City of Fort Collins

STRATEGIC

TRAILS PLAN

Connecting People to City Destinations & Natural Places

July 2025

Important Information About This Document

ACCESSIBILITY ASSISTANCE

We are committed to ensuring that all our documents are accessible to everyone. The City of Fort Collins is dedicated to providing equal access to information and services for all residents. We strive to create and distribute documents that meet the highest accessibility standards.

If you encounter any difficulties accessing, viewing, or reading this PDF, we are here to help.

HOW TO GET ASSISTANCE

For immediate assistance, please reach out to the City's ADA Coordinator:

- Email: adacoordinator@fcgov.com
- Phone: 970-416-4254
- Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The City of Fort Collins encourages individuals with disabilities to request accommodation or modifications to help ensure their effective participation in our programs and services. Examples include sign language interpretation, assistive listening devices, alternative document formats and modifications such as large print and audio playback of written content.

CITY OF FORT COLLINS ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

The City of Fort Collins is committed to providing equitable access to our services to all community members. Our ongoing accessibility effort works towards being in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1, level AA criteria. These guidelines not only help make technology accessible to users with sensory, cognitive and mobility disabilities, but ultimately to all users, regardless of ability. Our efforts are just part of a meaningful change in making all City of Fort Collins services inclusive and accessible. We welcome comments on how to improve our technology's accessibility for users with disabilities and for requests for accommodation to any State of Colorado services.

For more information, visit www.fcgov.com/legal/non-discrimination

City of Fort Collins

Acknowledgments

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Jeni Arndt, Mayor
Emily Francis, Mayor Pro Tem, District 6
Susan Gutowsky, District 1
Julie Pignataro, District 2
Tricia Canonico, District 3
Melanie Potyondy, District 4
Kelly Ohlson, District 5

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Dean Klingner, Community Services Director
Mike Calhoon, Parks Director
Jill Wuertz, Park Planning and Development Senior Manager
Dave "DK" Kemp, Senior Trails Planner and Project Manager
Rachel Eich, Business Support and Community Engagement Lead
Greg Oakes, Landscape Architect
Missy Nelson, Senior Technical Project Manager
Cortney Geary, Active Modes Manager
Kelly Smith, Senior Environmental Planner
Dillon Willett, Civil Engineer II
John Klingaman, Parks Crew Chief
Valerie Van Ryn, Communications and Marketing Manager

ADVISORY BOARDS

Active Modes Advisory Board
Disability Advisory Board
Land Conservation Stewardship Board
Natural Resources Advisory Board
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Senior Advisory Board
Youth Advisory Board

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

Aaron Fodge, Colorado State University Director of Active Transportation
Gloria Garcia, Chicas en Bicicletas
Jerome Rouser, North Front Range MPO Transportation Planner I
Kevin Krause, Active Modes Advisory Board
Marcia Richards, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Member
Nick Armstrong, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Chair
Rio Teuber, Colorado State University Student
Ryan Mckee, At large
Scott Mason, At large
Sophia Linn, Colorado State University Geospatial Centroid Manager
Veronica Venzor, Chicas en Bicicletas
Zac Wiebe, Larimer County Natural Resources Planning & Natural Resource Manager

CONSULTANT TEAM

LOGAN SIMPSON

Jeremy Call, AICP, PLA, Principal in Charge
Taylor Broyhill, AICP, Associate Planner and Project Manager
Rachel Geoffrion, Assistant Project Manager and GIS Analyst
Kristina Kachur Webb, AICP, Senior Associate and Natural Areas Planner

FEHR & PEERS

Charles Alexander, PE, AICP, RSP, Principal
Nick VanderKwaak, AICP, Senior Associate and Project Manager
Maggie Ostwald, EIT, Engineer and Planner
Kelsey Lindquist, Transportation Engineer and Planner

SPECIAL THANKS to the Fort Collins community members who contributed their ideas, feedback and support to the Strategic Trails Plan.

The Fort Collins Strategic Trails Plan was developed with funding from the City of Fort Collins.

City of Fort Collins Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and honor the lands situated within the City of Fort Collins as the original homelands of the Hinono'eiteen (Arapaho), Tsétsėhéstahese (Cheyenne), Numunuu(Comanche), Caiugu (Kiowa), Čariks i Čariks (Pawnee), Sosonih (Shoshone), Oc'eti S'akowin (Lakota) and Núuchiu (Ute) Peoples. This area is an important site of trade, gathering, and healing for these Native Nations. These lands are home to a diverse urban Native community representing multiple Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples. Despite forced removal and land dispossession, they continue to thrive as resilient members of our community. We are grateful for Native community members and honor the rich cultural heritage they bring to our collective community. We further recognize and value their social, intellectual, economic, and cultural contributions. The City of Fort Collins is committed to supporting, partnering, and working with the Native and Indigenous community.

Table of Contents

Maps

Figures

Exhibits

Glossary

- **Avoid Impacts:** Strategies that place trails or sites for ancillary facilities (e.g., parking lots, trailheads) outside of biologically sensitive habitat types.
- **Buffer Zone:** A defined distance (radius) surrounding a sensitive wildlife location. Disturbance within the buffer could cause a decline in wildlife reproduction or survival.
- **Designated Trail (as defined by Sec. 23-202 of the City of Fort Collins Municipal Code):** Any trail, whether paved or unpaved, maintained or unmaintained, designated by the City as a trail for use by the public by the posting of signs or by designation in the City's Parks and Recreation Policy Plan, excluding trails within the boundaries of City natural areas or within the curbs of City streets.
- **Ecotone:** transition area between two adjacent ecological communities.
- **Grade Separated Crossing:** A crossing that provides continuity of a bicycle/pedestrian facility or trail over or under a barrier, such as a roadway, waterway, or railroad. A grade separated crossing structure may be either a bridge or an underpass.
- **Habitat:** A place where an organism makes its home and that meets all the environmental conditions an organism needs to survive. The components of a habitat are water, food, cover, and space, all in a suitable arrangement. For a wild animal, essential habitat includes water, forage, cover, breeding, and reproduction areas, as well as movement and migration corridors to connect all of these components daily and throughout the year.
- **Major Trail:** A type of Paved Trail that connects Fort Collins to neighboring communities, promoting long-distance travel and regional connectivity. Major Trails are suitable for higher volumes of users and often have a higher mode share of bicyclists than other trail types. Major trails typically feature an adjacent crusher fines trail.
- **Minimize Impacts:** Strategies that reduce biological impacts through the application of best management practices to reduce the extent, severity, significance, or duration of unavoidable impacts
- **Minor Trail:** A type of Paved Trail that connects local destinations within Fort Collins and primarily promotes short-distance trips. Minor Trails typically support a lower mode share of long-range cyclists and serve higher shares of pedestrians. Minor trails tend to serve significant volumes of users with a highly varied mode share.
- **Mitigate Impacts:** Strategies that compensate for unavoidable adverse impacts to wildlife and habitat, including habitat replacement, on- or off-site habitat enhancement, or contribution to larger scale conservation projects.
- **Path:** Paths are constructed for the purpose of internal site circulation within a park or private development. Paths are typically more narrow than Paved Trails.
- **Paved Trail (often referred to as Trails in this Plan):** Paved travel ways constructed for use by multiple user groups including pedestrians, equestrians, and mechanized wheeled uses. Fort Collins' Paved Trails are managed by the Parks and Transportation Departments.
- **Reconciliation Ecology:** A branch of ecology which studies ways to encourage biodiversity in human-dominated ecosystems.
- **Regional Active Transportation Corridor (RATC):** As identified in the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization's Regional Transportation Plan, these corridors represent preferred alignments for regional bicycle and pedestrian transportation and recreation between communities. Some of Fort Collins' major trails, such as the Poudre River Trail, are also Regional Active Transportation Corridors.
- **Sensitive Habitat:** Any distinguishable habitat that either exists in a limited quantity relative to the broader landscape, and/or those that are very difficult to restore once they've been damaged.

- **Sidepath:** A paved trail that runs immediately adjacent and parallel to a roadway, but is completely separated from motor vehicle traffic, built within a separate right-of way (ROW), and may be used by most active modes.
- **Spur/Connector Trail:** A type of Paved Trail that provides a short-distance link between Major or Minor trails and local destinations such as parks, schools, and neighborhoods. Spur/Connectors enhance trail connectivity and provide comfortable access for more people. Spur/Connectors tend to serve fewer users, often with a higher mode share of pedestrians. Spur/Connectors are typically constructed as a part of another project such as a park or residential development.
- **Zone of Influence:** The area beyond a route's physical footprint in which on-trail activities affect wildlife behavior and habitat use.

Executive Summary

PURPOSE

WHY PLAN NOW?

In March 2024, an interdepartmental team was formed to update the 2013 Paved Recreational Trails Master Plan, renamed, the Strategic Trails Plan (STP). The STP aims to connect segments of the community that may not have historically enjoyed the use of trails by closing gaps between neighborhoods and destinations and establishing an actionable framework for maintaining Fort Collins' maturing trail system. The robust scope of work prioritizes collaboration between the City's Community Services Department and the Planning, Development, and Transportation Service Areas, emphasizing the nexus between on-street facilities and paved trails as part of a seamless interconnected system for navigating the City comfortably and safely.

The STP provides a road map for the planning and expansion of the paved trail system while preserving the existing system. The project team led a robust community engagement process that influenced the plan's policies and recommendations, including the location and conceptual alignment of proposed new trails.

"Fort Collins' paved trails weave a remarkable story, bridging past and future while offering a scenic pathway through the heart of the city. These trails represent more than mere concrete; they embody the city's commitment to accessibility, environmental stewardship, and community well-being." - CSU Geospatial Centroid Storymap *Mapping the Story of Paved Trails in Fort Collins*

City of Fort Collins
STRATEGIC
TRAILS PLAN
Connecting People to City Destinations & Natural Places

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

In 2022, the City conducted a 15-Minute City Analysis which defines what a "15-minute city" means for Fort Collins: a city where every resident can walk, bike, or roll within 15 minutes of their home to their daily needs and services. More recently, Fort Collins City Council set two priorities for 2024-2025 aimed at achieving a 15-minute City:

1. Advance a 15-minute city by igniting neighborhood centers
2. Advance a 15-minute city by accelerating our shift to active modes

The City's paved trail system and the STP play a vital role in helping to achieve the 15-minute city vision. The STP recognizes that the paved trail system must be designed in coordination with, and to complement, existing and future on-street walking and bicycling facilities. Proposed trails identified in this plan were established by holistically considering the entire network of walking and biking facilities within the City.

PLAN CONGRUENCE

Trail development is a collaborative process involving multiple City departments that provide overlapping and complementary functions such as planning, funding, wayfinding, construction, and maintenance.

Ensuring STP alignment with related City plans is an important guiding principle of the planning process. The project team conducted extensive review of existing local and regional plans, maps, and policy initiatives with implications for paved trail planning in Fort Collins. This effort included identifying the specific policies, objectives, and recommendations from related plans that align with or are closely related to STP focus areas (described below), themes, and City Council Priorities.

PLAN VISION

The Strategic Trails Plan will expand the paved trail system to meet the needs of an evolving community while instilling a culture of safety and inclusivity that welcomes people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

PLAN GOALS

The plan's overarching goals are to:

- Provide a framework for the future planning, design, maintenance, funding, and preservation of the paved trail system
- Create seamless integration of a low-stress network (on and off-street systems) to achieve a 15-Minute City while maintaining the trail system's recreational value
- Ensure an equitable trail system is maintained by prioritizing trail connections to underrepresented neighborhoods, schools, parks, and natural areas while working to protect environmentally sensitive areas

PROJECT PHASES

The overarching planning process and community engagement were organized in three phases completed over a 16-month period.

PHASE 1: VISION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Phase 1 defines project goals, reviews relevant background information and related plans, analyzes existing trail maintenance needs and level of service, and poses initial questions to gauge community needs, preferences, challenges, and satisfaction with paved trails in order to identify gaps and potential new trail connections.

PHASE 2: PROPOSED TRAILS AND POLICIES

Phase 2 presents proposed new trails and policies informed by community input and analyses conducted during Phase 1. Additional analyses on new proposed trails and design and construction standards are conducted during this phase.

PHASE 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

Phase 3 consolidates community input, the results of analyses, and prioritization into recommendations to produce the STP. Community engagement in this phase centers on draft plan review and culminates in City Council adoption of the STP.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

STP engagement strategies provided a framework for meaningful and inclusive community engagement early and frequently. Community engagement informed all three phases of the planning process and utilized a variety of methods including: *Our City* project homepage; interactive mapping; online questionnaires; visioning open house; pop-up engagement events; and the first-ever Northern Colorado Trail Summit.

ENGAGEMENT THEMES

The following major themes emerged consistently throughout the public engagement process and directly informed the policy direction of the STP.

- **Trails for all:** Everyone should have access to trail opportunities and the planning and design of trails should account for the great variation in abilities, cultural backgrounds, modes of movement, and diversity of the community.
- **Community Connections:** Priority connections for the community include neighborhoods, schools, parks, natural areas, and linkages to other trails.
- **Interconnected Network:** Trails are a key component of the City's system of facilities for active transportation and recreation and should be considered congruently with those facilities to provide a seamless and safe user experience.
- **Complement On-Street Infrastructure:** Trails should complement, not replace on-street bicycle infrastructure. In many areas of the city, the existing and proposed on-street infrastructure is low-stress.
- **Balancing Trail Access:** Homeowner concern for loss of privacy if trails are developed within irrigation ditch corridors and very close to homes.
- **New Trails in the Northeast:** Strong support for investment in NE Fort Collins trails and interim facilities while future development processes unfold.
- **Trail Safety Education:** Need for additional trail safety education regarding user behaviors/etiquette.
- **Partnerships Produce Results:** Collaborative trail development in Northern Colorado has resulted in the successful completion of numerous projects that connect Fort Collins to neighboring communities. The City should continue to leverage partnerships for a coordinated approach to network development.
- **Trails as a mechanism for environmental stewardship:** Trail development should integrate environmental analysis and best practices to understand potential impacts to habitat and sensitive ecosystems and eliminate or mitigate negative impacts through close collaboration with the Natural Areas Department and compliance with applicable federal, state, and city regulations.
- **Continue proactive community engagement:** The planning process for the STP has successfully engaged community members. On-going communication with the community on trail-related topics should continue beyond plan adoption.
- **Expand outreach focus:** Trail safety and etiquette education should expand to include community awareness on paved trails impacts to sensitive habitats and wild life, such as bicycle volumes and speeds. Outreach should provide ways to avoid or mitigate these impacts.

PLAN FOCUS AREAS

- **Plan Congruence:** Extensive review of existing local and regional plans, maps, and policy initiatives with implications for paved trail planning in Fort Collins. The purpose of this effort is to identify specific policies, objectives, and recommendations from related plans that align with or are closely related to the STP Focus Areas, themes, and City Council Priorities.
- **Community Engagement:** Utilize a diverse array of communication tactics to engage internal and external stakeholders, including the formation of a community working group to steer the plan's scope, policy, and proposed action items; and engagement strategies to reach historically underrepresented populations through events offered by the City's Neighborhood Services Department.
- **Asset Management:** Maintenance audit of existing major paved trails to document observed deficiencies, pavement conditions, known user conflicts, barriers to access, and other known issues with geo-tagged waypoints.
- **Equity of Existing & Future Trails Gap Analysis:** Review previously proposed trails and recommend the location of new trails to meet the needs of Fort Collins' growing population including a focus on connecting to underrepresented neighborhoods and schools.
- **Safety, Mobility, Accessibility:** Review of current safety outreach practices and ordinances; and provide recommendations to create a culture of safety among users of the trail system. This includes trail safety education strategies.
- **Design and Construction Standards:** Review and update existing design standards to ensure that new trail facilities can meet the needs of a growing population of trail users. These recommendations will define trail typologies, design specifications for new construction, grade separated crossing standards, at-grade crossing standards, and centerline standards.
- **Irrigation Ditch and Trail Compatibility:** Evaluate the feasibility of pairing trails on, along, or across irrigation ditches; and to enhance public transparency to known challenges and explore opportunities for future collaboration with irrigation ditch companies.
- **Funding Strategies:** Review and summarize existing trail funding strategies and identify new funding opportunities to potentially accelerate the growth of trail construction.
- **Estimates of Probable Cost and Implementation Scenarios:** Unit costs based on recent trail construction will inform implementation scenarios that explore various rates of trail construction and build out of the system based on current and potential future funding levels.

EQUITY BUILT IN. The STP process is committed to ensuring that underrepresented and under-resourced communities within Fort Collins are included in future trail planning.

PROPOSED TRAILS MAP

The project team evaluated opportunities and constraints within numerous environmental and physical factors to produce a proposed trails map. While the proposed trails map is feasible from an implementation standpoint, it is extensive and unequivocally ambitious:

- **57** proposed new miles of major and minor trails
- **27** proposed grade separated crossings at major roadways
- **7** proposed grade separated crossings at railroads

The proposed trails map represents at least a 45-year planning horizon, although the proposed trails map should be revisited every 10 years as the community grows and priorities shift.

PRIORITIZATION

To prioritize future trail projects, quantitative geospatial models were developed for both existing and proposed trails. Each model employed a slightly different set of prioritization criteria. This prioritization approach provides a framework for reconsidering priorities every two years consistent with the City's bi-annual Budgeting for Outcomes process. The framework also helps community members understand the anticipated expansion of the trail system over time.

The result is prioritized lists that emulate community values as reflected in the STP prioritization criteria while maximizing internal and external partnerships. The 57 miles of prioritized major and minor trails have been organized into three tiers: near-term, mid-term, and long-term.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING SCENARIOS

Based on current and potential future funding levels, two approaches to trail development have been identified.

THE CURRENT APPROACH

The Conservation Trust Fund is currently the only dedicated funding mechanism for the development of new trails. Using this current dedicated funding source, plus the potential to augment trail development with grants and partnerships, an estimated 1.5 miles of trail on average can be planned and constructed annually.

This incremental approach represents a 45-year planning horizon. A phasing framework based on discrete trail project prioritization is summarized in the table below and provides a useful structure for estimating the timeframe for full build out of the full trail system using current funding mechanisms.

THE ACCELERATED VISION

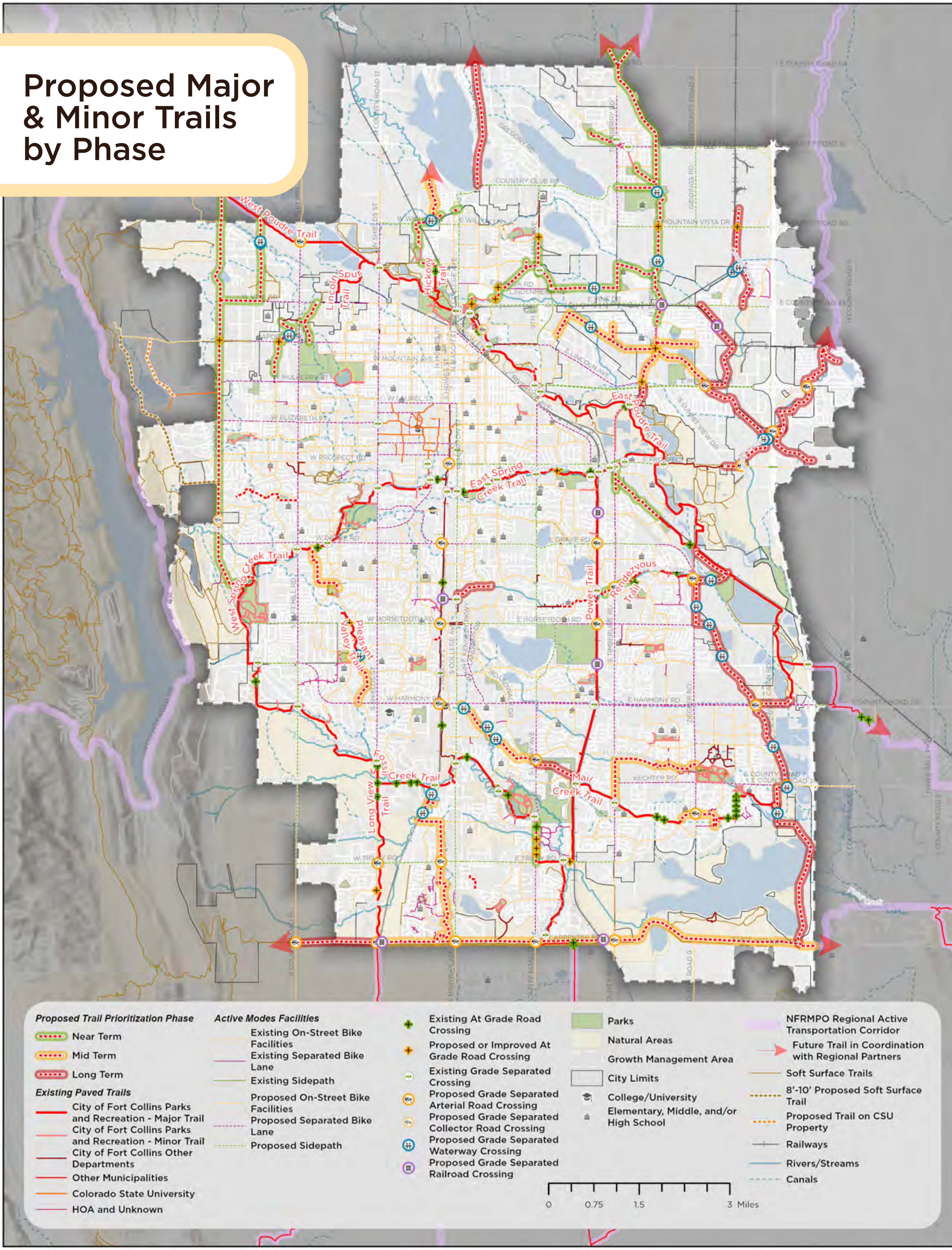
If additional annual funding is identified, trail development can accelerate. Additional funding would broaden staff's capacity to expand trail predevelopment while providing more resources for design and construction thereby enabling the City to advance multiple trail projects annually.

Hypothetically, an additional $1.5-2.0 million dollars annually through a combination of a potential increase in Conservation Trust Funds, potential Community Capital Improvement Program funding, GOCO grants, and Transportation-related grant funding, trail development could be accelerated an estimated 2.5 miles per year on average.

DEVELOPMENT TIME FRAMES COMPARED

Prioritized Miles of Proposed Trails	Phase	CURRENT APPROACH Approximate Years to Complete	ACCELERATED VISION Approximate Years to Complete
1-20	Near-term	~15	~9
21-38	Mid-term	~30	~17
39-57	Long-term	~45	~25

Proposed Major & Minor Trails by Phase



Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

ORIGINS OF TRAIL PLANNING IN FORT COLLINS

PURPOSE

PLAN VISION

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

PLAN CONGRUENCE

Origins of Trail Planning in Fort Collins

The City's paved trail system was first conceptualized and has been in existence since the late 1970's with construction of the first section of the Poudre River Trail near Lee Martinez Farm. Between the 1980's and early 2000's trail planning and construction flourished, and the foundation of today's existing system was established. In 2013, the City adopted the Paved Recreational Trails Master Plan – the first trails-specific comprehensive plan of its kind for Fort Collins. Since adoption, the City has successfully expanded the major paved trail system to 46 miles[1] as of 2025. The trail system connects numerous neighborhoods, parks, natural areas, schools, workplaces, and activity centers throughout the City, making it one of the most treasured community amenities. This success is the underpinning of the Strategic Trails Plan which updates and replaces the 2013 Paved Recreational Trails Master Plan.

1 The paved trail system is comprised of 46 miles of major trails maintained by the City and 53 miles of minor trails maintained by a combination of entities including the City, Colorado State University, and private Homeowner's Associations – some with public access easements.

EXHIBIT 1.

MAPPING THE STORY OF PAVED TRAILS IN FORT COLLINS

PATHS OF PURPOSE

Throughout 2023, the Park Planning and Development team worked with students at Colorado State University's (CSU) Geospatial Centroid to develop an interactive Storymap that documents the history of paved trail development in Fort Collins, how trails are funded, and paved trails' role in environmental stewardship and public health. Visit the Storymap here to learn more.

Purpose

WHY PLAN NOW?

In March 2024, an interdepartmental team was formed to update the 2013 Paved Recreational Trails Master Plan, renamed, the Strategic Trails Plan (STP). The STP aims to connect segments of the community that may not have historically enjoyed the use of trails by closing gaps between neighborhoods and destinations and establishing an actionable framework for maintaining Fort Collins' maturing trail system. The robust scope of work prioritizes collaboration between the City's Community Services Department and the Planning, Development, and Transportation Service Areas, emphasizing the nexus between on-street facilities and paved trails as part of a seamless interconnected system for navigating the City comfortably and safely..

The STP provides a road map for the planning and expansion of the paved trail system while preserving the existing system. The project team led a robust community engagement process that influenced the plan's policies and recommendations, including the location and conceptual alignment of proposed new trails.

"Fort Collins' paved trails weave a remarkable story, bridging past and future while offering a scenic pathway through the heart of the city. These trails represent more than mere concrete; they embody the city's commitment to accessibility, environmental stewardship, and community well-being." - CSU Geospatial Centroid Storymap *Mapping the Story of Paved Trails in Fort Collins*

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY

An interconnected network of trails can be a catalyst for environmental stewardship, achieving economic development goals, and supporting the physical and mental health of the community by providing a venue for recreation, active transportation, and social interaction.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Public trails encourage physical activity by providing a safe and attractive venue for exercise. Trails accommodate users of all ages and fitness levels and effectively remove common barriers to exercise such as cost, inconvenience, and access. These features of public trails promote an active lifestyle resulting in a higher quality of life and lowered risk for chronic disease. Paved trails, especially in Fort Collins, connect residents to nature. Contact with nature improves baseline physical and mental health[2] through the prevention of chronic health problems such as obesity, anxiety, depression, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Long term studies identify that proximity to parks and open space directly affects levels of physical activity and health outcomes. Individuals with access to nature have less mental distress, less anxiety and depression, greater well-being, and healthier cortisol profiles.

The presence of nature has a documented effect of reducing aggression and crimes of aggression. Two explanations are the positive psychological influence of time spent in nature to support recovery from mental fatigue, and increased community cohesion resulting in community trust and bonding.

See Appendix J, *Additional Resources*, for the sources referenced in this section.

ENVIRONMENT

Multi-use trails serve both recreational and transportation functions and can help shift more vehicle trips to walking, biking, and rolling. This reduction in vehicle miles traveled and in total vehicle trips ultimately reduces vehicular congestion and eliminates tons of greenhouse gases (GHG) and other noxious chemicals that would otherwise pollute the atmosphere.

Urban, suburban, and rural trail corridors present opportunities for managing stormwater, improving water quality, enhancing wildlife habitat, and inhibiting the spread of fires, among other benefits.[3] Trail construction is often compatible with environmental restoration projects such as stream restoration, wetland stabilization, stormwater mitigation and landscape conservation. Trails can be beneficial by securing undeveloped corridors and connecting otherwise isolated habitats. They can help to keep human use away from sensitive resources.

However, trails running through sensitive habitat can also have negative impacts on the

2 Brown, JD and Helen Santiago Fink. 2022 . Planning for Biophilic Cities. American Planning Association, PAS report 602

3 Ciabotti, et. Al, 2023. Trails as Resilient Infrastructure Guidebook. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

environment. The predevelopment phase of trail construction seeks to avoid or minimize environmental impacts through compliance with the City's land use code, development review, collaboration with Natural Areas, and coordination with external partners such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

ECONOMY

An interconnected network of trails, pathways, and bicycle infrastructure is a powerful economic development tool. Infrastructure for active transportation and recreation impacts local and regional economies in several measurable ways by enhancing quality of life for residents, increasing nearby property values, lowering healthcare costs, and most significantly, stimulating private investment and outdoor recreation tourism.

Trails stimulate small business development and private investment by attracting new visitors. This new customer base not only increases consumer spending in existing businesses near the trail but can also attract new trail-related businesses such as bicycle rental or recreation outfitters. Trails, parks, and open space are the cornerstones to supporting quality of life—an important factor in attracting employers and workers to a community.

Residential properties located near a trail benefit from an increase in property values. Higher home values not only benefit the owners of these properties but increase property tax revenue for communities. The National Association of Homebuilders states that, "Trails consistently remain the number one community amenity sought by prospective homeowners."

Trails also spur tourism to their respective locales, generating considerable economic activity, including (but not limited to) increased sales at local restaurants, bars, and hotels. An August 2017 National Recreation and Parks Association Park "Pulse Poll"[4] found that people seek out park and recreation amenities — such as beaches, parks, trails and secluded and relaxing places — when choosing a vacation destination.

The economic benefit of destination-quality trail systems is well-documented. As a key contributor to a city's "Experience Economy," trails have helped transform struggling towns into hubs of economic and recreational activity by investing in quality-of-life amenities, like trails and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, that contribute to community stability.

4 The Economic Impact of Local Parks, National Recreation and Parks Association (2022)

Plan Vision

The Strategic Trails Plan will expand the paved trail system to meet the needs of an evolving community while instilling a culture of safety and inclusivity that welcomes people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

The plan's overarching goals are to:

- Provide a framework for the future planning, design, maintenance, funding, and preservation of the paved trail system
- Create seamless integration of a low-stress network (on and off-street systems) to achieve a 15-Minute City while maintaining the trail system's recreational value
- Ensure an equitable trail system is maintained by prioritizing trail connections to underrepresented neighborhoods, schools, parks, and natural areas while working to protect environmentally sensitive areas

Council Priorities

In 2022, the City conducted a 15-Minute City Analysis which defines what a "15-minute city" means for Fort Collins: a city where every resident can walk, bike, or roll within 15 minutes of their home to their daily needs and services. More recently, Fort Collins City Council set two priorities for 2024-2025 aimed at achieving a 15-minute City:

1. Advance a 15-minute city by igniting neighborhood centers
2. Advance a 15-minute city by accelerating our shift to active modes

The City's paved trail system and the STP play a vital role in helping to achieve the 15-minute city vision. The STP recognizes that the paved trail system must be designed in coordination with, and to complement, existing and future on-street walking and bicycling facilities. Proposed trails identified in this plan were established by holistically considering the entire network of walking and biking facilities within the City.

Of special note, is the 2022 Active Modes Plan (AMP) which envisions, plans, and prioritizes hundreds of street projects to make streets more accessible, safe, and comfortable for people walking, biking, and rolling. A key premise of the AMP is to develop a Low (Traffic) Stress Network. By working together, the STP and AMP envision and plan for a seamless integration of the off-street and on-street networks. In doing so, these plans represent integral components to achieve the 15-Minute City with the goal of prioritized connectivity to schools and underrepresented neighborhoods, thereby ensuring equitable service delivery. The plans also support efforts to achieve the City's Vision Zero Plan, which identifies specific actions that the City should take over the next 10 years to achieve the goal of zero fatal or serious-injury crashes on the City's transportation network.

Natural areas across the city serve as destinations for community members looking to connect with nature and provide lower stress options for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. With many miles of both natural and hard surface trails located within natural areas, implementation of the STP will require continued collaboration with the Natural Areas planning efforts in order to support the City's goal of a 15-minute walk to nature.

Collectively these plans and efforts support the goals of Fort Collins' sustainability plan, Our Climate Future, as depicted in the graphic.

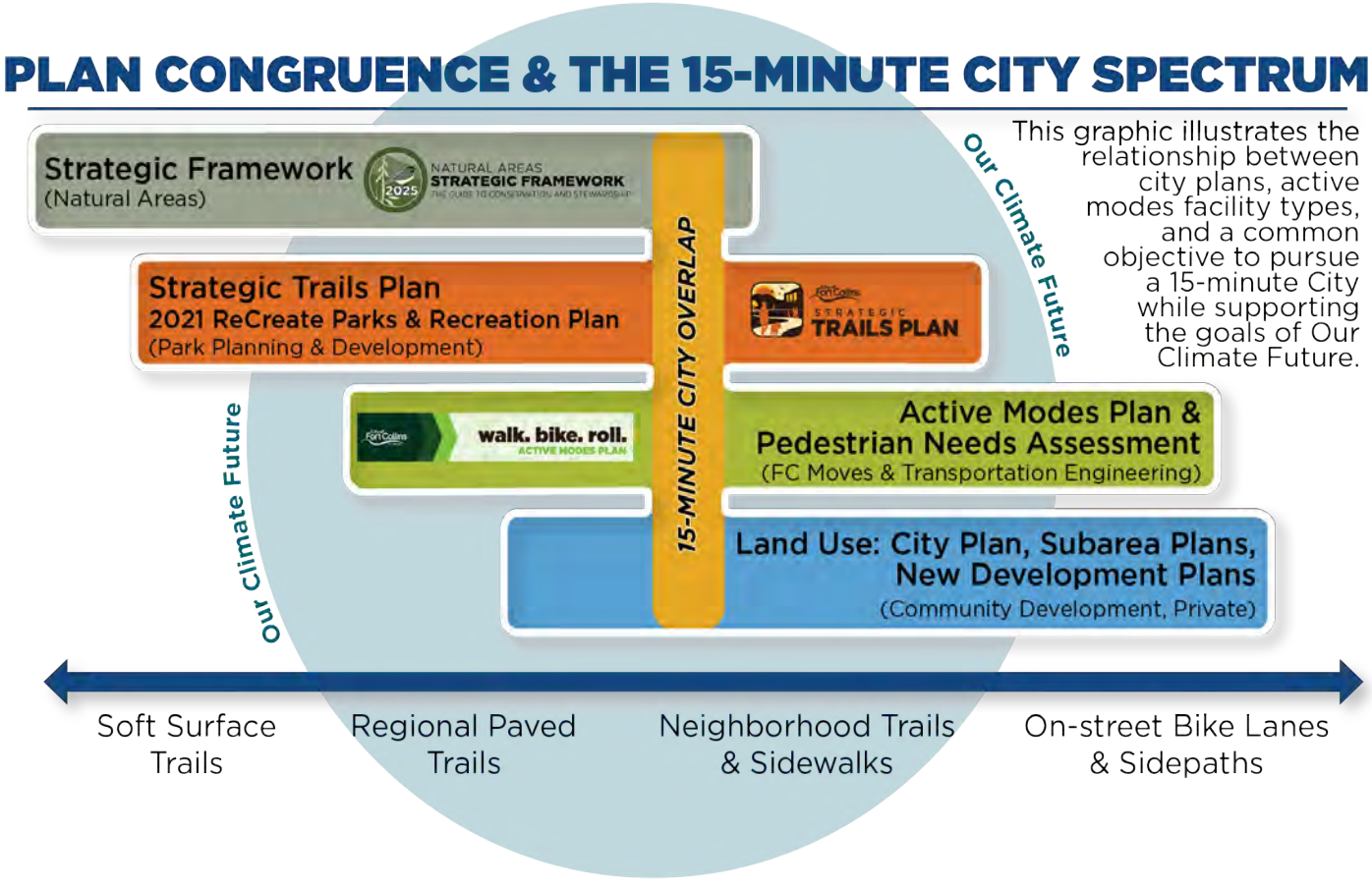
Plan Congruence

Trail development is a collaborative process involving multiple City departments that provide overlapping and complementary functions such as planning, funding, wayfinding, construction, and maintenance.

Ensuring STP alignment with related City plans is an important guiding principle of the planning process. The project team conducted extensive review of existing local and regional plans, maps, and policy initiatives with implications for paved trail planning in Fort Collins. This effort included identifying the specific policies, objectives, and recommendations from related plans that align with or are closely related to STP focus areas (described below), themes, and City Council Priorities. The resulting Plan Congruence Matrix (Appendix B) is intended to serve as helpful framework for identifying trail projects that support the goals of multiple City plans and departments.

Trail development is a collaborative process involving multiple City departments that provide overlapping and complementary functions.

FIGURE 1. PLAN CONGRUENCE AND THE 15-MINUTE CITY SPECTRUM



Chapter 2: APPROACH & ENGAGEMENT

PROJECT PHASES

PLAN FOCUS AREAS

PLAN OVERSIGHT

EQUITY BUILT-IN

PROCESS GOALS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

WHAT WE HEARD: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES


STRATEGIC
TRAILS PL
STRATEGIC
TRAILS PLAN

Project Phases

The overarching planning process and community engagement were organized in three phases completed over a 16-month period.

FIGURE 2. PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

PHASE 1: VISION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

(March – May 2024)

Phase 1 defines project goals, reviews relevant background information and related plans, analyzes existing trail maintenance needs and level of service, and poses initial questions to gauge community needs, preferences, challenges, and satisfaction with paved trails in order to identify gaps and potential new trail connections.

PHASE 2: PROPOSED TRAILS AND POLICIES

(June – November 2024)

Phase 2 presents proposed new trails and policies informed by community input and analyses conducted during Phase 1. Additional analyses on new proposed trails and design and construction standards are conducted during this phase.

PHASE 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

(December 2024 – June 2025)

Phase 3 consolidates community input, the results of analyses, and prioritization into recommendations to produce the STP. Community engagement in this phase centers on draft plan review and culminates in City Council adoption of the STP.

Plan Focus Areas

- **Plan Congruence:** Extensive review of existing local and regional plans, maps, and policy initiatives with implications for paved trail planning in Fort Collins. The purpose of this effort is to identify specific policies, objectives, and recommendations from related plans that align with or are closely related to the STP Focus Areas, themes, and City Council Priorities.
- **Community Engagement:** Utilize a diverse array of communication tactics to engage internal and external stakeholders, including the formation of a community working group to steer the plan's scope, policy, and proposed action items; and engagement strategies to reach historically underrepresented populations through events offered by the City's Neighborhood Services Department.
- **Asset Management:** Maintenance audit of existing major paved trails to document observed deficiencies, pavement conditions, known user conflicts, barriers to access, and other known issues with geo-tagged waypoints.
- **Equity of Existing & Future Trails Gap Analysis:** Review previously proposed trails and recommend the location of new trails to meet the needs of Fort Collins' growing population including a focus on connecting to underrepresented neighborhoods and schools.
- **Safety, Mobility, Accessibility:** Review of current safety outreach practices and ordinances; and provide recommendations to create a culture of safety among users of the trail system. This includes trail safety education strategies.

- **Design and Construction Standards:** Review and update existing design standards to ensure that new trail facilities can meet the needs of a growing population of trail users. These recommendations will define trail typologies, design specifications for new construction, grade separated crossing standards, at-grade crossing standards, and centerline standards.
- **Irrigation Ditch and Trail Compatibility:** Evaluate the feasibility of pairing trails on, along, or across irrigation ditches; and to enhance public transparency to known challenges and explore opportunities for future collaboration with irrigation ditch companies.
- **Funding Strategies:** Review and summarize existing trail funding strategies and identify new funding opportunities to potentially accelerate the growth of trail construction.
- **Estimates of Probable Cost and Implementation Scenarios:** Unit costs based on recent trail construction will inform implementation scenarios that explore various rates of trail construction and build out of the system based on current and potential future funding levels.

Plan Oversight

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM (PMT)

The STP Project Management Team is comprised of a Park Planning and Development (PPD) leadership team and department or division leads from FC Moves, Natural Areas, and Transportation Engineering that offer technical expertise and direction to the planning process.

The PMT was crucial in supporting STP development by providing input on plan approach, content and deliverables, and policy decisions. PMT members also assisted with event logistics and engagement efforts.

TASK TEAMS

Throughout plan development, the PMT was supported by additional City staff who are subject-matter experts with technical knowledge on specific project tasks and topics including trail maintenance, irrigation ditch management and water rights, equity and inclusion, development review and code compliance, real estate acquisition, active modes of transportation, environmental planning, natural areas, education and outreach, Safe Routes to School, geographic information systems (GIS), and capital planning.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP (CWG)

The CWG was critical to guiding the direction and development of the STP. Composition of the CWG included broad representation from pertinent stakeholder organizations and applicable City boards. The Community Working Group served as a sounding board for ideas and recommendations, identified trail gaps and priorities, reviewed proposed routes, and extended the reach of public involvement through their networks as champions for the STP. Meetings were held at key milestones in the first two phases of the planning process.

ADVISORY BOARDS & CITY COUNCIL

These established City boards advise staff and City Council on community needs and provide input related to parks, recreation, paved trails, active transportation, and accessibility matters including service delivery to the community and long-range planning. Over the course of the planning process, STP project managers met with the following boards at least twice: Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Active Modes Advisory Board, Disability Advisory Board, Land Conservation Stewardship Board, Climate Equity Committee, Youth Advisory Board, Senior Advisory Board, Natural Resources Advisory Board, and the Super Issues Board Meeting which convenes all City advisory boards. While each board offered different perspectives on the paved trail system, the role of the boards was the same:

- Serve as advisors in development of the STP by providing overall guidance throughout the process and specialized input on areas of expertise.
- Consider current issues and alternatives, review data, discuss ideas, advise consultant team and PMT, and provide feedback regarding goals, policies, and strategies of the STP.
- Act as a link to the community at large by sharing the planning process with colleagues and communities of interest.

Equity Built-in

The STP process is committed to ensuring that underrepresented and under-resourced communities within Fort Collins are included in future trail planning. The STP team worked with the City's Equity Office team to identify groups for specialized outreach and opportunities for culturally sensitive engagement strategies. This effort was initiated with an Equity Readiness Assessment of the STP process, led by a Lead Equity and Inclusion Specialist. Outcomes included identification of protected classes of individuals as well as specific groups that warrant special consideration in outreach efforts, and implementation of strategies that are culturally sensitive.

Additionally, the STP collaborated with Neighborhood Services team to identify targeted outreach events to reach historically underrepresented populations within their own neighborhoods and community events. The results of this outreach revealed ways in which the paved trail system may support and enhance underrepresented communities in a more effective way by identifying key destinations for connectivity and barriers to access. For example, the project team attended the Hickory Village Mobile Home Park Resident Resource Fair, a Spanish-first engagement effort, in July 2024 to increase awareness of the planning process and solicit feedback and input on key concepts and ideas from neighborhood residents.

The City's Economic Opportunity Assessment Map was a significant tool used to identify and evaluate the location of proposed new trails. Finally, proposed trails were prioritized according to several criteria with proximity to the 15-min City Analysis Equity Focus Areas as one of the most heavily weighted criteria. These tools are further discussed in Exhibit 3, Chapter 3.

Process Goals

The STP set out to achieve the following over the 16-month planning process:

- Assess if the paved trail system is meeting the needs of the community and determine opportunities and challenges for improvement.
- Develop a shared vision for the expansion of the paved trail system to meet the future needs of a growing community.
- Create transparency to trail funding, planning, design, construction, and maintenance.
- Explore and develop new policies to improve the current and future paved trail system.

Community Engagement Tools and Strategies

STP engagement strategies provided a framework for meaningful and inclusive community engagement early and frequently. Community engagement informed all three phases of the planning process and utilized a variety of methods including in-person and online engagement opportunities. The following summarizes key engagement strategies throughout the planning process. Detailed community engagement results can be found in Appendix A.

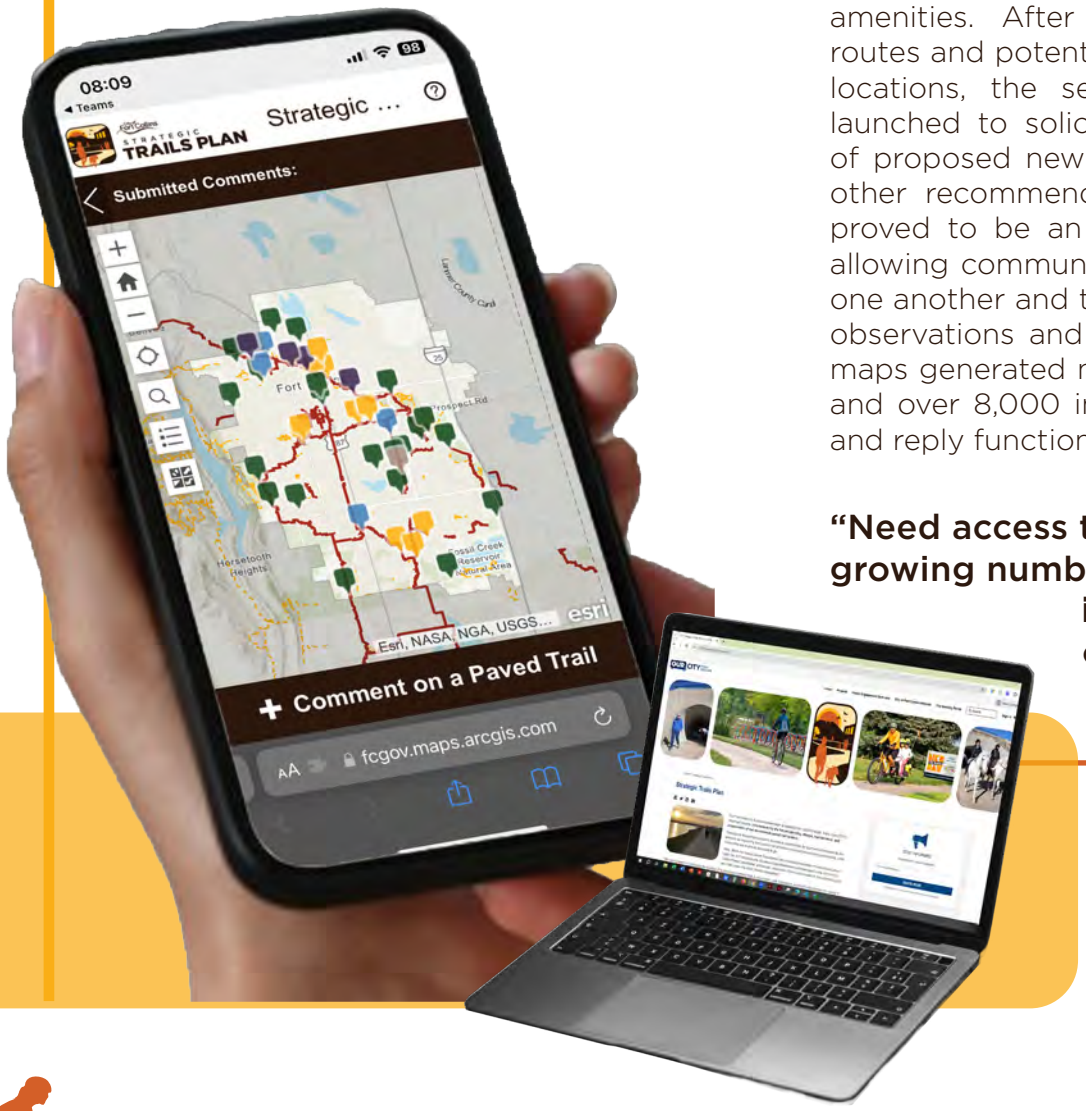
ONLINE OUTREACH

OUR CITY PROJECT HOMEPAGE

The use of Fort Collins' Our City web platform to create a STP-specific page enabled the project team to communicate plan progress, in-person and online engagement opportunities, and share results and project updates.

INTERACTIVE MAP

An online interactive map, deployed in the first two phases of the planning facilitated the collection of geolocated public comments. The first phase of interactive mapping invited the community to identify the locations of existing trail maintenance deficiencies, safety issues, personal security concerns, as well as preferred locations for new connections and amenities. After developing proposed trail routes and potential new park and open space locations, the second interactive map was launched to solicit feedback on the location of proposed new connections, amenities, and other recommendations. Interactive mapping proved to be an extremely effective tool by allowing community members to interact with one another and to agree or disagree with trail observations and ideas for improvement. The maps generated nearly 600 unique comments and over 8,000 interactions through the vote and reply functions.



"Need access to trail system from the growing number of neighborhoods in the Northeast part of Fort Collins."
- Interactive Map Comment

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRES

Two community-wide online questionnaires were circulated in the first and second phases of the planning process. The first questionnaire, deployed in Phase 1, was structured to gauge community satisfaction, attitudes, and perceptions, identify barriers to trail use, understand mode type and frequency of use, and understand what factors may increase trail use.

The Phase 2 questionnaire titled, *Which Wheels Go Where?*, was developed in collaboration with FC Moves to explore the use of human and lightweight electric powered micromobility devices on city facilities, such as, sidewalks, streets, bike lanes, and trails. Together, the questionnaires collected 2,425 responses.

"Continue to build more trails, more connectivity so users can disperse and access close to home, schools, and for commuting. Add more connected, peripheral trails that increase recreation access close to more neighborhoods around the city, including soft-surface trails which can be used by those riding bikes, running, and more..."

IN PERSON EVENTS

VISIONING OPEN HOUSE

An in-person public open house event was held in April 2024 at the Northside Aztlan Community Center introducing community members to the STP and collecting input on needs, preferences, challenges, and satisfaction with paved trails. The open house included multiple informational posters with pertinent plan information and a large floor map that encouraged attendees to work together using sticky notes and yarn to identify locations for new trails. Translated materials and Spanish interpretation services were also provided. Seventy-seven community members attended the open house.

POP-UP ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Throughout the planning process, the project team capitalized on opportunities for "pop-up" table engagement at already-occurring community events with interactive engagement activities to increase awareness of the planning process and solicit feedback and input on key concepts and ideas, and ultimately, the draft plan. In total, the team attended six community events.

EXHIBIT 2.

NORTHERN COLORADO TRAILS SUMMIT

PARTNERSHIPS PRODUCE RESULTS

The STP feature engagement event was the inaugural Northern Colorado Trails Summit that took place on Thursday, September 26, 2024. The event convened representatives from regional trail development agencies, partners, advocates, user groups, and supporters in celebration of the history and accomplishments of paved trail development in Northern Colorado.

The Trails Summit featured an exhibition hall with local and regional trail projects, organizations, and initiatives where attendees could network, connect, learn, and inspire each other with the multitude of exciting trail-related projects taking place in Northern Colorado.

The Summit highlighted the outstanding regional trail system that our communities enjoy while looking to the future of paved trails through presentations from regional speakers, representing Great Outdoors Colorado, Cache La Poudre River National Heritage Area, and an inspirational keynote address by author and award-winning landscape architect, Chuck Flink. Attendees enjoyed an exceptional evening connecting, learning, and inspiring each other with the multitude of trail-related projects taking place in Northern Colorado.

"The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board formally recommends the Northern Colorado Trails Summit become a regular occurrence to promote regional outdoor recreation opportunities and economic vibrancy." - Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Letter to Mayor and City Councilmembers, October 23, 2024

What We Heard: Community Engagement Themes

The following major themes emerged consistently throughout the public engagement process and directly informed the policy direction of the STP.

PHASE 1: VISION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- **Trails for all:** Everyone should have access to trail opportunities and the planning and design of trails should account for the great variation in abilities, cultural backgrounds, modes of movement, and diversity of the community.
- **Community Connections:** Priority connections for the community include neighborhoods, schools, parks, natural areas, and linkages to other trails.
- **Interconnected Network:** Trails are a key component of the City's system of facilities for active transportation and recreation and should be considered congruently with those facilities to provide a seamless and safe user experience.

PHASE 2: PROPOSED TRAILS AND POLICIES

- **Complement On-Street Infrastructure:** Trails should complement, not replace on-street bicycle infrastructure. In many areas of the city, the existing and proposed on-street infrastructure is low-stress.
- **Balancing Trail Access:** Homeowner concern for loss of privacy if trails are developed within irrigation ditch corridors and very close to homes.
- **New Trails in the Northeast:** Strong support for investment in NE Fort Collins trails and interim facilities while future development processes unfold.
- **Trail Safety Education:** Need for additional trail safety education regarding user behaviors/etiquette.
- **Partnerships Produce Results:** Collaborative trail development in Northern Colorado has resulted in the successful completion of numerous projects that connect Fort Collins to neighboring communities. The City should continue to leverage partnerships for a coordinated approach to network development.

PHASE 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

- **Trails as a mechanism for environmental stewardship:** Trail development should integrate environmental analysis and best practices to understand potential impacts to habitat and sensitive ecosystems and eliminate or mitigate negative impacts through close collaboration with the Natural Areas Department and compliance with applicable federal, state, and city regulations.
- **Continue proactive community engagement:** The planning process for the STP has successfully engaged community members. On-going communication with the community on trail-related topics should continue beyond plan adoption.
- **Expand outreach focus:** Trail safety and etiquette education should expand to include community awareness on paved trail impacts to sensitive habitats and wild life, such as bicycle volumes and speeds. Outreach should provide ways to avoid or mitigate these impacts.

3

Chapter 3:
THE TRAILS PLAN

STATE OF THE PAVED TRAIL SYSTEM

IDENTIFICATION OF PROPOSED TRAILS

HOW TO READ THE PROPOSED TRAILS MAP

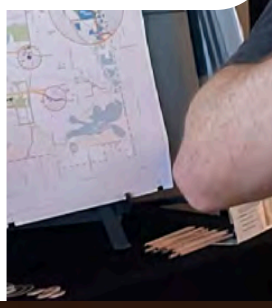
USER EXPERIENCE

TRAIL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING SCENARIOS

GRADE SEPARATED CROSSING PRIORITIZATION, FUNDING, AND IMPLEMENTATION



State of the Paved Trail System

The City of Fort Collins extensive paved trail system is the result of five decades of community commitment, collaboration, perseverance, and creative problem-solving. The current system stretches across the city from top to bottom and provides community members opportunities to recreate and travel safely to destinations like schools, places of employment, parks, and natural areas. In 2025, the overall paved trail system comprises the following:

- 46 miles of major trails (including the Mason Trail)
- 34 miles of minor trails
- 6 miles of Colorado State University (CSU) campus trails
- 13 miles of Homeowner's Association (HOA) trails (some within public access easements)
- 42 grade separated crossings (over/underpasses at major roads, railroads, and streams)

Signature trails that facilitate the majority of cross-city connectivity include the Poudre River Trail, Spring Creek Trail, Fossil Creek Trail, Power Trail, and Mason Trail. The Longview Trail, a section of the Colorado Front Range Trail, extends south, providing a direct trail connection to the City of Loveland. The recently completed Mail Creek Trail enables east-west connectivity to a lesser extent in the southeast part of the city.

TRAIL MANAGERS

Paved trails are managed by one of three entities: the City, CSU, or Homeowner's Associations. The City manages the majority of the paved trails, CSU manages trails located on university property, and many residential HOAs manage trails within their development. Some HOA-managed trails enable connectivity within the neighborhood and act as connectors from the neighborhood to the City's broader network of major trails.

While CSU and HOA-managed trails may be shorter in overall length and serve a more concentrated geographic area than the City's major trails, they represent a significant component of neighborhood connectivity within the City.

Fort Collins Paved Trails Quick Facts

Major trails (including Mason): **46 miles**

Grade separated crossings: **42**

Annual trips: **~2.5 million**

Trails within 3/4-mile (15-minute walk/bike) of a school: **90%**

Peak trail volume per hour: **102 trail users (one direction)**

Highest percentage of cyclists: **Longview Trail**

CITY OF FORT COLLINS MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Maintenance of the Fort Collins' paved trails is shared by multiple City departments. Most paved trails, including all major trails (except for Mason Trail) are maintained by the Parks Department. The Mason Trail, situated within a multi-modal transportation corridor that includes bus rapid transit and rail, is managed and maintained by the Streets Department.

Additionally, the City's Natural Areas Department maintains short segments of paved trails that provide circulation or access to amenities, such as a pavilion or observation point, within a Natural Area. Examples of Natural Areas-maintained trails include the paved trails within Pelican Marsh, Gustav Swanson, Bobcat Ridge, and Soapstone Prairie Natural Areas.

Occasionally, paved trails are constructed in conjunction with stormwater improvement projects and the Utilities Department maintains these trails as a feature of the stormwater facility.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

An inventory and assessment of existing major paved trails repair needs was conducted early in the STP process to document access control needs, Americans with Disabilities Act deficiency, crossing deficiency, drainage or flooding, erosion, lack of lighting, narrow tread or insufficient shoulder, pavement deficiency, sharp turns, blind spots, known user conflicts, and barriers to access with geo-tagged waypoints. This assessment included workshops with the Parks Department's trail maintenance teams as well as a multi-day effort to geolocate and document observed maintenance deficiencies on major trails.

Paved trail maintenance costs have steadily increased over the past five years in response to shifting weather conditions and in addition to typical wear and tear as the trail system ages. The City's oldest trails, constructed in the late 1980s, are approaching 40 years old. Aside from typical lifecycle replacement due to facility age, they are generally well maintained and have received significant surface upgrades and realignment as needed. However, maintaining such an extensive trail system is a significant responsibility that can outpace the financial resources of an agency to proactively address facility conditions within its means. Repair and replacement of existing infrastructure is a key element of long-term capital planning.

The annual cost to maintain the Park's Department's existing major paved trails is estimated at $450,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Annually update the inventory and maintenance assessment geodatabases.
- Develop and deploy a GIS-based asset management system for paved trails that identifies infrastructure lifecycle replacement intervals.
- Identify trail maintenance staffing needs and opportunities for volunteers to support with trail upkeep.
- Conduct routine inspections of grade separated crossings
- Create a program to install new and/or restore existing gravel paths adjacent to paved trails

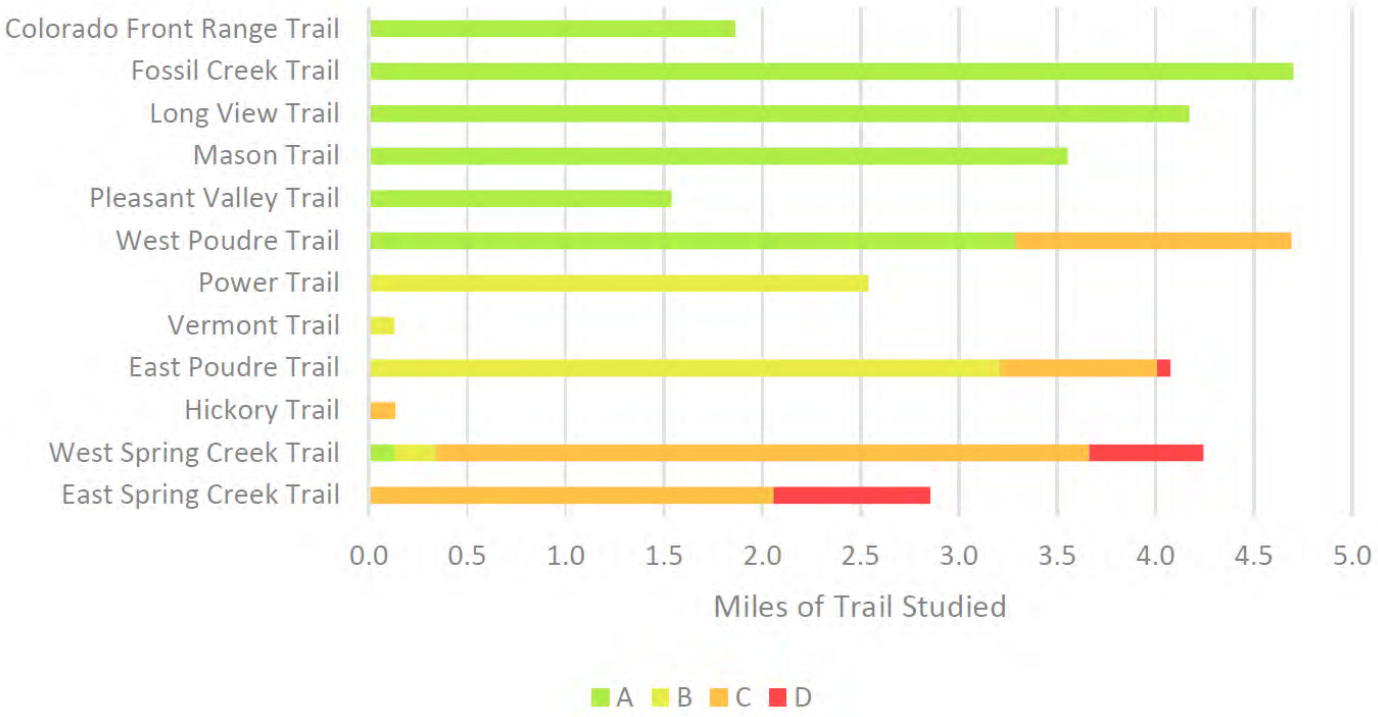
QUANTITATIVE LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

To further assess the quality of the user experience on paved trails, a quantitative Level of Service (LOS) score was calculated for major existing paved trails. This analysis evaluated each trail according to width, surface type, grade changes, and user volumes – factors that impact user experience and level of comfort on the trails. This evaluation identified existing trails with the greatest need for improvements relative to the volume of users served, the type of trail users (mode split), and quality of the existing facilities. Roughly two-thirds of existing paved trails already provide a grade-A level of service. Of the trails studied, the Spring Creek trail performs the poorest, with five miles of C- and D-graded trail segments. See Appendix D for the complete quantitative LOS methodology and results.

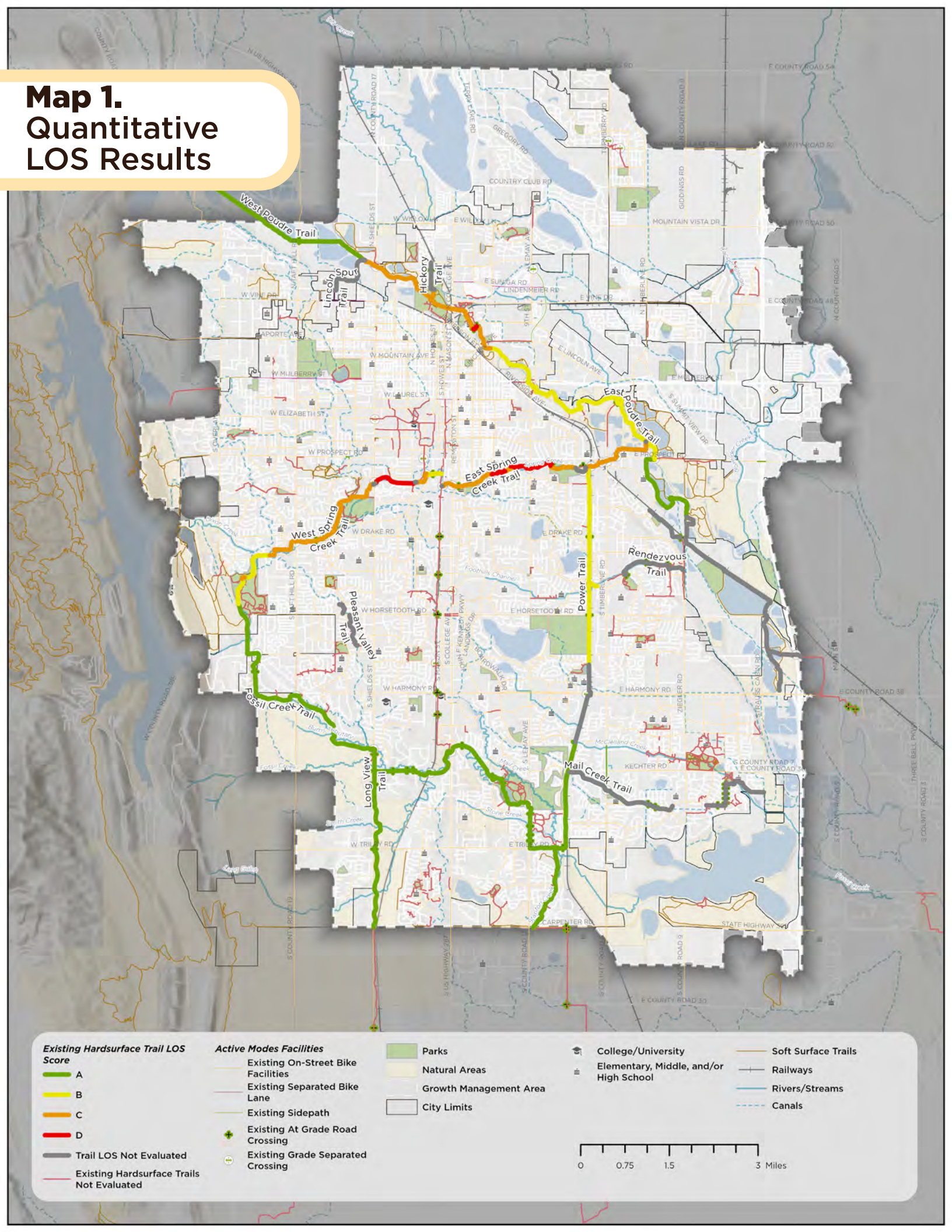
The quantitative LOS results are one of three factors used in the prioritization of existing trail improvements, discussed in greater detail in Exhibit 7. The prioritization resultsare reflective of the quantitative LOS analysis in identifying the Poudre River Trail between the Lincoln Middle School Spur and Springer Natural Area and the Spring Creek Trail as the two trail corridors that are in greatest need of improvement due to low quantitative LOS scores. Improvements to these trails will be further prioritized among other Parks projects and take into consideration limitations to possible improvements as the result of logistical challenges and regulations that protect sensitive habitats along riparian corridors.

Roughly two-thirds of existing paved trails already provide a grade-A level of service.

FIGURE 3. TRAIL LEVEL OF SERVICE



Map 1. Quantitative LOS Results



Identification of Proposed Trails

The primary focus of the STP is to analyze the existing trail system, to better understand how the trail system serves the community today, and to re-envision how the trail system will serve the community of tomorrow. The project team used six guiding principles to develop the proposed trails map.

- **Community Engagement** – The public input gained from Phases 1 & 2 provided the foundation of the proposed trails map. With the online interactive mapping tool, community members were able to articulate and document current gaps in the trail network and provide direction on where they would like the trail system to go in the future as part of Phase 1. In Phase 2, community members were offered the opportunity to react to the proposed trails map, which was generated by staff using comments from Phase 1.
- **Demand and Growth -** This analysis takes into consideration areas of the city that are continuing to grow while investigating older parts of the city to determine where trails may be retroactively factored into the built environment.
- **Equitable Access to Trails** – Equitable access to trails expands access to nature and outdoor recreation, resulting in numerous social, mental, and physical health benefits for communities near trail connections. The Economic Opportunity Assessment (EOA) Map and Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) identified in the 15-minute City Analysis were significant tools that informed the location of proposed new trails.
- **The 15-minute City** - The paved trail system should not be considered a panacea for creating safe connections to and from every origin and destination, but rather, the system must be designed to complement the existing and future on-street walking and bicycling systems.
- **Recreational Experience** - Maintaining and enhancing the recreational value of the paved trail system is foundational to the City's paved trail system. The expansion of the trail system should be planned and designed to achieve positive recreational outcomes.
- **Conservation and Resilience** - Trails have significant potential as resilient infrastructure that supports both recreation and conservation, specifically in the following functions:

  a. *Environmental Stewardship:* Establishing public trails can direct use away from sensitive habitats improving the overall recreation experience while reducing disturbance and soil erosion. Trails can have environmental benefits, but can at times have impacts on habitats, vegetation, and wildlife. The City works to minimize these impacts to the greatest degree possible while continuing to create opportunities for the community to connect with nature and utilize a low stress network to walk and bike through development review, collaboration with natural areas, and other key partners. Aligning trail development with wetland restoration and stormwater mitigation efforts can create new opportunities for environmental education and community engagement.

  b. *Habitat Protection:* Coordination with the Natural Areas Department ensures the best possible approach to protecting wildlife habitat and creating appropriate buffers through trail design techniques to avoid a negative impact to ecologically sensitive areas. Each section of proposed trail near sensitive habitat is carefully reviewed by different city departments and agencies to determine feasibility, evaluate resource impacts, and mitigate impacts prior to implementation. This is a context-sensitive approach, allowing alternatives and solutions to be developed based on resource impacts.

c. *Trails as Resilient Infrastructure:* Trails can be designed to serve multiple purposes, including recreation, active transportation, and climate resilience. By integrating trails into local and regional transportation networks, trails help reduce carbon emissions by encouraging non-motorized travel. In some circumstances, trails can function as adaptive infrastructure, provide flood protection, add to city's tree canopy to mitigate heat islands, and support stormwater management.

To learn more about the function of trails as resilient infrastructure, see the 2023 Federal Highway Administration Trails as Resilient Infrastructure Guidebook.

Guided by these principles, the project team evaluated opportunities and constraints within numerous environmental and physical factors to produce a proposed trails map. While the proposed trails map is feasible from an implementation standpoint, it is extensive and unequivocally ambitious:

- 57 proposed new miles of major and minor trails
- 27 proposed grade separated crossings at major roadways
- 7 proposed grade separated crossings at railroads

The proposed trails map represents at least a 45-year planning horizon, although the proposed trails map should be revisited every 10 years as the community grows and priorities shift.

EXHIBIT 3.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT MAP (EOA)

The City of Fort Collins EOA map is a geospatial tool that correlates nine socioeconomic indicators to identify geographic areas of the city that are most vulnerable to negative external stressor effects based on income, demographic, education and employment characteristics, gentrification risk; and history of capital investment (or lack thereof).

The EOA map was influential in identifying geographic areas of the city for future trail investment and was a significant contributing factor for determining the location of several proposed new trails. Additionally, proximity to the EFAs, identified in the 15-minute City Analysis which overlap with areas of greatest need identified on the EOA map, is one of the most heavily weighted criteria used to prioritize trail projects.

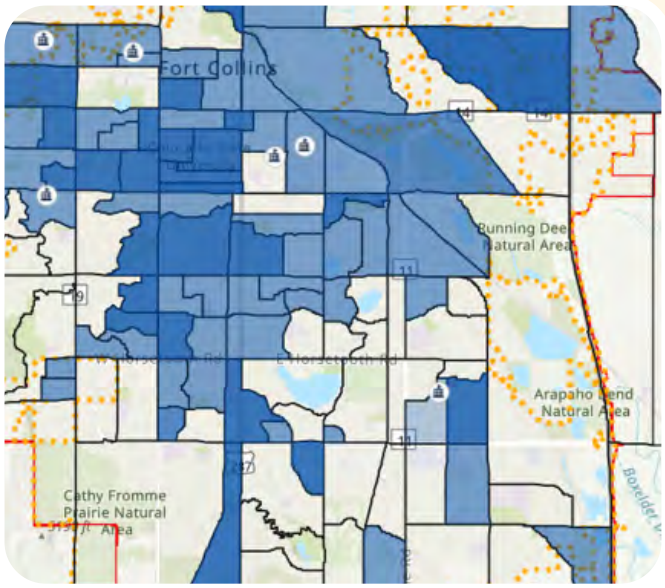


EXHIBIT 4.

AN ITERATIVE APPROACH TO PROPOSED TRAILS

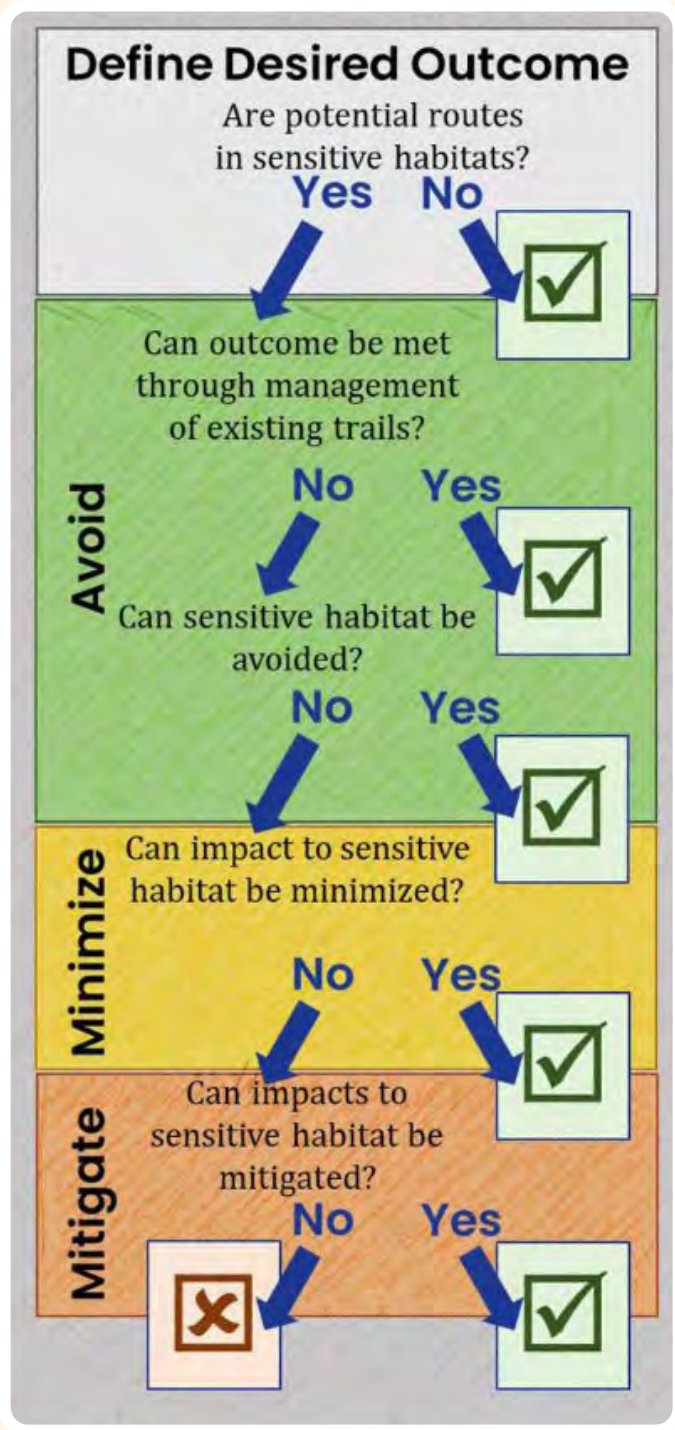
The project team incorporated recommendations from related plans and input from community members to develop the proposed trails map. This effort involved navigating environmental constraints and other considerations for trail development.

Proposed trails were evaluated using best trail planning and connectivity practices and were reviewed and refined through multiple workshops with representatives from several City departments and the Community Working Group. Ultimately, the proposed trails were field verified through on-site observation and assessment to ensure feasibility and to mitigate wildlife habitat and privacy concerns.

Notably, the STP team conducted a workshop at Nix Farm with representatives from the Natural Areas Department to examine an early draft of the proposed trails map. This exercise was a high level review of potential trail routes. Trail alignments may change during predevelopment when more information on environmental conditions becomes available The discussion resulted in several revisions to proposed trail locations within Natural Areas to eliminate or minimize disturbance to sensitive or high-quality habitat areas. The workshop also helped identify appropriate paved trail connections to Nature in the City.

INPUTS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
Plans	Railroads
2013 Paved Recreation Trail Master Plan	Irrigation ditches
Fort Collins subarea plans	Arterial roads and interstate
North Front Range MPO Regional Active Transportation Corridors	Topography
Master Street Plan	Flood zone/floodplain
CSU trail plans	Wetlands
Development review plans and proposals	Wildlife habitat
2022 Active Modes Plan: Existing & Proposed Infrastructure	Cultural Resources
Natural Areas Strategic Framework Plan	
Community Engagement	
Questionnaires	
Interactive map	
In-person events	
Community Working Group	
Other	
Current trail projects	
EOA Map	
Location of key destinations: schools, parks, and natural areas	

FIGURE 4. "SITING TRAILS WITH WILDLIFE IN MIND" DECISION TREE



Colorado's Guide to Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind; Colorado Parks and Wildlife, June 2021

Introduction to the Proposed Trails Map

The map identifies approximately 57 miles of new major and minor trails, represented by a dashed red line. Proposed trails and trail features are conceptual. Exact alignments are subject to establishing site control and conducting detailed evaluation of existing site features. This predevelopment work includes environmental inventory and assessment; compliance with state, federal, and City of Fort Collins environmental regulations and policies such as the General Resource Protection Standards for Easements or Rights of Way (2018), Natural Habitat Buffer Zones and other Land Use Code requirements, adopted Natural Area Management Plans; and determining additional buffers from wildlife habitat and unregulated waterways, as appropriate.

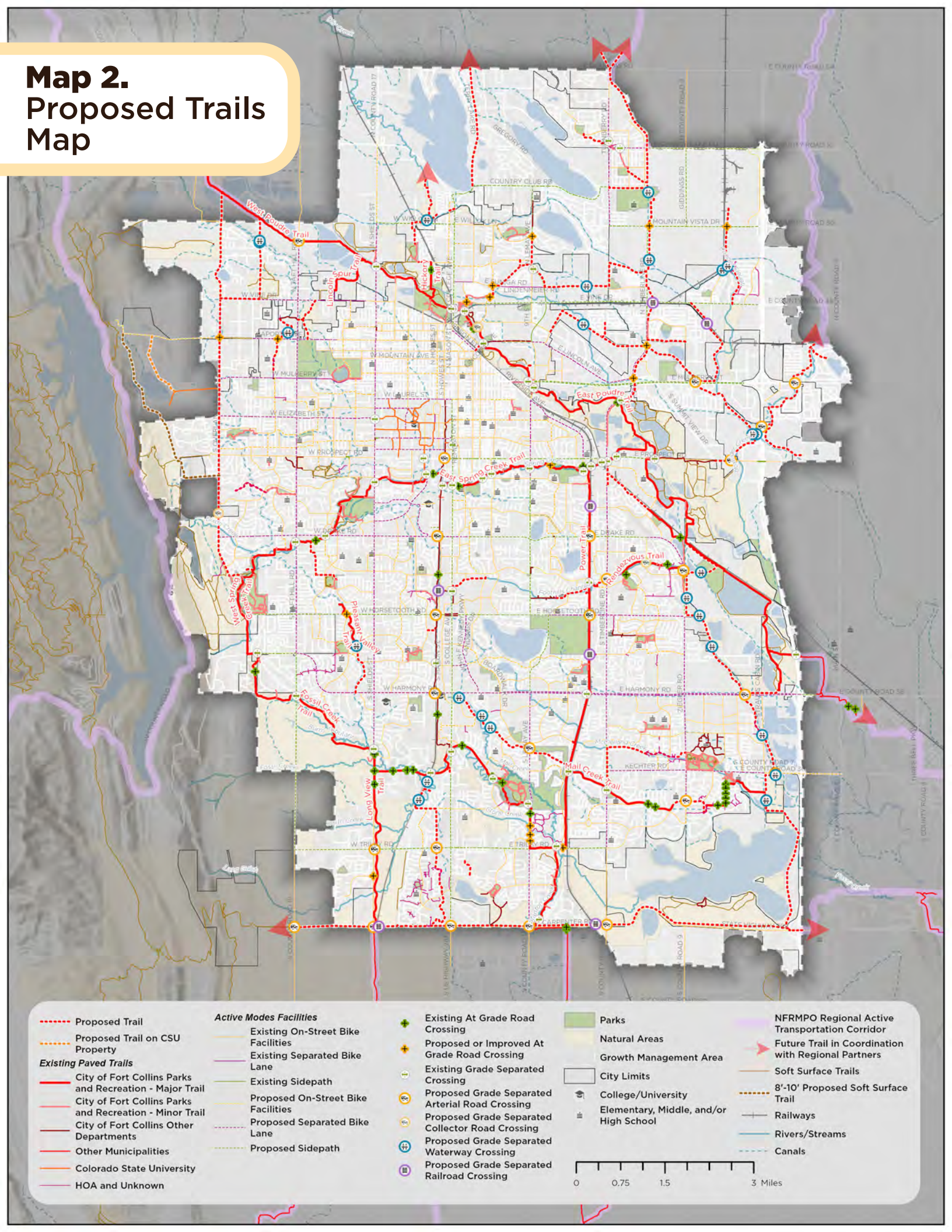
FACILITIES AND FEATURES

The proposed trails map includes several types of reference data that illuminate how new paved trails fit into the context of the larger city-wide system comprised of existing paved and unpaved trails, existing and proposed active modes facilities, Regional Active Transportation Corridors that connect Fort Collins to other communities, and the target destinations for connectivity (schools, parks, natural areas).

The map also identifies locations of new grade separated crossings in three categories: roads, railroads, and water crossings. The location of existing at-grade and grade separated crossings on trails are also included for reference.

Note: For a detailed look at proposed trails, see quadrant maps in Appendix C.

Map 2. Proposed Trails Map



User Experience

RECREATION

Maintaining and enhancing the recreational value of the paved trail system is a fundamental function of proposed trails. New trails are planned to preserve the system's recreational value in the following ways:

- Creating loops of varying lengths to improve health and wellness
- Providing a trail experience that follows the contours and features of the natural landscape
- Connecting people to recreation destinations such as parks and natural areas
- Detached gravel side path expands recreational value for a variety of user groups
- Soft surface alternative to paved trail tread is considered if surrounding environmental context allows and habitat protection is needed

KEY ORIGINS & DESTINATIONS

Improving connectivity throughout the city and region is a primary objective The proposed trails map strives to expand access to nature and recreation, provide safe routes to school, and invest in walking and biking where it is most needed in underrepresented neighborhoods- all in the spirit of advancing the 15-minute City through the seamless connection of paved trails and the on-street active modes network.

TRAILHEADS

Trailheads are an essential element of a trail system that support access, trail experience, and engagement, thereby ensuring that users have a safe and enjoyable experience. Trailheads provide information and wayfinding, offer amenities to enhance comfort and convenience, support safety and emergency access when needed, and cultivate social interaction as gathering places for trail users.

Very few stand-alone trailheads exist as part of the paved trail network in Fort Collins. Instead, the role and function of trailheads is primarily served by City parks. The proposed trails map reflects an intentional effort to expand trail connectivity directly to neighborhoods, thereby reducing the need to drive to a trailhead.

TRAIL AMENITIES

Trailside features and amenities such as restrooms, water, trash receptacles, trees or shade structures, public art, and interpretive kiosks can simultaneously meet basic needs while serving as points of interest. Trail features such as bicycle skills elements, a hammock garden, or seating area create iconic destinations and opportunities for reflection that define the user experience. To ensure consistency throughout the system, the City should develop a trails amenity plan to establish guidelines for where amenities are located and the frequency of distribution throughout the trail system.

WAYFINDING

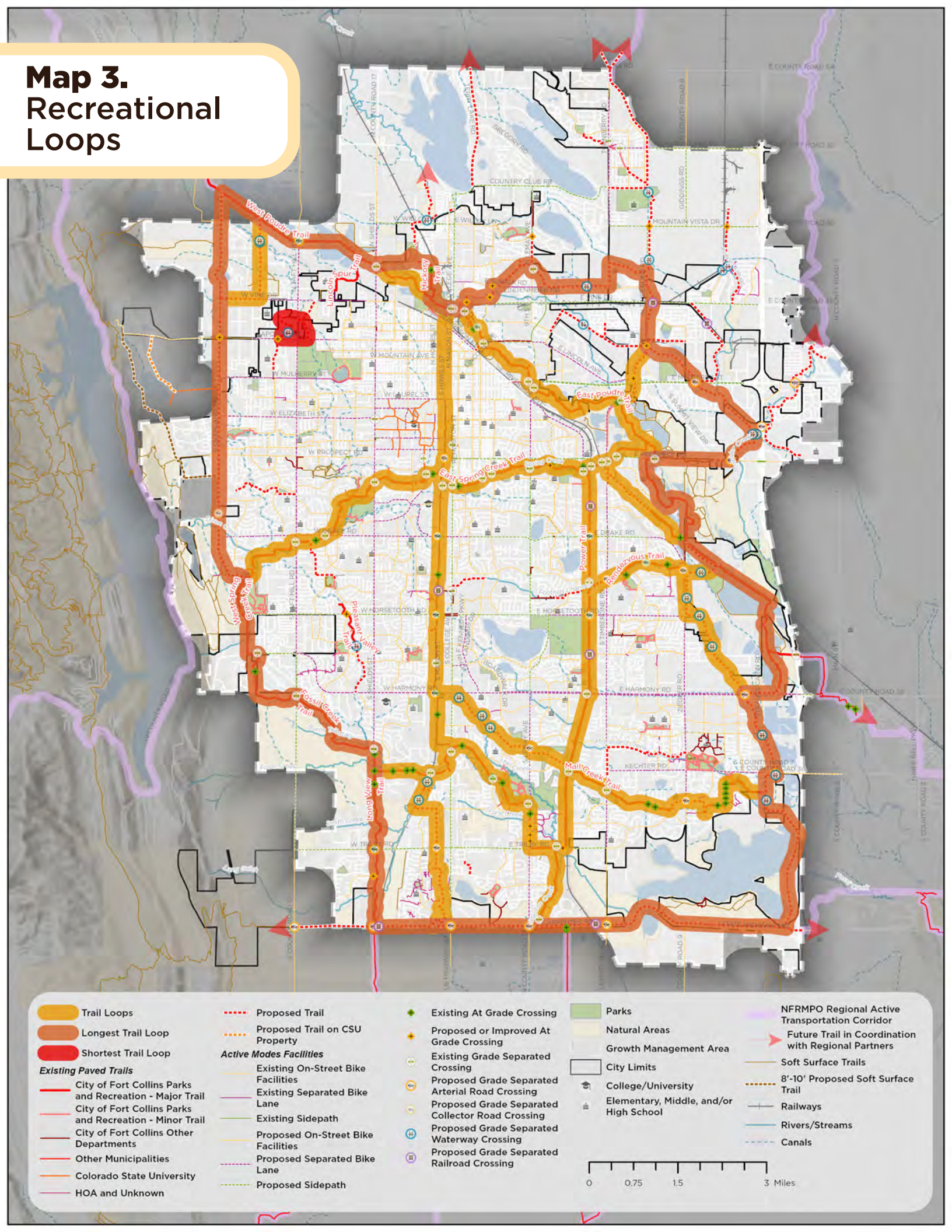
A uniform and recognizable sign system provides users with cohesive visual guidance for navigating the City's trail and on-street infrastructure system. A comprehensive wayfinding system helps people confidently navigate the City's low-stress network, access key destinations, and identify where optimal cycling routes exist. Consistent wayfinding can strengthen community identity and encourage people to shift their travel to active modes.

In 2015, the City adopted a comprehensive bicycle wayfinding system plan that includes a citywide bicycle wayfinding system map, recommended sign designs, placement guidance, and sign programming for five priority routes. Fort Collins has successfully installed wayfinding along several routes and continues to implement the plan to seamlessly connect on-street facilities with the paved trail system. The STP recommends that wayfinding on the paved trail system should follow the 2015 Bicycle Wayfinding Network plan to ensure a cohesive communication system across facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a trails amenity plan.
- Continue implementation of the 2015 Bicycle Wayfinding Plan and apply to proposed trails as they are constructed.
- Identify opportunities for co-locating signs.

Map 3. Recreational Loops



Trail Design and Construction Standards

The project team conducted an in-depth review and provided updates to existing design standards to ensure that new trail facilities will meet the needs of a growing population of trail users and a variety of modes. Recommendations include the definition of trail typologies, design specifications, grade separated crossing standards, at-grade crossing standards, centerline standards and more. Trail types along with a high-level summary of key recommendations are provided in the following sections. For more details, see Appendix F for the full report and recommendations.

TRAIL TYPOLOGY

This plan identifies three trail types, listed below, and differentiates between a trail and a path.

MAJOR TRAIL a trail that connects Fort Collins to neighboring communities, promoting long-distance travel and regional connectivity. They tend to be suitable for higher volumes of users and often have a higher mode share of bicyclists than other trail types. Ideally, major trails feature an adjacent crusher fines trail, which is preferred whenever possible.

- Standard Width: 10 feet
- Enhanced Width: 12-14 feet in areas of high user volume near parks, trail junctions, and activity centers where feasible
- Adjacent Crusher Fines Path: Four feet where feasible
- Visually identified by color concrete

MINOR TRAIL: a trail that connects Fort Collins to local destinations and primarily promotes short-distance trips. They often support a lower mode share of long-range cyclists and serve higher shares of runners and walkers. Minor trails may not always connect to the larger trail network but tend to serve significant volumes of users with a highly varied mode share.

- Standard Width: 10 feet
- Adjacent Crusher Fines Path: 4 feet where feasible

SPUR/CONNECTOR TRAIL: a shorter trail that links to major or minor trails to establish and maintain connections to local destinations such as parks, schools, and neighborhoods. They enhance trail connectivity and provide comfortable access for more people. Spur/connector trails tend to serve fewer users, often with a higher mode share of pedestrians. Spur/connectors are typically constructed as a part of another project such as park construction or neighborhood development.

- Standard Width: 10 feet
- Minimum Width: 8 feet
- Adjacent Crusher Fines Path: No

PATH: a paved pathway constructed for the purpose of internal site circulation within a park or other private development. Requirements for paths are documented in the City's adopted Land Use Code and are not addressed in the STP.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Trail design commences if an Environmental Assessment conducted during the predevelopment phase indicates suitable environmental conditions for trail development. The STP design and construction standards provide design and engineering guidance for trail implementation. STP trail design standards build upon previously identified City standards and are consistent with national trail design best practices including resources identified below.

- American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 5th Edition
- National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide, 3rd Edition
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 11th Edition effective on January 18, 2024 (anticipated to be adopted by CDOT and the City of Fort Collins)
- Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines
- FHWA, Evaluation of Safety, Design, and Operation of Shared-Use Paths

The design guidelines specify trail widths for each trail type, materials, slope, design speed, sight distances, lighting, signage, fencing, and other specifications to ensure high quality trail construction that is consistent citywide. They also provide guidance on centerline striping locations and mode separation.

AT-GRADE (SURFACE) CROSSINGS

At-grade crossings occur when a trail crosses the surface of a roadway. The type of at-grade crossing varies throughout the city and is determined at each location where a trail intersects with a roadway based on contextual factors such as volume of vehicular traffic, vehicle speeds, road width, and adjacent land uses and destinations. STP guidance on selecting appropriate at-grade crossing standards incorporates previously documented national guidelines, Colorado state standards, and City of Fort Collins standards including:

- Colorado Department of Transportation Pedestrian Crossing Installation Guide (2021)
- Fort Collins Pedestrian Plan (2011)
- Fort Collins Intersection Guidelines for Pedestrian and Bicycles (2022)

Additionally, in locations of at-grade trail crossings, the width of the trail should remain consistent on both sides of the roadway rather than tapering down in a manner similar to a sidewalk as it approaches the roadway. This helps avoid conflicts between trail users when crossing. If a trail changes direction at an intersection, a landing area with a minimum width of the trail and a minimum length of 10 feet is recommended to provide additional comfort and allow a variety of users to maneuver at the location.

GRADE SEPARATED CROSSINGS

The three main barriers in the trail system are roadways, railroads, and water crossings. These barriers may result in a significant amount of out-of-direction travel for trail users or undesired and unsafe social paths that are more direct. Grade separated crossings provide critical trail links by joining areas separated by these barriers. Grade separated crossings can be an overpass or underpass depending upon site constraints and desired user experience. Appendix F: Trail Design and Construction Standards provides design guidance for road, railroad, and water grade separated crossings.

Grade separated road crossings provide a low-stress and safe trail experience. Appendix F proposes a new trail-specific decision-making process for determining if an at-grade or a grade separated crossing is appropriate and how to determine the type of at-grade crossing. The STP recommends evaluating a grade separated crossing any time a trail crosses arterial roadways and some collector roads with high daily vehicular traffic in support of the City's Vision Zero Action Plan to improve conditions for vulnerable road users and providing a comfortable experience that encourages mode shift away from motor vehicle trips.

Grade separated crossings require significant investment and require a detailed study of the site to determine feasibility. Grade separated road crossings can also provide an indirect benefit by providing safe passage over or under roads for wildlife. Facility design and location should also take into consideration the potential impacts of groundwater disturbance and the costly ongoing requirement to monitor groundwater quality, including potential mitigation of contaminated groundwater pumped from underpasses.

Planning and Implementation

LIFECYCLE OF A TRAIL PROJECT

The lifecycle of a trail project from concept to a constructed amenity is a multi-phase process. The graphic featured here illustrates the typical process for implementing the proposed trails identified in this plan. Trail development is an incremental process and the path to implementation may vary from project to project. Some improvements and projects can be executed in a relatively short period of time while other projects are more long-term and may take years to achieve. The Poudre River Trail is an example of the patience and persistence required to realize a regionally significant trail corridor.

The predevelopment phase of the project is critical in determining the factors that influence a trail's final alignment and design. These factors include the design and construction of grade separated crossings, easement acquisition, topography challenges, existing and future utility installation, survey needs, and floodplain modeling and preventive design to avoid adverse flooding impacts.

Of utmost importance is the need to assess, evaluate, and mitigate potential impacts to wildlife habitat. Trails and the presence of people in a sensitive habitat create an impact even beyond a trail's physical footprint. Trail planning must consider the trail's Zone of Influence when determining final alignment as on-trail activity can influence wildlife behavior and habitat use.

Both trails and wildlife are incredibly valuable to community members. This requires that conservation and recreation values are reconciled to achieve a balance.

In order to provide structure for environmental review and stewardship practices, the STP proposes that an "Environmental Stewardship for Trail Development Policy" be formalized administratively within the Park Planning and Development division of the Parks Department.

The administrative policy includes the following goals:

- To protect high priority habitat as defined by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Fort Collins Natural Habitats and Features Inventory.
- Provide mitigation for, and monitor, trail alignments that are unable to avoid natural habitats and features, most critically, in the City Natural Areas.
- To ensure discrete trail projects are planned, designed, and constructed in a manner that enhances the environment and promotes conservation through the application of reconciliation ecology

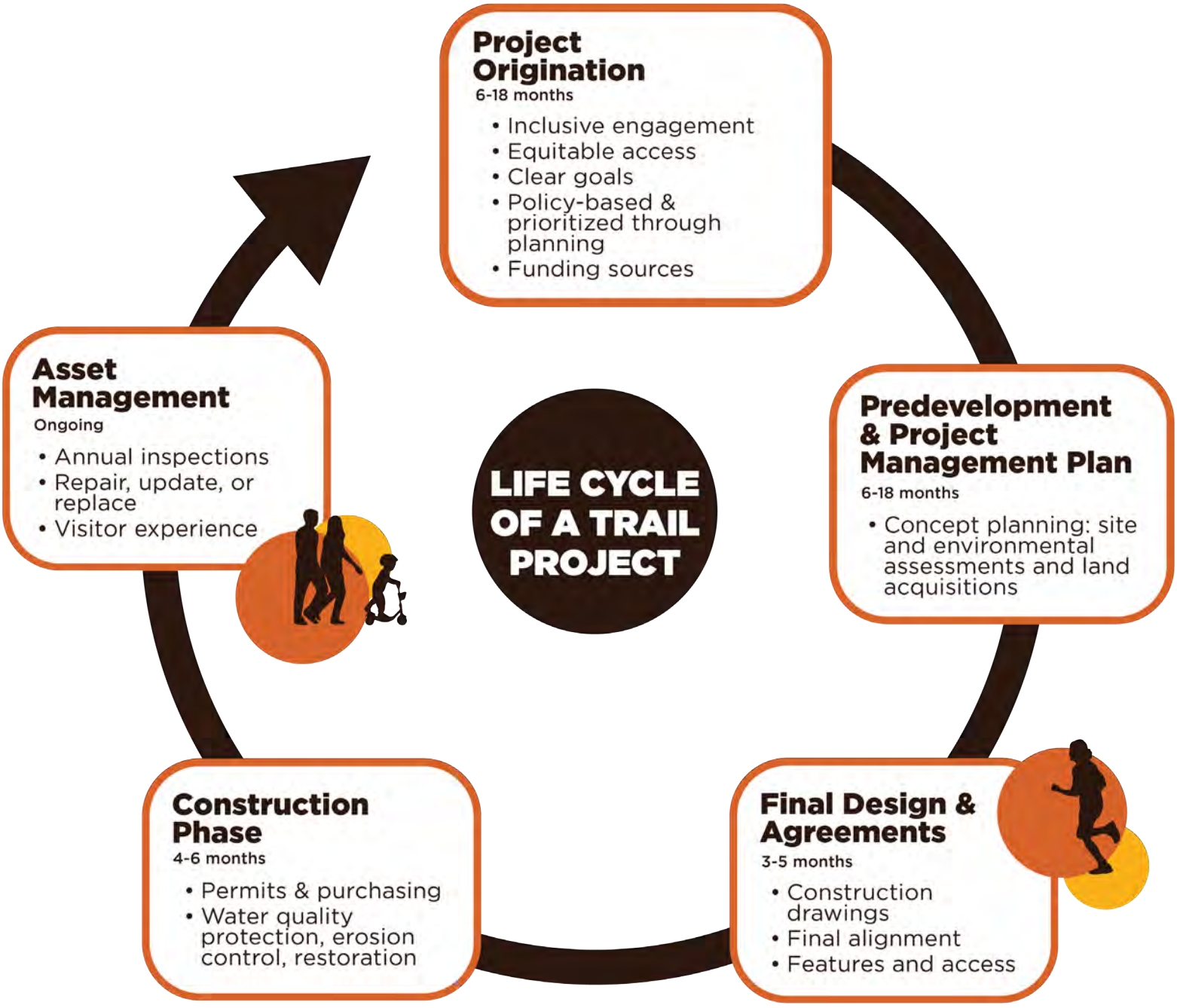
In summary, these factors, as well as available funding, partnerships, and staff capacity all impact the duration and complexity of the predevelopment phase, which accounts for nearly three quarters of the time it takes to complete a project.

Once a trail project is complete, this asset must be continuously maintained through annual inspections as part of a lifecycle replacement program that identifies need for repair, update, and eventually replacement as the trail material or amenity reaches the end of its useful life. Asset management is part of the total cost of trail system ownership and must be factored into trail system expansion to ensure that funding is commensurate to maintain new assets as they are constructed and the trail network grows.

RECOMMENDATION

- Administratively formalize an "Environmental Stewardship for Trail Development Policy" within six months of plan adoption.

FIGURE 5. LIFECYCLE OF A TRAIL PROJECT



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

To prioritize future trail projects, quantitative geospatial models were developed for both existing and proposed trails. Each model employed a slightly different set of prioritization criteria. This prioritization approach provides a framework for reconsidering priorities every two years consistent with the City's bi-annual Budgeting for Outcomes process. The framework also helps community members understand the anticipated expansion of the trail system over time.

Prioritization can change in response to new funding sources, opportunities, constraints, and community needs. The STP prioritization models are informed by criteria used by other City department prioritization models to ensure consistency and are cross-referenced with other cities with similar trail programs. For additional details on prioritization methodology, including criteria weight and data sources, see Appendix G.

EXISTING TRAILS PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA (MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS):

- **Equitable Service Delivery**: Existing trails that enter or are within a quarter mile of the 15-minute City Analysis identified EFAs which have been cross referenced with the EOA map.
- **Asset Management**: Trail locations demonstrating access control needs, Americans with Disabilities Act deficiency, crossing deficiency, drainage or flooding, erosion, lack of lighting, narrow tread or insufficient shoulder, pavement deficiency, sharp turns, blind spots as documented during the existing trails maintenance assessment.
- **Quantitative Level of Service (LOS)**: The quantitative LOS score calculated for major existing paved travels that evaluated trail width, surface type, grade changes, and user volumes – factors that impact user experience and level of comfort on the trails.

PROPOSED TRAILS PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA:

- **Equitable Service Delivery**: Proposed trails that enter or are within a quarter mile of the 15-minute City Analysis identified EFAs which have been cross referenced with the EOA map.
- **Connectivity to Neighborhood Schools**: Proposed trail connects to or is within a quarter mile of a school.
- **Recreational Value:** Proposed trail connects to or is within a quarter mile of a park or natural area.
- **Demand and Growth**: Located in growth areas in alignment with current Budgeting for Outcomes proposals (Northeast Fort Collins or West of Taft Hill Road).
- **Completes a Gap**: Completes a strategic connection between two or more existing trails.

QUALITATIVE ADJUSTMENT

Following the quantitative prioritization process, a qualitative adjustment to the prioritized trail list was performed based on knowledge of contextual factors including near and mid-term future transportation projects and development review projects currently in the pipeline. This synergistic approach ensures efficiency, leverages available resources, reduces mobilization and material costs, and minimizes disruption caused by construction. Additionally, if a trail project demonstrates significant ease of implementation or is considerably smaller in scale, the project's ranking is shifted up.

The result is prioritized lists that emulate community values as reflected in the previously described prioritization criteria while maximizing internal and external partnerships. The 57 miles of prioritized major and minor trails have been organized into three tiers. The timeframes for completion are discussed in the following section. See Appendix G for the complete list of prioritization results and projects.

FIGURE 6. IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

Prioritized Miles of Proposed Trails	Phase
1-20	Near-term
21-38	Mid-term
39-57	Long-term

EXHIBIT 5.

PROPOSED MAJOR & MINOR NEAR TERM TRAILS

The first 20 miles of proposed major and minor trail projects are listed below in order of priority. These near-term trails are represented with a green outline on Map 4. See Appendix G for the complete list of project prioritization results.

FIGURE 7. PROPOSED MAJOR AND MINOR TRAIL PRIORITIZATION

MILES	NAME OF MAJOR/MINOR TRAIL SEGMENT
0.11	Whitewater Park to Jerome St.
0.74	Soft Gold Park to Poudre Valley MHP to College Ave.
0.10	Gustav Swanson Natural Area to Whitewater Park
0.90	Soldier Creek Trail/New Mercer Ditch to Poudre High School
1.65	Future Suniga Rd. Extension East Sidepath
0.46	Lindenmeier/North Lemay Ave. Sidepath
0.92	Lake Canal Trail at Redwood Meadows (Old Town North existing trail terminus to N. Lemay)
0.36	North Lemay (east side) from Suniga to Existing Underpass
0.41	Rendezvous Trail West Extension across Timberline to Vermont Trail
0.52	Fossil Creek Trail Upgrade along South Lemay Ave. at Paragon Point
0.17	Hickory Trail Extension along Hickory St. to Soft Gold Park
0.63	Puente Verde Trail (pave existing soft surface path)
0.72	Dovetail Park to Jessup Farm
0.43	Spring Creek Trail to Jessup Farm
3.44	Overland Corridor: South from West Poudre River Trail via Overland Trail Rd. or Kestrel Fields Natural Area and Vine St
1.03	Overland Corridor: Spring Creek Trail to Dixon Canyon Road
0.35	Maple Hill Extension from Crescent Park to Proposed Trail along No. 8 Outlet
2.23	No 8. Outlet Trail from Country Club Rd. north to GMA boundary
0.40	Richards Lake Park to existing Minor Trail at Mainsail Dr.
1.77	Timberline Sidepath north from Mosaic to Future NE Community Park
0.5	NE Community Park Trail east-west from Turnberry Rd. to Proposed Trail along No. 8 Outlet Ditch
2.25	Overland Corridor: Dixon Canyon Road to Laporte Avenue

Map 4. Proposed Major & Minor Trails by Phase

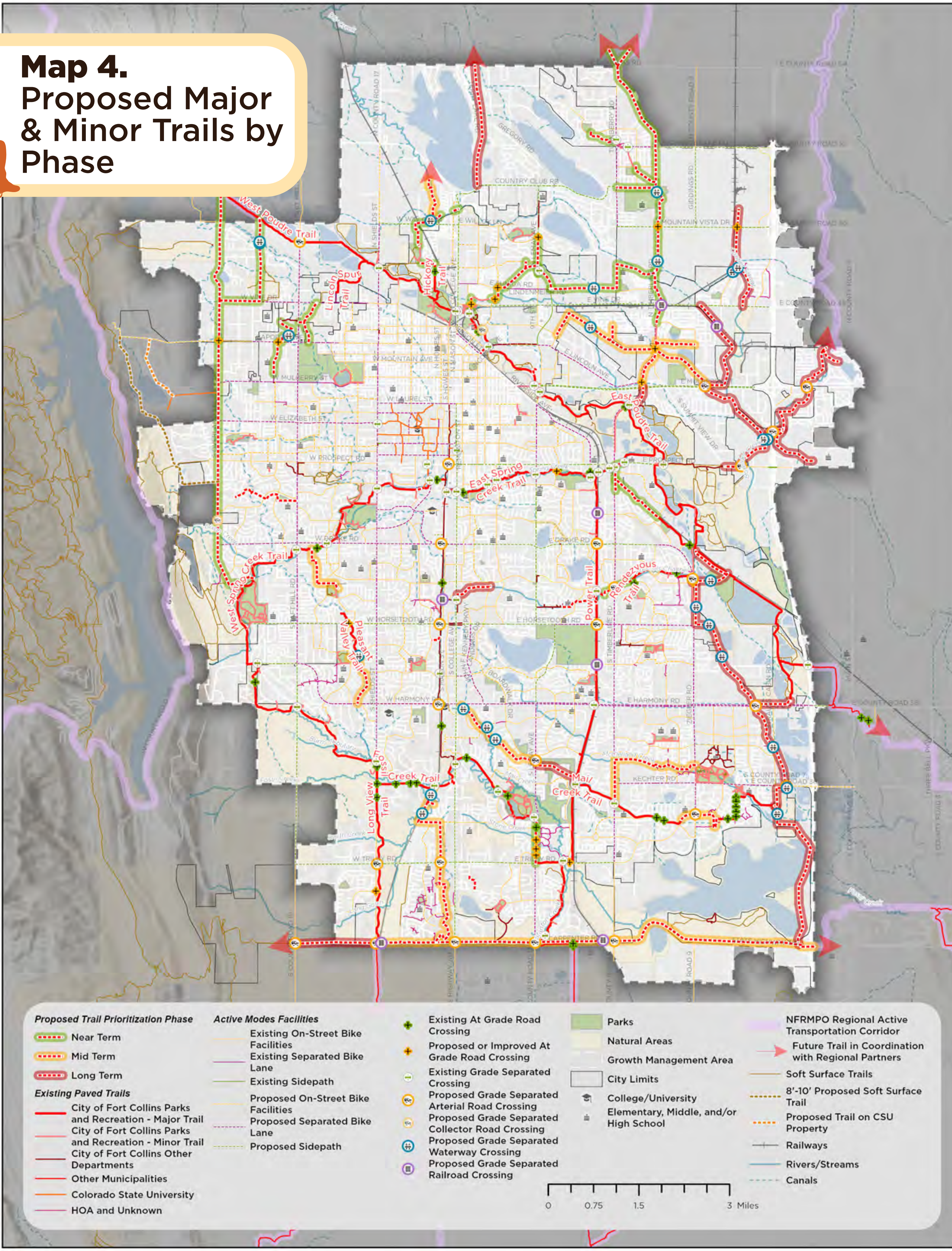


EXHIBIT 6.

PROPOSED SPUR/ CONNECTORS

Proposed spur/connector trails facilitate connectivity to or from existing trails and are prioritized separately. These short connector projects represent efforts to improve neighborhood connectivity to the existing system and are not associated with the construction of new minor or major trails. This set of spur/connector trails constitute a total of 2.7 miles of trails. These small trail projects will be included in the annual work plan with the goal of completing one to three projects per year.

FIGURE 8. PROPOSED SPUR/CONNECTORS

MILES	NAME OF SPUR/CONNECTOR
0.13	Mason Trail to Manhattan Road (establish public access)
0.09	Poudre River Trail to Woodward Way
0.22	Lakeview on the Rise to Stoney Brook Rd.
0.14	Poudre River Trail to Riverside Ave.
0.10	Spring Creek Trail to Dixon Creek Ln. (Quail Hollow)
0.12	Mason Trail Realignment at Spring Creek Trail Intersection
0.05	Power Trail to Nancy Gray Ave. (to be constructed as part of GSC project)
0.09	Power Trail to Caribou Dr. (to be constructed as part of GSC project)
0.06	Longview Trail to Bon Homme Richard Dr. (Registry Ridge)
0.11	Fossil Creek Trail to Venus Ave.
0.01	Power Trail to Centennial Rd. (establish public access)
0.04	Spring Creek Trail Realignment through Lilac Park
0.05	Power Trail to Shepardson Elementary School Connector South
0.5	Power Trail to Shepardson Elementary School Connector
0.98	Blevins Middle School to Ross Drive Connector

Map 5.
Proposed Spur/ Connector Trails

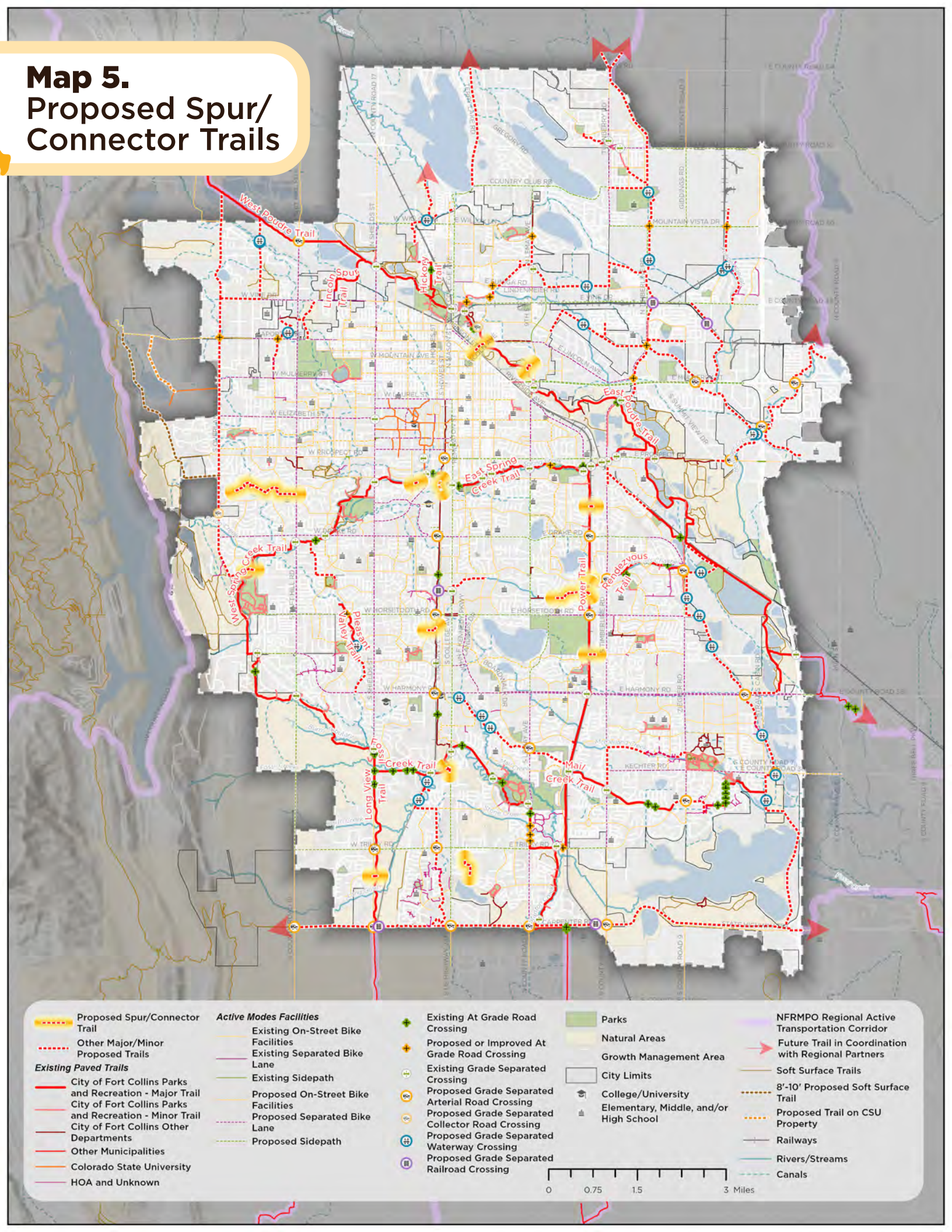


EXHIBIT 7.

EXISTING TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITIZATION

The existing trails maintenance assessment and quantitative level of service analysis (page 25) identified numerous improvement projects necessary to enhance the current paved trail system as related to trail width, surface type, grade changes, and user volumes.

The priority score of existing trails is represented on the map. Areas in red represent the locations in greatest need of improvement, according to the prioritization criteria. These locations are minimal with the majority of existing trails falling in the mid to low prioritization categories, indicating that the paved trail system is generally very well maintained and, in most cases, adequately serve trail users. The Poudre River Trail between the Lincoln Middle School Spur and Springer Natural Area south of Mulberry Street and the Spring Creek Trail represent the two broader trail corridors that are in greatest need of improvement due to low quantitative LOS scores. Improvements to existing trails will be further prioritized to leverage opportunities to coordinate construction efforts with other City projects and with respect to other Parks projects identified in the on-going Parks Maintenance annual work plan.

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA:

- **Equitable Service Delivery**: trails that enter or are within a quarter mile of the 15-minute City Analysis identified EFAs
- **Asset Management**: access control needs, Americans with Disabilities Act deficiency, crossing deficiency, drainage or flooding, erosion, lack of lighting, narrow tread or insufficient shoulder, pavement deficiency, sharp turns, blind spots
- **Quantitative Level of Service (LOS)**: quantitative LOS score that evaluated trail width, surface type, grade changes, and user volumes

See page 41 for more detail on the criteria summarized here.

Map 6.
Existing Trail Improvements Prioritization

Existing Hardsurface PPD Major Trails Prioritization Score

- Lower Priority
- Low-Medium Priority
- Medium Priority
- High Priority
- Existing Hardsurface Trails Not Evaluated

Active Modes Facilities

- Existing On-Street Bike Facilities
- Existing Separated Bike Lane
- Existing Sidepath
- Existing At Grade Road Crossing
- Existing Grade Separated Crossing

- Parks
- Natural Areas
- Growth Management Area
- City Limits

- College/University
- Elementary, Middle, and/or High School

- Soft Surface Trails
- Railways
- Rivers/Streams
- Canals

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Trail Development and Funding Scenarios

Based on current and potential future funding levels, two approaches to trail development have been identified. Each approach assumes an approximate timeframe for completion, estimated capital needs, and ongoing maintenance costs.

THE CURRENT APPROACH

Funding for trail planning, design, and construction is primarily obtained from Conservation Trust Funds (CTF) which is a beneficiary of Colorado Lottery proceeds.

CTF is constitutionally mandated to be distributed directly to local governments, based on population, for acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks, open space, and recreational facilities, such as trails. The funds are distributed and monitored through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. Over five-years, from 2019-2024, the City of Fort Collins received an average of approximately 2 million dollars annually to fund trail planning, design, construction, and maintenance.

Of the annual ~2 million dollars, approximately 1.4 million dollars support new trail development while the remaining funds supports on-going trail maintenance and provides supplemental funding support for other Park-related projects, for example, the Bike Park Feasibility Study and 9/11 Memorial at Spring Canyon Park.

The City also applies for Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grants to provide additional funding for discrete trail projects, for example, in 2019, a $2 million GOCO Connect Initiative Program grant was awarded to Larimer County in partnership with the City of Fort Collins and the Towns of Windsor and Timnath. Approximately 1 million dollars from this grant was appropriated to the City of Fort Collins for its portion of the Poudre River Trail project(s).

The Parks Department also coordinates interdepartmentally with the Engineering Department and FC Moves to apply for state and federal funding to plan, design, and construct joint projects, including trails and grade separated crossings. Development. Recent examples include the extension of the Power Trail as part of the current Harmony Road underpass project and the completion of the Longview Trail between Fort Collins and Loveland, which also included multi-jurisdictional coordination with Larimer County and the City of Loveland.

The Parks Department has historically capitalized on the opportunity to partner with land developers to dedicate public access easements and to share the design and construction costs for trail infrastructure. Each developer partnership is different due to the type of development and specific context of each trail project, both large and small. Land developers acknowledge the benefits that trail access brings to new communities and they are required by the City of Fort Collins Land Use Code to incorporate trail corridors into their development plans based on adopted parks and trail plans, such as the Strategic Trails Plan. A good example of these partnerships includes a multitude of current developments occurring in Northeast Fort Collins, such as, The Enclave at Redwood, Northfield, Hartford, Mosaic, Montava, and Sonders developments.

The Conservation Trust Fund is currently the only dedicated funding mechanism for the development of new trails. These funds fluctuate from year to year depending on revenue received from the Colorado Lottery. More or less lottery activity equates to more or less funding to the City each year. Using this current dedicated funding source, plus the potential to augment trail development with grants and partnerships, an estimated 1.5 miles of trail on average can be planned and constructed annually. This incremental approach represents a 45-year planning horizon. A phasing framework based on discrete trail project prioritization is summarized in Figure 9 provides a useful structure for estimating the timeframe for full build out of the trail system.

The top 20 miles of prioritized projects are designated as near-term projects with anticipated completion within the next 15 years. The next 18 miles of prioritized projects are designated as mid-term with anticipated completion of 30 years; and the remaining 19 miles of prioritized projects are designated as long-term with a completed timeframe of 45 years.

AN ACCELERATED VISION

If additional annual funding is identified, trail development can accelerate. Additional funding would broaden staff's capacity to expand trail predevelopment while providing more resources for design and construction thereby enabling the City to advance multiple trail projects annually.

Hypothetically, an additional $1.5-2.0 million dollars annually through a combination of a potential increase in Conservation Trust Funds, potential Community Capital Improvement Program funding, GOCO grants, and Transportation-related grant funding, trail development could be accelerated an estimated 2.5 miles per year on average.

In comparison to the program's current funding level, this accelerated approach would reduce the amount of time to achieve full build out of the proposed trail network by approximately 20 years. Figure 9, below, presents an estimated timeframe for this implementation scenario in comparison to the current approach timeframe.

The current Community Capital Improvement Program (CCIP) tax will expire on December 31, 2025. Prior to expiration, Fort Collins voters will have the opportunity to renew this tax in November 2025 and extend it to December 31, 2035. As part of the package of tentative projects under consideration, funding for the Strategic Trails Plan has been preliminarily identified. This potential new dedicated funding source could supplement current Conservation Trust Funds to boost paved trail development.

FIGURE 9. DEVELOPMENT TIMEFRAMES

Prioritized Miles of Proposed Trails	Phase	CURRENT APPROACH Approximate Years to Complete	ACCELERATED VISION Approximate Years to Complete
1-20	Near-term	~15	~9
21-38	Mid-term	~30	~17
39-57	Long-term	~45	~25

ESTIMATES OF PROBABLE COST FOR CONSTRUCTING PROPOSED TRAILS

Estimates of probable cost were determined by calculating the average cost of construction per linear foot of trail based on construction completed within the past five years. Soft costs of trail development such as resource surveys, design, easement preparation, site preparation, floodplain considerations, and demolition are generally included based on recent trail projects.

Estimates account for projected annual inflation, estimated at 3%, to identify a range of design and construction costs for 2030, 2040, and 2050. Near-term project costs are calculated according to the estimated 2030 cost of construction. Mid-term project costs are calculated according to the estimated 2040 cost of construction. Long-term project costs are calculated according to the estimated 2050 cost of construction. Estimated unit cost ranges by target construction year used to calculate the total cost by phase in the table below, can found in Appendix K.

Maintenance costs were calculated using the baseline, current-day cost of $450,000 for annual maintenance expenses for 41 miles of Parks Department-maintained major trails. The per-mile maintenance cost was multiplied by the number of trail miles added to the paved trail system during each phase. Each phase of new paved trails is expected to result in an average additional $208,500 in annual Parks Department maintenance costs.

All estimates of probable cost are precisely that, *estimates*. They are based on the best available information of recent City of Fort Collins trail construction costs and extrapolated to anticipate rising future costs of trail development. Accuracy is limited by the number of recently completed projects and the level of planning completed to date for proposed projects. Estimates are presented as ranges to reflect the variability in future cost projection based on current assumptions. Cost estimates should be further refined during individual project predevelopment to account for specific context and design factors associated with that project. These estimates are for general capital planning purposes only.

FIGURE 10. 2030 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT UNIT COST

	Cost Per Linear Foot	Cost Per Mile
Design	$53 - $64	$280,000 - $337,000
Construction	$126 - $514	$660,000 - $2.7 Million

FIGURE 11. TRAIL DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE COSTS BY PHASE

Prioritized Miles of Proposed Trails	Phase	Approximate Years to Complete	Proposed Trails Cost Estimate - LOW	Proposed Trails Cost Estimate- HIGH	Total Annual System Maintenance Cost Estimate (including existing trails)
1-20	Near-term	~15	$18,800,000	$60,940,000	$669,500
21-38	Mid-term	~30	$22,788,000	$73,854,000	$867,000
39-57	Long-term	~45	$32,414,000	$104,671,000	$1,076,000
Total Cost of Proposed Trails			$74,002,000	$239,465,000	

Estimates of probable cost are precisely that, *estimates*. They are based on the best available information of recent City of Fort Collins trail construction costs and extrapolated to anticipate rising future costs of trail development.

GRADE SEPARATED CROSSING PRIORITIZATION, FUNDING, AND IMPLEMENTATION

In 2018, an interdepartmental team prepared the Bicycle and Pedestrian Grade Separated Crossing Prioritization Study. This prioritization study established an approach to prioritize identified bicycle and pedestrian grade separated crossing locations to direct future investment toward the most critical locations using a combined approach of data and engineering judgment. The study has remained in draft form and has been a helpful tool primarily for staff to reference future projects.

As part of the STP, the Grade Separated Crossing Prioritization Study was updated to remove projects that have been completed and include newly identified grade separated crossing locations identified through this planning process. The STP Grade Separated Crossing Prioritization uses the original evaluation matrix and methodology but updates the criteria based on data availability and uses current data. The resulting list of priorities has been cross-referenced with the 15-minute City Analysis to ensure conformity.

In 2024, the City's Engineering Department developed the 10-year Transportation Capital Improvement (TCI) framework. TCI is a tool that prioritizes the City's various transportation infrastructure investments using criteria aligning with the City's strategic goals and objectives.

Of the 27 identified proposed grade separated crossings at arterial and collector roadways, the top ranked (10) grade separated road crossing projects for inclusion in the TCI are listed below. This list reflects grade separated road crossing projects identified for existing paved trails and proposed trails consistent with the *near-term* prioritized trails. As grade separated projects are completed, additional projects identified in the STP will be added to the TCI at future updates. See Appendix H for the complete study and results.

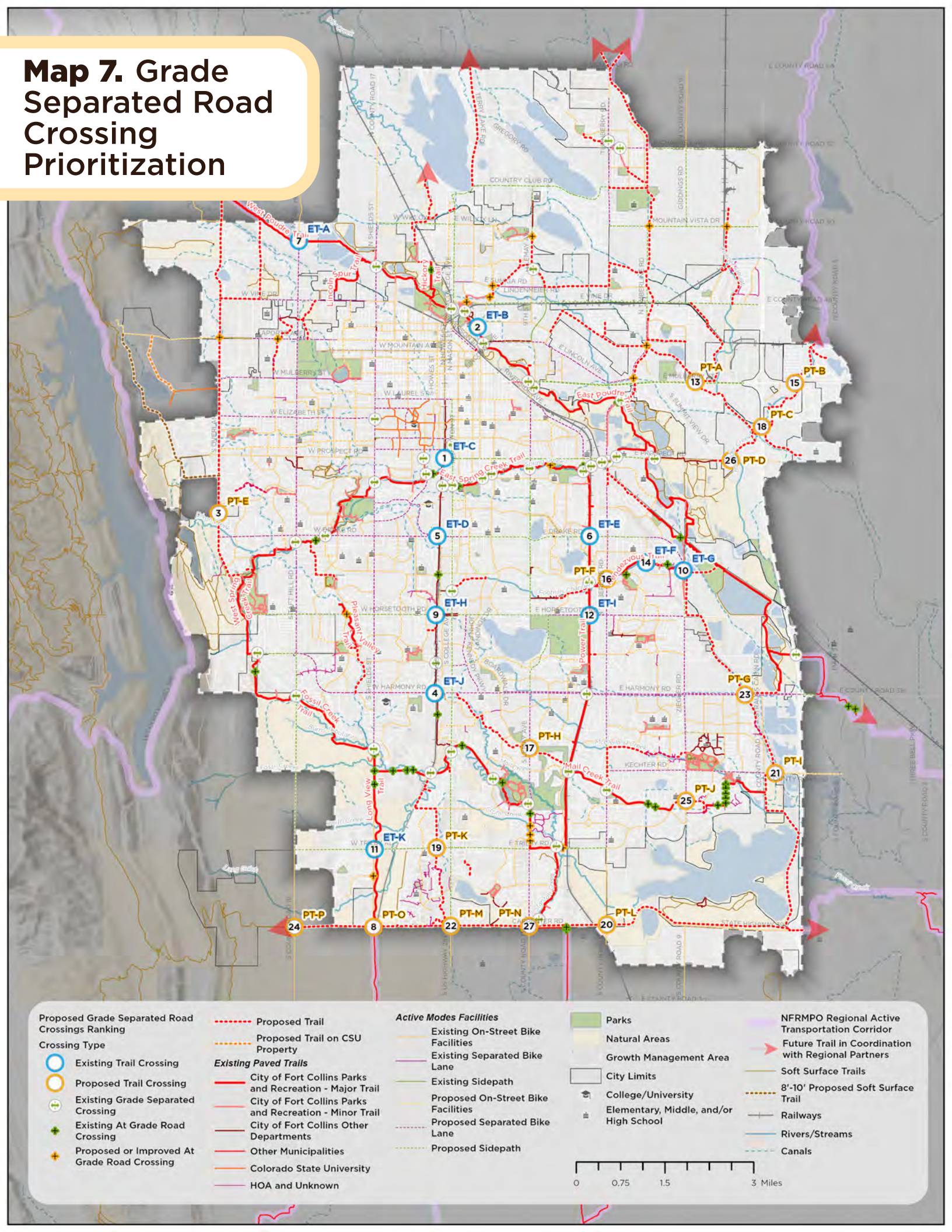
Unit costs were also identified for road, railroad, and water grade-separated crossings based on recently completed crossing projects. Minor water crossings and at-grade road crossings are assumed as part of the overall trail construction cost per linear foot and were not estimated separately.

FIGURE 12. TOP 10 ROAD GRADE SEPARATED CROSSING PRIORITIES
(TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE TCI)

RANK	PROJECT ID	LOCATION
1	ET-C	Mason Trail at Prospect Rd
2	ET-B	East Poudre Trail at Linden St.
3	PT-E	Proposed Overland Corridor Trail at LCR 42C (Dixon Canyon Rd.) and Overland Trail Rd.
4	ET-J	Mason Trail at Harmony Rd.
5	ET-D	Mason Trail at Drake Rd.
6	ET-E	Power Trail at Drake Rd
7	ET-A	West Poudre Trail at N Taft Hill Rd
9	ET-H	Mason Trail at Horsetooth Rd.
10	ET-G	Rendezvous Trail at Ziegler Rd.
11	ET-K	E Trilby Road at Longview Trail

Note: This list reflects top priority grade separated road crossing projects for existing paved trails and proposed *near-term* prioritized trails. The 8th-ranked GSC (PT-O) is a mid to long-term project.

Map 7. Grade Separated Road Crossing Prioritization



The design and construction of grade separated crossings has historically been implemented through a partnership between Park Planning & Development and the City's Engineering Department. Engineering typically leads these major projects and applies for state and federal transportation grants through the North Front Range Metropolitan Organization to help fund the projects.

When grade separated crossings are identified in both the Strategic Trails Plan and Active Modes Plan, the City's Transportation Capital Expansion Fee is another partial funding mechanism to plan, design, and construct grade separated crossings. Current examples of this application include the funded Siphon Overpass and Harmony Underpass projects.

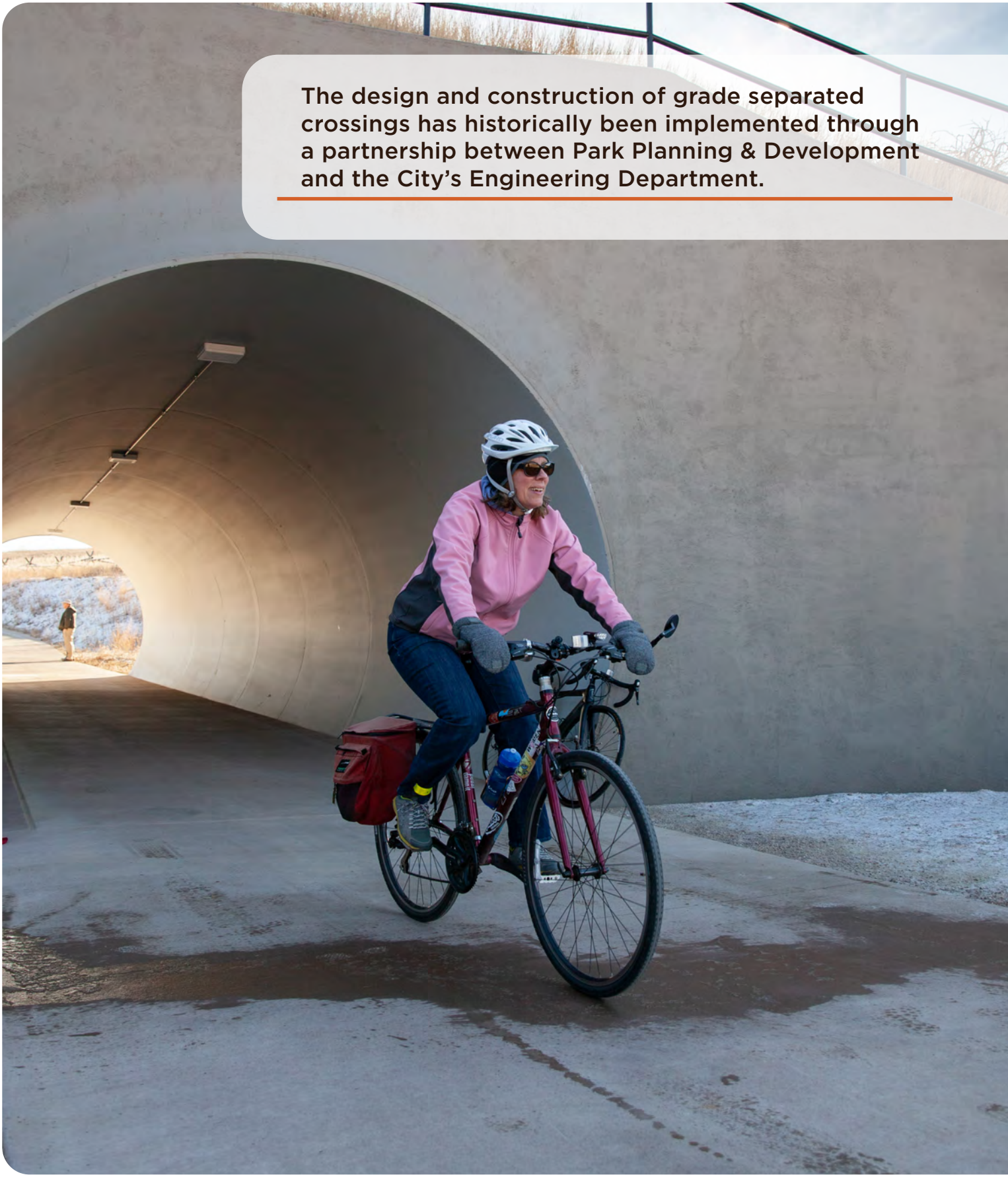
The current CCIP ¼ cent tax funds have also historically contributed to the design and construction of grade separated crossings. The current CCIP tax will expire on December 31, 2025. Fort Collins voters will have the opportunity to renew this tax in November 2025 and extend it to December 31, 2035. As part of the package of tentative projects under consideration, funding for a Bicycle Infrastructure and Overpass/Underpass Program has been preliminarily identified. This potential continued dedicated funding source would co-fund grade separated crossings over the next decade.

The table below provides the total number of each type of grade separated crossing (road, railroad, and major water crossings) identified on the proposed trails map, the unit cost for each type, and the total cost by type of crossing.

The estimated cost of full build-out of the proposed trails network, including grade separated crossings, accounting for future cost inflation is $330,366,000.

FIGURE 13. GRADE SEPARATED CROSSINGS ESTIMATED 2030 COST BY TYPE

Type	Count	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Road	27	$6,300,000	$170,100,000
Railroad	7	$6,300,000	$44,100,000
Water	25	$105,000	$2,625,000



The design and construction of grade separated crossings has historically been implemented through a partnership between Park Planning & Development and the City's Engineering Department.

4

Chapter 4: ADDITIONAL POLICY AREAS

FOCO TRAILS PROGRAM

TRAIL SAFETY, ETIQUETTE, AND MOBILITY

IRRIGATION DITCH COMPATIBILITY

Additional Policy Area Development

The STP process included multiple analyses related to support and advance paved trail development and user safety. These analyses, their findings, and recommendations are reported in this chapter.

FOCO TRAILS PROGRAM

To proactively communicate with community members on an on-going basis and to offer more familiarity and transparency with the city's trail system, staff recommends developing a signature "FoCo Trails" Program. The development of this program will include a communications plan to provide on-going information concerning trail conditions, closures, detours, sensitive habitat areas including wildlife migration and nesting areas, trail project updates, special events, safety information, volunteer opportunities, and other trail related topics. Trail program staff will cultivate a relationship with community members and trail enthusiasts to offer a one-stop shop to learn and discover more about the city's trails. Communication tactics will include information in a quarterly newsletter, webpage, trail signing, information at trailhead and park kiosks, social media, project open houses, and pop-up trail events.

RECOMMENDATION

- Develop the FoCo Trails Program to expand community familiarity and transparency into the City's trails system.

TRAIL SAFETY, ETIQUETTE, AND MOBILITY

The term "micromobility" refers to small-wheeled devices, such as bicycles, scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, and other vehicles with a small profile compared to most motor vehicles, and which may be human powered or have electric motors. With recent battery and technological advances, the options have expanded rapidly and are continuing to change.

Today, people use human and electric-powered micromobility devices to move about the city; however, many of the laws pertaining to these devices are outdated. Current laws and policies create a fragmented, inconsistent, and often unsafe network. People's mobility choices are changing, and our laws need to stay current to regulate, educate, and enforce the safe use of these devices on City facilities and create a fair physical and legal environment for their use.

Fort Collins' robust bicycle and pedestrian networks are well suited to accommodate most micromobility options, and the City is constantly working to improve these networks. Supporting the use of new devices provides community members with more mobility choices. These alternatives encourage the move away from motor vehicles that emit greenhouse gases and cause traffic congestion, which aligns with several City plans, such as Our Climate Future, the Active Modes Plan, and the Vision Zero Action Plan.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

To inform this policy area, community members who experience bicycle and pedestrian facilities in different contexts were engaged through the following strategies:

- Access Fort Collins reports, e-mails to staff and City Council
- Focus groups (boards and commissions)
- Which Wheels Go Where questionnaire results

Over the course of 2024, an emerging theme surfaced through STP community engagement activities at City events, boards commission meetings, and correspondence with community members and City Council: a need to more thoroughly address mobility safety on the paved trail system.

The issue primarily involves the speed, including perception of speed, and types of bikes, including e-bikes, that are being operated on the trail system. The speed differentials between people walking and people biking can be great and in many reported close call incidents, people moving more slowly on the trail system feel intimidated and are concerned they will be struck by a faster moving bicyclist. There's also concern for people operating devices that are outside of the State of Colorado's e-bike

classification. These devices are considered "out of class" by the People for Bikes organization and can reach speeds higher than Class 1 and 2 e-bikes.

While crashes resulting in severe injury are rare on the trail system, they do occur. There is a public perception that the City is lacking in terms of providing a safe environment for people to use a diversity of mobility options on our trails and that additional safety education efforts are needed for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to feel safe and welcome using the trails. The need to instill a culture of safety and courtesy on our trails is paramount.

WHICH WHEELS GO WHERE?

Related to the STP process and trail safety, Park Planning & Development staff are coordinating with FC Moves on the '*Which Wheels Go Where?*' project to explore the use of human and lightweight electric powered devices on City facilities, such as, sidewalks, streets, bike lanes, and trails. This project is moving forward concurrently to the STP process and is scheduled to seek City Council feedback in August 2025.

The goal of *Which Wheels Go Where* is to update and simplify the laws governing micromobility operations on streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, and paved trails, and clarify right-of-way, and behavior. To inform this project, community members who experience bicycle and pedestrian facilities in different contexts were engaged to determine how best to accommodate human powered vehicles and lightweight electric vehicles on City facilities and to develop strategies to address concerns.

This project collected internal and external stakeholder input and reviewed crash data and experiences in other communities. The Community Engagement Summary, a companion report, summarizes the community outreach and input received in the Which Wheels Go Where questionnaire, which received over 1,400 responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address trail safety issues, staff is exploring a four-point approach that will require coordination between several departments including Parks, Natural Areas, FC Moves, Communication and Public Information Office, and the Police Department. Implementation of this strategy will begin in 2025 and is funded by the Strategic Trails Plan Implementation Fund identified in the 2025-2026 Budgeting for Outcomes process.

1. **Trail Safety Education Campaign –** Develop a contemporary and ongoing multimedia safety education campaign that addresses common concerns and provides safety education, messaging, and resources, including guidance specific to the types of allowed e-bikes, allowed speeds, and consumer education. See Appendix M for full list of trail safety messages (signs and social media assets).

2. **Courtesy and Etiquette Signs -** Use existing sign design or develop new design and increase sign frequency along the trail system reflecting key safety messages of multimedia campaign.

3. **Warning Signs and Striping Improvements -** Create consistency, refresh centerline striping, and install warning signs at bridges, underpasses, and trail junctions.

4. **Bicycle Ambassador Program -** Continue coordination with FC Moves to include path patrols and routine trail pop-up events to provide trail user safety education. Explore opportunity to expand this program to Park and Natural Areas rangers and the Volunteer Ranger Assistant program.

In addition to promoting safe behaviors on trails, trail etiquette education should expand include community awareness on paved trail impacts to sensitive habitats and wild life, such as bicycle volumes and speeds. In partnership with the Natural Areas Department, outreach efforts should provide on-going and strategic information to community members to avoid or mitigate these impacts by slowing down and staying on the trail at all times.

ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

There's often a sense that enforcement will solve the safety concerns on the City's trails; however, enforcement challenges limit the effectiveness of this tactic in changing long-term trail user behavior.

The existing 46 miles of major paved trails are patrolled by a small team of rangers from both the Parks and Natural Areas Departments. Park rangers have some enforcement limitations as they are not allowed to detain or pursue scofflaws. Rangers have the authority to issue citations for municipal code offenses; however, they often choose to educate people instead.

One method of educating community members involves employing a technique called, 'Authority of the Resource[5].' This method transfers the authority from the ranger to the requirements of the resource (trails, parks, and natural resources). This technique asks the ranger to transfer part of the expectation for compliance back to the community member. This method uses values that people care about to influence their behavior, rather than a human authority figure telling them what to do.

Natural Areas, and Fort Collins Police Services (FCPS) recognize there is a trail safety issue; however, they believe the best course of action to proactively change unsafe behavior is to continue addressing safety through education and outreach. This position reinforces the need to conduct an on-going Trails Safety Campaign.

5 Wallace, Dr. George N. Law Enforcement and the Authority Resource. Colorado State University

The best course of action to proactively change unsafe behavior is to continue addressing safety through education and outreach.

EXHIBIT 8.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL AND PARKS

The Safe Routes Partnership is a national nonprofit organization working to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone. Organizations and agencies, like FC Moves, that join the Partnership commit to operating a Safe Routes program in their jurisdiction. In Fort Collins, FC Moves manages a successful Safe Routes to School program with the goal of 50% of K-12 students safely walking, biking, scootering, or skating to school on a regular basis. As of 2024, 30% of students walk, bike, scooter, or skate to school.

Fort Collins' **Safe Routes to School** (SRTS) program works with strategic partners such as Poudre School District, Bike Fort Collins, and Safe Kids Larimer County to increase the number of students safely walking, bicycling and taking the bus to school. The program offers bicycle and pedestrian safety classes, strategically implements improved sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle lanes for student use, and enforces school-zone speed limits and other traffic calming in school areas.

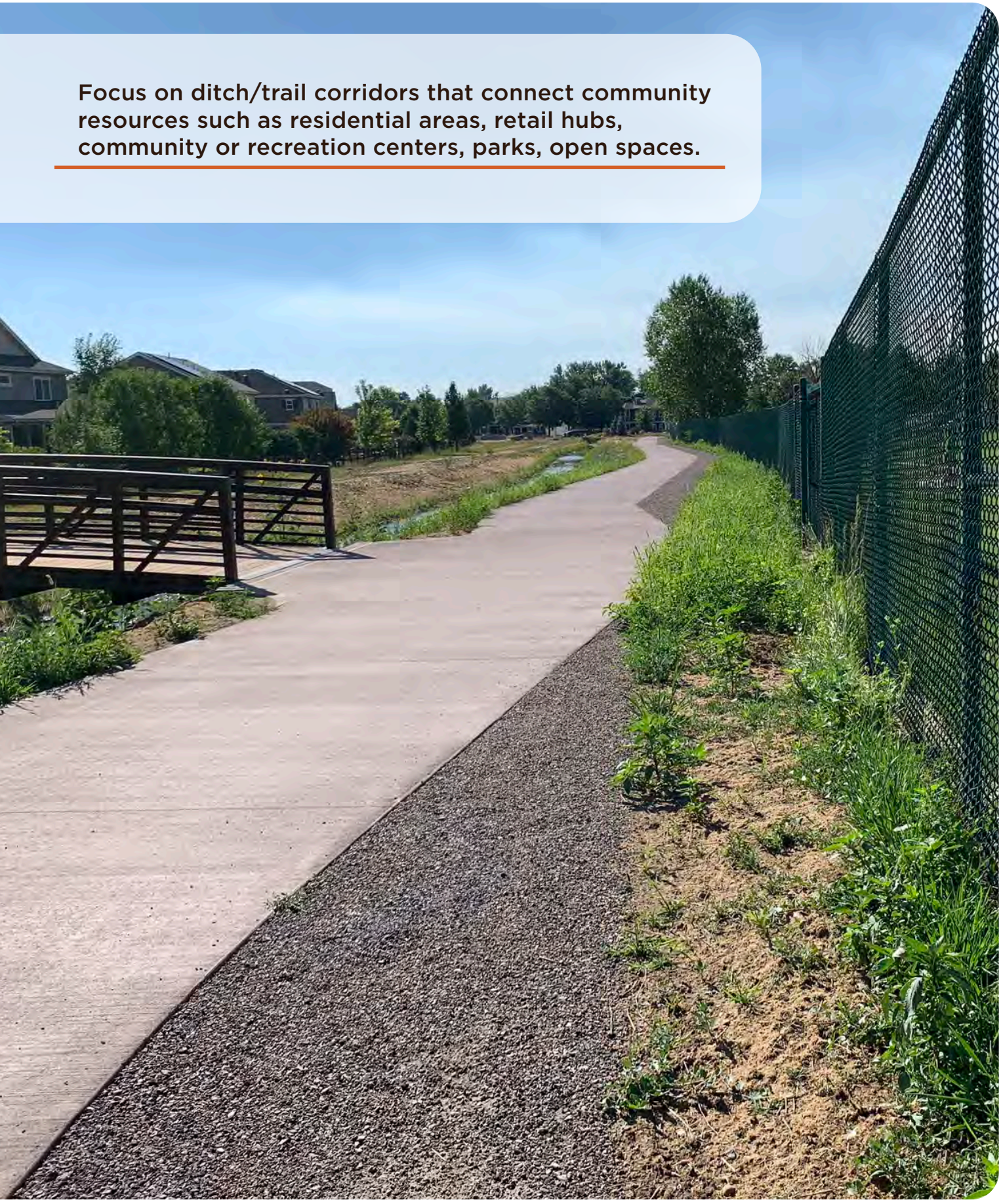
Historically, much of the SRTS program efforts have focused on elementary and middle schools but also includes high school curriculum. SRTS educates students on trail etiquette that covers the following topics:

- **Communication:** Defines a shared vocabulary for communicating with other trail users and your intended movement when passing.
- **Centerline Definition:** Explains the purpose and meaning of yellow centerlines on the trail, including the difference between dashed and solid lines.
- **Rider Location:** Explains where to ride on trails to avoid conflicts with other trail users and crashes that can occur along the edge of the trail.
- **Stopping:** Defines proper stopping protocol.
- **Speed:** Establishes the importance of controlled speed and appropriate speeds for bicycles on the trails.
- **Hazards:** Trains trail users on how to identify hazards on the trail, especially those that are most hazardous to cyclists.
- **Signage:** Reviews the types of trail signs and information they include.

This curriculum provides an excellent template for trail safety education that can be expanded to adults.

Safe Routes to Parks is a close relative of the SRTS Program. Since 2017, the Safe Routes Partnership has partnered with community-based organizations, government agencies, and other national partners to improve local park access via walking and biking. Although the City of Fort Collins does not have an official Safe Routes to Parks program, expanding the network of safe trail connections to parks and natural areas is an original goal of the paved trail system and continues as a preeminent focus of the STP.

Focus on ditch/trail corridors that connect community resources such as residential areas, retail hubs, community or recreation centers, parks, open spaces.



Irrigation Ditch Compatibility

Many Northern Colorado communities, including Fort Collins, have worked with irrigation ditch companies to develop trails that impact ditches either by crossing or by utilizing the ditch easement for trail construction. Differences in ditch ownership, concerns about safety, and questions related to maintenance responsibility contribute to uncertainty around the viability of constructing future trails within or across ditch corridors.

To address this uncertainty, the STP evaluated the feasibility of establishing trails on, along, or across irrigation ditches and other water conveyance infrastructure within the City's Growth Management Area (GMA). The purpose of this effort was to:

- Develop better understanding among community members for the role and operational considerations of ditch companies operating within the Fort Collins' GMA, leading to increased transparency and communication.
- Identify potential constraints, opportunities, and other impacts where our current proposed trails cross or run adjacent to existing ditch alignments.
- Identify possible missed opportunities to pair trails with irrigation ditches whose boards (or directors) may be amenable to trail development.
- Cross reference case studies to identify potential solutions to ditch company coordination challenges or concerns about trails.

This study resulted in tools to help guide future planning of trails along or across irrigation ditches within Fort Collins GMA: 1) Irrigation Ditch Viability Map; 2) case studies from other communities; 3) a GIS database of all water conveyance infrastructure within the GMA. These resources can be further explored in Appendix E.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus trail development where the City might have greater influence from higher shareholder interest; work through existing City representatives on irrigation ditch company boards to coordinate with companies on potential trail development.
- Focus future trail development efforts along corridors that are identified as "likely agreeable to trail development" on the Irrigation Ditch Viability Map.
- Engage ditch company managers and boards in early discussions on potential trail development and determine how projects can be developed to provide shared benefits such as improved ditch company access.
- Focus on ditch/trail corridors that connect community resources such as residential areas, retail hubs, community or recreation centers, parks, open spaces.
- As pre-development work commences, assess environmental impact of co-locating a trail adjacent to an irrigation ditch's existing alignment. Some irrigation ditches may provide a wildlife habitat and migration corridor. Determine if impact can be avoided and/or minimized or mitigated.
- Evaluate return on investment of opportunities to take on or share ditch maintenance responsibilities in exchange for constructing a trail within the ditch corridor.
- Prior to trail construction, develop formal agreements that address both trail development, management/maintenance, and the City's added liability for the trail. Define parameters for development and use of trails that do not impact the ditch or canal's original functions or the ability to maintain them.
- Establish agreed-upon design guidelines for the trail at the outset of negotiations with ditch companies.

EXHIBIT 9.

MANAGING IMPACT AND SHARED BENEFITS OF TRAILS AND DITCHES

Irrigation ditches and other water conveyance infrastructure can serve as ideal corridors for trails, offering several key advantages as multi-functional spaces that balance human recreation with ecological and agricultural needs.

1. Connectivity

- **Linear Pathways:** Irrigation ditches are often linear and extend over long distances, making them natural corridors for an interconnected trail system.
- **Linking Destinations:** Trails along ditches can link neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other community hubs, promoting access and utility as an alternative transportation corridor.

2. Recreational Value

- **Trails for All Abilities:** In many cases, irrigation ditches provide a flat, accessible grade that can be enjoyed by trail users of all ability levels.
- **Nature Experience:** Irrigation ditches often traverse through scenic, undeveloped areas of the city and provide riparian habitat, offering trail users a chance to enjoy natural landscapes, and wildlife.

3. Environmental Benefits

- **Wildlife Corridors:** Trails along ditches can impact wildlife habitat and migration corridors. Some riparian and ditch corridors may be inappropriate for trail development due to the presence of sensitive wildlife habitat. An ecological characterization study conducted during the predevelopment phase of the project will indicate any potential impacts. If adverse effects are identified, avoidance and/or mitigation techniques will be utilized, such as, trail realignment, providing an ample buffer or set-back, or selecting an appropriate trail width and surface type to ensure a trail supports and does not negatively impact biodiversity and wildlife passage for birds, mammals, and insects.
- **Erosion Control:** Managed, paved trails can reduce the erosion caused by informal paths along ditches, helping to protect water quality.

4. Community and Economic Value

- **Visual Enhancement:** Well-managed trails enhance the visual appeal of otherwise utilitarian ditches, converting them into attractive community assets.

5. Educational and Cultural Value

- **Learning Opportunities:** Trails along ditches can serve as outdoor classrooms, offering lessons on local agriculture, irrigation system functions, and environmental stewardship through interpretive signs and installations.
- **Preserving Heritage:** Many irrigation ditches have historical significance. Establishing interpretation along trails near ditches can celebrate and preserve this heritage.

6. Efficient Use of Space

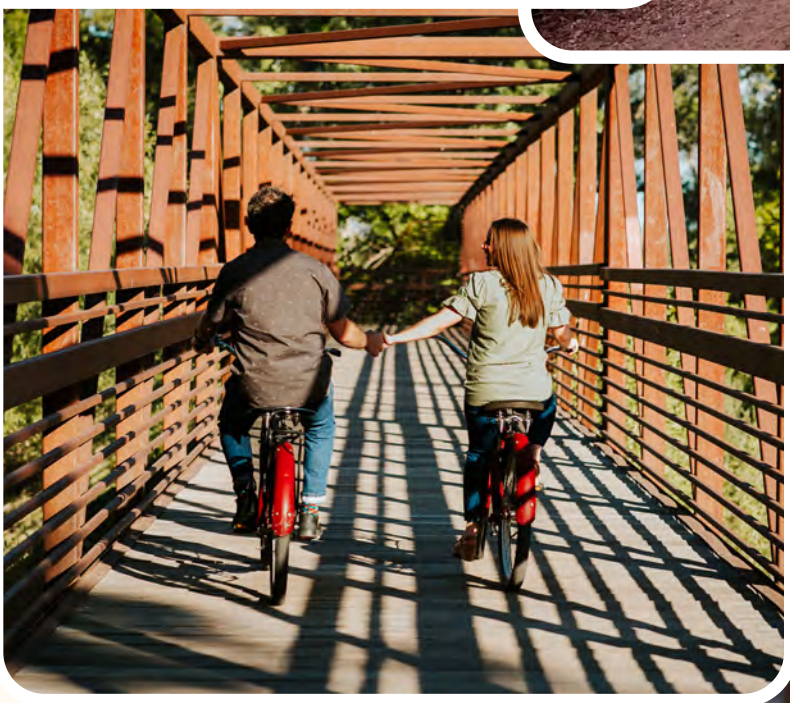
- **Multi-Use Infrastructure:** Transforming irrigation ditches into trail corridors makes efficient use of land that is otherwise underutilized.
- **Low-Impact Development:** Utilizing existing corridors reduces the need to clear new land for trails, minimizing environmental impact.

7. Maintenance and Management Awareness

- **Access for Maintenance:** Trails provide easier access for maintaining and inspecting irrigation ditches. They can also function to keep the ditch corridor clear of trees and debris.
- **Visibility:** Trails make irrigation systems more visible to the public, increasing awareness of local water management and conservation efforts.

5

Chapter 5: PERFORMANCE METRICS



Performance Metrics

The STP presents a wide-ranging framework of trail projects and recommendations to guide decision-making across multiple levels of community action from city government to partnerships with allied agencies. The true impact of this plan will come from diligent and consistent collaborative efforts to execute the STP vision.

The following performance metrics represent quantifiable ways to measure implementation success as the proposed trail system is constructed.

Advance a 15-minute City by accelerating the shift to active modes and reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

- Increase the number of annual trips on trails from 2.5 million to:
  - 4 million after near-term trails are completed
  - 8 million after mid-term trails are completed
  - 10 million after long-term trails are completed

Advance a 15-minute City by improving connectivity between key destinations, including underrepresented neighborhoods, schools, and parks and natural areas.

- All underrepresented neighborhoods will be within 1/4 mile of a paved trail
- All schools will be within 3/4-mile of a paved trail
- 50% of K-12 students safely walking, biking, scootering, or skating to school on a regular basis (SRTS Goal)
- Most parks and natural areas within the City's GMA will be within a 1/4 mile of a paved trail

Instill a culture of safety for users of all modes and abilities on the trail system.

- There will be zero crashes resulting in severe injury on trails annually

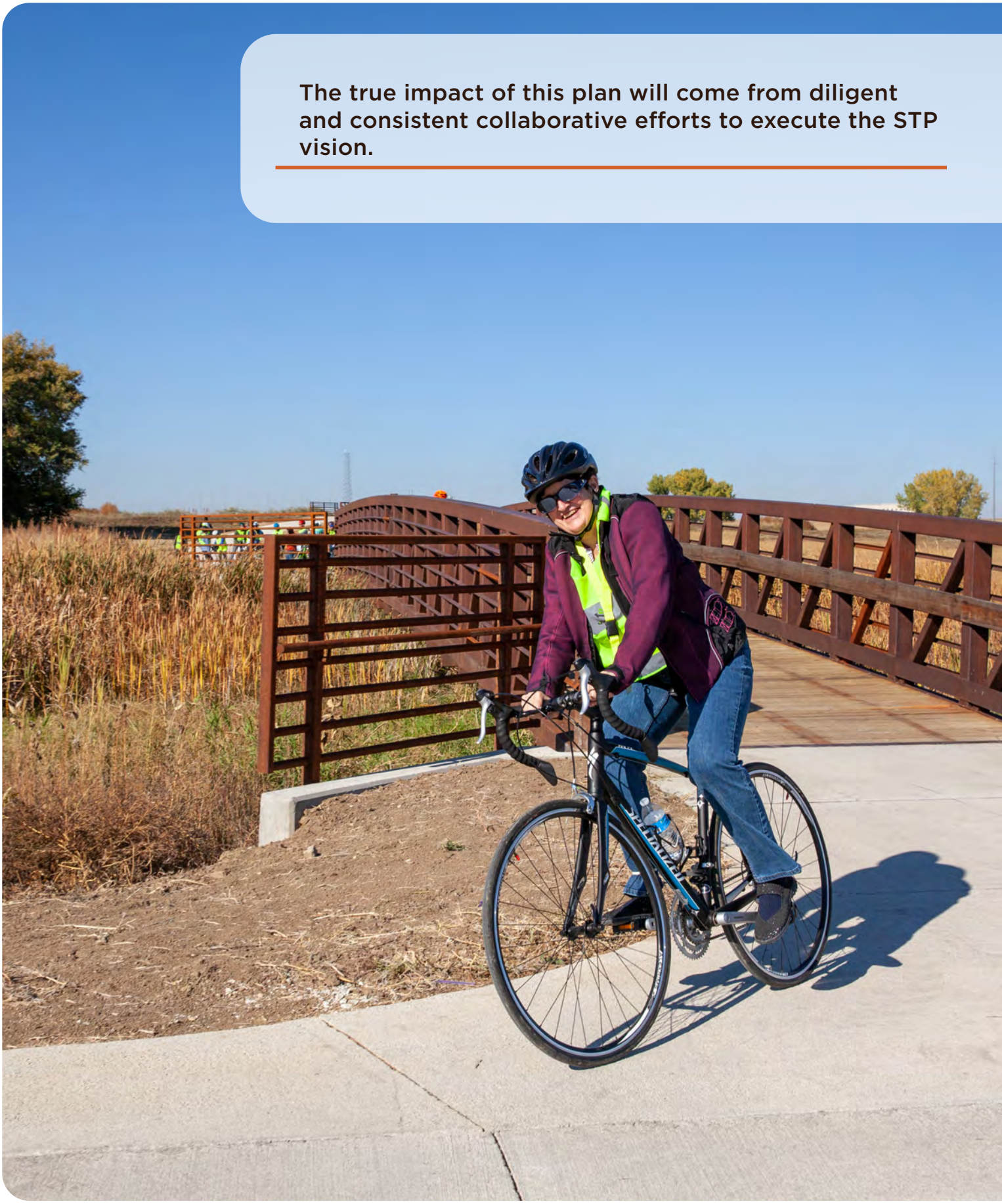
Expand access to trails in the new growth areas of the City.

- Construct approximately 20 miles of paved trails to serve new development in the northeast area of the City

Decrease the risk of negative environmental impact from trail development.

- Implement a thorough environmental review and mitigation process for each trail project. Conduct post project environmental audit to measure efficacy

The true impact of this plan will come from diligent and consistent collaborative efforts to execute the STP vision.



LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX F: TRAIL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

- Trail-Type Cross-Sections
- At-grade Crossing Specifications
- Grade Separated Crossing Specifications
- Other Considerations

APPENDIX G: PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

- Methodology and Criteria Determination
- Proposed Trails Prioritization Results by Phase
  - Major/Minor Trail Priorities
  - Spur/Connector Trail Priorities
- Existing Trail Prioritization Results by Phase

APPENDIX H: UPDATED GRADE SEPARATED CROSSINGS PRIORITIZATION STUDY UPDATE

- 2025 Report with updated methodology and results
- 2018 Grade Separated Crossing Prioritization Study

APPENDIX I: WHICH WHEELS GO WHERE? QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SUMMARY

APPENDIX J: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX K: ESTIMATES OF PROBABLE COST BY UNIT AND CONSTRUCTION YEAR

APPENDIX L: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX M: TRAIL SAFETY MESSAGES