



## Board Summary Report

**Date:** October 6, 2020

**To:** Board of County Commissioners

**Through:** Shannon Carter, Open Spaces Department Director

**From:** Brett Collins, Grants and Acquisitions Manager

**Subject:** Joint Project Request Kiowa-Bennett Road Pedestrian Underpass

### Direction/Information:

Staff will present information supporting a Joint Project funding request for a pedestrian underpass at Kiowa-Bennett Road next to the Kiowa Creek North Open Space. See the attached Joint Project Application.

### Request and Recommendation:

Open Spaces staff and the Open Space Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) recommends the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approve the expenditure of \$248,500 in Open Space Acquisition and Development funding for a pedestrian underpass on Kiowa-Bennett Road. See the attached recommendation from OSTAB.

### Background:

In 2011, the Town of Bennett received an Arapahoe County Open Space grant to construct the first phase of a trail link from Antelope Hills subdivision, north along Kiowa-Bennett Road toward Adams County and the Town. The first phase was completed in 2013 and consisted of a 1.1-mile asphalt trail beginning at the northwest corner of Antelope Hills and ending at East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue/County Road 6. In 2013 and 2016, the Town was awarded planning grants for the second phase of the trail connection, intended to continue north along Kiowa-Bennett Road, west across Kiowa Creek, and under I-70 into Adams County. Shortly after the 2016 grant was awarded, the County requested that Bennett put the project on hold due to concerns from OSTAB about the safety of the proposed alignment, and suggested that the trail instead cross Kiowa-Bennett Road and travel north through the County's open space. The project was on hold for several years, pending plans for the Kiowa North property. Ultimately, Bennett opted to return the planning grant funds in January 2020 due to the significant scope changes.

In 2018, Bennett received a grant from the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program to improve a minor drainageway crossing under Kiowa-Bennett Road, approximately 1,600 feet (0.3 miles) north of the trail's current dead end. In consultation with County staff, Bennett requested joint project funds to upgrade the new drainageway box culvert at this location to a 10'x10' concrete box culvert large enough to include a new pedestrian underpass and construct the trail through the underpass. The existing trail

along Kiowa-Bennett Road will be extended north to meet the east side of the underpass (not included in this request). The west end of the underpass will enter Kiowa North Open Space, and trail connections will be incorporated into the County's recently initiated master plan for the property. The attachment includes an area map depicting the full trail alignment (excluding the alignment through Kiowa North, which will be finalized during the master planning process).

### **Links to Align Arapahoe:**

#### **Service First**

Increased customer service by improving the experience for trail users to access open space.

#### **Fiscal Responsibility**

Promotes responsible spending by leveraging County funding with partner agencies to optimize the use of resources.

#### **Quality of Life**

The project will increase access to additional open space to promote physical and mental health by enjoying nature.

#### **Discussion:**

Incorporating the proposed underpass into the culvert reconstruction/drainage project furthers the Town's goal to provide a trail connection from Antelope Hills, Bennett Regional Park and Open Space, and Future Park in Arapahoe County to the main Town in Adams County. The Town anticipates that the underpass would be completed in summer 2021 and that the connecting trail on the east side would be completed by summer 2022. The County currently anticipates that construction at Kiowa North Open Space will take place in 2022. The underpass and trail would complete the connection from Antelope Hills to Kiowa North. Additionally, the Town plans to procure a trail easement to the north of Kiowa North Open Space that would extend the trail into Adams County, where it will ultimately connect to the Town's trail network. Arapahoe County Open Spaces has offered to support Bennett's efforts to procure this trail easement where appropriate.

The installation of a pedestrian underpass provides a safer alternative to an at-grade crossing or continuing the existing trail to the north along Kiowa Bennett Road to I-70. Traffic on the road travels at or often more than the 55 MPH speed limit, and the road is expected to be widened in the future as the Bennett area continues to develop.

#### **Alternatives:**

Approve, modify, or deny the Joint Project funding request.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

Arapahoe County Open Spaces Acquisition and Development funds in the amount of \$248,500 will be used to match the applicant's funding. The fund balance exceeds this amount.

**Concurrence:**

The OSTAB recommended the BOCC approve funding for the pedestrian underpass at Kiowa-Bennett Road at their August 24, 2020 meeting.

**Attorney Comments:**

None

**Reviewed By:**

Brett Collins, Grants and Acquisitions Manager

Shannon Carter, Open Spaces, and Intergovernmental Relations Director

Tiffanie Bleau, Assistant County Attorney

Todd Weaver, Director of Finance

**Attachments:**

Joint Project Application-Kiowa Bennett Rd Pedestrian Underpass 8.18.20

OSTAB-Rec to BOCC Kiowa Bennett Rd Pedestrian Underpass 8.24.20

Presentation-Kiowa Bennett Rd Pedestrian Underpass 10.6.20