



Guide for Submitting a Joint Project Proposal (updated 3/23/2022)

Purpose: This guide provides the background, tools, and steps for submitting a joint project proposal. Applications are available by invitation only. Please contact the Arapahoe County Open Spaces Grants & Acquisitions Manager to discuss your project. (Contact info: Michele Frishman – mfrishman@arapahoegov.com or 720.874.6723)

Funding Source: Funding for joint projects comes from the Arapahoe County Open Space Fund, which is governed by County Resolution No. 21-263. Joint projects, including those brought forward by various regional working groups, are funded from a designated portion of the Open Space Fund that is focused on open space acquisition and trail development.

Eligible Entities: Eligible entities for joint projects include municipalities, recreation districts, and other special districts that have a recreational component in Arapahoe County.

Basic Requirements: Projects for consideration must be high-priority, regional in nature, timely, and non-controversial. The scope and total cost of a joint project will generally exceed \$500,000. Proposals must demonstrate adequate pre-planning and public input and support. Joint projects should include commitments from multiple funding partners/sources. Agencies proposing a project must commit or generate a significant level of matching funds (normally greater than 50% of total project costs) to leverage Arapahoe County funding. Arapahoe County Open Space funds are intended to be spent within the County's geographic borders.

Conformity to Adopted Master Plans: The proposal must discuss how the project conforms to or furthers the goals and outcomes envisioned by adopted plans, including the County Comprehensive Plan or Sub-Area Plan, County Open Space Master Plan, County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and any strategic municipal, district, regional, state, or federal plans.

Definition: A joint project: (a) meets the guidelines of the County's Open Space Resolution and Open Space Master Plan; (b) is regional in scope (i.e., has regional significance geographically, physically, or otherwise demonstrates connections between two or more jurisdictions); (c) includes multiple funding partners; (d) is unique in what it has to offer the public; and (e) is designated as either a:

1. County conservation focus area – A significant land area or trail corridor that has been identified and defined as a conservation focus area in the Arapahoe County

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Open Space Master Plan or other process as recommended by the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) and/or determined by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC);

-or-

2. Priority project – A significant project as determined by the BOCC via OSTAB, the scope of which:
 - a. Typically significantly exceeds the county grant funding threshold;
 - b. Is or will be of significant public benefit (preserves or enhances conservation values and/or public recreation opportunity);
 - c. Involves significant partner(s) funding commitments;
 - d. Has compelling circumstances (urgency and need) to act; and
 - e. Is identified as a priority in an appropriate park and recreation open space master plan(s) or conservation plan(s) adopted by an elected body or board of directors.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Meets definition as outlined above;
- Official request from the applicant agency, demonstrating support from its highest official(s);
- Comprehensive project submittal from eligible agency or agencies;
- Administrative process (agreed-upon implementation process and timeline);
- Eligibility for each proposed project component;
- Support from a regional working group or the County;
- Significance of project results;
- Willingness to execute an intergovernmental agreement per County Attorney’s Office format.

Evaluation Process: Joint projects are brought forward either by a regional working group (South Platte Working Group, Cherry Creek Basin Working Group, East Metro Working Group, or High Line Canal Working Group) or other eligible government agency. Proposals are evaluated by County Open Spaces staff, followed by OSTAB, and finally by the BOCC for a final funding decision. The applicant is typically invited to make an oral presentation at each of these stages. A site visit or tour of the area is often warranted during the process. If approved by the BOCC, the County enters into an intergovernmental agreement with the applicant or appropriate agency that is responsible for the administration and final closeout of the project.