a larger scale and, therefore, may require large one-time grants or incremental development through piecemeal funding sources.

Table 6: Federal funding programs

Federal Program	Funding Purpose	Funds Available and Federal Share
Federal Lands Access Program (Access Program)	Fund projects that are within, adjacent to, or improve access to federal lands or facilities	In FY 2013, Colorado = \$18.3M; match based upon state share of visitation and transportation assets; Colorado = 17.21%
Highway Safety Improvement Program	To reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads through the implementation of infrastructure-related highway safety improvements	FY 2013, Colorado = \$29M; 90%-100% match, depending on project
National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)	Ensures that federal investments are toward performance targets established in the state's asset management plan, including bicycle transportation and pedestrian improvements	FY 2014, Colorado = \$300M; generally, 80% match with a sliding scale
Surface Transportation Program (STP)	Flexible funding for projects that preserve and improve public infrastructure, including bicycle and pedestrian transportation and recreation projects	FY 2014, Colorado = \$138M; generally, 80% match with a sliding scale.
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	Available for projects likely to contribute to the attainment or maintenance of a national ambient air quality standard, including projects that improve multi-modal transportation networks; requires performance assessment	FY 2014, Colorado = \$42M
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Provide funding for surface transportation projects that improve safety, maintain infrastructure, reduce congestion, and protect the environment	NHPP, STP set aside; generally, 80% match with a sliding scale
Safe Routes to School Program (through TAP funds)	Under MAP-21, this program was folded into TAP allocations; this allows TAP funds to go toward projects that encourage the routine of walking and bicycling to school	Generally, 80% match with a sliding scale
Recreational Trails Program (Sub-allocation through TAP)	Provides funds to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses	Set aside TAP funds, FY 2013, Colorado = \$1.5M (can be used toward match for other federal program)

5. Next Steps

This feasibility study lays the groundwork for the future steps of trail development. Next steps include project design and environmental review. The lead agency moving forward will be CFL, partnering with FWS and the local jurisdictions involved. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be drafted to define roles and responsibilities for CFL, FWS, the City of Arvada, City of Westminster, and the City and County of Broomfield.

A MOU is a written agreement that specifies mutually accepted expectations between agencies working toward a common objective and is essential for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental clearance process. This agreement will be based on previous agency coordination discussions and will guide the decision-making process moving forward. The MOU will also address trail maintenance responsibilities. It is anticipated that local agencies will be asked to maintain trails within their respective jurisdictions.

To determine the best use of the \$1.7 million from the FTA, the preliminary estimates prepared for this study are a starting point to package improvements. However, due to the nature of the estimates, the actual cost of the improvements will be prepared during the design phase. In addition, because federal dollars will be used for the construction of the trail, NEPA policies will be followed under the management of CFL. The schedule for the project's next steps is underway as part of the environmental clearance and design scoping.

5.1. Project Priorities

The Core Team has identified several sections as priorities for construction using available FTA funds. Table 7 shows a preliminary recommended construction package. These projects were identified for improvements to safety, connectivity, and trail continuity.

The addition of a crusher fines trail from West 100th to a Rocky Flats overlook is the highest-priority project because it establishes a new trail through otherwise undeveloped open space and makes the ultimate connection between the refuges possible. An underpass and trailhead at West 86th Parkway, as part of the initial package, would improve safety at the roadway crossing and would establish new trail connections between the Arvada and Standley Lake sections. This

improvement is only viable if a trail is constructed within the ditch company right-of-way in Arvada. Wayfinding improvements within Sections 1 and 2 would help to brand the trail as a recognizable route in the area and would improve the overall user experience.

Table 7. Recommended construction package

Section	Design Option	Cost Estimate
Section 3	Crusher fines trail from Standley Lake Nature Center to Indiana crossing. Includes ditch crossing behind boat storage and at-grade crossing at 100 th Ave.	\$825,000
Section 3	Rocky Flats overlook turnaround	\$10,000
Section 2	Underpass at West 86 th Parkway and benched crusher fines trail through open space to junction with maintenance road	\$617,000
Section 2	Wayfinding	\$14,000
Section 1	Wayfinding	\$42,000
Section 1	Trailhead at Kipling and West 86 th Parkway with gravel surface	\$100,000
Total		\$1,608,000

The recommended construction package only allocates \$1.6M of the \$1.7M available. Due to the preliminary nature of the estimates, this allows some flexibility should estimates increase once a more detailed cost estimate is prepared. Remaining funds can be used toward design and will allow for variation from cost estimates provided in this report. Future project priorities and implementation schedule will depend upon coordination with stakeholders, including ditch companies and the Standley Lake Operations Committee (SLOC), and the availability of funds.

5.2. Public and Stakeholder Engagement

CFL will manage stakeholder coordination, public hearings, and public engagement strategies. The NEPA action required for trail projects could range from a Categorical Exclusion to a full Environmental Impact Statement.

- Categorical Exclusions (CATEX) are issued for actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment.
- An Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared for actions in which the significance of the environmental impact is not clearly established. Should environmental analysis and interagency review during the EA process find a project to have no significant impacts on the quality of the environment, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is issued.
- An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared where it is known that the action will have a significant effect on the environment.

The class of NEPA action required will determine the level of public involvement in projects. Local jurisdictions and FWS will provide support and input as needed. This section outlines the overall approach to engagement for the Refuge to Refuge Trail projects proceeding through the NEPA process.

Opportunities for public involvement will be early and continuous during the project development. Plans will be developed to involve stakeholders and the public in meaningful ways, such as to:

- Present information
- Solicit and document input
- Develop two-way communication
- Achieve informed consent for the document's findings and recommendations

5.3. Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholder analysis involves not only identifying all persons or organizations involved in a project, but it also seeks to understand their interests and expectations. Stakeholders have already been identified through the development of this feasibility study.

Additional parties may be identified as projects move forward, including those who are likely to be affected by a project, both positively or negatively and directly or indirectly. The process involves documenting all the names of interest groups, institutions, individuals, organizations, and authorities who:

- Are concerned in any way with the project
- Are located in the region
- Hold an influential position
- May be affected by the problems addressed in the program

A discussion of stakeholder characteristics, main issues and attitudes, and connections to other stakeholders can help set priorities to avoid conflicts as the project moves forward. A preliminary list of stakeholders has been developed as a part of this feasibility study (Appendix F). Coordination with stakeholders will be managed by CFL.

5.4. Stakeholder Organization

The MOU will establish clear expectations for the role of each agency in decision making and identify responsibilities to keep the project on schedule. Different stakeholder groups will have varying interests in the Refuge to Refuge Trail. While the final structure of participating agencies will be determined through the MOU process, it is helpful to frame out an approach for defining potential stakeholder groups that serve different purposes.

The following groups have been identified:

- Lead Agency: CFL
- Joint Lead Agency: FWS
- Cooperating Agencies: City of Arvada, City of Westminster, City and County of Broomfield
- Participating Agencies : Jefferson County, Boulder County

5.5. Engagement Tools

The following engagement tools may be considered as part of an effective engagement process.

- **Feasibility Study**—This study is the result of data collection, analysis, and consensus-building efforts. This document is a resource for local agencies to continue the momentum and implement the trail vision.
- **Public Information Materials**—Public information materials offer a range of ways for providing project updates, such as:
 - Flyers
 - Display boards

- Brochures
- Mailing lists
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- Electronic media
- Utility bill inserts

- **Project Website**—A project website is a way to distribute information and solicit feedback from stakeholders and residents who may not be able to attend meetings in person. Websites can also provide links to online surveys and interactive maps.
- **Community Workshops/Open Houses**—Workshops and Open Houses allow the public to interact with each other as well as agency representatives to share thoughts, ideas, concerns, and new information to strengthen the project. Comment sheets can be used to engage attendees and document input at the meeting.
- **Keypad Polling**—Keypad polling is an audience response software system that can be used at meetings to build consensus. A question from the facilitator is displayed on a screen with a series of possible answers. Responses from attendees are automatically and instantly tallied and the results are displayed on screen. The process is transparent and immediate and everyone, participants and leaders, can see the group's response to the question.
- **Mapping Exercises**—Maps are an effective tool to allow meeting attendees to engage with the project and write specific ideas and concerns related to trail development. Used at public meetings, maps help initiate conversations and provide clarification in the decision-making process.
- **Street Teams**—Street teams engage community members by going to the project location and interviewing system users. This is an effective strategy to reach those most familiar with the project area, and most likely affected by potential trail developments.



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

Post City Council Meeting
November 25, 2013



SUBJECT: Review of Previously Adopted 2014 Water Tap Fee Increase

PREPARED BY: Christine Gray, Management Analyst
Stu Feinglas, Water Resources Analyst

Recommended City Council Action

Review the status of water tap fees and give Staff direction on how to proceed.

Summary Statement

- Water tap fees are charged to new utility customers to connect to the City's water system, and are based on the current value and size of the utility system.
- The water tap fee structure is composed of several components that together reflect the equitable portion of the water system impacted by new customers.
- Periodically the City increases the water tap fee charged to new utility tap customers to address the system's infrastructure and water resources critical needs. Prior to 2012, other than consumer price index increases, the last significant increase was in 2006.
- A tap fee increase was adopted by City Council in 2012 for implementation on January 1, 2014 to meet the capital needs of the water system and to ensure that costs are equitably distributed between current and future users of the system.
- Staff has been asked to provide an update on water tap fees in advance of the planned increase.
- Staff will be present at Monday night's Post Council Meeting to answer questions.

Expenditure Required: \$0

Source of Funds: N/A

Policy Issue

Should the City revisit the adopted water tap fee increase that is effective January 1, 2014?

Alternatives

1. Council could allow the water tap fee to increase to \$22,986 effective January 1, 2014.
2. Council could direct Staff to reduce the water tap fee to the 2012 Staff report recommendation of \$20,836, effective January 1, 2014.
3. Council could provide direction to Staff to implement some other option.

Background Information

Tap fees are charges that new connections to the City's water and wastewater system pay in order for the Utility Fund to recover an equitable share of system capacity that has been developed to service growth. The City sets separate tap fees for connecting to the water system and the wastewater system. Past and current customers have invested to develop the water system sized to meet build-out demands. As new customers connect to the system, they pay for the portion of the developed system they will use. In this way, current customers benefit from lower system costs (water rates) and increased reliability, while new customers pay their fair share.

The water tap fee includes three components:

1. The Infrastructure or Treated Water Investment Fee is set to recover an equitable portion of the City's infrastructure required to meet the demand of the new customer. The infrastructure includes all components of the utility system required to divert, treat and distribute water to customers. Infrastructure tap fees are calculated based on fixture count and resulting meter size, which is the best determination of projected peak demand on the infrastructure system. The current cost of the infrastructure component for a typical single family water tap fee is \$8,987.
2. The Water Resources Fee is set to recover the value of the City's water supplies developed to meet the demand of the new customer. Water resources are calculated in terms of Service Commitments (SC). One SC is equal to 140,000 gallons of annual use, which is the projected use of one new single-family home. For those other than single-family homes, multiples of service commitments are purchased based on a projected volume of use. The current cost of the water resources component for a single family water tap fee is \$7,338.
3. The Connection Fee is the portion set to recover the cost of calibration and installing the water meter. The current cost of a single family water tap Connection fee is \$321.

The total current cost of a single family water tap fee is \$16,646.

Periodically the City increases the cost of the infrastructure portion of the water tap fee to ensure that new users are paying an equitable portion of the overall costs to maintain and improve the water system. A recent study determined that the infrastructure portion of the water tap fee should be increased from \$8,987 to \$10,086 to address the water system’s replacement cost. This is based on the value of the improvements made to the system and the increase in the replacement costs for the rest of the system since the infrastructure fee was previously set.

The water resources portion of the tap fee is based on the current market value of the water resources owned by the City. Recent water purchases are used as a basis for determining the current market value. Water purchases are valued in terms of the cost per acre foot (AF) of reliable annual water delivery. Currently, Westminster’s tap fee is based on a water value of \$17,000 per AF. Since this value was established, the market for water rights in the region has become even more competitive. While Front Range water purchases since 2009 have ranged from a low of \$22,000 per AF up to \$50,000 per AF, recent purchases in the Clear Creek/Standley Lake market have ranged from \$22,000 per AF to \$30,000 per AF. The City of Arvada’s 2013 agreement to purchase 3,000 AF of Gross Reservoir (Denver Water) water for \$90,000,000 reflects the current market price of \$30,000 per acre-foot, which is consistent with Council’s 2012 action setting tap fee rates to be effective in 2014.

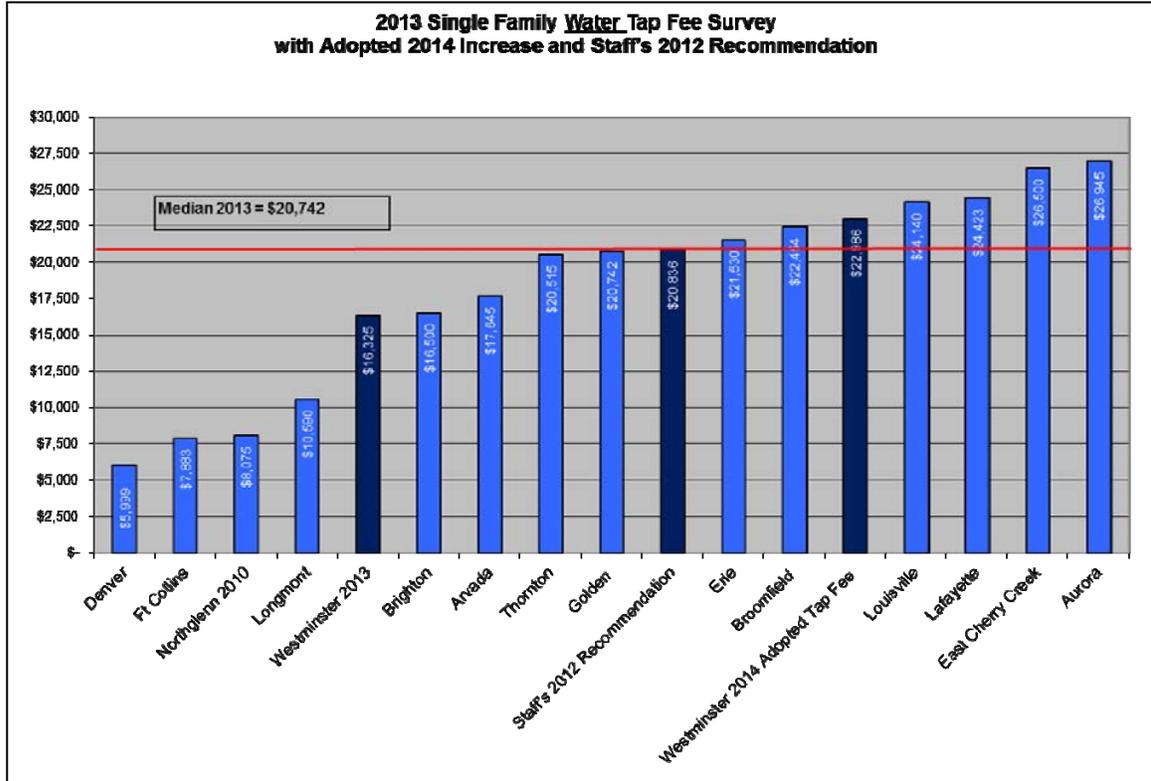
A chart is provided below that compares single family water tap fees at the existing rate to water tap fees fully implementing the infrastructure cost increase and two of the options reviewed in 2012 on the market value of the water resources component:

Tap Fee Recommended by Staff in 2012: Water Resources valued at \$25,000 per acre foot
 Tap Fee Adopted by Council in 2012: Water Resources valued at \$30,000 per acre foot

Single Family Water Tap Fee Comparisons			
Water Tap Fees	Current Tap Fee	Staff’s 2012 Recommendation	Adopted Tap Fee Effective 1/1/2014
Infrastructure component:	\$8,987	\$10,086	\$10,086
Water Resources component:	\$7,338	\$10,750	\$12,900
Total Water Tap Fee*: not including connection fees	\$16,325	\$20,836	\$22,986

(*Note that per City Code the water tap fee would continue to increase by the Denver Metro area’s Consumer Price Index on an annual basis.)

Westminster’s current tap fee is below the median for surrounding communities. Below is a chart illustrating the City’s current tap fee, the tap fee recommended by Staff in 2012, and the tap fee adopted by Council for implementation on January 1, 2014, for comparison with other neighboring entities.



The projected revenue from the adopted tap fee increase has been included in the 2014 Utility Fund budget. If Council adopts a different tap fee, the budgeted revenue may need to be reviewed. To the extent new development does not pay its full share for improvement, repair and replacement of the water system, these costs may need to be recovered by existing customers through rates.

Adopting appropriate water tap fees supports the City Council strategic goal of Financially Sustainable City Government Providing Exceptional Services by ensuring that the City's water system infrastructure is maintained as a high quality water system.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall
City Manager