



Niwot Trails Master Plan

Approved July 11, 2006
(starts on page 2)

&

Amendment

Approved December 11, 2014
(starts on page 50)

Niwot Trails Master Plan



**Approved by Board of County Commissioners
July 11, 2006**

Prepared by

**The Architerra Group
ERO Resources Corporation**

For

**Boulder County
Parks and Open Space Department**

Acknowledgments

The Niwot Trail Master Plan is the culmination of a ten month planning process which involved Boulder County Open Space staff, the consultant team, key stakeholders and the general public. The individuals listed below contributed to this plan.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space Staff

Ron Stewart, Parks and Open Space Director

Brent Wheeler, Parks Operations Manager

Tina Nielsen, Special Projects Manager

Al Hardy, Parks Supervisor/Trails

Anna Unger, Planning Intern

Boulder County Transportation Department

Tim Swope, Alternative Transportation Coordinator

The Architerra Group, Inc.

Dean Pearson

Amanda Bower

ERO Resources Corp.

Bill Mangle

David Hesker

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Purpose and Goals of the Plan.....	1
Project Background.....	1
Planning Process.....	2
Public Input Process.....	2
Existing Conditions.....	5
Natural Resources.....	5
Land Use and Ownership.....	7
Cultural Resources.....	8
Existing Trails and Trail Facilities.....	9
Trail Recommendations.....	11
Community Trails.....	11
LOBO Regional Trail.....	17
Trailheads.....	20
Implementation.....	21
Community Involvement.....	21
Trail Design.....	21
Trail Materials.....	22
Trail Construction.....	23
Trail Amenities.....	24
Estimated Construction Costs.....	25
Potential Environmental Impacts.....	25
Potential Permitting Requirements.....	26
Phasing.....	27
References.....	28
Figures	
Figure 1. Existing Trails Plan.....	10
Figure 2. Proposed Trails Plan.....	12
Figure 3. LOBO Regional Trail Plan.....	13
Figure 4. Niwot Road.....	11
Figure 5. Centrebridge Existing Trail Replacement.....	14
Figure 6. Somerset/Legend Ridgetrail.....	14
Figure 7. Dry Creek Local Loop Trail	15
Figure 8. 95th Street Trail.....	16
Figure 9. LOBO Regional Trail.....	17
Figure 10. Dry Creek Alignment.....	18
Appendix	
Niwot Community Association Meeting #1 Summary.....	A1
Summary of Public Input Through April 14,2006.....	A3
Public Meeting #2 Summary.....	A5
Crime Notes.....	A7
Impact of Trails on Adjacent Properties.....	A9
References on the Effects of Trails on Property Values & Crime	A14
Conceptual Trails Cost Estimate (2006).....	A15
Trail Element Costs.....	A16

Introduction

Purpose and Goals of the Plan

The purpose of the **Niwot Trail Master Plan (Trails Plan)** is to provide a strategic guide for the implementation of a trail network for the Niwot area.

Goals of the Trails Plan:

- Create safe, high quality recreational trails as part of a comprehensive system
- Minimize environmental and neighborhood impacts
- Develop multiple use regional trail linkages to promote alternative transportation modes

Actions, presented in this report, which aid in the realization of these goals include:

- ✓ Document existing trail locations and conditions
- ✓ Inventory and analyze trail development constraints and opportunities
- ✓ Design the most feasible trail network that identifies specific trail alignments and appropriate uses
- ✓ Develop trail standards and management guidelines
- ✓ Provide construction cost estimates and priorities

Project Background

Niwot is located in eastern Boulder County in the Left Hand Valley. The name Niwot comes from the Arapaho Chief Niwot, which means left handed. Chief Niwot proclaimed a legendary curse, “People seeing the beauty of this valley will want to stay, and their staying will be the undoing of the beauty.” Niwot was platted in 1875 shortly after the railroad was extended northeast from Boulder. Niwot was at that time primarily an agricultural community. Today it is still semi-rural in character with many active agricultural operations in existence.

For the purpose of this document, the planning area includes a triangular area bounded by 95th Street on the east, Mineral Road (Hwy 52) on the south, and the Boulder-Longmont Diagonal, Hwy 119 on the west.

The Trails Plan furthers the vision of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan which includes general alignments of future trails along key corridors including Niwot. The Comprehensive Plan’s County Trails Map depicts a conceptual Trail Alignment along Dry Creek and a north-south Conceptual Trail Corridor between 87th Street and 95th Street. Two Niwot Service Area policies in the Niwot, Lefthand, Boulder Creek Subregion of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan are particularly relevant to this master plan:

NIW 2.08. The county shall encourage the development of a network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways that are protected from vehicular encroachment and that serve the resident’s needs to safely and efficiently move between activity areas and living areas within the Niwot Community.

NIW 2.10 Trail locations in the Niwot Community Service Area should follow principal ditches, roadways, and other appropriate courses, tying together business, school, and recreational activity centers and shall be located so as to minimize their impact on the environment and surrounding private properties.

The initial Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1978 and last amended in 1999. In 2001, county voters approved a ballot initiative to fund a specific list of transportation projects including a set of regional trails that connect communities within the county. Specific trail projects were prioritized through a public process and were approved by the Board of County Commissioners in May 2003. This prioritized list includes the Longmont to Boulder (LOBO) Regional Trail with connections to Niwot.

Planning Process

The Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS) staff and consultant team developed an effective and efficient planning process for the Trails Plan. The process included:

- **November 2005** Conducted a kick-off meeting to start the planning process
- **December 2005** Site visit with Niwot Community Association board members
- **December/January 2006** Data collection, document review, site visits to understand the resources and opportunities
- **February 2006** Conducted a meeting with the Niwot Community Association to review the existing trails map, the project goals and planning process
- **March 2006** First public open house at Niwot High School to review the existing trails plan, the regional LOBO trail alignment, and trail amenities
- **April 2006** Second public open house at Niwot High School to review preliminary trail alignment plans
- **May 2006** Site visit with approximately 20 adjacent land owners to review the Dry Creek trail alignment
- **June 2006** Presentation to the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee; The Trails Plan was unanimously approved for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners
- **July 2006** Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners; The Trails Plan was unanimously approved by the Board of County Commissioners

Public Input Process

Public involvement allowed the Boulder County staff and consultant team to make informed decisions that incorporate the opinions, ideas and expertise of stakeholders and members of the general public. The public input process included two public open houses, facilitated by Boulder County staff and the consultant team, at the Niwot High School to gather input for the Trails Plan.



Public Open House #1

Public Open House #1

The first open house was held on March 15, 2006 to review the existing trail map, the LOBO regional trail map, and get input from the public about the proposed trail system. Approximately 1,700 meeting notices were mailed to local residents. The public was asked for their opinions about additional trails, types of trails, the LOBO regional trail alignment, and trail amenities. About 60 people attended this meeting.

A brief, condensed summary of public input is as follows:

General Comments:

- Any new trails should minimize ecological impacts
- Trails shown on the Comprehensive Plan should be shown on this plan, specifically the trail along Dry Creek
- New trails should be as far from existing roads as possible
- All trail systems should emphasize loops and connections; Do not invest in dead-end trails

Specific Concerns:

- Do not put new trails through older neighborhoods like Overbrook
- Keep trails away from open space boundaries that abut private properties as is reasonably possible

Proposed Trail Alignment Ideas:

- Continue the bike path east from Niwot High School to 95th Street
- Complete a loop trail along Dry Creek that connects to the high school along the sanitation district property
- Provide a trail along 95th Street that is separated from the road for safety
- Connect the Legend Ridge subdivision trail to the Somerset trail
- Consider Dry Creek alignment (per Comprehensive Plan) for the LOBO regional trail

Trail Materials, Facilities Comments:

- Keep most of the trails soft surface and open to all non-motorized users (pedestrians, equestrians, bikers)
- Add rest areas along regional trails with shade, toilets, drinking fountains, and picnic tables

Public Open House #2

The second open house was held on April 26, 2006 for the public to review and give feedback on proposed trail alignments. Approximately 1,800 meeting notices were mailed to local residents. Present were members of the Community Association, Boulder County staff, the consulting team and approximately 100 people from the community. The proposed trails plan and the LOBO Regional Trail alternatives plan were displayed.



Public Open House #2

A brief, condensed summary of public input is as follows:

General Comments:

- All trails should meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) design guidelines whenever possible
- Any new trails should minimize ecological impacts specifically to wildlife like pheasants, herons and other birds

Proposed Trail Alignment Comments and Concerns:

- There was some support and some opposition for a local loop trail along Dry Creek, across the

Sanitation District property behind the high school and across the eastern edge of the high school property to Niwot Road

- There was general support to continue the bike path east from Niwot High School to 95th Street
- There was general support for a trail along 95th Street north to the neighborhood on the east. This trail should be separated from the road for safety
- There was general support to formalize a trail connection between the Legend Ridge Subdivision trail and the Somerset trail
- There was some opposition to the continuation of the trail along the Diagonal into downtown Niwot

LoBo Regional Trail Comments:

- There was some support and some opposition for the 83rd/Diagonal alignment
- Many supporters liked this alignment because they live along the Dry Creek alignment and do not want the trail near their homes
- There was some support and some opposition for the Dry Creek alignment
- Many supporters liked this alignment because of the experience of being along the creek and open space/agricultural land

Trail Materials, Facilities Comments:

- There was general support for soft surface trails versus concrete trails
- There was general support to keep the trails open to all non-motorized users (pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists)
- There was general support for trail amenities such as shade structures, toilets, drinking fountains, picnic tables, etc. located periodically along the regional trail system

The meeting did not achieve consensus over the LOBO Regional Trail alignment or the Dry Creek loop trail. It was stated that the BCPOS staff and consultants will weigh all the public input and recommend a trails plan that they believe is in the best interest of the whole community.

In addition to the public input received at the meetings, the consultants and BCPOS staff received and responded to approximately 25 telephone calls and 50 emails from the public.

More detailed summaries of both public meetings are included in the Appendix.

Public Site Tour

On May 31, 2006 BCPOS staff met with approximately 20 people from the Niwot Meadow Farm, Brittany Place, Waterford and Waterford Park neighborhoods to walk a portion of the Dry Creek trail alignment. Some people do not want a trail at all in this location; some people support a local trail if their concerns can be mitigated.

Specific Concerns:

- Preserving privacy
- Control of dogs going from the trail into yards
- Parking in their neighborhood and sight distance at road crossings
- Hours of use
- Increased crime

Boulder County Staff will work with adjacent homeowners to mitigate specific concerns. This process is outlined in the Implementation-Community Involvement section.

Existing Conditions

In order to develop the Trails Plan, the consultant team worked closely with Boulder County staff to gain an understanding of the existing conditions within the planning area. The consultant team conducted a number of site visits to inventory existing land ownership, natural resources, cultural resources, key destinations and existing trails. This inventory provided the basis for opportunities and constraints related to the proposed trail system.

Natural Resources

While a majority of the Niwot study area consists of residential developments and cultivated agriculture, some portions of the study area contain natural resources that were considered during the trail planning process. These natural resource elements are briefly described below.

Left Hand Creek Corridor

The most significant natural resource in the study area is Left Hand Creek and the adjacent riparian corridor that crosses the northern corner of the study area for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. The Left Hand Creek riparian corridor is typical of Front Range riparian systems, characterized by a dense canopy of cottonwood, willow, and other tree and shrub species, wetland vegetation within and adjacent to the creek channel, and an upland understory of grasses, forbs, and shrubs. This riparian corridor provides habitat for numerous wildlife species, including a variety of large and small mammals, raptors, and migratory songbirds. There is a known Swainson's hawk nest along Left Hand Creek, immediately adjacent to 95th Street (Brennan 2006).

Left Hand Creek is designated in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan as a Stream Habitat Connector and a Significant Riparian Corridor (Boulder County 1999).

Dry Creek Corridor

The Niwot study area is bisected, from southwest to northeast, by Dry Creek. The Dry Creek corridor does not contain significant riparian communities, but is instead characterized by small riparian shrubs and wetland vegetation along the creek channel, with scattered patches of willow and cottonwood trees along its length. Although it is somewhat degraded and has less developed habitat than the Left Hand Creek corridor, Dry Creek does provide habitat for a several generalist wildlife species including red fox, coyote, small mammals, and migratory songbirds.



Agricultural Areas

Most of the study area north of the Niwot community consists of land managed for agricultural purposes. These lands are typically used for a variety of cultivated crops, while some areas consist of native and non-native pasture grasses for livestock. There are several irrigation ditches in the study area that support these agricultural uses. In some areas, these ditches support mature stands of cottonwood trees.

The Upper Baldwin Ditch south of Ogallala Road supports a large string of mature cottonwood trees that extends for over $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. These cottonwoods provide potential nesting habitat for several raptor species, and may support active nests for red-tailed hawk or other species (Brennan 2006).

These agricultural lands provide limited habitat for several wildlife species, including red fox, coyote, and several bird species. A small flock (or “nye”) of ring-necked pheasants are known to inhabit the pasture areas immediately north of Dry Creek. (Pheasants are introduced game species that are common in agricultural areas throughout North America (NDIS 2006)).

The agricultural lands in the northern half of the study area are designated by the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan to be Agricultural Lands of National Significance (Boulder County 1999).

Natural Open Space Areas

Boulder County Open Space owns and manages about 258 acres of natural open space land along the southern edge of the study area (Monarch Park, Hillside Estates, and Somerset properties). These areas are primarily characterized by native and non-native prairie grasses, with small areas of riparian vegetation along Dry Creek, the Boulder and Left Hand Ditch, and other small drainages. The Monarch Park property (south of Monarch Road) and Hillside property (east of Niwot Loop trail Parking Lot) supports an active prairie dog colony.

Residential Communities

The developed portions of the Niwot community are characterized by vegetation and wildlife that are typical of suburban settings along Colorado's Front Range. Several wildlife species, including skunks, raccoons, fox, and numerous bird species are well adapted to the interface between landscaped, suburban settings and nearby natural habitat areas.

Portions of the developed and developing areas in the southeast corner of the study area are considered to be part of the White Rocks/Gunbarrel Hill Environmental Conservation Area, as designated by the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (Boulder County 1999).

Significant Wildlife Habitat

Preble's meadow jumping mouse

The Preble's meadow jumping mouse (Preble's) was listed as a threatened species in 1988 under the federal Endangered Species Act. Preble's habitat occurs within or adjacent to riparian communities along the Front Range of Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. While Preble's habitat may be found along Left Hand Creek, the Niwot planning area does not support any confirmed occurrences of Preble's (USFWS 2002).

Black-tailed prairie dog

The black-tailed prairie dog is a state-listed sensitive species that is found in portions of the Niwot study area. Existing populations occur on Boulder County Open Space lands in the southwestern corner of the study area (south of Monarch Road), and the northernmost corner (north and west of Left Hand Creek). The prairie dog is believed to play an important role in maintaining grassland ecosystems, supporting habitat for other species such as burrowing owls, and providing a food source for raptors. For these reasons, it is prudent to conserve the species and its habitat where such conservation is appropriate where it can function as a prey base.

In 2002, the Boulder County Commissioners adopted the *Boulder County Grassland Management Plan Prairie Dog Habitat Element* (Boulder County 2002). The purpose of the plan was to identify management priorities for certain areas that balance the sometimes conflicting goals of wildlife habitat protection and agricultural preservation and production in Boulder County. The plan outlines three prairie dog management categories for open space land:

- **HCA Habitat Conservation Areas:** Areas where prairie dogs will be allowed to function with minimal human intervention and without causing or experiencing significant negative impacts to or from adjacent land uses
- **MOA Multiple Objective Areas:** Areas where prairie dogs will be allowed to coexist with other uses but they may not be the highest management priority
- **NPD No Prairie Dog Areas:** These areas are not appropriate for prairie dog habitation because of unsuitable ecological conditions or existing agricultural uses; The goal is to remove prairie dogs from these areas

Several county open space properties in the study area are managed as MOAs:

- Monarch Park (in the southwest corner of the study area)
- Hillside (east of Niwot Loop Trail Parking Lot)
- Peppertree/Niwot Estates/Country Creek (western portion of Niwot)
- Left Hand Valley Grange Park (corner of Niwot Road and 83rd Street)
- Overbrook (west of Niwot High School)
- Bouzarelos (north of Dry Creek)
- Peck (north of Left Hand Creek)

The remaining open space properties are managed as No Prairie Dog (NPD) areas.

Other significant habitat

The Niwot study area does not include Significant Natural Communities, Rare Plant Areas, Critical Wildlife Habitats, Natural Landmarks, or Natural Areas, as designated in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (Boulder County 1999).

Land Use and Ownership

The Niwot study area is generally divided between residential, commercial, and other suburban land uses south of Dry Creek, and rural, agricultural land uses north of Dry Creek. While most of the study area is privately-owned, several large areas include lands owned and managed by Boulder County Parks and Open Space, the Niwot Sanitation District, and the St. Vrain Valley School District. Several conservation easements and trail easements also exist in the study area, as described below.

Boulder County Open Space

BCPOS owns about 832 acres of land within the study area, which can be divided into five general areas:

- **Monarch Park/Hillside Estates Open Space:** This area consists of about 258 acres of open space land on the southern edge of the Niwot community; The existing Niwot Loop Trail traverses this area, which is managed for natural grassland habitat and public uses (This may be considered for use as an organic farm site)

- **Dry Creek Corridor Open Space:** BCPOS owns an assemblage of open space properties, encompassing about 43 acres, along Dry Creek through the center of the Niwot community; The portion to the south and west of 83rd Street includes an existing trail corridor
- **Agricultural Open Space Lands:** BCPOS owns seven large tracts of agricultural land to the north of Dry Creek, totaling about 457 acres; These lands are leased for agricultural uses
- **Left Hand Creek Open Space:** Five open space parcels totaling about 57 acres include the Left Hand Creek corridor and adjacent upland areas; These areas are primarily managed for natural resource protection (The upland tract of land between Left Hand Creek and the Diagonal Highway may be considered for use as an organic farm site)
- **Other Open Space:** Within the Niwot community, two other areas totaling about 15 acres are owned and managed by BCPOS

Niwot Sanitation District

The Niwot Sanitation District owns about 130 acres of land in the study area, north of Niwot High School. This property includes the District's water treatment facilities, as well as adjacent lands that are managed for agricultural use.

Niwot High School

The St. Vrain Valley School District owns 58 acres of land that contains Niwot High School and adjacent athletic fields, located on the eastern edge of the Niwot community along Niwot Road.

Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are deed restrictions that landowners voluntarily place on their properties to protect environmental resources and restrict future development. Easements are generally sold at a reduced rate or donated to a qualified conservation organization or government entity. Conservation easement lands are privately owned and are not open to public access. BCPOS holds several conservation easements (376 acres) within the study area, as shown on Figure 1.

Trail Easements

BCPOS owns several trail easements in the Niwot study area. These easements are usually dedicated to the County as part of the subdivision process. The most notable trail easement in the Niwot study area is found along the north side of the Waterford Park subdivision. This 40-foot wide, dedicated trail easement (immediately south of Dry Creek) was dedicated as part of the subdivision process.

Cultural Resources

The Niwot Study Area includes several sites, related to the agricultural history of the area, that may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The potential eligible sites include several historic structures, historic farm properties, and downtown Niwot Historic District, and include the structures of the Gabrielson Property on the west side of 83rd Street (OAHP 2006). In addition, Old Town Niwot has also been designated as a Boulder County Historic Landmark (Boulder County 2006), while the Niwot Cemetery is listed on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties (Colorado Historical Society 2006). None of the proposed trail alignments are anticipated to affect the structures on the Gabrielson Property, or any other types of potentially historic sites in the study area.

The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan identifies the Left Hand Creek corridor as a historic travel route, but does not identify any archaeologically sensitive areas within the Niwot study area (Boulder County 1999).

Old Town Niwot has been designated as a Boulder County Historic Landmark (Boulder County 2006), while the Niwot Cemetery is listed on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties (Colorado Historical Society 2006). (Neither of these sites would be affected by the proposed trail plan).

The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan identifies the Left Hand Creek corridor as a historic travel route, but does not identify any archaeologically sensitive areas within the Niwot study area (Boulder County 1999).

Existing Trails and Trail Facilities

Niwot currently has approximately 8.3 miles of hard and soft surface public trails. There are numerous other trails that are either informal or are owned and maintained by individual homeowners associations. The primary trails are shown on the Existing Trails Plan, Figure 1 and include the following:

- A hard surface (concrete) trail along Niwot Road from the downtown core east to the high school
- A soft surface (crusher fines) trail goes east from the high school to the church; This trail ends short of 95th Street
- A soft surface loop trail around the Legend Ridge subdivision
- A soft surface trail connects Legend Ridge to Niwot Road through the Niwot Hills subdivision
- A soft surface trail along the south end of the Somerset Estates subdivision
- A combination soft surface, hard surface trail and sidewalk connects the Somerset trail north to Niwot Road along an irrigation ditch
- The LOBO Regional Trail is hard surface from Niwot Road south to 79th Street; This trail is in poor condition and is approximately four feet wide, which is very narrow for a regional trail
- The LOBO Regional Trail is soft surface from 79th Street south to Highway 52 where an underpass will open in July 2006
- There are combination soft surface and sidewalk connections to the downtown area along 79th Street and to the west between the Cottonwood Park and Peppertree Estates subdivisions

Existing trailheads are located in the following areas:

- The Monarch Trailhead at Monarch Road along the LOBO Regional Trail
- The Niwot Loop Trailhead at 79th Street
- The Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead at 83rd Street/Niwot Road



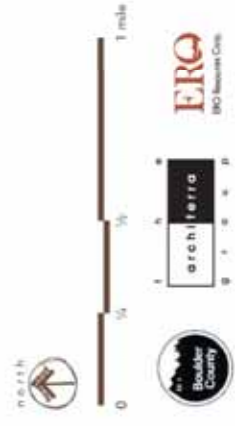
Niwot Loop Trailhead

N i w o t

TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Figure 1
Existing Trails Plan

- TRAILS**
- Existing Soft Surface Trail
 - Existing Hard Surface Trail
 - Sidewalk Connection
- OPEN SPACE**
- County Open Space
 - Conservation Easement (no public access)
 - Other Open Space
- City**
- Planning Area Boundary
 - Community Destination
 - Existing Trailhead



Trail Recommendations

Specific trail recommendations are based on analyses of opportunities and constraints, public input, meetings with stakeholders and discussions with BCPOS staff.

The proposed trail plans shown on Figures 2 and 3 provide a strategic guide for the implementation of a trail network for the Niwot area. The various lines depict general trail alignments and are conceptual in nature. The actual trail alignments will be finalized during the trail design process as a next step in plan implementation. As trail segments are designed, County Staff will work with individual property owners to identify specific concerns and address any trail impacts.

Nothing in this Trails Plan shall preclude the consideration of routes not shown at the time of adoption should new information and changing conditions including the willingness of property owners to sell land or grant easements make them practical. In addition, nothing in this plan shall preclude the reconsideration of trail routes shown herein if new information or changing conditions makes them more problematic. If there are significant alterations to this plan, revisions will be reviewed by the Parks and Open Space Advisory Board and approved by the BOCC with appropriate opportunities for public input.

Community Trails

The proposed community trail recommendations are as follows:

Niwot Road (west of 79th Street) - Replace the degraded existing hard surface trail along the south side of Niwot Road. Extend this trail west along Niwot Road to the existing Park 'n Ride at the Diagonal Highway (see Figure 4). This trail would provide a connection from the existing Park 'n Ride, the Peppertree Estates, Cottonwood Park and Country Creek neighborhoods to downtown. The existing trail should be replaced with concrete. The new trail can be constructed within the existing Niwot Road right of way.



Figure 4.

N i w o t

TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Figure 2
Proposed Community Trails Plan

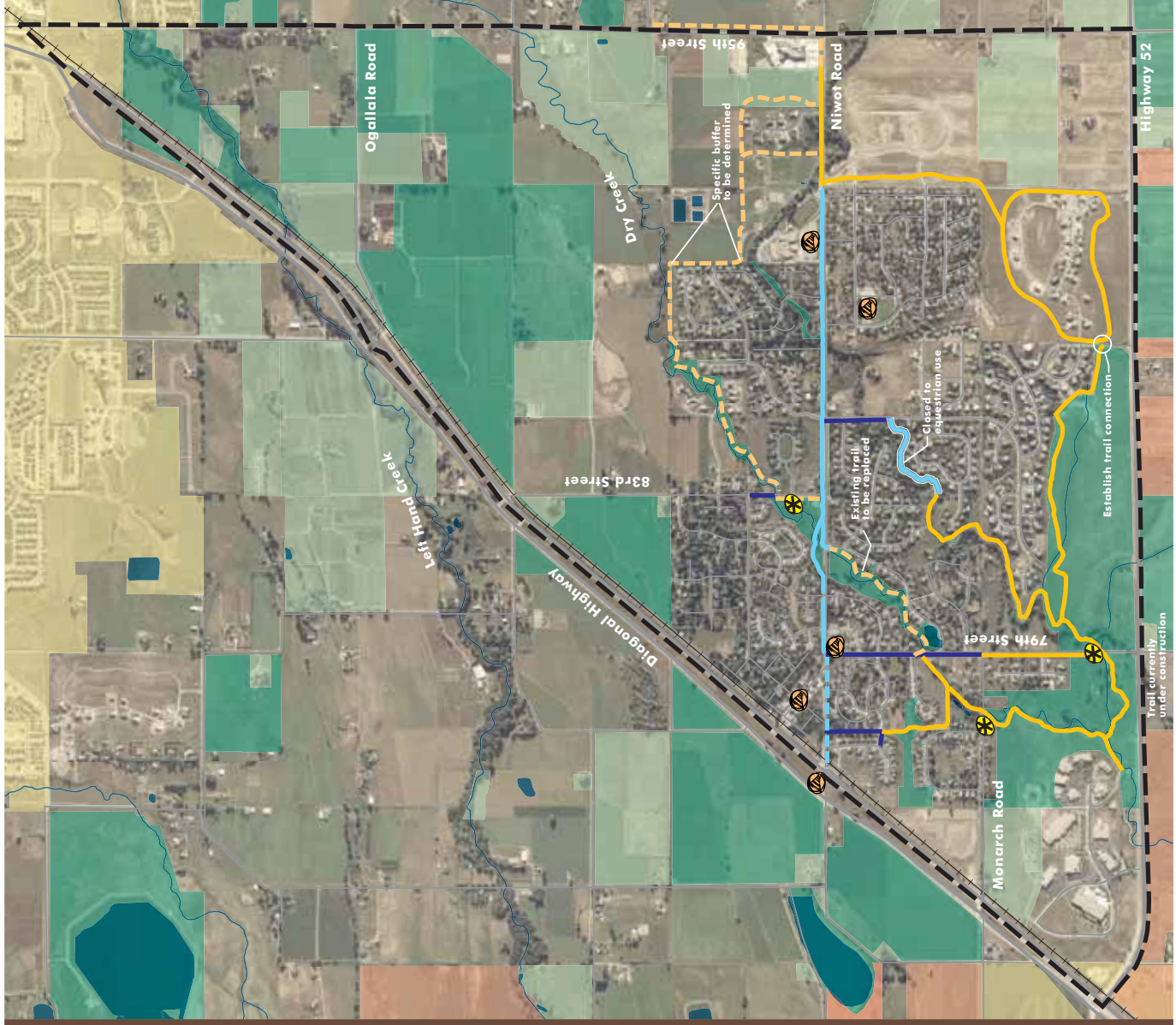
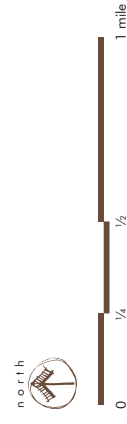
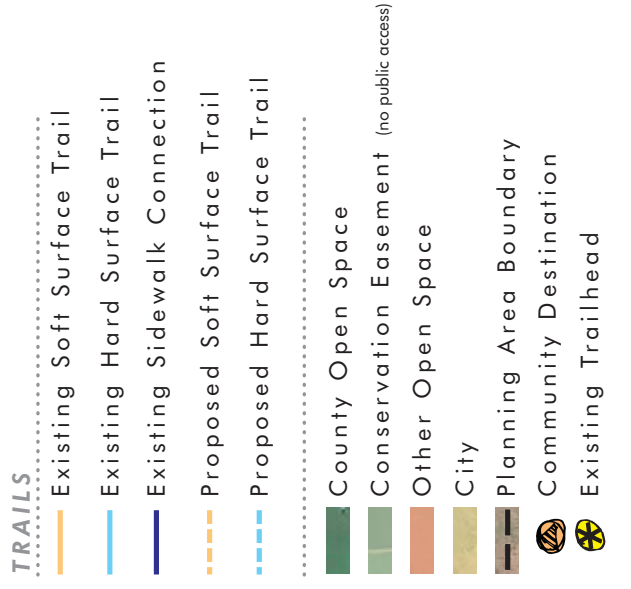


Figure 3
LOBO Regional Trail Plan

LONGMONT-BOULDER REGIONAL TRAIL

- Existing Trail Alignment
- Proposed Trail Alignment

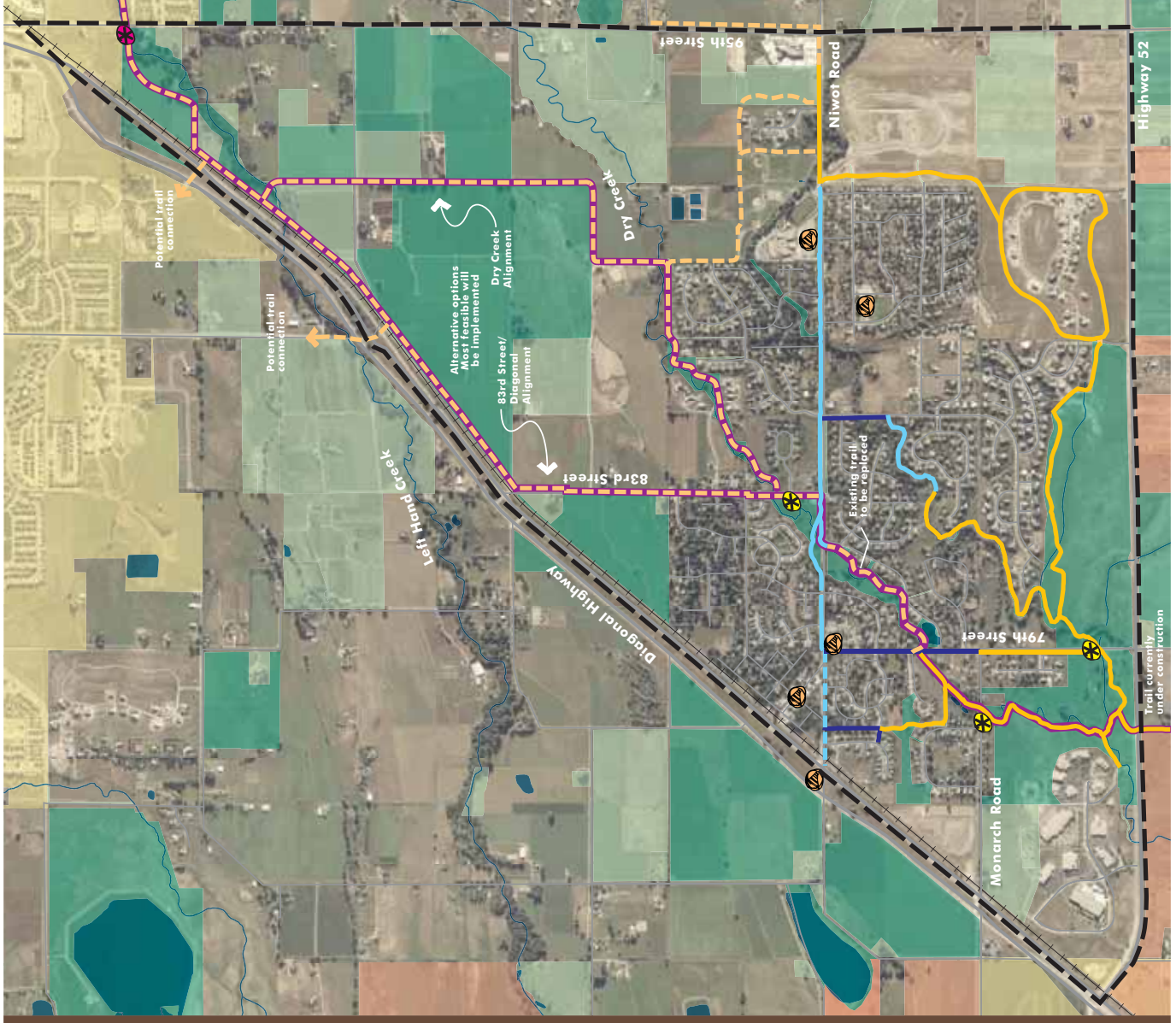
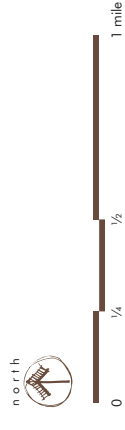
OTHER TRAILS

- Existing Soft Surface Trail
- Existing Hard Surface Trail
- Existing Sidewalk Connection
- Proposed Hard Surface Trail
- Proposed Soft Surface Trail

- County Open Space
- Conservation Easement (no public access)
- Other Open Space
- City

Planning Area Boundary

- Community Destination
- Existing Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead



Centrebridge Existing Trail Replacement - Replace the existing damaged 4 foot wide concrete trail along Dry Creek between Niwot Road and 79th Street with an 8 foot wide crusher fines trail. The existing concrete is very narrow and in poor condition. The trail connections on both ends are crusher fines other than the Niwot Road underpass (see Figure 5).



Figure 5.

Somerset/Legend Ridge Trail - Establish a formal soft surface trail connection between Somerset Estates and Legend Ridge (see Figure 6). There is an existing social trail located on private property. A trail easement and a designated and signed road crossing is required to formalize this connection.



Figure 6.



Somerset/Legend Ridge Trail

Dry Creek Loop Trail - Develop a local soft surface trail loop from Left Hand Valley Grange Park along Dry Creek across Niwot Sanitation District and Niwot High School or church property to Niwot Road (see Figure 7). This trail segment can be located on open space or trail easements to the east end of the Waterford Park neighborhood. From this point easements are required from the Niwot Sanitation District and the St. Vrain Valley School District to connect to Niwot Road. Based on initial discussions with the Niwot Sanitation District, they would like the trail along the western edge of their property. Boulder County staff will continue to work with them and attempt to obtain as large a buffer as possible to mitigate landowner concerns. There is a technical challenge between the Waterford and Waterford Park neighborhoods as Dry Creek meanders very close to the neighborhood leaving very little room for the trail. This may need to be addressed by realigning and armoring the channel or crossing the channel twice with bridges.



Figure 7. Dry Creek Loop Trail

This trail alignment has generated the most concerns from nearby residents, and these are summarized in the Public Input Process section of this report. Many of the concerns can be mitigated as follows:

- Privacy. Landscaping can be installed to create a visual barrier. Irrigation will be required, which some homeowners have offered. Varying the horizontal and vertical alignment of the trail can also achieve a level of separation between trail users and nearby residents.
- Control of dogs going from the trail into yards. This issue can be mitigated with fencing, educational outreach to trail users, leash law enforcement, and signage.
- Parking in their neighborhood. This can be mitigated by installing “no parking” signs on adjacent streets. However, this would prevent nearby residents and their guests from parking in these areas. Staff feel it is unlikely that trail users will drive from other communities and park in neighborhoods to use the Niwot trail system when there are three existing trailheads with adequate parking. BCPOS will only promote use of existing trailheads.
- Hours of use. The hours of use for all trails will conform to BCPOS standards, which are currently dawn to dusk.
- Crime and Property Values. Studies have shown that new trails adjacent to existing neighborhoods do not result in increased crime or decreased property values. Supporting data is included in the appendix.

95th Street Trail - A soft surface trail connection from Niwot Road along the east right of way of 95th Street to the Wild View neighborhood (see Figure 8). There is adequate right of way along Niwot Road and 95th Street for this trail. Some landscaping in front of the existing church may need to be transplanted in order to accommodate the trail. The trail would cross 95th Street at the existing signal. The trail should be located as far from the edge of 95th Street as possible for safety concerns. A small ditch at the north end will need to be piped to accommodate the trail.

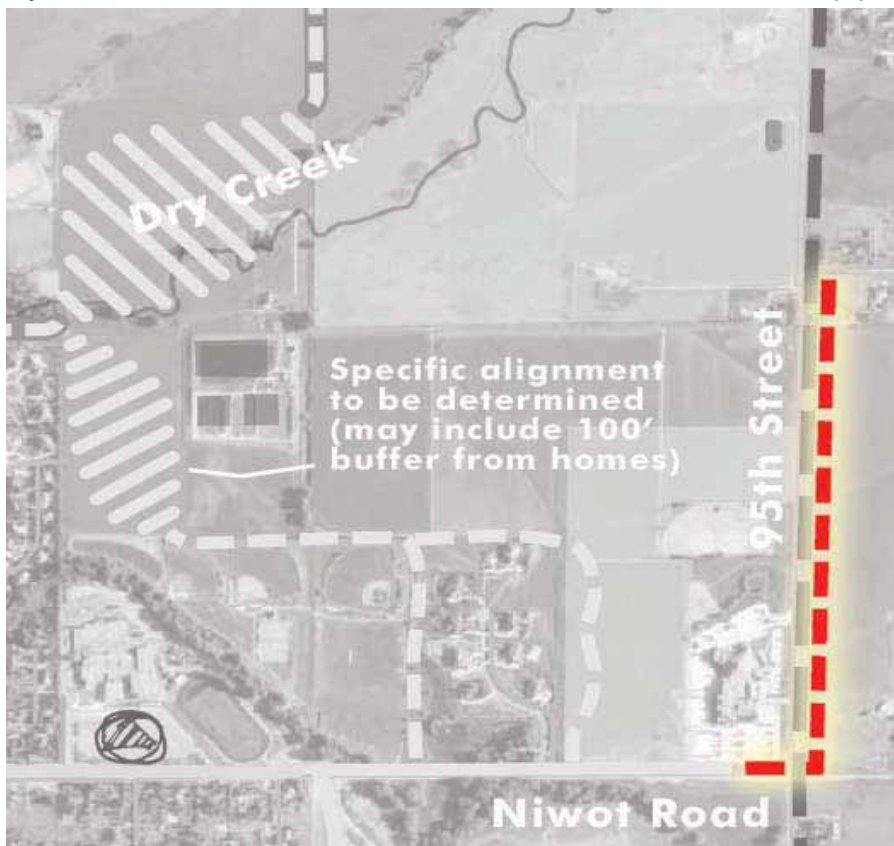


Figure 8.

LOBO Regional Trail

There are two trail alignment options for the LOBO Regional Trail. These are shown on Figures 9 and 10.



Figure 9. 83rd Street/Diagonal Alignment

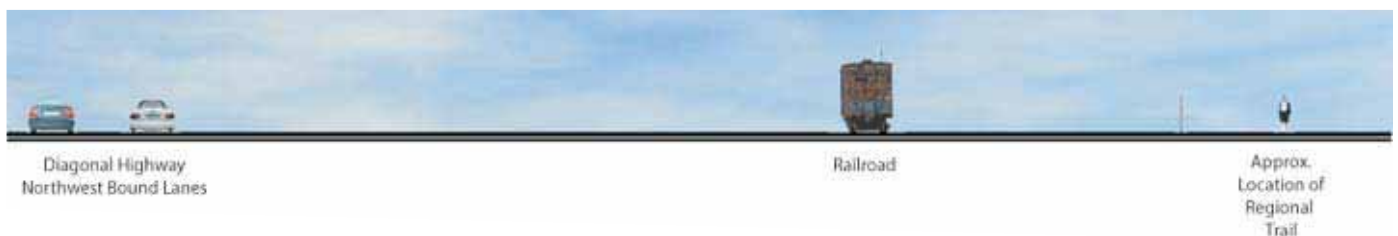


83rd Street

83rd Street/Diagonal Alignment

Trail Description:

Starting at the existing sidewalk along 83rd Street at Left Hand Valley Grange Park, continue north along the west side of 83rd Street. Pipe existing irrigation ditches to accommodate the trail. Explore options for increasing the amount of space available between the existing roadway and the Freedman/Douthit property as the available space is very narrow. Continue trail on the west side of 83rd Street through the Fitzgerald and Freedman/Douthit Open Space properties and cross 83rd Street to the Nelson Open Space property. From there, follow the existing trail easement through the Open Space property and construct a bridge crossing of Left Hand Creek to connect to the City of Longmont's existing trail at 95th Street/Hover Road.



Typical Section along Diagonal Highway

Pros and Cons of the 83rd Street/Diagonal Alignment:

Pros

- **Land Ownership:** The majority of the trail alignment is on either county-owned roadway right of way or county-owned open space
- **Timing:** Acquiring the necessary easements is likely to be relatively easy and will allow trail construction as soon as design and engineering is completed
- **User Experience:** The trail would extend along the perimeter of open space and privately owned agricultural land to provide a good user experience
- **Proximity to Other Uses:** Part of the trail is in close proximity to the Diagonal Highway; However, the trail will be well east of the roadway with a reasonable buffer/separation from the roadway (approx. 140' minimum)
- **Access:** This alignment allows access from the Lefthand Valley Grange Park as well as from locations along 83rd and the Diagonal Highway



Approximate Diagonal Trail Alignment

Cons:

- **User Experience:** A portion of the trail will be located within the right of way of 83rd Street; Most trail users would prefer a trail experience farther from the road
- **User Experience:** Experience is not as scenic or diverse of a recreational experience as the potential route interior to open space or along Dry Creek
- **Safety:** A portion of the trail is adjacent to railroad tracks; Trains could spook horses

Alternatives Analysis:

A trail alignment along the east side of 83rd Street was also analyzed but was found to be less feasible due to existing irrigation ditches, which function as siphons and cannot be piped, and adjacent property issues.

Dry Creek Alignment

Trail Description:

This alignment would also start at the Left Hand Valley Grange Park, cross 83rd Street at grade; follow Dry Creek on publicly owned land to the Niwot Sanitation District property. The creek may need to be rerouted and stabilized or there may need to be two bridges to cross where the creek flows very close to private property. Another bridge would be required to cross the creek where the trail would go north and then east across private property. The trail then would go north between the Nelson and Laber properties, cross Ogallala Road, bridge across Left Hand Creek and then go north of the creek under 95th Street and connect to the City of Longmont's existing trail at Airport Road. This trail would



Figure 10. Dry Creek Alignment

require easements from several landowners as described under Dry Creek Loop Trail discussion on page 15.

Pros and Cons of the Dry Creek Alignment:

Pros:

- User Experience: This alignment is farther from roads, is more scenic and provides a more desirable user experience
- Land Ownership: This alignment utilizes some existing public land and trail easements

Cons:

- Land Ownership: A portion of the trail alignment is on county-owned open space; however, a large segment would be located on privately-owned agricultural lands which would require a trail easement or land acquisition from multiple landowners
- Timing: Timing for design and construction would be dependant on acquiring the necessary land or easements
- Proximity to Other Uses: Portions of this alignment would be very close to a number of homes and may impact their privacy; See the Dry Creek Local Loop Trail section for mitigation of this concern
- Access: Good access from Lefthand Grange Park, however, limited access elsewhere along the alignment; Would require users from the Diagonal to travel down 83rd, or along Niwot Road to access the trail

LOBO Regional Connection Selection

Because either trail alignment can function as the LOBO Regional Trail, it is recommended that both trail alignments be pursued to ensure timely completion of the trail connection. Both alignments require land or trail easement acquisitions, and both present technical challenges. Whichever trail alignment can be designed and constructed should be implemented. If the 83rd Street/Diagonal alignment is implemented first, the project team recommends pursuing the option of building the Dry Creek Loop as an extension to the existing Niwot Loop Trail system, and possibly continuing north and east as a regional connection over time if land or easements can be acquired, and as budgets allow. BCPOS will work with local residents to mitigate any specific concerns along the trail alignments.

Community Involvement

Boulder County Staff will work with adjacent homeowners to mitigate specific concerns. This process is outlined in the Implementation-Community Involvement Section.

Trailheads

The proposed trailhead recommendations are as follows:

Improve Existing Trailheads:

As the trail system develops and user needs increase, BCPOS will expand or enhance the existing trailheads.

- Future reconfiguration of the Monarch Trailhead to better accommodate equestrian use
- The Niwot Loop Trailhead is currently being reconfigured to accommodate more use and will provide additional equestrian parking in 2006 or 2007
- The Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead may be expanded to provide additional facilities such as restrooms and informational kiosks; This trailhead also serves multiple uses and provides parking for the playground and ballfield

Proposed Trailheads:

Proposed trailhead improvements are as follows:

- A trailhead is proposed where the LOBO Regional Trail intersects 95th Street; This trailhead may include a small parking area, shelter, restroom facility and signage

Implementation

This section provides guidelines for trail design, materials, amenities, estimated construction costs, potential environmental impacts, and phasing.

Community Involvement

In the implementation of trails adjacent to neighborhoods with specific concerns, Boulder County Staff will work with the community as follows:

- Conduct individual and/or neighborhood meetings with the adjacent, affected homeowners
- Stake the proposed trail alignment in the field and walk the alignment with homeowners
- Meet with individual adjacent homeowners to consider mitigation measures such as grade separation, fencing and landscaping

This process will allow adjacent homeowners to have specific concerns addressed as trails go through final design and implementation.

Trail Design

Soft surface trails comprise most of the existing trails in the Niwot area, were generally favored by the public, and are the standard for most BCPOS. For these reasons, soft surface trails are recommended for the Niwot trail system. This material blends well with the rural landscape. The soft surface trails will be constructed of crusher fines material over compacted subgrade and generally 8 feet wide. Trail segments in areas prone to frequent flooding or erosion may be constructed of concrete.

Trail Grades

All trails should have a 2% cross slope to create positive drainage across the trail. Longitudinal slopes of 5% or less are ideal. Longitudinal slopes should not exceed 8.33% wherever possible. All trail grades shall conform to the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) where practical.

Trail Underpasses

Where trails pass under roadway bridges or through concrete box culverts, sufficient clearance should be provided for safe trail use. Street signage attached to the bridge or culvert helps to orient trail users. Trails under bridges should be widened to at least 10 feet wherever possible with 2-3 foot shoulders on each side of the trail. Box culverts for trails should be at least 12 feet wide as the 2 feet adjacent to the walls are unusable for bicyclists so this is effectively an 8-foot wide trail. Ideal vertical clearance is 10 feet.

Centerline Striping

Centerline stripes are recommended at all trail underpasses. Yellow painted 4-inch wide lines are suitable for this purpose.

Trail Right of Way

When new trail right of way is to be dedicated to the County, a minimum ideal dimension should be 50 feet. This will allow for a 10-foot wide trail with 3-foot shoulders on each side with room for grading.

Trail Landscape

Where appropriate, trails should have native vegetation, trees or landscaping to match the contextual surroundings. Trails developed in open spaces should have native, low water consumptive, low maintenance landscapes. Trails developed in urban areas may have bluegrass turf, shade trees and ornamental landscaping.

Vertical Clearance

Minimum vertical clearance from obstructions such as overhead branches should be 10 feet.

Curb Ramps

When trails enter a roadway, a curb ramp should be provided that is at least as wide as the trail. The ramp should meet the intent of the ADA guidelines.

Bridges

Bridges over ditches or drainageways should be at least 8 feet wide and should be designed to allow for access by maintenance and emergency vehicles. The bridges should be constructed of wood. Bridge railings should be 3 feet, 6 inches high. The bridge deck should be constructed of wood decking.

Culverts

Culverts for minor drainage crossings should be designed to allow for the trail tread width including shoulders. Culverts should be located to allow for a minimum of 12 inches of clearance between the top of the pipe and the finished trail surface.

Miscellaneous Structures

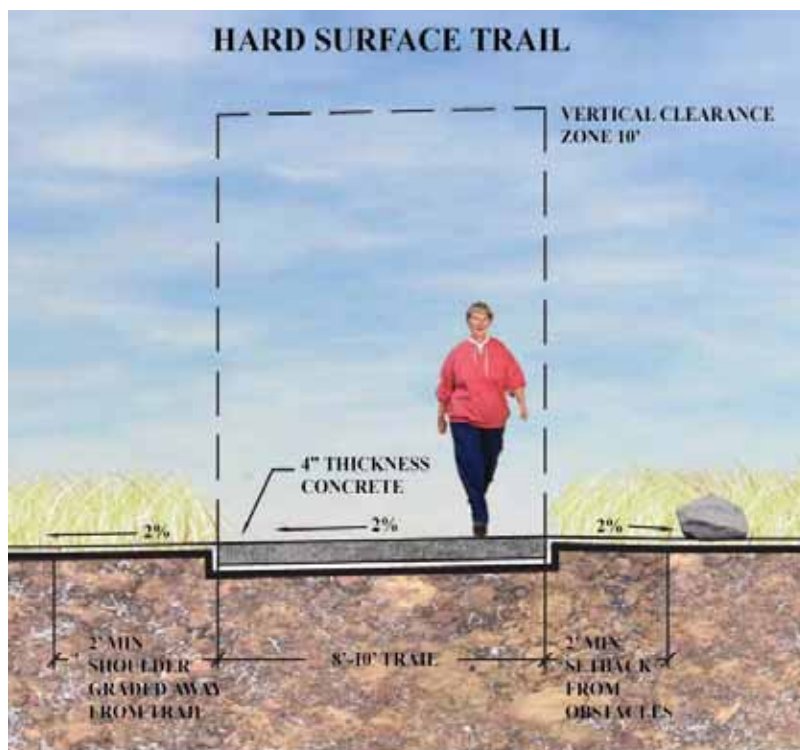
Structures such as signs, railings, walls, benches, etc. should be located a minimum of 2 feet from the edge of any trail.

Trail Materials

There are essentially two different types of trail materials:

Hard Surface Trails

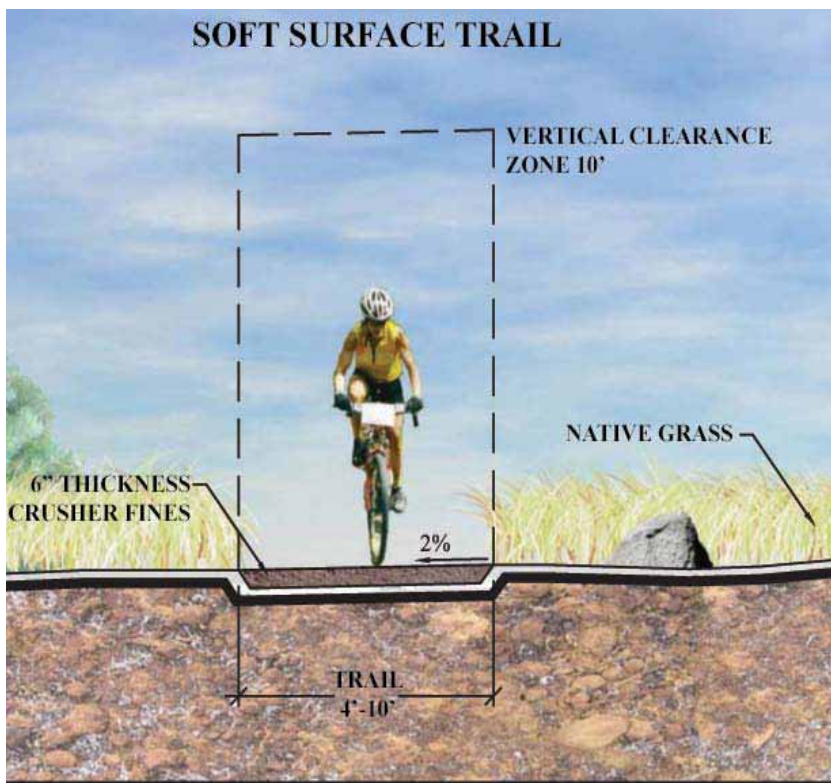
Hard surface trails are typically constructed of asphalt or concrete. Concrete is preferred as it is much more durable with lower maintenance requirements. Hard surface trails accommodate a variety of users including walkers, bicyclists, roller bladers, skateboarders, pedestrians with baby strollers, and wheelchairs. Snow is also easily cleared off of hard surface trails, making these ideal along roadways and frequently used paths through town.



Concrete trails should typically be 4"-6" thick depending on the need for heavy maintenance vehicles, and should be 8'-10' wide depending on the amount of intended use. Sawcut or zipstrip joints should be used every 8'-10' to create a smooth surface for wheeled users. Expansion joints should only be used adjacent to existing structures such as walls, steps, etc. Shoulders 2'-3' wide with minimal slope for positive drainage are recommended on each side of the trail.

Soft Surface Trails

Soft surface trails are typically constructed of natural earth, crusher fines or recycled concrete materials. Crusher fines are a by-product of gravel mining and generally include materials that pass through a 3/8" sieve. This is a preferred material as it creates a smooth, firm and stable surface. Soft surface trails should be constructed of crusher fines material approximately 6" thick, installed over filter fabric to prevent rutting. Soft surface trails should be 4'-10' wide depending on the amount of intended use. Generally speaking, where space is available, BCPOS recommends constructing 8 foot wide crusher fines trails throughout the project area.



Trail Construction

The site design and construction of this trails plan should be conducted in a manner that results in the least amount of disturbance to native plants and habitat. The trampling and removal of vegetation due to construction activities can result in weed infestations, erosion problems, and in some cases, a proliferation of social trails. Impacts to natural resources in the study area can be reduced with the following measures:

- Use existing roads and trails to the greatest extent possible
- Minimize the need for new or duplicate access roads
- Use accepted Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce and control erosion from disturbed areas
- Require the full restoration of access roads and other disturbed areas following construction
- Explore alternative construction and access techniques in sensitive areas such as wetlands
- Monitor and control weed infestations in restored areas

Raptor Protection Guidelines

Depending on the species, nesting raptors can be impacted by human activity near their nests. Some individuals (most likely in urban or semi-rural settings) may habituate to and tolerate human activity better than others, while human activity may cause others to abandon their nests. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) has provided the following buffer guidelines to protect nesting raptors from human disturbances. Although there are exceptions, the buffer areas and seasonal restrictions suggested below reflect an informed opinion that if implemented, should assure that the majority of individuals within a species will continue to occupy the area (CDOW 2002).

- ***Red-tailed hawk*** - no trails or other facilities (beyond that which historically occurred in the Area) within 1/3 mile radius of the nest site, and associated alternate nests. However, some members of this species have adapted to urbanization and may tolerate human habitation to within 200 yards of their nest. Seasonal restriction to human encroachment should be in effect from March 1 to July 15.
- ***Swainson's hawk*** - no trails or other facilities (beyond that which historically occurred in the area) within 1/2 mile of the nest site. Seasonal restriction to human encroachment within 1/2 mile of the nest from March 15 to July 31.

These guidelines should be considered during the final trail design and implementation. Final determinations should be made by County biological staff, who may recommend larger or smaller buffer areas based on their local expertise and conditions in the field. Measures to reduce raptor impacts may include alternate trail routes, seasonal limits on construction, seasonal trail closures, or other measures, as appropriate.

Trail Amenities

Signage

Trail signage should be limited to only those necessary for regulatory, informational, and interpretive or educational purposes.

Regulatory signage includes stop, yield, sharp turns, low clearance, steep grades, and other warning signs and should be located along trails to provide for user safety.

Informational signage should be located at trailheads, key destinations and periodic locations along trails to provide maps showing the location within the larger trail system context and distances between points on the trail. Informational signage should have trail etiquette, rules and regulations, emergency information, maintenance information and general information about the trail system.

Interpretive signage should be located at strategic locations along the trail system to educate the trail users about natural, cultural, or historical resources. It is important to create a system-wide theme for a unified interpretive program. These signs can also be used to protect sensitive natural resources.

An overall signage plan should be developed for the Niwot area with unique signage standards. The LOBO Regional Trail signage should have a separate, unique identity. This will help users identify where they are within the various Boulder County trail systems.

Informational signage will be implemented as a hierarchy of sign kiosks, depending on the size and use frequency of a particular trailhead.

- A trailhead with a well-used parking lot, such as Niwot Trail at 79th Street and the future lot on 95th Street will have large kiosks standard to the Boulder County Parks and Open Space parks system
- A secondary trailhead where it is determined that a significant number of trail users are entering from will have a standard “mini-kiosk”, a signpost with a trail system map, regulations panel and brochure box
- A designated access used as a trailhead, but not determined to be significant enough for a map, will have a regulations sign, though efforts will be made to limit the posting of regulations signs to accesses that are more significant than local footpaths

Create a naming system for trails within the Niwot Trail system that will aid trail users in wayfinding and will provide reference to maps and signs along the system.

Site Furniture

Site furniture such as benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles should conform to Boulder County Parks and Open Space standards.

Miscellaneous Structures

Structures such as picnic shelters and vault toilets should conform to Boulder County Parks and Open Space standards.

Estimated Construction Costs

Estimated construction costs have been developed for the proposed trails shown on the Trails Plan. The estimated costs are based on trail projects that have bid in 2005 and 2006. The cost estimates are based on 2006 dollars. While the numbers are conservative, they are very preliminary based on conceptual trail alignments and should be used for budgeting purposes only. More detailed design is required to refine the cost data. A detailed cost estimate is shown in the Appendix.

Potential Environmental Impacts

During the planning process, BCPOS gave special consideration to any sensitive natural resources when considering various trail implementation options. Based on a preliminary review of the trail recommendations, potential environmental impact areas are described below. Trail design and implementation will require site-specific surveys to assess the presence or absence of sensitive environmental resources, and associated permitting.

Dry Creek Trail

The proposed Dry Creek Trail alignment includes a short section (at the northwest corner of the Waterford Park subdivision) where initial assessments indicate there is not enough space to build a trail between the existing open space land and the adjacent trail easement. The Dry Creek embankment in this area is steep and unstable. The implementation of the trail through this area would require verification of existing public and private ownerships, additional design and engineering. Options may include one or two bridges, stabilization of the streambank, and/or re-routing of the stream itself.

Any of these options would result in localized impacts to riparian habitat in the area. However, any such efforts may also provide an opportunity to restore and enhance the structure of the stream bank and the quality of riparian habitat in this area.

Upper Baldwin Ditch

A large portion of the north-south trail connection between Dry Creek and Left Hand Creek follows the Upper Baldwin Ditch between agricultural fields. The portion of the ditch immediately south of Ogallala Road contains a strip of mature cottonwood trees that may provide nesting habitat for raptors. While no physical impacts to the trees would occur, the construction and use of this trail segment south of Ogallala Road could result in impacts to any active raptor nests in this area due to disturbance. (This area has not been surveyed and no active nests are known at this time). Implementation of this trail should incorporate the expertise of staff biologists and consider the CDOW guidelines described above under *Raptor Protection Guidelines*.

Left Hand Creek Crossing

The proposed trails plan includes the installation of two bridges across Left Hand Creek. These two crossings could fragment the riparian habitat in this area and may reduce its utility to some wildlife species. While current conditions require two separate bridges, the County will further explore any opportunities during the design and construction phase to find a single crossing point for both trails to reduce riparian habitat impacts. The County will also seek opportunities to mitigate the impacts of this crossing through enhancement of nearby riparian habitat. The Left Hand Creek corridor is also known to support nesting habitat for raptors. Trail design and implementation will seek to avoid and minimize impacts to active nests, based on the expertise of County staff and guidelines provided by the CDOW.

Other Impacts

Ground disturbance during trail construction will result in localized environmental impacts. However, with the exception of the specific areas described above, most of these impacts are anticipated to be minor.

Potential Permitting Requirements

In some areas, trail development may require permits from regulatory agencies to protect sensitive environmental resources. Permitting requirements will need to be assessed during the final trail design and implementation. The following permitting guidelines may apply:

- ***Wetlands*** - Some wetlands within the study area may be under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Activities that disturb wetlands may require a permit from the Corps under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Corps issues permits and authorization on a case-by-case basis following review of specific projects.
- ***Threatened and Endangered Species*** - The Left Hand Creek corridor may contain habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, which is currently listed as threatened under the

Endangered Species Act. While previous trapping surveys in this area have not found any occurrences of Preble's (USFWS 2002), trail crossings in this area may be subject to consultation and permitting by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional habitat evaluations and/or trapping surveys may be required at that time.

- **Raptors** - Potential nesting habitat for raptors (primarily along Left Hand Creek and the Upper Baldwin Ditch) should be surveyed for active nests prior to or during the design and implementation of proposed trails. If active nests are found in close proximity to proposed trail routes, impacts to active nests should be avoided and minimized based on the expertise of County staff and CDOW guidelines.
- **Migratory Birds** - The removal of trees will require migratory bird surveys to ensure that the project does not harm active or inactive nests (pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act). Subsequent removal of trees with nests requires a nest depredation permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Removal of active nests is typically not permitted.
- **Cultural Resources** - Cultural resources are protected under the Boulder County Land Use Code, and the Historic Preservation Advisory Board is the referral agency for all land use proposals that may impact a historic or archaeological site. Trail development plans that would change, modify, or are located on or adjacent to cultural resources should be reviewed by the Boulder County Historic Preservation Advisory Board.

Phasing

Implementation of the Trails Plan will be phased over time. Issues such as funding, negotiation of easements, repair or replacement of unsafe or hazardous conditions, trail continuity, environmental permitting, ease of design and construction will all factor into the prioritization of trail improvements. A guideline for phasing is as follows:

- **Somerset/Legend Ridge Trail Connection:** Design and construct an 8 foot wide soft surface trail connection between Somerset and Legend Ridge; This trail connection could be implemented in 2006 or 2007 if trail easements are acquired
- **Centrebridge Trail Replacement:** Replace the existing damaged and narrow concrete trail in the Somerset neighborhood with an 8 foot wide soft surface trail; This trail replacement could be implemented in 2006 or 2007
- **95th Street Trail:** Design and construct an 8 foot wide soft surface trail from the existing trail along Niwot Road to 95th Street; Continue north along the east side of 95th Street to the Wild View neighborhood. This trail could be implemented in 2006 or 2007
- **Dry Creek Loop Trail:** Design and construct a local soft surface trail loop from 83rd Street along Dry Creek, across the Niwot Sanitation District property and the Niwot High School property to Niwot Road; This trail connection could be implemented in 2008 or 2009
- **LOBO Regional Trail:** Design and construct the LOBO Regional Trail along 83rd Street and the Diagonal Highway or along the Dry Creek alignment; This trail connection could be implemented between 2008 and 2010

References

Boulder County. 1999. Boulder County Comprehensive Plan.
<http://www.co.boulder.co.us/lu/bccp/index.htm>. Accessed June 1, 2006.

Boulder County. 2006. Historic Preservation.
<http://www.co.boulder.co.us/lu/hpab/hppage8.htm#county>

Boulder County. 2002. Boulder County Grassland Management Plan Prairie Dog Habitat Element. Prepared by Boulder County Parks and Open Space.

Brennan, Mark. 2006. Wildlife Biologist. Boulder County Parks and Open Space. Personal communication with Bill Mangle, ERO Resources. June 7, 2006.

Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW). 2002. Recommended Buffer Zones and Seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptor Nests. Prepared by Gerald R. Craig, CDOW, January 18, 2002.

Colorado Historical Society. 2006. Directory of Colorado State Register Properties.
<http://coloradohistory-oahp.org/programareas/register/1503/cty/bl.htm>

Getboulder.com. Our People, Southern Arapahos are Part of Boulder's Spirit, by Judy Mattivi Morley. [Http://www.getboulder.com/visitors/articles/southernarapaho.html](http://www.getboulder.com/visitors/articles/southernarapaho.html)

NDIS. 2006. Colorado Natural Diversity Information Source. Ring-necked Pheasant.
[Http://www.ndis.nrel.colostate.edu/wildlifesp.aspx?SpCode=040292](http://www.ndis.nrel.colostate.edu/wildlifesp.aspx?SpCode=040292).

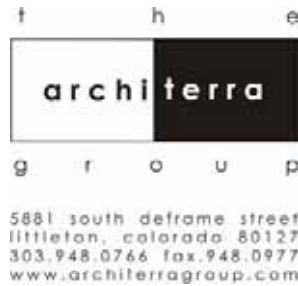
Niwot Community Association. 2006. History of Niwot, by Anne Dyni. <http://www.niwot.org/history.cfm>

OAHP. 2006. Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Colorado Inventory of Cultural Resources file search results. June 16, 2006.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2002. Trapping Data for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.



APPENDIX



Niwot Trail Master Plan

Niwot Community Association Meeting #1 Summary

February 8, 2006

Introduction

The meeting was held at the Niwot Grange. Ron and Brent gave a brief introduction about the scope of the project, introduced the Boulder County staff and the consultant team and reviewed the draft existing trails plan.

Project Goal

The goal of this project is to work with the Niwot community to create a vision for a comprehensive trail master plan.

Process/Schedule

Brent reviewed the process we will go through to develop a trails master plan. There will be two public meetings to gather input from the community. The consultant team will work with Boulder County Open Space staff to develop a master plan based on consensus from the public meetings. The master plan will be presented to the Boulder County Parks and Advisory Board and the Boulder County Commissioners.

Public Meeting #1

March 15th, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the high school

Public Meeting #2

April 26th, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the high school

The goal is to have an approved trail master plan in June, 2006.

Questions/General Discussion:

Will the LOBO Trail (Longmont to Boulder) will be located on the Diagonal Highway? A woman riding a bike on the road was hit by a bus and killed.

The conceptual trail alignment shown is intended to follow the alignment of the Diagonal Highway but will be separated by a landscape buffer.

Is there a possibility for trail easements along irrigation ditches (like the High Line Canal)?

Boulder County has been successful obtaining trail easements along some ditches. It depends on the ditch company. Some are willing to grant easements,

others are not. If there are alignments that make sense, we will contact the ditch companies regarding easements.

The aesthetics of a trail along the Diagonal Highway are not ideal. Could the trail follow Dry Creek?

The Comprehensive Plan shows a trail along Dry Creek. The main issue is land ownership. Much of the land is privately owned. The approximately 1-1/2 miles of trail along the creek passes through 8 or 10 different privately owned properties. The trail along the Diagonal would have some separation and there are no land ownership issues.

It was suggested that we bring the LOBO map to the next meeting to show more context.

What is the difference between crusher fines and hard surface trails?

Crusher fines make a soft trail surface good for hiking or running. Crusher fines trails cannot be plowed of snow in the winter.

Hard surface trails are typically constructed of concrete and are better for a wider variety of uses such as walking, running, bicycling, rollerblading, etc. These trails are more easily maintained in the winter.

The community should provide input on the types of trail materials they would like to see on trails in the Niwot area.

Will the LOBO trail be located on 83rd Street? There is a concern about the narrow street and high speed traffic.

The 83rd Street right of way is wide enough to allow for a trail. We could also look at locating the trail in adjacent open space.

Why doesn't the existing trails map show the HOA trails?

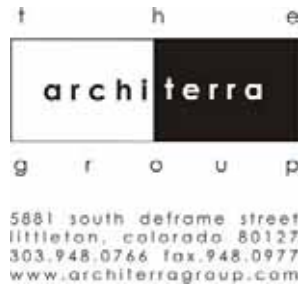
The existing trails map is intended to show the community wide trails for public access. If certain HOA trails are thought to be important, the County can potentially negotiate with the HOA to make this a public trail.

There is an existing 30' wide trail easement on a berm that dead ends at the treatment plant. What is the intent of this trail?

The trail would go on top of the berm and could be used as a smaller loop trail and connection to the high school.

Why not put the LOBO trail in the median of the Diagonal Highway?

There are numerous reasons not to locate the trail in the median. It would require extensive coordination with CDOT which may not allow a trail in the median. It would require numerous crossings of streets which would be less safe than a separated trail to the east.



Niwot Trail Master Plan Summary of Public Input Through April 14, 2006

The following is a summary of public input received at the public meeting held at Niwot High School on March 15, 2006 and from various emails and phone calls. This summary does not list every single comment received but generalizes the comments received to date. It is also important to note that this summary includes only comments related to the project study area which is between the Diagonal Highway, Highway 52 and 95th Street.

General Trail Comments:

- Trails near water should be far enough away so wildlife corridors are useful at night and wildlife can get to water.
- Any new trails should minimize ecological impacts.
- Keep road bikes on the road on bike lanes.
- Do not put new trails through older neighborhoods like Overbrook.
- Keep trails away from open space boundaries that abut to private properties as is reasonably possible.
- Concrete should only be used when necessary, like for underpasses or aprons where trails meet the road.
- Trails shown on the Comprehensive Plan should be shown on this plan, specifically the trail along Dry Creek.
- New trails should be as far from existing roads as possible.
- All trail systems should emphasize loops and connections. Do not invest in dead-end trails.

Proposal Trail Alignment Comments:

- Complete the trail between ditches behind the high school (Overbrook neighborhood).
- Need a trail along the ditch through the Niwot Hills development. The current trail is through the neighborhood.
- Continue the bike path east from Niwot High School to 95th Street.
- Connect the Dry Creek Trail to the high school along the sanitation district property.
- Provide a safe trail connection to the middle school.
- Provide a trail along 95th Street that is separated from the road for safety.
- Would like to see a trail all the way along the .

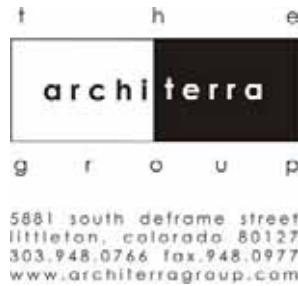
- Would like to see the Legend Ridge subdivision trail connect to the Somerset trail.

LoBo Regional Trail Comments:

- Consider Dry Creek alignment (per Comprehensive Plan) for regional trail.
- Would like to see the LoBo trail in concrete to get bicyclists off the Diagonal Highway.
- Seek an underground connection on major roads between Niwot and Longmont either under 95th Street or the Diagonal Highway.
- Keep the LoBo trail as far from the Diagonal Highway as possible.

Trail Materials, Facilities Comments:

- Keep most of the trails soft surface and open to all non-motorized users (pedestrians, equestrians, bikes), the regional connector trails can be concrete.
- More doggie bag dispensers and trash cans.
- Add shelters or trees periodically for shade. Shelters should have a roof and a wall along the west side to protect users from storms.
- Add rest areas along regional trails with shade, toilets, drinking fountains, and picnic tables.
- Add mileage markers, interpretive signage and trail maps.
- More signage and enforcement of dog leash laws.
- Need to have crosswalks at Longview Drive/Niwot Road and where the trail along the western edge of Niwot Hills connects to the trail on the north side of Niwot Road.



Niwot Trail Master Plan Summary of Public Meeting #2 April 26, 2006

The following is a summary of public input received at the public meeting held at Niwot High School on April 26, 2006 and from various emails and phone calls received either before or directly after the meeting. This summary does not list every single comment received but generalizes the comments received. It is also important to note that this summary includes only comments related to the project study area which is between the Diagonal Highway, Highway 52 and 95th Street.

General Trail Comments:

- All trails should meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) design guidelines whenever possible.
- Any new trails should minimize ecological impacts specifically to wildlife like pheasants, herons and other birds.

Proposal Trail Alignment Comments:

- There was some support and some opposition for a local loop trail along Dry Creek, across the Sanitation District property behind the high school and across the eastern edge of the high school property to Niwot Road.
- There was general support to continue the bike path east from Niwot High School to 95th Street.
- There was general support for a trail along 95th Street north to the neighborhood on the east. This trail should be separated from the road for safety.
- There was general support to formalize a trail connection between the Legend Ridge subdivision trail and the Somerset trail.
- There was some opposition to the continuation of the trail along the Diagonal into downtown Niwot.

LoBo Regional Trail Comments:

- There was some support and some opposition for the 83rd/Diagonal alignment.
 - Many supporters liked this alignment because they live along the Dry Creek alignment and do not want the trail near their homes.
- There was some support and some opposition for the Dry Creek alignment.
 - Many supporters liked this alignment because of the experience of being along the creek and open space/agricultural land.

Trail Materials, Facilities Comments:

- There was general support for soft surface trails versus concrete trails.
- There was general support to keep the trails open to all non-motorized users (pedestrians, equestrians, bikes).
- There was general support for more doggie bag dispensers and trash cans.
- There were concerns about types of fencing along portions of the trail. This is a detail that will be looked at in specific conditions.
- There was general support for trail amenities such as shade structures, toilets, drinking fountains, picnic tables, etc. located periodically along the regional trail system.

MEMORANDUM**Wednesday, April 26th, 2006**

TO: Sheriff Joe Pelle

Ms. Tina Nielsen, Boulder County Parks and Open Space

FROM: Comdr. Phil West**RE:** Relationship Between the Incidence of Crime and Open Space Trails in Niwot.

The Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department is planning the development of some new trails in the Niwot area. Some area residents have expressed concern that trails act as a “magnet” for crime. Testing that theory, Det. Sgt. Rick Brough and Crime Analyst Dave Rogers surveyed crime data in the Niwot area over the past three years.

Det. Sgt. Brough evaluated all of the crime/incident reports taken in a seven square-mile area around Niwot since January 2003 (346 reports). Five incidents were documented as having occurred on a trail or at a trailhead:

#04-2356	A dog bite that occurred on the trail behind a residence at 6701 N. 79 th Street
#04-3572	A 21 year-old male was arrested for possession of marijuana after he was contacted by a deputy for parking at a trailhead after dark
#04-6028	A truck stolen from Longmont was found abandoned at a trailhead in the 6300 block of N. 79 th Street
#05-7012	A 33 year-old man was arrested for possession of marijuana after he was contacted by a deputy for parking at a trailhead after dark
#06-128	An abandoned vehicle was impounded from a trailhead

Clearly, relative to the nature and number of crimes reported elsewhere in the vicinity, the incidence of crime at the trailheads or on the trails is negligible.

However, not every contact results in a report; deputies make far more contacts with citizens than are reflected here, particularly for “after hours” Parks violations that are typically resolved with a warning.

Additionally, there has been a good bit of publicity lately about the number of auto prowls that have occurred at Open Space trailheads over the past couple of years. Curiously, the trailhead at N.79th Street and Monarch Road has evidently escaped notice. As Det. Sgt. Brough’s research indicates, there have been no reported trespasses to vehicles at the trailhead in the past three years.

Recognizing that our documentation is tied to street addresses which wouldn’t necessarily correlate to activity along the trails, and that citizens are concerned that the trails are being used to gain access to residential areas, Crime Analyst Dave Rogers

surveyed all calls for service (including calls that resulted in a report being taken) for the Niwot area from 2001 to present. He generated maps (attached) identifying the location of specific crimes of concern (eg. Burglary, Auto Theft, Theft, Sex Assault, etc) and overall “density of events” in an attempt to determine if there was a correlation between the location of trails and the location of reported crime.* He interpreted the data as indicating that there was no clear correlation and that the incidence of crime was more closely related to structural and traffic density.

As regards citizens’ concerns that open space trails provide ready access to criminals: anecdotally, that has been the case in Superior where a serial burglar was responsible for upwards of 20 residential burglaries over the course of a year. Investigation indicated that he frequently used open space trails and easements to traverse residential areas. The burglar was presumably involved in over 250 similar crimes throughout the north Metro area. However, it should also be noted that his modus operandi was unique, that he worked exclusively at night, and that he only targeted homes that were unsecured (open doors, open windows, etc); he never attempted to force entry and the simple precaution of locking a door was an adequate deterrent. We have not experienced anything similar in Niwot or Gunbarrel in recent history.

I hope that this is of assistance to you. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

* Crime Analyst Dave Rogers eliminated data regarding the incidence of crime occurring at Niwot High School from the survey as, due to its relative frequency of occurrence, it would tend to distort the map.

Impact of Trails on Adjacent Properties

Summary

Since 1979 studies have concluded that trails do not increase crime or negatively impact property values. They have also found that while some residents were apprehensive about trail projects most did not experience problems after the trails opening. In fact, many became users of the trail and the majority recognized the trail's economic and health benefit. Despite understandable homeowner concerns about the possible impacts associated with a new neighborhood trail, the research does not show that trails cause an increase in crime or a decrease in property values.

Crime and Vandalism

A study of recreational trails in Omaha, Nebraska, surveyed residents living along the trails. It found that respondents reported incidents with trail-related theft and property damage infrequently and that most of these incidents were relatively minor in nature. Property owners did not have a widespread concern for their safety. Trespassing, theft and vandalism by trail users were relatively infrequent events. 75% of the residents living along the trails perceived there to be a positive relationship between the trails and neighborhood quality of life.

Greer, Donald. 2000. *Omaha Recreational Trails: Their Effect on Property Values and Public Safety*. University of Nebraska at Omaha, Recreation and Leisure Studies Program, Omaha, Nebraska.

The 1998 study, *Rail-Trails and Safe Communities*, indicates that rail-trails are safe places for people to be. Out of the 372 trails included in the study only eleven trails in 1995 and ten trails in 1996 had experienced any type of major crime, 3% of responding trails. These figures are very low considering the 372 trails covered nearly 7,000 miles of trail and more than 45 million estimated annual users. In addition, only one-fourth of the trail managers reported any type of minor crime, such as graffiti or littering and these problems were quickly corrected as part of routine trail management. Letters from law enforcement agencies support these findings. They consistently report that rail-trails do not encourage crime and that the actual volume of incidents such as graffiti and littering, sign damage and motorized use were minimal.

National Park Service and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. 1998. *Rail-Trails and Safe Communities: The Experience on 372 Trails*. National Park Service, Washington D.C.

A survey of residents near the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike trail in New York asked respondents to comment on twelve potential problems that could arise from the trail. The respondents ranked each potential problem on a scale of one to five, with one being “not a problem” to five being “a major problem”. The items that were ranked highest as being a major problem were litter (14% of respondents), illegal motor vehicle use (12%), and disruptive noise from the trail (12%). For these three items the percentage of users who indicated that these were not a problem at all was 41%, 44%, and 45% respectively.

Schenectady County, Department of Planning. 1997. *The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and Its Impact on Adjoining Residential Properties*. Schenectady, New York.

A National Park Service study of the 26-mile Heritage Trail in rural Iowa, the 16-mile St. Marks Trail through small communities in Florida, and the 8-mile Lafayette/Moraga Trail in suburban San Francisco found that property owners experienced relatively few problems from the existence of a rail trail. Most adjacent property owners reported that the rates of vandalism, burglary and trespassing had remained the same or decreased since the opening of the trail. The majority of property owners interviewed in the National Park Service study reported that living near a trail was better than they expected.

National Park Service and Penn State University. 1992. *The Impacts of Rail-Trails: A Study of Users and Nearby Property Owners of Three Trails*. National Park Service, Washington D.C.

A study of the Burke-Gilman Trail in Seattle, Washington relied on interviews with local police officers and residents adjacent to the 12-mile urban rail-trail. The study found that incidents of vandalism and burglary did not increase as a result of the trail. To the contrary, the rate of vandalism and break-ins to adjacent property was well below the neighborhood average.

Seattle Engineering Department, Office of Planning. 1987. *Evaluation of the Burke-Gilman Trail's Effect on Property Values and Crime*. Seattle Engineering Department, Seattle, Washington.

Economic Impact

A 2002 survey of 2,000 recent homebuyers co-sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors asked about the “importance of community amenities,” and trails came in second only to highway access. Those surveyed could check any number of the 18 amenities, and 36 percent picked walking, jogging or biking trails as either “important” or “very important.”

*See graphic

National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors. 2002. *Survey of Recent Home Buyers*. <www.nahb.com/news/smartsurvey2002/htm>.

81% of respondents surveyed for the study in Omaha, Nebraska felt that the nearby trail’s presence would have a positive effect or no effect on the ease of sale of their home, 42% thought that the trails would increase the selling price of their home while 36% felt there would be no effect and 20% didn’t know what effect the trails would have. The clear majority of residents, 63.8%, who bought their homes after the construction of the trails reported that the trail had positively influenced their purchase decision.

Greer, Donald. 2000. *Omaha Recreational Trails: Their Effect on Property Values and Public Safety*. University of Nebraska at Omaha, Recreation and Leisure Studies Program, Omaha, Nebraska.

This 1997 study in Schenectady County, New York on the impacts of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail on adjoining residential properties found that the majority of landowners felt that the trail had no effect on or increased their ability to sell their homes. Similarly, most landowners felt the trail had no effect on or actually increased the value of their property. Overall, respondents reported that living near the trail is somewhat better than they had expected it to be and improved the quality of their neighborhood modestly.

Schenectady County, Department of Planning. 1997. *The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and Its Impact on Adjoining Residential Properties*. Schenectady, New York.

A study of the effect of greenways on property values concluded that urban trails have had neither a positive nor a negative effect on the value of homes adjacent to a trail. The study did, however, find that homes within one block of an urban trail were more easily marketed than homes in neighborhoods that didn’t have an urban trail.

The Conservation Fund and Colorado State Parks. 1995. *The Effect of Greenways on Property Values and Public Safety*. The Conservation Fund, Denver, Colorado.

Landowners along all three trails in the study reported that their proximity to the trails had not adversely affected the desirability or values of their properties, and along the suburban trails in the study the majority of owners felt that the presence of the trail would make their properties sell more easily and at increased values.

National Park Service and Penn State University. 1992. *The Impacts of Rail-Trails: A Study of Users and Nearby Property Owners of Three Trails*. National Park Service, Washington D.C.

Resources – Researched on 04/13/06

Surrey, Parks, Recreation, and Culture 2001. Greenway Proximity Study: A Look at Four Neighborhoods in Surrey, British Columbia. Surrey, British Columbia.

Schenectady County Department of Planning 1997. The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail & Its Impact on Adjoining Residential Properties: A Survey of Residential Property Owner's Perspectives Regarding an Adjacent Multi-Use Recreational Trail's Impact on Their Lives and Property. Schenectady County, NY.

Greer, Donald L., Pd.D. Project Director University of Nebraska at Omaha Recreation and Leisure Studies Program 2000. Omaha Recreational Trails: Their Effect on Property Values and Public Safety. Omaha, NE.

Center for Urban Policy and The Environment 2003. Public Choices and Property Values: Evidence from Greenways in Indianapolis. Indianapolis, IN

National Association of Home Builders and National Association of Realtors 2002. Survey of Recent Home Buyers. www.nahb.com/news/smartsurvey2002/htm

References on the effects of trails on property values and crime

- Arizona State Parks 1995. A survey of landowner's perceived views of property values and attitudes toward multi-use trails and trail users. Arizona State Parks - State Trail Program. Flagstaff , AR
- Colorado State Parks 1995. The effect of greenways on property values and public safety. The Conservation Fund. Colorado State Parks. Denver, CO.
- Murphy, M. M. The impact of the Brush Creek Trail on property values and crime. Sonoma State University. Santa Rosa, CA.
- National Park Service 1990. Economic impacts of protecting rivers, trails, and greenway corridors, a resource book. Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance. National Park Service.
- National Park Service 1992. The impact of rail-trails, a study of user and nearby property owners from three trails. National Park Service.
- National Park Service 1998. Rail-trails and safe communities - experiences of 372 trails. National Park Service.
- Parks and Recreation Magazine April 1998. Residential attitudes towards rail trail development.
- Feeney, S. J. A survey of residential property owners' perspectives regarding a multi-use recreational trail's impact on their lives and property. Schenectady County Department of Planning. Schenectady, NY
- Seattle Engineering Department 1987. Evaluation of the Burke-Gilman Trails's effect on property value and crime. Seattle, WA.
- Turco 1998. Residential attitudes towards rail trail development. National Parks and Recreation Association. Illinois State University.

Niwot Trails Master Plan
Conceptual Trails Cost Estimate (In Year 2006 Dollars)

Trail Segment	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
1. Somerset/Legend Ridge Trail				
8' wide crusher fines trail	100	lf	\$15	\$1,500
Drainage structures	1	ls	\$2,500	\$2,500
Subtotal				\$4,000
2. Centrebridge Trail Replacement				
Remove exist. 4' wide concrete trail	2,800	lf	\$8	\$22,400
8' wide crusher fines trail	2,800	lf	\$15	\$42,000
Subtotal				\$64,400
3. 95th Street Trail				
8' wide crusher fines trail	3,500	lf	\$15	\$52,500
Pipe ditch	500	lf	\$50	\$25,000
Subtotal				\$77,500
4. Dry Creek Local Loop Trail				
8' wide crusher fines trail	10,000	lf	\$15	\$150,000
Pedestrian bridges	2	ea	\$80,000	\$160,000
Design and engineering (approx. 15%)	1	ls	\$46,000	\$46,000
Subtotal				\$356,000
5. LOBO Regional Trail-83rd Street Alignment				
8' wide crusher fines trail	15,000	lf	\$15	\$225,000
Pedestrian bridges	2	ea	\$80,000	\$160,000
Safety barrier at 83rd Street	100	lf	\$100	\$10,000
Drainage structures/ditch crossings	1	ls	\$120,000	\$120,000
Design and engineering (approx. 15%)	1	ls	\$80,000	\$80,000
Subtotal				\$595,000
6. LOBO Regional Trail-Dry Creek Alignment				
8' wide crusher fines trail	7,800	lf	\$15	\$117,000
Pedestrian bridges	2	ea	\$120,000	\$240,000
Drainage structures/ditch crossings	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000
Design and engineering (approx. 15%)	1	ls	\$60,000	\$60,000
Subtotal				\$442,000
7. Niwot Road Trail				
Remove existing concrete trail	1,200	lf	\$30	\$36,000
10' wide concrete trail	2,000	lf	\$50	\$100,000
Design and engineering (approx. 15%)	1	ls	\$20,000	\$20,000
Subtotal				\$156,000
Total				\$1,694,900

Notes:

- The LOBO Regional Trail-Dry Creek Alignment costs are in addition to the Dry Creek Local Loop Trail costs.
- The crusher fines trail costs of \$15/linear foot are Boulder County installation costs. All other costs are by contractors.
- Trail mitigation such as fencing or landscaping is undefined so not costs are currently shown. These costs will be identified during detailed design.

Trail Element Costs	
Amenities	
Highway/road signs	\$2,500 Each
Trail signage	\$500 Each
Interpretive signs	\$3,000 Each
Kiosks	\$20,000 Each
Trailheads	\$6.00 /SF
Restroom Buildings	\$80,000 Each
Native Evergreen Trees	\$250-350 Each
Native Shrubs	\$30-\$60 Each
Infrastructure	
Road Underpass	\$45,000 Each (existing bridge) \$200,000 (new excavation)
Bridges	\$1,000 / LF
Fencing	\$6-\$12 / LF



Parks and Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road • Longmont, Colorado 80503
303.678.6200 • Fax: 303.678.6177 • www.bouldercounty.org

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DATE AND LOCATION: Thursday, December 11, 2014 3:00 p.m. Commissioners Hearing Room, 3rd floor Boulder County Courthouse, 1325 Pearl Street, Boulder, CO

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Amendment to the Niwot Trails Master Plan

PRESENTER: Brent Wheeler, Project Coordinator

ACTION REQUESTED: Approval

ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the Amendment to the Niwot Trails Master Plan to include two new trails and to establish priorities for new recreational improvements.

LOCATION AND BACKGROUND:

As part of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan, a network of trails was envisioned through the community of Niwot and to connect the communities of Longmont and Boulder. A number of small parcels and trail segments were created as various subdivisions developed. In 2006, the Niwot Trails Master Plan (Plan) was adopted by the BOCC. The Plan provided guidance for completion of the Niwot trail system and the Longmont to Boulder Trail (LOBO). Since the completion of the Plan, the Dry Creek Loop and the LOBO trails were constructed providing a comprehensive network of trails within Niwot and connecting to surrounding communities.

Although the Niwot Trails Master Plan addressed the key trail issues at the time, several other items have developed in recent years and this Plan Amendment addresses:

- A request from the Niwot Community Association (NCA) to formalize an informal trail from the Dry Creek Loop Trail westerly towards Niwot Road.
- Formalizing an off street route of the LOBO Trail through Left Hand Valley Grange Park. Currently the LOBO uses sidewalks through this area and there is an existing informal trail that is heavily used.
- Overall trail and trailhead priorities and potential funding sources.
- Updates on the redesign of the Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead (design, funding and timing), status of Somerset and Niwot Road trail crossings and naming of trails in this area for better way finding.

The planning area for the original Niwot Trail Master Plan and this amendment includes a triangular area bounded by 95th Street on the east, Mineral Road (Highway 52) on the south

and the Boulder-Longmont Diagonal, Highway 119 on the west (see Figure 1).

PUBLIC PROCESS

An extensive public process was used during the development of the original Niwot Trails Master Plan. The major components of this plan have been completed. Since that time, several informal trails have developed and become well-established. The Niwot Community Association (NCA) submitted a proposal to formalize one of these trails. NCA is a group of local business people and community members who come together to maintain a non-profit corporation, organized to promote the economic and commercial well-being of businesses in the Niwot Business Area, encourage preservation of the Niwot Historic District, and make a positive contribution to the Niwot community.

During the summer 2014, staff looked into this trail request and identified several other recreational improvements that were not entirely addressed in the original Niwot Trails Master Plan. A web page was created to provide general public information about amending the Niwot Trails Master Plan in mid-July of 2014. As part of the web page, an online forum and questionnaire were developed to gather public input. In addition to the web page and questionnaire, an open house was held at the Left Hand Grange No. 9 on August 13 from 5 until 7 PM. Postcards were sent to over 1700 Niwot residents and press releases were issued to inform the community of this open house. Thirty-five citizens signed in at the open house and many members of the public participated in the online questionnaire during the meeting. Public comments were taken from August until mid-September of this year. The Appendix attached to this memorandum provides a compilation of all public comments received to date. All public comments have been evaluated and incorporated into this analysis and the subsequent recommendations.

Public input and recommendations from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) have been evaluated and incorporated into the amendment. POSAC unanimously recommended approval to the BOCC at their November 20, 2014 hearing (the draft minutes are provided at the end of the Appendix and will not be formally approved until their next meeting). All of these meetings were open for public comment and press releases were sent out to keep the community informed of these meetings and opportunities to comment.

ANALYSIS

This section includes analysis of the major components of this amendment: formalizing an informal trail from the Dry Creek Loop Trail westerly towards Niwot Road; formalizing an off street route of the LOBO Trail through Left Hand Valley Grange Park; establishing overall trail and trailhead priorities and potential funding sources; and updates on the redesign of the Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead, status of Somerset and Niwot Road trail crossings and naming of trails in this area for better way finding. The analysis of these components is described below and summarized in the Staff Recommendation section.

Formalizing an informal trail from the Dry Creek Loop Trail westerly towards Niwot Road

This informal trail heads westerly from the Dry Creek Trail located in the northwest corner of Niwot High School (see Figure 2). It is currently a moderately used trail consisting of a narrow unsurfaced foot path. The informal trail is located on Boulder County Parks and

Open Space land and runs between the Boulder and White Rock and Boulder and Left Hand ditches.

Staff has evaluated this trail proposal and developed the following recommendations. This informal trail provides a good connection to the existing Niwot trail system and would allow high school students and visitors easy access from other portions of the community. The trail currently consists of native soils, is narrow, overgrown and becomes slippery when conditions are wet. 96% of the public comments received supported this proposal and only 4% opposed. There appears to be no significant concerns from adjacent neighbors. *Staff recommends the informal trail be formalized into a four foot wide crusher fines surfaced trail.*

Formalizing an off street route of the LOBO Trail through LeftHand Valley Grange Park

This informal trail creates a more direct route for the LOBO Trail through Left Hand Valley Grange Park (see Figure 3). It is currently a moderately used trail consisting of a narrow unsurfaced foot path. The informal trail is located on Boulder County Parks and Open Space land and runs generally parallel to the eastern side of Dry Creek.

Staff has evaluated this trail proposal and developed the following recommendations. This informal trail provides a more direct connection to the LOBO Trail and would create easier way finding for visitors using this regional trail. The existing sidewalk is used by other pedestrians and often leads visitors along Niwot Road, instead of the regional trail. The trail currently consists of native soils, is narrow, overgrown and becomes slippery when conditions are wet. 87% of the public comments received supported this proposal and only 13% opposed. There appears to be no significant concerns from adjacent neighbors. *Staff recommends the informal trail be routed slightly away from the creek and formalized into an eight foot wide crusher fines surfaced trail.*

Updates on the redesign of the Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead, status of Somerset and Niwot Road trail crossings and naming of trails in this area for better way finding

The redesign of the Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead was recommended in the original Niwot Trails Master Plan in 2006. The Plan states that Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS) will expand or enhance the existing trailheads as the trail system develops and user needs increase. The Plan goes on to state the Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead may be expanded to provide additional facilities such as restrooms and informational kiosks. In addition to serving trail visitors, the trailhead provides parking for the small playground and ball field located to the south. A design for expanding the parking lot has been created, along with adding a permanent restroom and informational kiosk (see Figure 4). These improvements and additional facilities will help better meet the needs of trail visitors, serve as a trailhead for the growing use of the LOBO regional trail and provide better and much needed facilities for the playground and ball field. Due to the costs associated with these improvements, BCPOS will be looking for partners and possibly apply for a grant with Great Outdoors of Colorado (GOCO) for funding assistance in the next couple of years. Boulder County Transportation will assist in funding the permanent restroom as part of the Regional Trails Program.

The Dry Creek Loop Trail and the extension of the Niwot trail system through Legend Ridge, Niwot Hill and Somerset subdivisions were completed in recent years. This trail crosses

Niwot Road near Niwot High School and again at Somerset Drive as it enters the Somerset subdivision further to the south (see Figure 5). Both crossings are unmarked and somewhat confusing to visitors who are new to the area. BCPOS has developed conceptual road crossings for each of these sites. These designs will promote easier way finding and delineate a clear and safer road crossing point. Staff will work with the homeowner associations in these subdivisions to gather their input and secure any necessary easements. There is currently some funding allocated for these improvements and BCPOS hopes to include them in the future GOCO grant application. If grant funding is unavailable, BCPOS will pursue implementation for these crossing improvements within the next two years.

There have been several efforts over the last few years to name some of the trails within the Niwot trail system. Staff sought suggestions from the community and will incorporate their input into future sign improvements. The sign improvements will focus on better identifying the Niwot trail system and naming the individual sections of the trails that are part of it to enhance overall way finding. Sign improvements will be incorporated into existing operating funds and will be scheduled as staff time and resources allow based on overall county-wide needs.

Overall trail and trailhead priorities and potential funding sources

As previously mentioned, BCPOS hopes to submit all of the recommended recreational improvements described in this Plan Amendment to GOCO for funding assistance. Exact timing of each component cannot be established until the funding is in place. Based on public comment received at the open house and the online survey, along with potential safety concerns associated with the existing condition of the road crossings, BCPOS is recommending the following phasing:

1. Improve the existing road crossings located at Niwot Road and Somerset Drive. The crossings will cost approximately \$12,000 and should be completed as soon as possible. Some existing funding can be used for these crossings if grant monies are unavailable.
2. Formalize the informal trail from the Dry Creek Loop Trail westerly towards Niwot Road. This trail is currently well-used and minor improvements will go a long way in providing a better user experience and new connections to the existing trail system. BCPOS staff can improve this trail for approximately \$25,000 in materials and equipment.
3. Formalize the off street route of the LOBO Trail through Left Hand Valley Grange Park. It will enhance trail visitor experience and provide a more direct and easily followed route for the LOBO Trail. BCPOS staff can improve this trail for approximately \$12,000 in materials and equipment. Volunteers may be able to assist and supplement staff efforts to improve these new sections of trail.
4. The Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead currently seems to meet current parking needs but demands will increase as the trail system gains in popularity. The restroom was broadly supported in the public process and would substantially improve current and anticipated uses. Niwot Youth Sports leases the ball fields from BCPOS for a nominal fee. They currently rent a port-a-potty for a significant portion of the year. This port-a-potty is expensive, temporary in nature and also is used by trail and

playground visitors. A permanent restroom would provide a great amenity for all of these uses. The trailhead expansion would ideally be constructed prior to the restroom and informational kiosk. BCPOS staff could construct the restroom for approximately \$35,000 in materials and equipment. The trailhead improvements would cost approximately \$110,000 using a combination of contracted services and materials and equipment for BCPOS staff to construct the remaining trailhead improvements. If funding cannot be secured for the entire trailhead project, the restroom should be the top priority for the trailhead and phased in front of other improvements if at possible.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

BCPOS recommends approval of the Amendment to the Niwot Trails Master Plan to include two new trails and to establish priorities for new recreational improvements.

FIGURES

1. Niwot Trails Master Plan Amendment: Proposed Improvements
2. Dry Creek Trail Improvements
3. Left Hand Valley Grange Trail Improvements
4. Left Hand Valley Grange Trailhead Improvements
5. Improved Road Crossings

Appendix – Compilation of Public Comments

Appendix – Compilation of Public Comments

Do you support the proposal by the Niwot Community Association to make official the informal trail from the Dry Creek Loop Trail?

Yes 45

No 2

Please explain

I like trails and people are going to ride these trails anyway.

I like trails and people are going to ride these trails anyway.

an update would help make the Dry Creek Trail more assessable for safety. Present time the trail has many uneven trails and is not well maintained.

This trail is heavily used and can be dangerous in the winter (I've fallen)...it's already signed, take it to the next step.

It makes lots of sense for people connecting to the Dry Creek Trail. I expect the increase in traffic to be modest.

Regular maintenance of the shrubs and trees along the trail will improve the neighborhood and make the area safer for kids.

Great for high school students!

Looks logical, interested in seeing what objections others may have before firm yes or no

Maybe nowhere near me

If people are already taking informal trails, they are clearly useful.

People are obviously using this trail, having created it. A more formal trail will be safer to both people and the environment.

Strongly support. I used to live just off of Elm Street and used the informal trail. It was often overgrown. Making it a formal trail would be help with connectivity in Niwot, and especially to Niwot High School. I now live half a mile away on Dry Creek Road and use the Niwot trails.

This allows me to make a loop without going all the way to Niwot High.

Leave as natural as possible.

If it is a formal trail it will be a good all-weather trail for use. It is very narrow right now.

A greenway without a trail is like a day without sunshine.

A greenway without a trail is like a day without sunshine.

Informal trail receives plenty of foot and bike traffic. Poor grading and unimproved trail conditions makes for treacherous footing during inclement weather conditions. This suggested improvement is necessary to provide safer hiking and biking.

I'm always enthusiastic for additional linkages to trails where they are useful, practical, and non-detrimental to the local ecology. As this area is already heavily impacted by development, I see it as a good access area to the trails.

I think it makes sense to make this well used trail a real trail.

This is a more direct connection and would improve the integrity and continuity of the dry creek trail.

It also improves a direct connection to Niwot High School for students, faculty and staff. This connection would serve both recreational and transportation needs of the greater Niwot Community en route to the HS and it's recreational sports facilities.

I don't see the need to formalize it. My child walks it to Niwot Elementary, and the woodsy character of it is enjoyable and fine.

I prefer the aesthetic of the informal trail; I grew up with it that way! Also, providing better access for the students to use the trail would mean more students walking through the Overbrook neighborhood.

There has already been a long history of students trespassing and/or damaging property in the neighborhood, and I think they can stick to using the sidewalks.

Well it makes sense. It is safe, keeps people off the road and the site is already in use.

It would be great to add Voice and Sight control for dogs to this trail.

Voice and Sight for dogs please!!

It will enhance the area and provide a more safe environment

Increased enforcement by BCPOS Rangers will be a benefit to adjacent property owners versus the current casual trail

Do you support the plan to make formal an off street route of the LOBO Trail through Left Hand Valley Grange Park?

Yes 40

No 6

Please Explain

Safer, more fun, encourages exercise.

Safer, more fun, encourages exercise.

A variety of routes would be helpful to give bikers, etc. more options instead of just using the same trails.

Makes sense to keep bikes off of the sidewalk where people could be walking

Minimize conflicts with peds, route is more scenic and better user experience away from traffic and concrete sidewalk.

Keep low impact

The trail will be located and that is a positive.

This will make the trail sections on either end much more useable for all.

I don't see a lot of value. The existing trails are fine. Having a shorter route for a trail that's primarily for recreation doesn't seem worth it.

Would like to ensure that the foxes have enough protection in terms of enough distance from the trail to keep raising kits there.

Currently used by many people. If crossing stripes included safety is enhanced.

People are already using informal trail, and corner is tight. However, given the close duplication of the current trails, this is very low priority for me.

Definitely, I'm one of those that has used the informal trails.

I don't know that it is necessary, but it would be easier wayfinding for LOBO trail users. I like it rustic as is.

The informal trail should be improved. I would urge you not to move it unless you have good reasons for doing so (e.g. creek erosion) Do not let the fear of one or two neighbors complaining about its location cause you to reroute it. People use it "as is" and will continue to do so if you improve it "where is."

I frequently walk the dirt path. Having the trail improved there makes the LoBo trail more apparent.

This makes sense as the social trail is a logical route from parking lot to Niwot road.

I have used the trail. It is getting over grown. A real trail would be great for winter use and after a rain.

People like the little singletrack along the creek...it's fun!

People and kids like riding the little singletrack along the creek- it's fun!

Do not understand why this was not considered for the original master plan. Makes a lot of sense. It is shorter route and will help to reduce the bike/pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk along Niwot Road and 83rd.

I assume that that the county will be studying this area to assure that there are no detriments to the area ecology and wildlife. My only problem with the growth of trails and social trails locally has been seeing less wildlife, particularly in the area just south of Niwot Road. To date, I have not used this trail as I don't want to impact the creek in that area. However, we do use the part that connects the westbound sidewalk with the path after coming north through the underpass at Niwot Road. That area definitely needs to be formalized as I have watched it grow steadily over the years through use as few trail users skip using this connection when it's muddy.

I like the idea of getting people away from traffic.

This is a more direct connection and would improve the integrity and continuity of the LOBO trail. It is currently well used as a single track connection/short cut for those using the LOBO trail. Improving

this connection will help accommodate bikes with trailers. It also will improve safety for all users by providing a path that is designed to accommodate the mix of uses.

I love this short single track- I don't want to see it turned to wide gravel like everything else. It's fun to wander through the tall grass and look for butterflies with my daughter. I think it works fine as is- I wish there could be a few more fun single tracks- although overall I love the trail system and really appreciate it. I really like a little bit of single track fun.

Life is more fun on an un-maintained path.

Safety!!!

It would be a great place for Voice and Sight control for dogs here.

Voice and Sight for dogs please!!

Safer

Better continuity/flow for LOBO Trail. Request a sign at above intersection for wayfinding to Niwot services/Old Town Niwot. Also request a similar wayfinding sign on east bound approach to 83rd St.

Keeping in mind that trailhead improvements are part of the long-range plan and may not happen for some time, what are your thoughts on the proposed redesign of the Lefthand Valley Grange Trailhead?

Question is too complicated.

Question is too complicated.

This would depend on how many people are expected to use it. The cost per user would be important to me.

like to hear more about the proposed redesign.

Awesome!

Looks fine

That trailhead needs improvement and that looks like a good start.

A permanent restroom would be a great improvement.

I don't want a permanent restroom if it will be closed during winter months. If it's open all year, I like it. Overall, the plan looks expensive for a small park and trail head; however, I like it in the context of park and trail enhancements and additions.

doubling the size of this trail head will lead to significant increases of traffic on N83 street. would prefer not to see this project happen

I think a public restroom will be very useful there. I assume there will also be drinking fountains.

Looks good.

I do not see the need for more parking, there are plenty of roads nearby to park, the ballpark use is by locals who can, SHOULD, walk or bike. Maintenance and cleaning of the restroom is funds better spent elsewhere.

Do it sooner rather than later. Seek LID funding for restrooms if necessary. Build it in phases if necessary. Reduce the concrete if necessary. Restrooms will save money for Niwot Youth Sports which now pays for port-a-potties which are used by the public as well as ballfield patrons.

It makes sense and will encourage more people to use the trails, both the Lobo and the trail that goes up behind the high school.

Restrooms would be a real asset benefiting the whole Niwot trail system. Please consider horse trailer parking in the redesign.

I like the design. I like the permanent bathroom. A larger parking lot would be a good thing.

I am not in favor of any more parking/less open space. Bathrooms would be nice.

Sacrifice open space and grass for a bigger parking lot? NO! Bathrooms would be nice.

This is much, much, much more of a priority to me and everyone I know than improving informal trails as proposed above. Signage through Somerset would also be great. There are a couple of places where the trail disappears ...across a road or in opposing, unclear directions.

I have never seen this parking lot full Most of the trail users in this area are accessing the trail on bike, foot, and horse. I do like the addition of a kiosk and restroom as this is a good spot for a break on the LoBo trail. I would support the redesign to include the ADA access and not more than five

additional parking spaces. The addition of more bike racks would be great as well as signage indicating access into town.

I support the addition of the permanent rest rooms, kiosk, ADA space. I don't believe the parking area needs to be increased to accomplish this. I'd like to see these improvements while keeping the current parking area at its current size.

It is too hard to see where the changes are based on the map shown here.

I think this could be good in the long-term but also think this money could be better spent elsewhere. This is a really busy technical drawing. Is there an alternative sketch up to better show the basics of the plan?

It seems that major component of the new design is to provide more vehicle parking spaces. I question the need for these improvements, which will be costly and impact the existing natural environment. It would be helpful to understand the current demand and utilization for the parking at the trail head today. Is there a need for additional parking space demand and if so how often? Is it a seasonal need, just during the times when the ball park is being used? Would it be possible to enter into an agreement with the adjacent church located on the east side of 83rd street to share their parking lot and use it for overflow parking as necessary. I am in support of the park amenities and improvements for an ADA accessible parking space, a permanent restroom and an informational kiosk. But, not convinced that the additional parking supply is necessary or makes sense from a cost/benefit analysis.

I'm on the fence about this. I'm not sure it's necessary and I hate to see that area become a larger parking lot. I'd be curious what the people who live closer to the trailhead think.

The rest room has been needed for decades---it's about time, so are the lot circulation needs!

Any place you can easily and safely add Voice and Sight control would be a plus.

Voice and Sight for dogs please!!

Looks good

Great improvement. The public restrooms would be a great addition/feature of the LOBO Trail.

How often do you currently use the existing Niwot trail network?

Never 4

1-3 times/week 29

1-3 times/month 6

1-3 times/year 7

Do you think that the proposed trails and trailhead would increase your use of the Niwot trail network?

Yes 23

No 9

Unsure 14

Which trail name do you prefer?

Cougar Trail (top pick by students from Niwot High School) 20

Moccasin Trail (in keeping with Niwot's Native American history) 10

Either is great! I have no preference. 15

Please share any other comments or concerns related to recreational improvements that should be considered in the plan amendment.

Encourage physical activity and habitat conservation.

Encourage physical activity and habitat conservation.

The Niwot trail system is fantastic- I use it on a daily basis. Love the underpass under Hwy 52.

new to the area, enjoy the trails even though not many. Keep looking for new opportunities to add to niwot trails if possible

I appreciate Boulder County's proactiveness in creating quality recreational facilities for the Niwot community.

Thanks for gathering input.

The I found a cougar print in Niwot 17 years ago, maybe they still show up in the wilder places.. Who knows? The local Native American's experience with European invasion was of genocidal persecution and failed treaties cheating's peop Cheif Niwot out of their land and freedom. naming a trail for" them won't help.

Are there any future plans to connect to the rail station at 52 and 119 from the exint networks? The trail system is great for recreation, but not allowing e-bikes on major trails limits the ability for commuting to local offices (I try to avoid 119 whenever possible)

Additional Niwot requests: Add crosswalks accross Niwot Road near Niwot Park & Ride or the intersection with the North and South lanes of the Diagonal. Many bike riders start at Niwot P & R and you can't get to/from the Easterly bike line into the P & R. Other Boulder County: Heading west on Hwy 66 into Lyons after intersection with Hwy 36, the Bike lane ends for a couple hundred yards (?) forcing cyclists into the line of traffic. These bike lanes need to be continuous. Intersection of 63rd & Valmont is extrememly dangerous at rush hour. I will not communte to work due to this intersection and I know there have been multiple bike/car accidents in history. The washed out underpass on Valmont will help when it is back but when you are heading northeast, it will still put you on the wrong side of 63rd so you need to add a crosswalk there or a bike turn lane from Valmont onto north 63rd.

I use the trails DAILY, multiple times, as I am a year-round bicycle commuter, recreational bicyle rider and hiker. Thank you for all your good work, I am quite proud of our trail system you create and maintain and appreciate all your obviouse hard work.

thanks for the opportunity to comment. Name different trail segments for different reasons. Moccasin for soft surface segment. Cougar for close to High School.

Lobo signs are confusing. A down arrow seems to mean turn around and go the other way, but people who don't already know where they're going will be totally confused.

I walk the trails almost every day during good weather and am quite familiar with them. The proposed trails are great and will make it easier to walk in all weather.

The answers we are forced to choose from leads to (perhaps intentionally?) the data not being accurate as far as public input. For example: My family uses the Niwot trail system several times a day for walking, bike commuting, etc. Yet the most frequent user answer is '1-3 times per week'.

Also, though it is a trifle matter, the trail name answers to choose from come down to 'This is great, that is great, both are great', no way to select something like 'I care not for either'...

By forcing us to choose answers that restrict the feedback to (perhaps intentionally) what you want leads to inaccurate public input data. Examples: My family uses the Niwot rail system several times per day, but we had to select '1-3 times per week', as there wasn't a 'daily' option- like you couldn't fathom people using it every day. As far as the trail name selection, we could choose 'this is great, or that is great, or both are great', no way to say I don't like either. I'm surprised you didn't ask "How is Boulder County Open Space Dept doing?", with the selections "Awesome", "Spectacular" or "Both!".

Thanks to the BC Parks and Open Space for this project here in Niwot.

Access and parking around NYS fields seems much more pressing an issue than improving informal trails that are working or have alternatives. Signage through Somerset would also be great. There are a couple of places where the trail disappears ...across a road or in opposing, unclear directions. Thank you for all that you do, and for making an easy way for us to add our .02!

I love the local trails and use them with great frequency. Some days we walk locally on the trails, some days we ride locally, and some days I bike to Boulder or Longmont. The big remaining issue on LoBo is lack of adequate signage. The biggest miss at the moment would be where a trail heads south towards 75th and Lookout Road. Too many of the existing signs were placed at street junctions and not at trail junctions. We need also to start looking into how to create a paved trail that links Boulder and Longmont. I would also like to see the creation of a continuous trail along 95th Street from Longmont south to South Boulder Road. There are so many trails that reach or approach 95th and trail along that corridor can help connect these trails as well as connect our communities.

I really like how this allows me to participate in the process. Often I am not able to make the meetings because I work Monday - Friday 8-5. This allows me to share my input.

If Cougar Trail is not picked, I would prefer to see a name that capitalizes on local Native American history. Perhaps the Chief Niwot trail, Arapaho trail, or Left Hander Trail. But, "Moccasin" doesn't resonate with local Native American history. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Niwot
I would love to see a path/ bike shoulder along 95th from Niwot Rd to where the sidewalk picks up at Plateau in Longmont- I would make a nice loop with LOBO trail and make 95th more pleasant to drive on. Might also encourage alternate transportation for the high school.
Thanks for soliciting feedback from the town!
Adding Voice and Sight control for dogs to as many places as possible would be helpful to the walking community.
More voice and sight trails!!
Why not call it the Niwot Loop Trail? I am available to discuss the wayfinding signs for "Old Town Niwot" at 83rd and Grange Park.

E-Mail comments received

Hi Brent,

Thanks for the email about the Niwot Trails planning meeting.
Not sure I can make it, but at the very least we'd like the existing trails to remain open to equestrians and of course if there are to be new trails, please plan for them to be open to us as well.

If there's a way to restore designated horse trailer parking at the Niwot TH that would be terrific.

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to chat about trail opportunities in this area (or any other).

Thanks

Suzanne Webel
President, Boulder County Horse Association

Hi Brent,

Unfortunately I'm traveling this week and can't make the meeting but as a 3 - 5 time a week user of the Niwot trail system I had some input that I wanted to pass along. This may be outside the scope of what you are looking at but the two main things that I would like to see are:

1. Connection to Boulder reservoir
2. Enhance the LoBo trail to not require roads / sidewalks to get to the Twin Lakes area

Both of these are really about better connections (preferably soft surface) to the Boulder regional trail system.

Thanks,

Josh

Hi,

I couldn't make it to the meeting last night, but I wanted to give my input to the proposed trail extensions in Niwot:

I LOVE love love both proposed extensions, especially the Dry Creek one!!! My friends and I run both informal trails several times a week, so we would absolutely love these improvements.

I actually hate the Dry Creek informal trail right now because there are several places where I've tripped multiple times on hidden tree stumps. Many serious athletes use the Niwot high school track for workouts, and we often run along the Dry Creek trail as a warmup. Improving the informal trail along there would mean we wouldn't have to run down the steep hill and back up again for a warmup - something my friends and I would absolutely love.

I am very excited about these improvements. Thanks so much!!

Tracey Bennett
Niwot CO

Mr. Wheeler,

I thought the 'online' comments for public input was...disappointing...

I do not want to have to join something (I'm not even sure what it was I was required to join) to give my comments, and the online comments form was poorly designed anyway.

For example:

Has it not occurred to BCOS that some people may use the Niwot trail system every day, like my family does?

When asked how often, the most frequent selection we could choose was "1-3 times per week".

Also, I thought it funny how one is forced to choose the trail name of "This is great, that is great, both are great" as the only selections. What if I don't prefer either? Don't you want to know that (well, perhaps not...)

I'm surprised you didn't ask "How are we doing?" with the selections "Awesome, Spectacular, or both awesome and spectacular!".

Regards,

Art "please do not sign me up for anything" Paolini

Good Evening-

My apologies for not following the planning process regarding the BCPOS trails in Niwot. Reading about the proposals in the Courier brings to my attention a serious flaw in the planning around the Grange Park.

The pond and creek near the expanding bike trails is in fact a valuable little "wilderness" for those who live in these neighborhoods. Wildlife does inhabit the area west of the park, and residents enjoy this very small undeveloped area.

One can only ask how much trail does the small Grange Park really need?? On the east side there is BOTH a cement trail and a gravel trail. To the south there is a cement trail and short walking path from the ball field.

The major problem that the county has never addressed is the short cut-off that turns to an ever-widening mud puddle closer to the pedestrian tunnel. This section of social trail has led to overuse of the next section along the creek because the bicyclists short cutting once, continue to fail to stay on the correct trail.

All it would take to assist the bicyclists who cannot find their way would be a couple of sensible signs -- not an entirely new trail. Adding an 8 foot trail reduces the actual open space by a significant amount in a park as small as this one.

This proposal is an absurd use of financial resources, and needlessly impacts the natural areas of the park. A better philosophy would be to PROTECT the natural areas, and keep the bicycles on the pavement that already exists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cathryn O'Connor
Niwot

**DRAFT MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 20, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Janice Moore in the Hearing Room of the Board of Commissioners, Third Floor, Boulder County Courthouse, Boulder, Colorado.

POSAC Members in Attendance

Present: Jenn Archuleta, Sue Cass, Lisa Dilling (arrived 6:31), Russell Hayes, Eric Hozempa, Janice Moore, and John Nibarger (arrived 6:32)
Excused: Cathy Comstock and Deborah Foote

Staff in Attendance

Sandra Duff, Renata Frye, Therese Glowacki, Al Hardy, Jeff Moline, Tina Nielsen, Ron Stewart, Mel Stonebraker, Brent Wheeler, Janis Whisman

Amendment to the Niwot Trails Master Plan

Staff Presenter: Brent Wheeler, Project Coordinator

Action Requested: Recommendation to BOCC

See Staff Memo for Detail on Presentation.

Questions

Russell Hayes: Equestrians use that trail from Legend Ridge to Somerset on occasion. I hope the new design of the road crossing takes that into account. Elsewhere in the Niwot trail complex there is a barrier across the trail that people can step over, but it's awkward on horseback.

Brent Wheeler: Those step-overs you mention are mostly relics that the county has gotten rid of on its trails. You might still see a few, but those are on private trails.

Sue Cass: The Dry Creek portion of the trail, would it be considered riparian habitat, and are there any stream crossings?

Brent Wheeler: The existing Dry Creek Trail that we completed a couple years ago from Lefthand Valley Grange to the high school does follow the Dry Creek corridor, which is somewhat of a riparian ditch, but it tends to be more of an urban drainage now. It does have some natural values obviously, but because it's surrounded by houses and there is extensive public use in the area, we don't see it as a high value riparian area with sensitive habitats. There are two bridges that we put in at the completion of the Dry Creek trail to minimize impact. The trails we're proposing have no creek crossings.

Sue Cass: Will the restroom at the grange be a standard pit toilet, and will it be open year-round?

Brent Wheeler: All of our restrooms are open year-round, and we are proposing pit toilets here, like the rest of our plains open space restrooms, keeping a common theme.

Jenn Archuleta: Looking at a map regarding the new alignment from Niwot Trail to 83rd, the bulk of which will go along the ballfield and parking lot. I was reading some of the public comments, and it sounds like people really like being able to walk by the creek. It's been my experience that when a social trail pops up, that's the alignment people want. How are you going to keep people from walking along the creek?

Brent Wheeler: You make a very good point. Usually informal social trails pop up for a reason. We feel in this case that this realignment will still get them from Points A to B quickly and being 8-ft wide crusher fines, most people will use it. We might put up stub fences and signs [to discourage access to the social trail]. It's a pretty small area, and the views are the same. I don't think it's a significant enough re-route that it will be problematic to close the old one [and keep people away from that area].

Lisa Dilling: Some of the comments liked having single-track. What's the policy, or the challenge with doing that?

Brent Wheeler: We try to build one trail and make it right and have it meet the needs of the community. To manage multiple trails is problematic, and there can be liabilities. Because this is part of the LOBO regional trail, where we are promoting people to commute and recreate between communities, we need to stick to a wider standard.

Janice Moore: I wonder about the trail naming. Have you thought about having the community involved in coming up with the trail names?

Brent Wheeler: Usually trail naming isn't dealt with in management plans, so we thought it would be fun to have this be part of the getting public comment. The name that was chosen is "Cougar Trail", which is the mascot of Niwot High School. That's what we'll go with. We'll also try to add the Niwot Loop trail system emblems so that people try to follow the system around. It's generally a pretty low-cost item, but staff time and labor is involved.

Public Comment

- Mike Barrow, 1103 Alexandria, Lafayette. He commented that in his opinion crusher fines don't hold together very well and that the use of road base has been more effective on natural surface trails in the area. He'd like to know why crusher fines is planned for this project.

Staff Response [to public comment]

Brent Wheeler: We do use both, and we have generally found that crusher fines are a more effective surface. ADA requirements didn't allow for road base, but those standards may have relaxed a little. Road base is a combination of gravel and dirt. It's solid, but it doesn't drain as well. We find that crusher fines is a better material for plains trails.

- Dick Piland, 7205 Gold Nugget Dr., Niwot. He is the president of the Niwot Community Association [niwot.org]. He is very excited by the plan that has been presented. He stated that the NCA has a very good working relationship with Boulder County and the community is eager to help and support the effort.

Staff Response [to public comment]

Brent Wheeler: I want to add that we recognize that there is a strong community in Niwot, and the Niwot Community Association has volunteered labor to help build these trails. We hope to involve them and other volunteers with the completion of these improvements.

Motion

Eric Hozempa moved to accept staff recommendation for the Amendment to the Niwot Trails Master Plan as presented, and Lisa Dilling seconded the motion. ***After discussion, Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion on Motion

Eric Hozempa: I want to commend Brent on his efforts on this. It sounds like a great plan for this area.

Lisa Dilling: I also want to commend the department for listening to the community. It really does seem that this was driven out of community interest.

I've been on POSAC long enough that I remember the first Niwot Trails Master Plan process, and it was a lot more contentious.

Janice Moore: I thought this was a very well thought out presentation and I'm very impressed by the level of support from the community. This is exactly how these things should work.

Figure 1: Niwot Trails Master Plan: Proposed Improvements

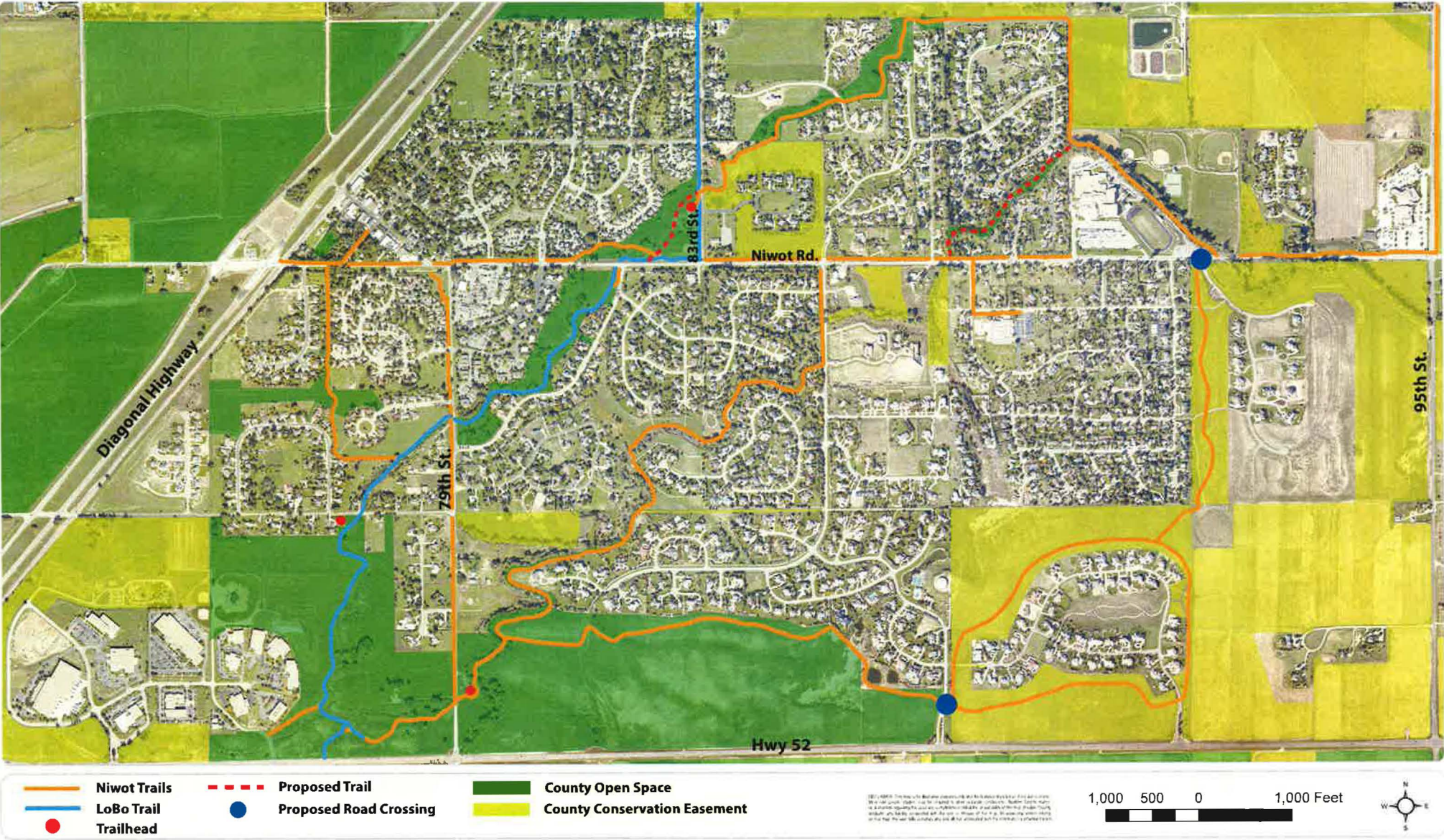


Figure 2: Dry Creek Trail Improvements



Parks & Open Space



- - - - **Proposed Trail**
- **County Open Space**
- — — — **Dry Creek Trail**

(2022) BPS. This map is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be used for legal or financial purposes. It is not a warranty of any kind. The map is provided as a guide only and is not intended to be used for legal or financial purposes. The map is provided as a guide only and is not intended to be used for legal or financial purposes.

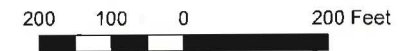


Figure 3: Lefthand Valley Grange Trail Improvements

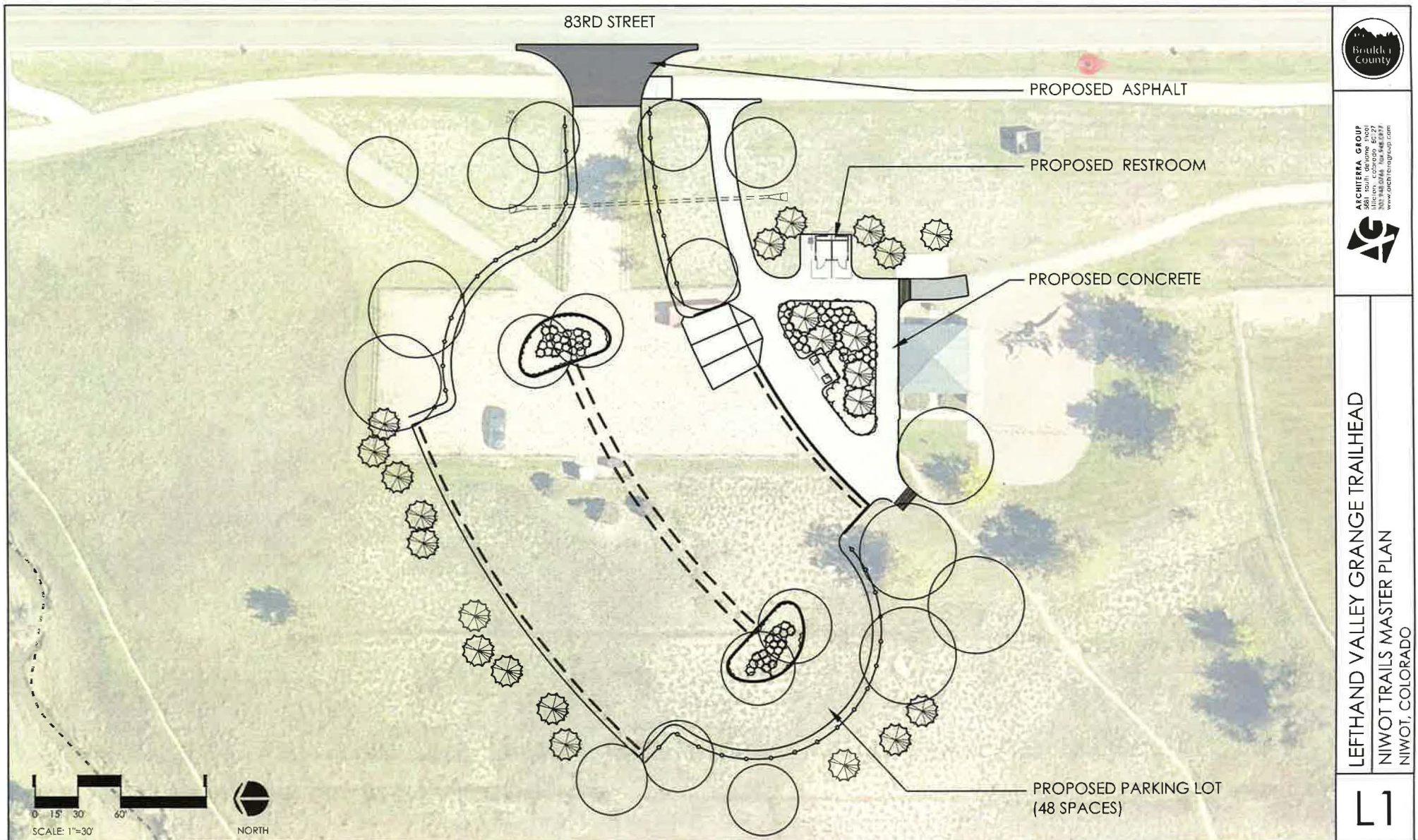


- Proposed Trail
-
- Niwot Trails

©2017 Boulder County Parks & Open Space. All rights reserved. This map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a warranty or guarantee of any kind. Boulder County Parks & Open Space is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map. The map is not intended to be used for navigation or any other purpose. The map is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The map is not intended to be used for any other purpose.



Figure 4: Lefthand Valley Grange Improvements



An aerial photograph of the Niwot Hills area. In the upper left, Niwot High School is labeled in a yellow box. A red dashed line runs horizontally across the middle of the image, labeled "Niwot Rd." in a yellow box. Below this road, a winding road is labeled "Niwot Hills Dr." in a yellow box. The area below the winding road is labeled "Niwot Hills" in a yellow box. A scale bar in the bottom right corner indicates distances of 50, 25, 0, and 50 feet. A north arrow is located in the bottom left corner. A solid orange line runs along the left edge of the map, and another solid orange line runs horizontally across the top right.

Proposed Crossing

Somerset

Somerset Dr.

Legend Ridge

Hwy 52

50 25 0 50 Feet

 **Proposed Crossing**
 **County Open Space**