



Legislation Text

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A Resolution Supporting a Paths to Parks Grant Application to Great Outdoors Colorado for the Legacy Loop Paths to Parks Project

From:

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Summary:

The Legacy Loop Paths to Parks Project is a grant-supported trail development project focused on expanding access to outdoor recreation, increasing trail connectivity, and improving park and trail amenities for Colorado Springs' youth and families. This project will improve the safety and multi-use functionality of the Pikes Peak Greenway, create a regionally significant east-west trail connection along the Rock Island trail corridor, and expand recreational offerings within Monument Valley Park. With a daily average of 830 trail users counted at the Pike Peak Greenway near Colorado College, the Legacy Loop project will support downtown revitalization efforts by enhancing one of the most popular recreational and active transportation amenities in the Pikes Peak Region.

The Legacy Loop Project is inspired by William Jackson Palmer's bold vision of a vibrant, livable city where the essential functions of mobility and access are linked to the restorative and recreational power of parks, open space, and trails. From the earliest days of Colorado Springs, a central part of this vision has been the completion of a trail and park network ringing downtown. The Legacy Loop grant application provides an excellent opportunity to make significant progress towards realization of this goal.

The Legacy Loop project is supported by the recently adopted Park System Master Plan, the Monument Valley Park Master Plan, and a diversity of partner organizations including the Greenway Foundation, Kids on Bikes, and the Friends of Monument Valley Park.

This Resolution of Support is for a \$1,000,000 dollar grant application to Great Outdoors Colorado's (GOCO) Paths to Parks grant program. Additional project funding will come from previously allocated PPRTA funds, TOPS trail funds, Conservation Trust Funds and from the support of project partners such as the Greenway Fund.

Previous Council Action:

On February 25th, 2014, City Council passed a similar Resolution of Support for a Great Outdoors Colorado Paths to Parks grant application. The 2014 application was not successful but GOCO has invited the City to resubmit in March, 2015. Towards that end, Great Outdoors Colorado has requested an updated Resolution of Support from City Council.

Background:

The Legacy Loop Paths to Parks Project has been referred to in the past as the Emerald Loop or Emerald Necklace. Drawing comparisons to Fredrick Law Olmstead's linear park system in Boston, the Legacy Loop concept of a trail and park network looping around Colorado Springs' downtown core is a vision that has been advocated for by the community for many years. The Legacy Loop Paths to Parks Project will focus on the most critical, shovel-ready portions of the Legacy Loop to create a more accessible, functional, and safer trail and park system in Colorado Springs.

In the spring of 2014 the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department submitted a Paths to Parks grant application to Great Outdoors Colorado for the Legacy Loop trail. The application was not successful. In the fall of 2014, Great Outdoors Colorado announced one more round of Paths to Parks grants and sought project proposals from municipalities across the state. The Parks Department submitted a concept paper for a refined Legacy Loop project and was selected as a grant finalist. If Council chooses to pass a Resolution of Support for a second Legacy Loop grant application, the Parks Department will submit a \$1,000,000 grant request to Great Outdoors Colorado.

Major Legacy Loop project elements include construction of three new trail underpasses along the Pikes Peak Greenway, construction of a new trailhead and event space near Fontanero Street, widening and paving the western portion of the Pikes Peak Greenway from Uintah Street to the northern boundary of Monument Valley Park, and the construction of a new 12' wide multiuse trail along the Rock Island corridor from Shook's Run to the Pikes Peak Greenway. Through these improvements this project will greatly improve trail and park connectivity and will bring the City much closer to completing the long-sought Legacy Loop Trail.

Since its voter-approved formation in 1992, Great Outdoors Colorado has invested more than \$825 million in Colorado Lottery proceeds to more than 4,500 projects across Colorado. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department has a strong history of using GOCO grant dollars to help fund projects important to the citizens of Colorado Springs. In 2013 alone the Parks Department received \$2,081,500 dollars in grants from Great Outdoors Colorado for park, trail, and open space projects in our community. This \$1,000,000 grant request for the Legacy Loop Project represents an opportunity to partner with GOCO to leverage previously allocated Parks Department dollars to help make the Legacy Loop project a reality.

Financial Implications:

The Great Outdoors Colorado Paths to Parks Grant requires a minimum 25% project match. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department anticipates requesting the maximum of \$1,000,000 from GOCO for this project. Therefore the Parks Department will be required to contribute \$250,000 to this project. As of the January 1, 2015 budget allocation, the Parks Department has \$1.1 million in PPRTA funds and \$560,000 in TOPS trail funds dedicated to trail projects along the Legacy Loop project. This is more than sufficient to cover the match requirements for this grant application. Additionally, we anticipate private funds and other donations to contribute an additional \$250,000, and a future State Trails grant request to contribute another \$200,000 to this project.

It is expected that no General Fund dollars will be required for this project.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

On January 8, 2015 the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board voted to support a Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department grant application to Great Outdoors Colorado for the Legacy Loop Paths to Parks Project.

Stakeholder Process:

The Legacy Loop Project has been a focus of multiple high-profile public/stakeholder planning processes over the last several years. These public planning efforts include an Urban Land Institute study for downtown, the Monument Valley Park Master Plan, Imagine Downtown, the Colorado Springs Bicycle Master Plan, the Pikes Peak Regional Transportation Master Plan, and the Colorado College Visioning Plan. Most recently, the 2014 Park System Master Plan identified the Legacy Loop Trail as a highest priority trail for our City. These many public planning efforts have confirmed the strong public desire for the Legacy Loop trail.

Alternatives:

Council is being asked to pass a Resolution of Support for a \$1,000,000 grant request to Great Outdoors Colorado for the Legacy Loop Paths to Parks project. Council may deny support for a Resolution of Support. Doing so would preclude the Parks Department from pursuing a Great Outdoors Colorado Paths to Parks grant in any dollar amount for the Legacy Loop in 2015.

Proposed Motion:

Move approval of a Resolution of Support for a Great Outdoors Colorado grant request in the amount of \$1,000,000 for the Legacy Loop Paths to Park project.

N/A