November 22, 2016

Mr. Shannon Carter, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations Director, and
Arapahoe County Open Space & Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB)
6934 S Lima St, Unit A
Centennial, CO 80112

Re: Joint Project Funding Request – Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer – Arapahoe County
Joint Project Request, December, 2016

Dear Shannon and OSTAB Members:

The Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department (PROS) respectfully submits the
enclosed Joint Project Funding Request to undertake Phase 1 of the Buckley AFB Compatible Use
Buffer Project.

In late 2013, the U.S. Air Force launched a community partnership initiative at Buckley AFB with
the goal of leveraging the capabilities and resources of military installations, local governments,
and non-profits in order to develop, prioritize and implement partnership initiatives beneficial to
all. Through this public-public, public-private (P4) partnership process, The Trust for Public Land
(TPL), the City of Aurora, Arapahoe County, the U.S. Air Force, the Colorado DMVA, and other
partners identified lands that would create a protected buffer around Buckley AFB to prevent
encroachment, create a protected wildlife corridor, and provide new recreation opportunities with
trails that connect to the regional trail system.

TPL and Buckley have worked with Aurora and Arapahoe County to acquire and protect several
properties adjacent to the base as part of this project and have donated these properties to Aurora.
In order to continue this effort to protect the base, provide additional open space and connect trail
corridors surrounding the base, both Aurora and Arapahoe County have been asked by Buckley
AFB to contribute matching funds to complete the project.

TPL, Aurora, Arapahoe County and Buckley have sought grant funds estimated at approximately
$17M from various sources to acquire 734 additional acres for greenway purposes and public
benefit in Phase 1 of the Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer project. The funding partners for
Phase 1 would include:

- City of Aurora;
- Trust for Public Land;
- Great Outdoors Colorado (requested);
- Air Force- REPI;
- Arapahoe County Open Spaces Joint Project (requested).

Aurora PROS is now seeking formal consideration and approval of the $1M request from
Arapahoe County as Joint Project funds.

Thank you for your consideration of our Joint Project funding request, and for your continued
support and partnership on this regionally significant project.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Barrett
Director
Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space Dept.
Arapahoe County Open Spaces Joint Project Application

Applicants: City of Aurora, Parks, Recreation & Open Space, and the Trust for Public Lands

Buckley Air Force Base Compatible Use Buffer Project, Phase 1: Acquisition

Project Summary

- Abstract: The Buckley AFB Compatible Use Project will provide for the acquisition of open space, trail corridors and relieve development pressure surrounding Colorado’s front-range Air Force base, thereby extending its useful life to provide critical national security.

- Scope of Work: The Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer Project is comprised of land acquisitions, trail corridor expansions and connections, and is designed to provide public access to open space surrounding the Buckley Air Force Base. This project has a dual function, in that while it provides new open space lands and trail connections, it also helps to create a buffer surrounding the AFB. This benefits the base and the surrounding community in numerous ways more fully described below. This project has significant momentum from the United States Air Force, and other funding sources, and has been awarded over $13M in funding to date towards completion of these property acquisitions. Please see Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer Project Area Map for a view of properties purchased to date as well as planned acquisitions under this joint funding project request.

- Location: Project location surrounds Buckley AFB, located between 6th Avenue on the north, Jewell Ave. on the south, E-470 on the east and Dunkirk on the west, in eastern Aurora, within the NE Metro Working Group boundaries. Please see Vicinity map.

- Expected Results: This project will fund the acquisition of open space and trail corridors, and farmland surrounding Buckley AFB. These parcels will allow gaps in existing trail systems to be connected while substantially strengthening the security surrounding the AFB.

- Public Benefits: There are significant underserved communities, including AFB residents and Military personnel who will be afforded access to public outdoor recreation opportunities not currently available to them. Providing a buffer for the AFB will provide long term viability to the base and allow its continued economic benefit to Arapahoe County and Aurora.

- Partner Contributions:
  - Arapahoe County Open Spaces - $1,000,000 (requested)
  - City of Aurora - $1,000,000
  - Great Outdoors Colorado - $3,000,000 (requested, decision due 12/2016)
  - Trust for Public Land - $104,500 (cash & in-kind)
  - Dept of Military & Veterans Affairs - $2,500,000
  - Buckley Air Force Base - $9,500,000
- Expected Time of Completion: June of 2018

Relevance to Existing Plans:

- County Comprehensive Plan

This project helps implement the Open Space, Parks and Trails section of Arapahoe County’s Comprehensive Plan, which recommends “using open space as a means to help direct growth, maintain rural character, conserve wildlife habitat, create edges to the urban environment and provide opportunities for education, scientific research, wildlife observation, hiking and passive and active recreation activities.” Several open space goals and policies will also be achieved through this project, including:

Goal OS 1 – Develop a Countywide Open Space, Parks and Trails System

Arapahoe County will have a countywide connected system of open space, and will contain parks, trails and recreation facilities in Growth Areas that provide active and passive recreation opportunities for County residents.

Policy OS 1.1 – Connected Countywide System of Open Space, and Public Parks and Trails

Arapahoe County will work to improve a connected system of open space and increase residents’ access to public parks and trails in Growth Areas.

Policy OS 1.3 – Plan for Non-Motorized Trails in Growth Areas and for Regional Connections

The County will promote trails planning to provide a non-motorized transportation alternative.

- County Open Space Resolution

Established in 2003 and extended in 2011, Arapahoe County’s open space program is designed to “preserve urban and rural open space and natural lands; protect the land that preserves water quality in rivers, lakes and streams; provide, maintain and improve neighborhood parks, open space, sports fields, picnic facilities, and biking, walking and multi-use trails; protect wildlife habitat and corridors; protect views, vistas and ridgelines; preserve agricultural and ranch lands; and enhance and maintain designated heritage areas.” Nearly all of these goals will be achieved through this joint project by connecting to existing trails, parks, and open spaces, both within Aurora and with adjacent jurisdictions, including Arapahoe County.

- County Open Space Master Plan

The Toll Gate Creek and E-470 Corridor trail are also identified as “Open Space Opportunity Corridors” in the Arapahoe County Open Space Master Plan that was approved in June 2010. The Plan encourages preservation and enhancement of riparian corridors, in addition to creating an interconnected greenway system following waterways, grasslands, ridgelines and other appropriate corridors that link core habitat areas, parks and open spaces areas, as well as connections to neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and other activity centers.

- County Joint Project Criteria

County Conservation Focus
Located five miles east of Aurora’s municipal center, Buckley Air Force Base (Buckley AFB) is sandwiched between dense residential developments to the west, the Plains Conservation Center to the south, E-470 to the east, and the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor to the north. The last, privately owned properties along the western and eastern boundaries of the Base are prime for commercial and industrial development, which could have devastating impacts to the watershed, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, military training, and national security. The importance of each of these issues has become apparent in long range planning documents and open space and trail plans for Arapahoe County Open Space, and Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space, and is evidenced by the popularity in public support of open space taxes throughout Colorado.

It is a shared value among our communities that we enjoy a higher quality of life when we have better access to local open spaces, streamside environments, and trails that meet the needs of a variety of ages and activity levels, and new and revitalized open spaces and parks that encourage walking, exploration, and social engagement. Additionally, protection of natural areas and interconnected systems of greenspace contribute to the improved health of our waterways, the wildlife that call these corridors home and the people who enjoy watching them.

**Priority Project**

The current budget for this project is approximately $17M, and it will deliver a significant public benefit while providing outdoor recreation opportunities to the public. The partnerships described represent all significant government entities within the region, and cover funding commitments at a level necessary to rise to the BOCC and OSTAB criteria for a joint funding project.

- **Agency Plans and/or other Strategic Plans**

TPL, Buckley AFB, Aurora, and Arapahoe County have worked on the regionally significant P-4 Initiative since 2012 to develop a joint planning effort designed to identify community improvements, water projects, greenway and trail opportunities and integration of the Buckley AFB into these community assets. This effort identified specific undeveloped properties which once acquired, would allow the implementation of this project. It also detailed the trail connections that were available to surrounding built trail segments.

The transportation chapter of the 2009 City of Aurora Comprehensive Plan Update recommends the provision of a more balanced transportation system for the future of the city. An extensive trail network is mapped, which designates the Toll Gate Creek Trail as a “proposed regional trail.” Additionally, two key strategies in the Comprehensive Plan directly relate to this project:

“Preserve and interconnect open space corridors to preserve existing wildlife corridors and extend the urban trail system.”

“Expand and enhance trails and open space system as part of the regional network, connected to adjoining municipalities providing access via trails to destinations in Aurora.”

As part of the Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer project, the acquisition of properties allowing the connection of the Toll Gate Creek Trail concept is consistent with Aurora’s Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Department’s Framework Master Plan 2007 that outlines the fundamental actions, roles, and responsibilities of the department. The plan explicitly recommends to: 1) “provide trails, greenways, and greenbelts as major connecting elements of the parks and open space system;” and 2) “strive to establish a well-integrated, community-wide system...for bicyclists and pedestrians.”
The City is currently finalizing an update to its *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*. The draft document reflects comments, concerns, ideas and recommendations gathered regarding needed improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network. The public was encouraged to provide comments by way of an online survey and interactive mapping exercise as well as open house forums. Support for the connection on both the west and east sides of Buckley was evident as participants reviewed maps and offered input.

- **Detailed Discussion**

**Need and Urgency:**

Land acquisition is the critical first step in implementing the Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer project. The acquisitions included in this application have an estimated fair market value of $17 million, and some of the landowners are eager to sell, providing a window of opportunity that could close if Arapahoe County funding is unavailable for this project. Buckley Air Force Base has also committed over $9 million from the Department of Defense’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program to help acquire these and other properties surrounding the base. Aurora has committed funding to this project, and additional partners such as the State of Colorado Dept. of Veterans & Military Affairs have also committed funding to the project. In order to acquire the remaining properties Arapahoe County Open Space joint project funds are requested through this application, and will be critical to completing the project.

Future development and the loss of this opportunity, particularly along E-470, is imminent. Developers are coming back to Aurora with revised residential development plans that sat idle since the real estate market slowed in 2008, and “For Sale” signs dot all of the remaining vacant parcels, including Parcel 5. Development trends show commercialization of properties northward along the E-470 corridor, as well as along the exits south of Buckley AFB. Unless it is protected, the final property along the eastern fence line remains a target for commercial development. Similarly, Parcel 14 has been periodically listed for sale over the past five years.

Development of this property would eliminate the open space and recreation corridor linking protected properties between the Plains Conservation Center and the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor (where Arapahoe County Open Spaces has placed large investments), and push wildlife onto the airfield or into E-470. What makes this project so unique, are its strong ties to our nation’s security and defense. In addition to increased noise complaints, new facilities in the vicinity could interfere with radar and navigation systems, threatening Buckley’s safety and mission, and will permit observability of airfield operations, increasing the chance of planned or random attacks on individual aircraft or the airfield. Similarly, development on the southwestern edge of the base could impact the water quality of East Toll Gate Creek and push raptors onto the base, with potentially devastating damage to aircraft and pilots. This project will close critical gaps between previously protected properties to create an uninterrupted wildlife corridor and trail system that connects to other open spaces and regional trails throughout the Front Range. The project builds on significant investments already made in Signature Park, Great Plains Park, the Plains Conservation Center, the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor, Coal Creek Arena, Sand Creek Greenway and Sand Creek Riparian Preserve, and the Aurora Sports Park, many of which were funded through grants from Arapahoe County Open Spaces.

**Goals:**

The Buckley Air Force Base (Buckley AFB) Compatible Use Buffer project is a collaborative effort between The Trust for Public Land, the City of Aurora, the U.S. Air Force, the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and other partners to create a protected buffer around the base. The project will
connect stream corridors, open space, and new trails with surrounding parks, recreation facilities, and
environmental education centers; these include the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor, Plains Conservation
Center and the E-470 Trail (referred as the Triple Creek Connector), as well as the Aurora Sports Park,
Sand Creek Regional Greenway, and Arapahoe County Parks and Trails.

The protected corridors will ensure that wildlife can stay outside of the Buckley AFB boundary and access the
habitat along East Toll Gate, Sand, Coal and Murphy Creeks, giving mule deer, white-tailed deer, bobcat, bald
eagle, Swainson’s hawk, red-tailed hawk, and American kestrel, among others, a safe and accessible migration
corridor. This will prevent interference with base aircraft operations by moving the migration corridors outside of
the base perimeter, directing wildlife along stream corridors away from the base. Preventing development
along Buckley AFB’s fence line also addresses encroachment issues and ensures the long-term viability of the
Air Force and Colorado National Guard training and flying missions, prevents interference with radar and
navigation systems, and helps sustain operations at Buckley AFB. Buckley AFB plays a critical role in national
security and brings an estimated $1 billion annually to Aurora’s economy.

Implementation of this ambitious project is already underway. The Trust for Public Land entered
cooperative agreements with the U.S. Air Force and the Colorado DMVA to implement the buffer concept,
and applied for and received state and federal grant funding to acquire private property surrounding Buckley
AFB. With an initial investment of nearly $5 million, Parcel 1, Parcel 2 and Parcel 4 (see attached Buckley AFB
Buffer Acquisitions Map) have been protected with conservation easements held by Arapahoe County and the
United States, and the open space is now owned by Aurora. The acquisition of Parcel 6 (Murphy Creek) is in
progress and includes Arapahoe County open space funds awarded to Aurora for the Triple Creek Greenway
Corridor, which will be matched with available federal, state and local monies. Additional local grant funds,
such as Arapahoe County Joint Project funding, are needed to leverage state and federal grants to complete the
remaining acquisitions on the eastern boundary of the base (Parcel 5) and along East Toll Gate Creek on the
western border (Parcel 13b and Parcel 14). Financial participation from Aurora to match existing and future
potential grant awards will be appropriated for 2017 and 2018.

Expected User Groups:

This joint project is a creative and resourceful way to provide usable open space to the residents of Aurora,
Arapahoe County, and Buckley AFB for public use. It will close critical gaps in existing trails, which connect
to regional trails throughout the Front Range, while providing a tremendously important buffer from
development adjacent to the Denver metro area’s closest Air Force base.

A planned soft surface trail will provide access for wildlife viewers, walkers and cyclists to experience nature
close to home and develop an increased appreciation for the Great Plains landscape. The new recreational
opportunities from these trail corridors will benefit thousands of service members and families who live on
the base and more than 12,000 military and civilian personnel who commute to the base each day, as well as
the densely developed neighborhoods surrounding Buckley, which include more than 30,000 people in a 4
square mile radius. These northern neighborhoods are perhaps the most in need of better access to outdoor
recreation options in the City of Aurora.

Process Used to Evaluate Project:

In late 2013, the U.S. Air Force launched a community partnership initiative at several bases around the
country with the goal of leveraging the capabilities and resources of military installations, local governments,
and non-profits in order to reduce operating costs and the cost of services by developing, prioritizing and implementing partnership initiatives. Through this public-public, public-private (P4) partnership process, The Trust for Public Land, the City of Aurora, Arapahoe County, the U.S. Air Force, the Colorado DMVA, and other partners identified parcels that would create a protected buffer around Buckley AFB to prevent encroachment, create a protected wildlife corridor, and provide new recreation opportunities with trails that connect to the regional trail system.

Implementation of the Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer began in 2015. Using funds from the Department of Defense’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, as well as state funds granted to the Colorado DMVA for acquisitions buffering Buckley AFB, Parcel 1, Parcel 2 and Parcel 4, please see Buckley AFB Buffer Acquisitions Map, totaling 170 acres, have been protected with conservation easements held by Arapahoe County and the United States, and the open space is now owned by Aurora. Parcel 6 (Murphy Creek) will close later this year and will add 78 acres to the 200 acres already protected along the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor, immediately north of Buckley AFB. Grant funds awarded through GOCO’s Protect Initiative would complete the remaining acquisitions on the eastern boundary of the base (Parcel 5) and along East Toll Gate Creek on the western border (Parcel 13b and Parcel 14), connecting the 1,100-acre Plains Conservation Center, 55-acre Great Plains Park, and the 147-acre Signature Park, and will allowing the critical gaps in the trail system to be closed in future improvement projects.

Throughout the U.S., the Air Force has sponsored the P4 process. Locally, through participation of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the public has expressed overall support for the buffer project and the potential trail connections it will bring. Aurora’s City Council and the Aurora Open Space Advisory Board have provided input and support for this project, including $1M in funding for the project in 2017/2018.

Planning Efforts to Date:

The P-4 Initiative was a multi-jurisdictional planning effort spearheaded by the Buckley AFB. After four years of meeting and jointly determining needs, strategies and funding availabilities to meet the needs of all parties participating, the current process of funding requests through grant opportunities began and has been an unparalleled success, particularly as evidenced by the significant Federal funds committed through REPI. This joint jurisdictional effort, arguably the most successful in the nation to date, was a departure for an AFB. The State and Federal leadership efforts to gain participation and make use of the Trust for Public Lands skills has made a tremendous difference in gaining buy-in from the additional partners.

The Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer project was planned to provide an unparalleled opportunity to achieve multiple local, statewide and national priorities through land conservation. This project will create a protected wildlife corridor around the base that connects the Plains Conservation Center with the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor and will realign Buckley’s boundary so that East Toll Gate Creek falls outside of the base fence line and becomes permanently protected open space. This will prevent interference with base aircraft operations by moving the migration corridors outside of the base perimeter, directing wildlife along stream corridors away from the base. The protected corridor will also offer new recreation opportunities for trails linking exiting parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, and environmental education centers. Preventing development along Buckley AFB’s fence line also addresses encroachment issues and ensures the long-term viability of the Air Force and Colorado National Guard training and flying missions, prevents interference with radar and navigation systems, and helps sustain operations at Buckley AFB, which play a critical role in
national security and bring an estimated $1 billion annually to Aurora’s economy.

Environmental Considerations:

The properties surrounding Buckley AFB are located in the Central Shortgrass Prairie Ecoregion, which lies in the western portion of the Great Plains of North America, encompassing approximately 55.7 million acres, stretching across eastern Colorado, portions of southeastern Wyoming, western Kansas and Nebraska, the panhandles of Oklahoma and Texas, and northeastern New Mexico. The upland areas are dominated by shortgrass prairie, including blue grama, sideoats grama, and little bluestem, and the riparian areas in the region, including East Toll Gate Creek, offer an important transition between upland and aquatic systems, providing high quality, biologically diverse plant communities and important wildlife habitat. Creating a protected corridor along the western and eastern borders will ensure that wildlife can stay outside of the Buckley AFB boundary and travel north from the Plains Conservation Center (for which Arapahoe County holds the CCR’s) along East Toll Gate Creek to the west and to the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor (which was partially funded by Arapahoe County) to the east, accessing habitat along Sand, Coal and Murphy Creeks.

Planned restoration activities will enhance the existing conservation values at these properties. Additionally, the City of Aurora and Buckley AFB are completing a drainage study on East Toll Gate Creek to determine impairments and recommend remediation measures that will stabilize the banks and improve flows in the creek and nearly 30,000 contiguous acres of publicly owned land surrounding the Aurora Reservoir.

Acquisitions in Phase 1 of the Buckley AFB Compatible Use Buffer Project will permanently protect approximately 734 acres of open space, wildlife habitat, and recreational trail access, including the following parcels:

Parcel 5, 13b & 14

Parcel 5, which includes 334 acres located between the eastern boundary of Buckley AFB and E-470, has historically been used for agriculture and dryland farming. The habitat on the property provides food, shelter, breeding ground, and migration corridors for wildlife species, including pronghorn, mule deer, white-tailed deer, coyote, red fox, jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit, black-tailed prairie dogs, raptors and songbirds.

Parcel 13b covers approximately 300 acres located on the southwestern boundary and is currently within Buckley AFB ownership. East Toll Gate Creek flows north through property and includes sections of cottonwood-willow riparian communities that support several hundred species of migratory and resident birds, including Bald eagle, Red tailed hawks, Swainson’s hawk, and American kestrel, among others. The Buckley AFB fence will be realigned to the east of the creek, allowing mammals to move freely along the riparian corridor, outside of the base boundary.

Parcel 14 includes approximately 100 acres of vacant land just west of Buckley AFB, and provides similar wildlife habitat that will connect the Plains Conservation Center, two existing trails and Great Plains Park to existing and future Aurora-owned properties to Signature Park and connecting to the High Line Canal Trail.

Inclusivity:

As Phase 1 is an acquisition project, the specifics of design are not relevant to this phase. Future phases of the project will follow all appropriate Federal, State and Local requirements for trail design, layout and
construction. Aurora’s Planning, Design & Construction division has a long history of developing and construction trails which meet all of Arapahoe County’s requirements.

There are no existing or future facilities currently designed for these properties, however once acquisition of the properties is complete, a soft surface trail is planned to provide access for wildlife viewers, walkers and cyclists to experience nature close to home and develop an increased appreciation for the Great Plains landscape. A more comprehensive trail plan is underway for both Arapahoe County and Aurora Open Space programs.

**Connectivity:**

This project builds on the success of several previous land protection efforts, including the preservation of the Plains Conservation Center and the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor, an ambitious plan to add fourteen miles of interconnected greenway and trails between the existing terminus of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway to Aurora Reservoir. These properties offer critical connections between previously conserved properties that will be lost without protection. This is an extremely rare opportunity to protect and connect such a broad swath of public open space in an urban area.

This project will close critical gaps between previously protected properties to create an uninterrupted wildlife corridor and trail system that connects to other open spaces and regional trails throughout the Front Range. The project builds on significant investments already made in Signature Park, Great Plains Park, the Plains Conservation Center, the Triple Creek Greenway Corridor, Coal Creek Arena, Sand Creek Greenway and Sand Creek Riparian Preserve, and the Aurora Sports Park, many of which were funded through grants from Arapahoe County Open Spaces funding.

**Long Term Sustainability and Maintenance:**

Aurora’s Open Space & Natural Resources Division currently manages over 6,800 acres of open space and commits to maintenance of the properties on which they will hold title. Annual maintenance budgets are sufficient to maintain these properties.
## Timeline

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APPLICANTS:

City of Aurora, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department
Open Space & Natural Resources Division
15151 E. Alameda Parkway, suite 4600
Aurora, CO 80012
Attn: Pat Schuler
303-326-8947

The Trust for Public Land
1410 Grant St., suite D210
Denver, CO 80202
Attn: Hillary Merritt
303-837-1414 x 302
November 21, 2016

Arapahoe County
Board of County Commissioners
Administration Building
5334 E. Prince St.
Littleton, CO 80120

RE: Buckley Air Force Base
Compatible Use Buffer Joint
Project Request

Dear Members of the Board of County Commissioners;

The Buckley Air Force Base (Buckley AFB) compatible use buffer project is a collaborative effort between The Trust for Public Land, the City of Aurora, Arapahoe County, the U.S. Air Force, the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and other partners, to provide access to open space and create a protected buffer around the base. The project will connect stream corridors, open space, and new trails with surrounding parks, recreation facilities, and environmental education centers, including the Triple Creek Corridor, Plains Conservation Center and the E-470 Trail, as well as the Aurora Sports Park, Sand Creek Regional Greenway, and Arapahoe County Parks and Trails. A planned, future soft surface trail will provide access for wildlife viewers, walkers and cyclists to experience nature close to home and develop an increased appreciation for the Great Plains landscape.

The new recreational opportunities from these trail corridors will benefit thousands of service members and families who live on the base and more than 12,000 military and civilian personnel who commute to the base each day, as well as the developed neighborhoods surrounding Buckley, which include more than 30,000 people. This joint project is a creative and resourceful way to provide useable open space to the residents of Aurora, Arapahoe County, and Buckley AFB for public use. It will close critical gaps in existing trails, which connect to regional trails throughout the Front Range, while providing a tremendously important buffer from development adjacent to the Denver metro area’s closest Air Force base.

We urge the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners to approve Aurora and the Trust for Public Land’s Buckley Air Force Base Compatible Use Buffer joint project application and to award the full request of $1 million.
Thank you in advance for your serious consideration of this joint project request.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Hogan
Mayor
November 22, 2016

Arapahoe County Open Spaces
Open Space & Trails Advisory Board
6934 S Lima Street
Centennial, CO 80112

RE: Buckley Air Force Base Compatible Use Buffer

Dear Arapahoe County Open Spaces and OSTAB Members,

The Buckley Air Force Base (Buckley AFB) compatible use buffer project is a collaborative effort among The Trust for Public Land, the city of Aurora, Arapahoe County, the U.S. Air Force, the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and other partners to create a protected buffer around the base.

The project will connect stream corridors, open space, and new trails with surrounding parks, recreation facilities, and environmental education centers, including the Triple Creek Corridor, Plains Conservation Center and the E-470 Trail, as well as the Aurora Sports Park, Sand Creek Regional Greenway, and Arapahoe County Parks and Trails.

A planned soft surface trail connecting lands conserved through this project will provide access for wildlife viewers, walkers and cyclists to experience nature close to home and develop an increased appreciation for the Great Plains landscape. The new recreational opportunities from these trail corridors will benefit thousands of service members and families who live on the base and more than 12,000 military and civilian personnel who commute to the base each day, as well as the densely developed neighborhoods surrounding Buckley, which include more than 30,000 people in a four square mile radius.

This joint project is a creative and resourceful way to provide useable open space to the residents of Aurora, Arapahoe County, and Buckley AFB for public use. It will close critical gaps in existing local trails, which connect to regional trails throughout the Front Range, while providing a tremendously important buffer from development adjacent to the Denver metro area’s closest Air Force base.

Implementation of this ambitious project is already underway. With Arapahoe County’s help, partners have protected nearly 200 acres of property surrounding Buckley AFB, and another 78 acres will be preserved by the end of 2016. Additional open space funds through a joint project with Aurora will further leverage federal, state and local monies to complete the project. We urge you to approve the Buckley Air Force Base Compatible Use Buffer application and to grant the full request of $1 million.

Thank you in advance for your serious consideration of this grant proposal.

Regards,

James R. Petterson
Colorado State Director