

PROS GUIDEBOOK



Draft
August 5, 2026

TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN



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(Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)
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Preface

Trail access is a defining value of the Louisville community. Residents take pride in the City’s scenic open spaces, mountain views, and interconnected network of trails and multimodal paths that provide safe routes to schools, jobs, and neighboring communities. These connections are a key reason many people choose to live and work in Louisville.

As the community continues to grow and recover from major events such as the 2013 flood, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2021 Marshall Fire, Louisville remains committed to protecting natural resources while supporting public health and well-being. These values are deeply woven into the City’s identity.

The Trail System Plan (TSP) establishes a balanced approach to enhancing recreational access and connectivity while preserving open space and natural ecosystems. It guides how Louisville can improve trail user experiences, protect ecologically important lands, and support a healthy, active community for generations to come.

The Louisville Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Department is deeply thankful to all of the volunteers and community members who have contributed to the Trail System Plan.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Louisville’s trails are among the community’s most valued public assets, supporting recreation, daily mobility, public health, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. The trail network connects neighborhoods, parks, open spaces, schools, downtown, and regional destinations and is heavily relied upon for walking, biking, and passive recreation. Recent community challenges—including flooding, wildfire, and the COVID-19 pandemic—highlighted the importance of resilient, well-connected outdoor infrastructure. The Trail System Plan (TSP) sets a coordinated, long-term approach to strengthening Louisville’s trail system, with a high standard to protect native plants, wildlife, and their habitats as the community grows and recovers. The Plan includes a coordinated effort with the City’s Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to ensure a seamlessly connected system between trails and the network of shared-use, multi-purpose pathways in Louisville.

Purpose

The TSP provides a roadmap for improving safety, connectivity, consistency, and sustainability across Louisville’s trail network over the next decade. As part of the PROS Guidebook, the TSP complements the PROS Long-Range Plan and aligns with the 2026 Louisville Comprehensive Plan and other existing City documents. The Plan identifies system gaps, establishes consistent planning, design, and management standards, and balances recreational access with environmental protection. It also offers a framework for prioritizing investments, coordinating across City departments, and leveraging partnerships to ensure long-term stewardship and effective implementation.

The TSP is informed by:

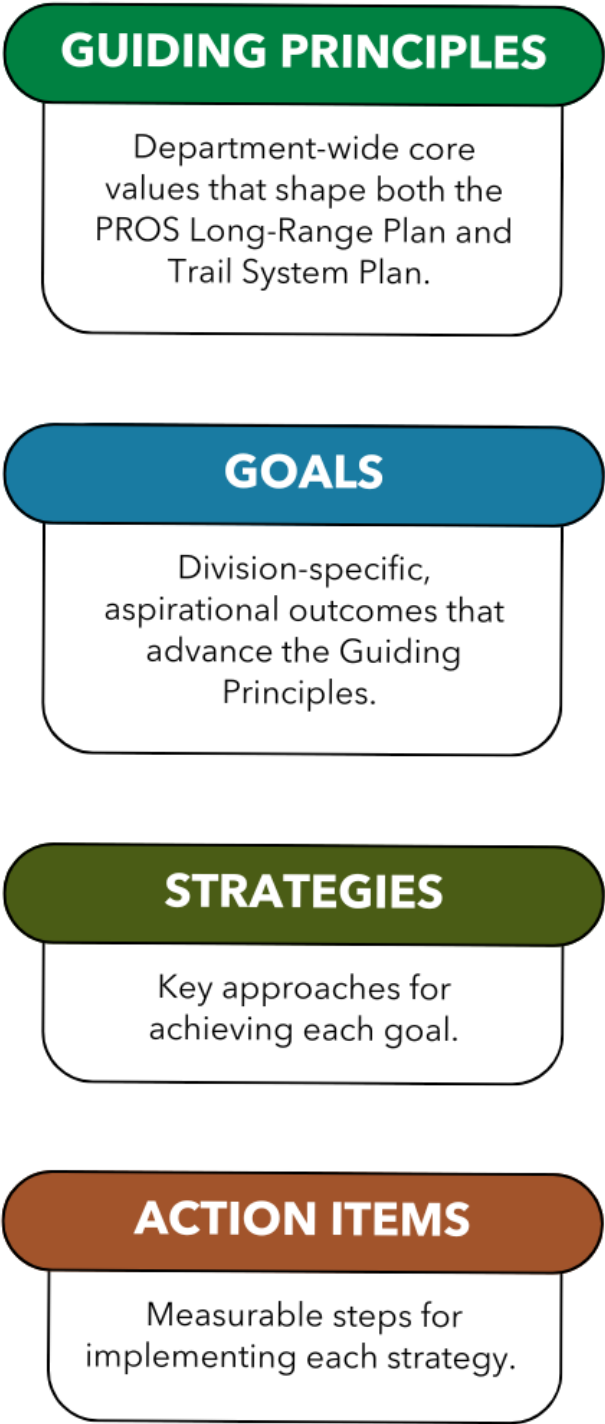
- A technical Needs Assessment Report
- Extensive community engagement
- PROS staff input
- Industry best practices



x Underpass (Credit: PROS Staff)

Plan Organization

The TSP applies four levels of organization to explain values, aspirations, and implementable steps toward realizing those aspirations. The levels are Guiding Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Action Items.



Community Engagement

Robust and inclusive community engagement was central to the TSP’s development. The City gathered input through statistically valid and open-link surveys, public open houses, pop-up events, focus groups, trails workshops, stakeholder interviews, advisory board meetings, and on-site conversations with trail users. More than 2,000 survey responses and hundreds of in-person interactions informed the TSP. Community members strongly supported trails overall. They also asked for better connectivity, safer crossings and underpasses, clearer wayfinding, protection of important habitats, better management of undesignated (social) trails, and more equitable access for users of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

The following themes emerged throughout the Community Engagement process:

- **Connectivity, access, and safety:** The public expressed a desire to construct missing trail links between neighborhoods, open spaces, downtown, schools, parks, and regional systems, to reduce reliance on roadways by improving off-street connections, and to address major barriers by installing safer crossings, upgraded underpasses, consistent trail design and surfacing, improved signage, and targeted fixes at potential crash hotspots.
- **Environmental stewardship and system sustainability:** The community prioritizes protecting riparian corridors and ecologically important habitats, managing, restoring, or formalizing undesignated (social) trails, prioritizing maintenance of existing trails on open space before expanding, and strengthening education, stewardship, and enforcement efforts. They further encouraged the PROS Department to implement a progressive, adaptive management approach that supports long-term ecological health, resilience, and functionality for future generations (see [Article 15 of the Louisville Home Rule Charter](#)).
- **Universal access and inclusion:** Residents expressed a desire to ensure trails are accessible to users of all ages and abilities and expand outreach and engagement with underrepresented communities such as non-English speaking residents or those typically unable to attend public meetings.

[More than 2,000 survey responses and hundreds of in-person interactions informed the TSP.]



Trail Pathway (Credit: PROS Staff)



Community Open House #1 (Credit: DTJ Design)

Goals and Strategies

The Plan Goals and Strategies are informed through the community input process. The goal statements are all equally important and shall be applied in the decision-making process. As such, the following goals are not in a priority order.

Improve trail connectivity.

- Prioritize maintenance, rehabilitation, and safety upgrades of existing trails.
- Expand and connect the trail network to improve local and regional connectivity.
- Collect and use trail data to inform planning and investment decisions.
- Promote trail use to support recreation, health, and alternative transportation.

Enhance safety for all users.

- Monitor trail conditions and use data to inform improvements.
- Reduce user conflicts and promote responsible trail use.
- Enhance crossings and navigation to support user confidence.
- Optimize physical conditions to improve visibility and the user experience.

Protect natural resources through data-informed management practices.

- Align trail planning, design, construction, and maintenance with applicable policies.
- Use data and science to minimize ecological impacts.
- Manage trail use to protect sensitive resources.

Formalize trail design standards, maintenance, operations and construction protocols.

- Apply guidelines for trail types, accessibility, maintenance, and supporting features.
- Apply adopted and recognized standards consistently across the trail system.
- Use sustainable and context-sensitive trail design best practices.

Manage undesignated trails through a consistent, transparent decision-making framework.

- Document existing undesignated social trails.
- Communicate social trail decisions to the public.

Strengthen trail system management, partnerships, and funding.

- Foster collaboration within PROS and across City departments.
- Promote external partnerships to support programs and services.
- Align staffing and funding resources to sustain service delivery.

Next Steps

The Trail System Plan (TSP) provides a clear and actionable roadmap for guiding the future of Louisville’s trail system over the next decade. The TSP reflects Louisville’s longstanding commitment to quality of life, environmental stewardship, equity, and fiscal responsibility. The Strategies and Action Items outlined in the TSP balance the importance of maintaining and enhancing existing assets with the need to respond to evolving community demographics, recreation trends, climate challenges, and operational realities. Overall, the TSP establishes a vision for a resilient, connected, and inclusive trail system.

The Implementation Plan serves as a living tool, to be reviewed and updated annually to track progress, adapt to changing conditions, and celebrate accomplishments. Ongoing community engagement, transparent reporting, and pursuit of diverse funding and partnership opportunities are essential to sustaining momentum. Implementation of the TSP will occur incrementally over the next ten years. Initial next steps include confirming short term Action Items, integrating Plan recommendations into annual work plans, the Capital Improvement Program, and budgeting processes, and continuing coordination with Advisory Boards, the Public Works Department, and partner agencies. By using this Plan as a practical decision making framework, the PROS Department can ensure thoughtful investments, measurable outcomes, and long-term stewardship of the trail system amenities that are central to the community’s identity.

[The TSP establishes a vision for a resilient, connected and inclusive trail system.]



Davison Mesa Wayfinding (Credit: PROS Staff)

01.

INTRODUCTION

Sunset Before the Storm (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

1.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Louisville has experienced significant change in recent years due to the impacts of the 2013 flood, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2021 Marshall Fire. These events highlighted the importance of resilient, inclusive, and well-maintained parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities. The 2026 Louisville Comprehensive Plan establishes long-term strategies that balance environmental protection with future growth.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Department Guidebook includes two coordinated plans: the PROS Long-Range Plan (LRP) and the Trail System Plan (TSP). Both plans respond to community preferences, demographic trends, current facility needs, and industry best practices to inform future decision-making. The TSP establishes a plan for trails and multi-modal pathways in Louisville that focuses on addressing safety, connectivity, and trail management. The TSP is guided by the PROS Guidebook Guiding Principles.

The LRP and TSP are strategic framework plans, meaning that they propose actionable recommendations for the future, but do not specify capital improvement project initiatives or cost estimates. That effort will be completed by the PROS staff following Plan approval. Together, these plans provide a unified framework to guide PROS investments and priorities over the next decade.

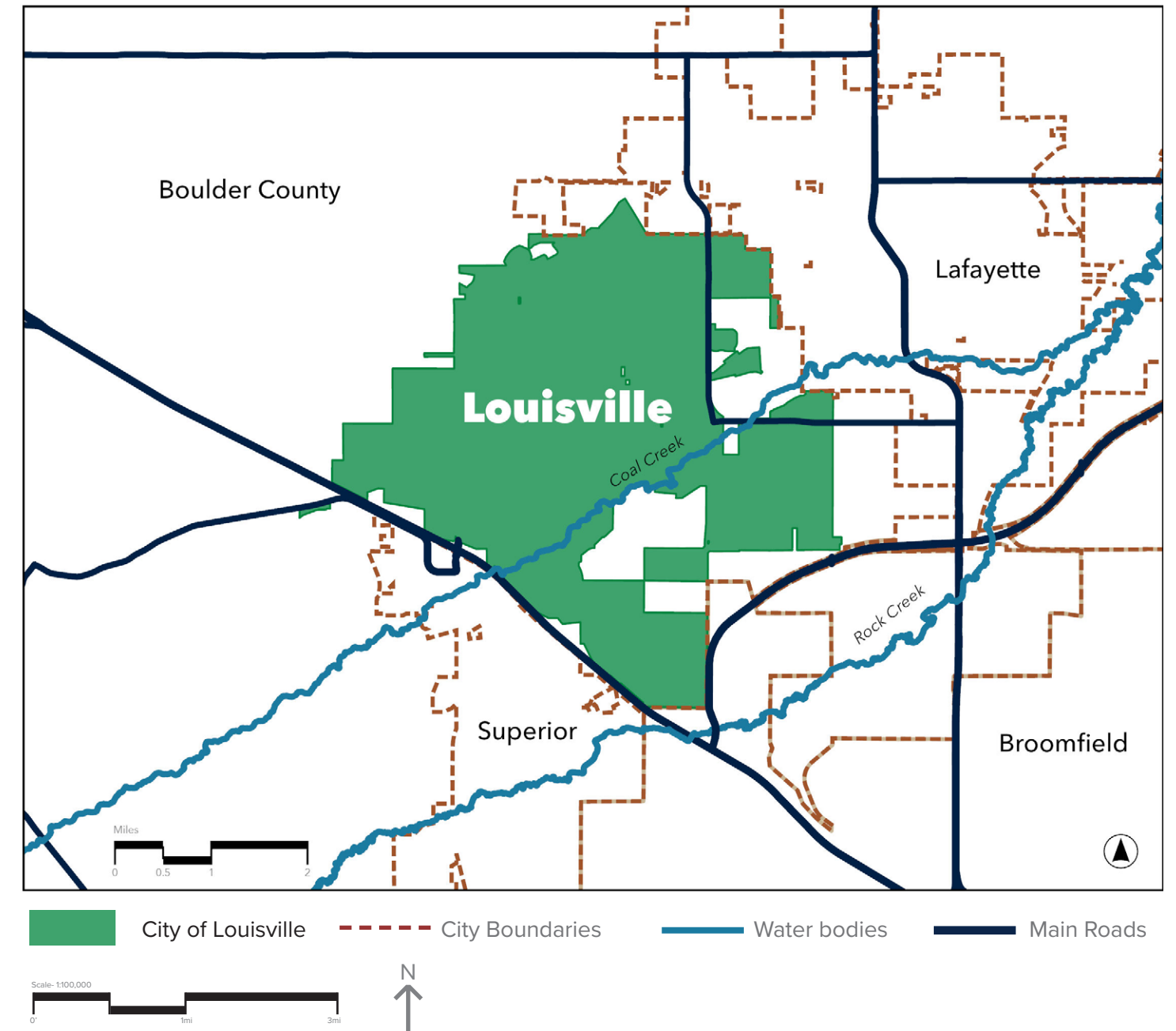


Figure 1. Louisville Vicinity Map

1.2. PLAN PURPOSE

The TSP establishes Goals, Strategies, and Action Items for Louisville's recreational trails and multimodal trail network, including trail standards, connectivity solutions, and Strategies to address safety and access gaps. The Plan supports a healthy and active community, balancing the protection of open lands and natural resources. The Plan is informed by community engagement, a technical Needs Assessment Report, and industry best practices.

The intent of the TSP is to achieve three equally important objectives:

- Provide critical connections and safe access for all to existing trails, various points of interest, neighborhoods, and other areas of Louisville.
- Limit impacts on natural resources, while focusing on sustainability.
- Address user conflicts & safety, and creates a variety of experiences for all users throughout all seasons.

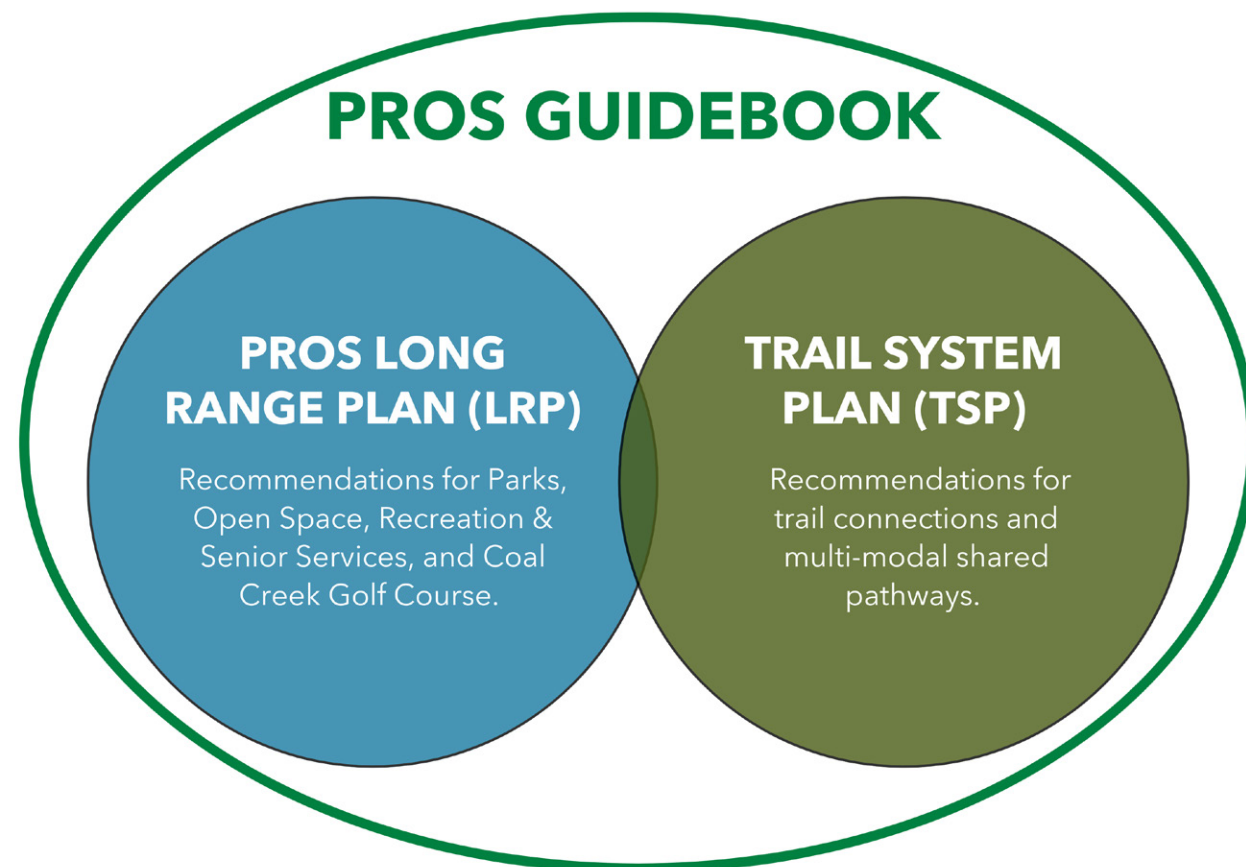


Figure 2. PROS Guidebook Diagram

This diagram is representative of the PROS Guidebook process that integrates both the LRP and TSP.

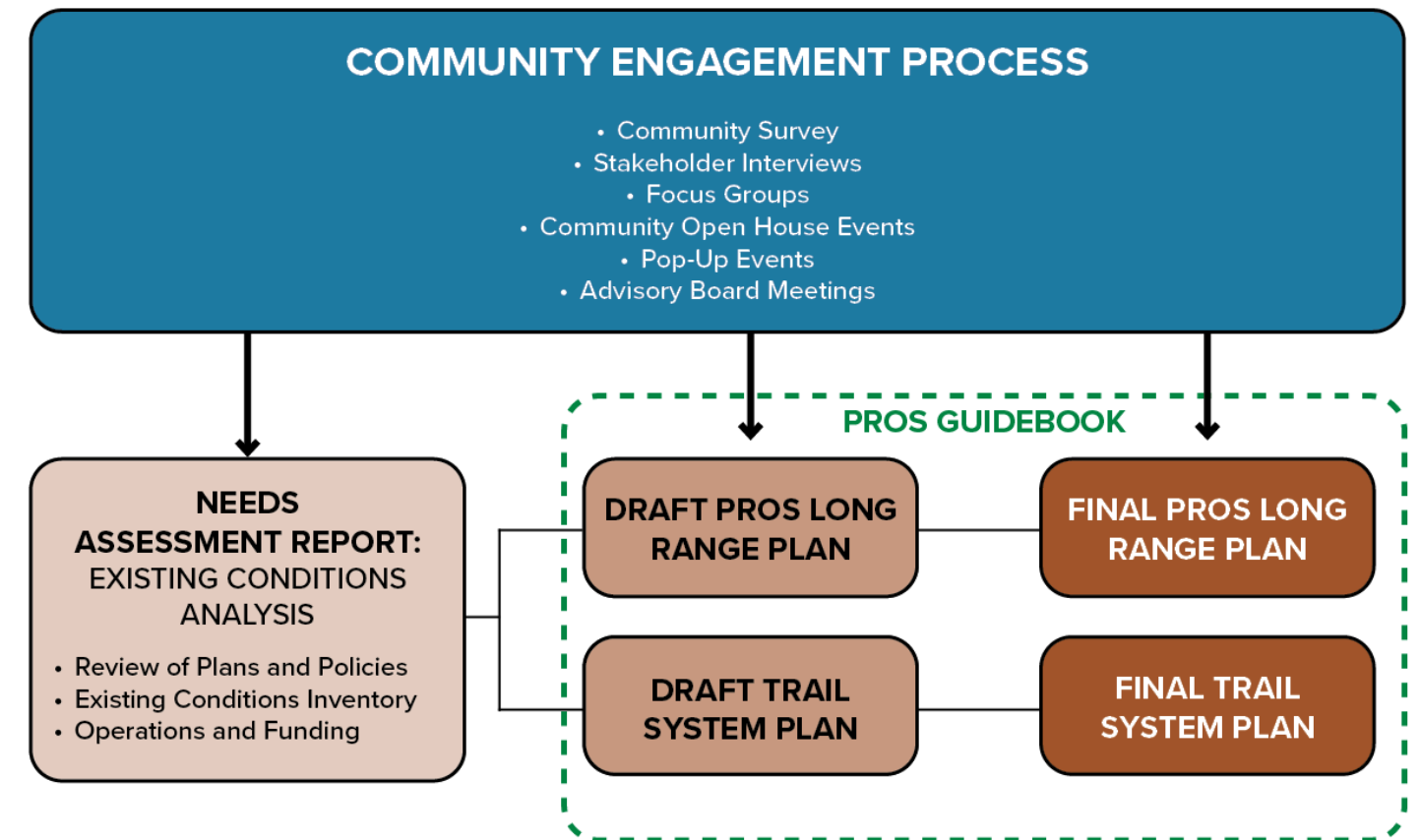


Figure 3. Plan Process Framework

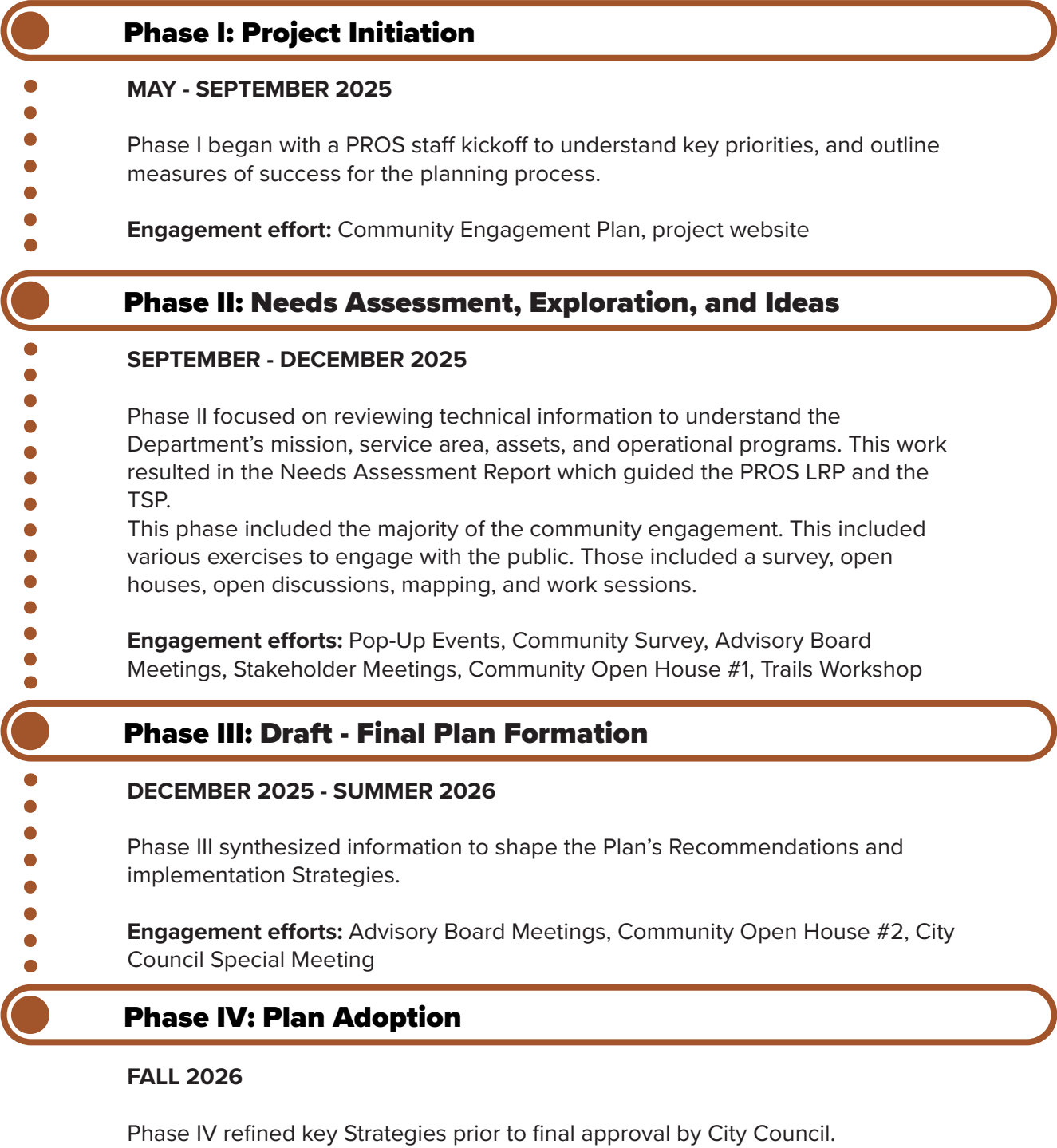
[The PROS Long-Range Plan and Trail System Plan work together as a unified framework; The LRP and TSP provide a framework and both plans inform each other.]

1.3. PROJECT TIMELINE

The TSP process coincided with the PROS LRP process and included shared community outreach events and special workshops, on-site engagement and Advisory Board events. The Project Timeline below illustrates the four Phases of development for the PROS Guidebook process.



Figure 4. Project Timeline



1.4. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The TSP applies four levels of organization to explain values, aspirations, and implementable steps toward realizing those aspirations. The levels are Guiding Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Action Items.

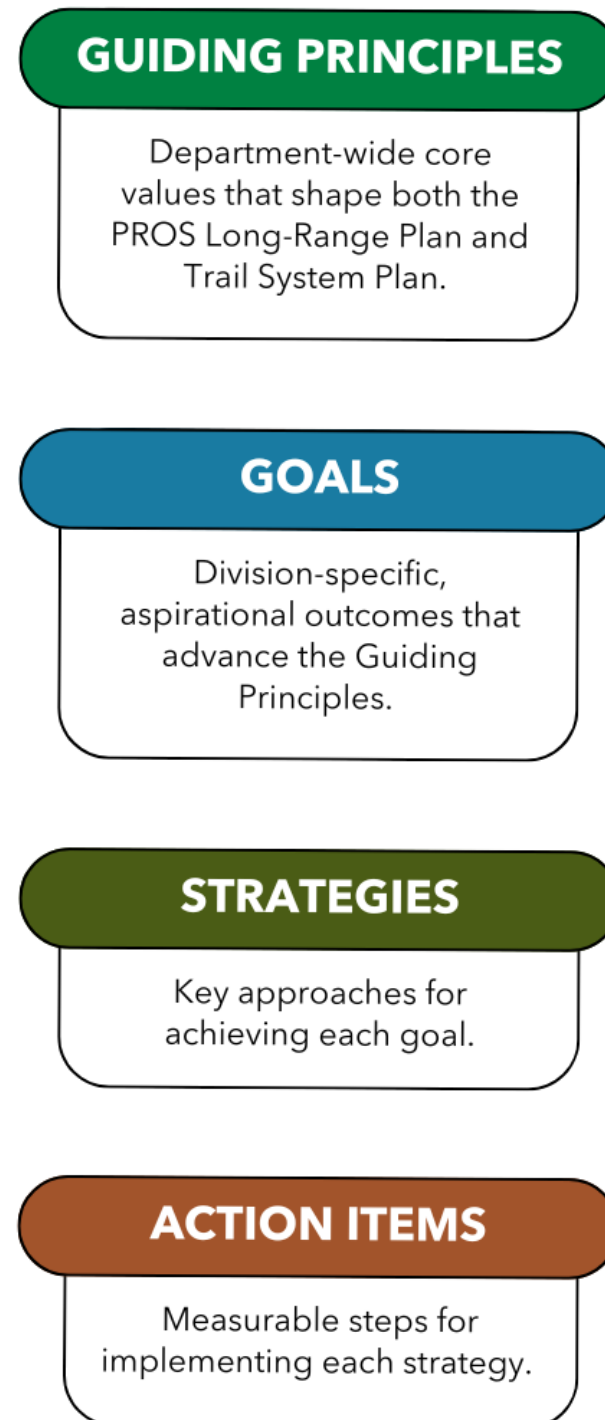
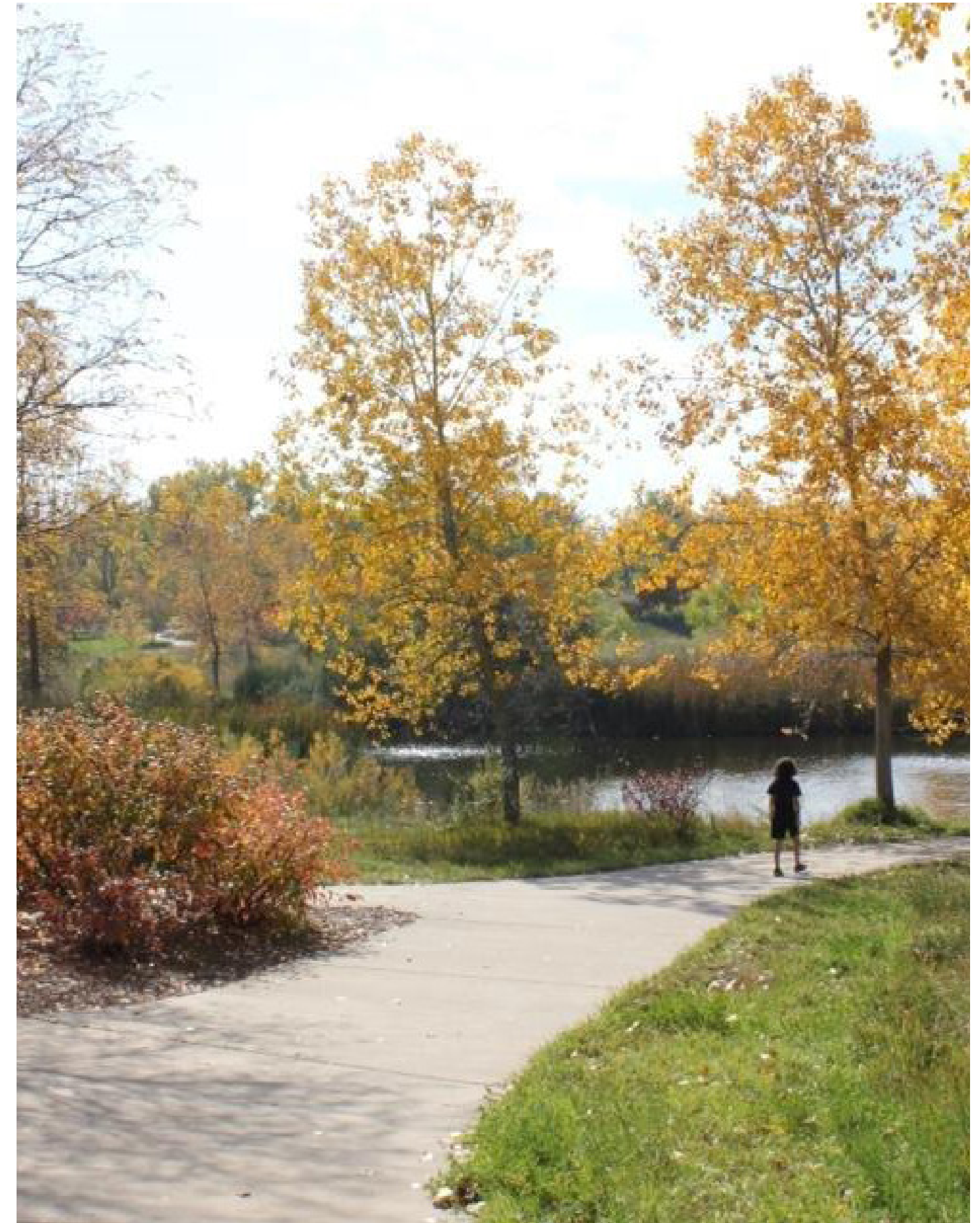


Figure 5. Plan Organization Diagram



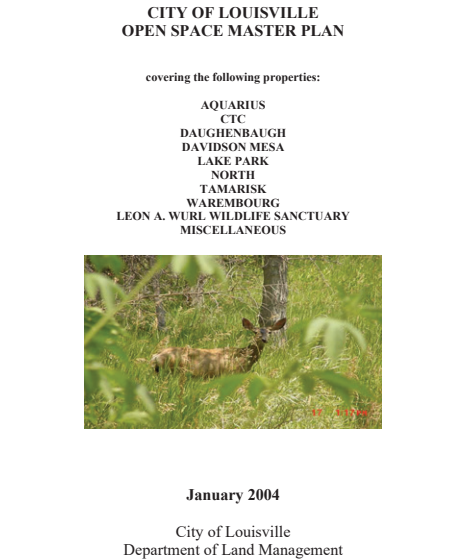
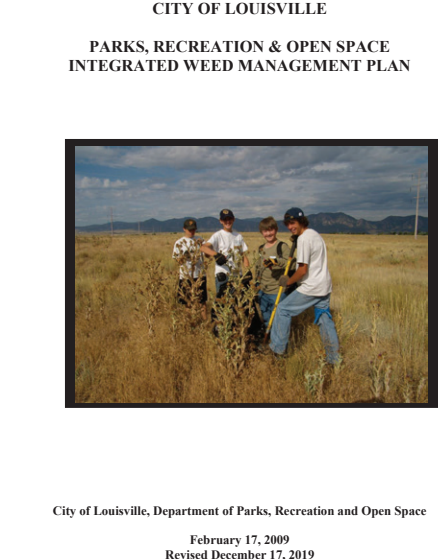
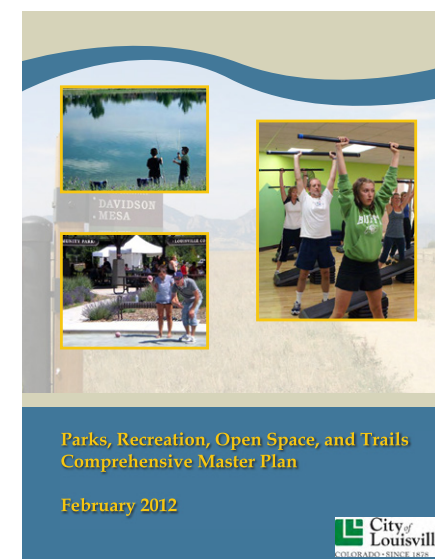
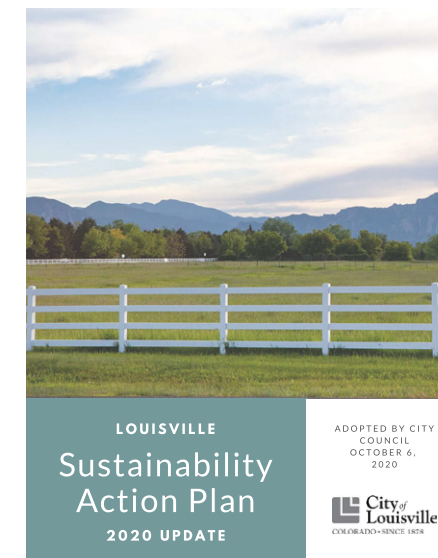
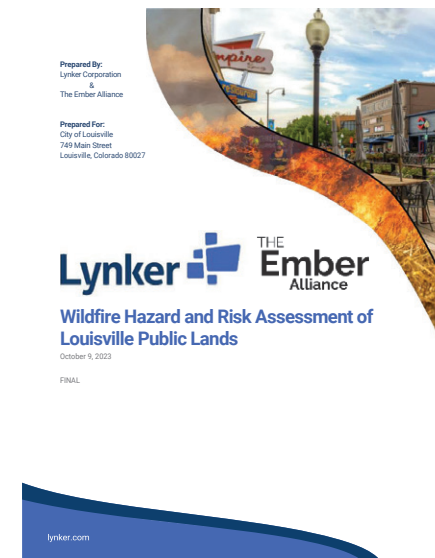
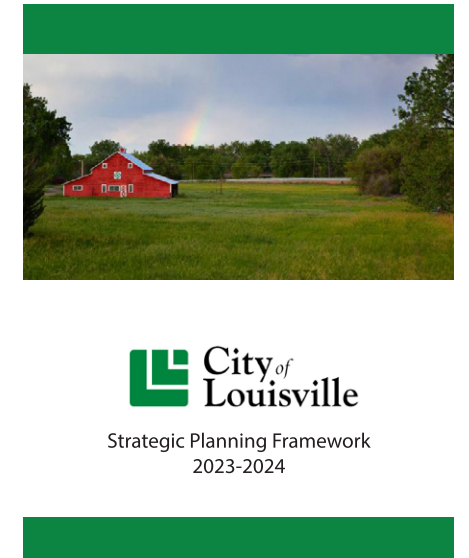
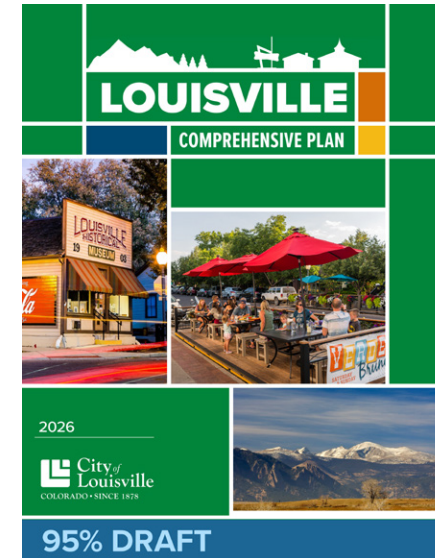
Lake Park Colors (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

1.5. PREVIOUS PLANS AND REPORTS

The TSP considers the objectives of the following existing plans.

- 2026 Louisville Comprehensive Plan
- 2026 Vegetation Survey
- 2025-26 City of Louisville Budget Book
- 2023-2024 Strategic Planning Framework
- 2023 Parks General Maintenance and Management Plan
- 2023 Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment of Louisville Public Lands
- 2020 Louisville Sustainability Action Plan
- 2020 PROS Integrated Weed Management Plan
- 2019 Transportation Master Plan
- 2012 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Master Plan
- 2004 City of Louisville Open Space Master Plan
- 2001 Louisville Home Rule Charter (City Charter)

To access the supporting plans, please visit Engage Louisville at <https://www.engagelouisvilleco.org/join-the-journey>



02.

**EXISTING
CONDITIONS**

2.1. TRAIL SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Louisville residents rely on an integrated trail network for both recreation and daily travel between homes, jobs, schools, and other destinations. Development and maintenance of Louisville’s trail system is implemented in partnership between the Open Space Division, Parks Division and Public Works Department.

The City contains primary and secondary trails, greenways, and street routes and pathways with designated bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Primary trails are the principal trail corridors in the network that provide continuous, high-quality connections between major destinations and serve as the backbone of the trail system. These are the named trails that users may be most familiar with. Secondary trails connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, open space and other destinations to primary trails and to one another. Street routes are pathways that are integrated with a roadways to provide network continuity where an off-street trail is not feasible or appropriate. This may include sidewalks and/or bike lanes. Street routes are maintained by the Public Works Department, while all other trail facilities are maintained by the PROS Department.

The City of Louisville [Transportation Master Plan](#) includes a thorough trail inventory, as of 2019. Louisville’s current Trail mileage is reflected in the table below.

Trail Network Mileage			
Trail Typology		Definition	Length (miles)
Primary	Multi-Modal Corridor	The principal trail corridors in the network that provide continuous, high-quality connections between major destinations and serve as the backbone of the trail system. Prioritizes direct, efficient travel with minimal delays, emphasizing continuous movement and transportation between destinations.	25.5 mi
	Greenway	Principal trail corridors providing opportunities to experience natural landscapes and park settings while supporting environmental stewardship and conservation.	
Secondary	Connector	Secondary trails connecting neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, open space and other destinations to primary trails and to one another.	18.0 mi
	Street Route	Integrated with a roadway or developed streetscape to provide network continuity where an off-street trail is not feasible or appropriate. Urban or suburban in nature with emphasis on facilitating everyday travel and providing access to residential and community destinations.	11.0 mi
Total			54.5 mi

Table 1. Louisville Trail Network Mileage by Facility Type

Louisville’s trail system includes 54.5 miles of on-and off-street facilities. The network connects local and regional destinations, parks, open spaces, and schools. Key infrastructure includes grade-separated crossings, primarily located along US 36 and 96th Street, enhancing safety and accessibility. For more information, refer to the Needs Assessment Report in Appendix B.

Observations

The following observations have evolved as part of the TSP process and are based on community and staff input.

- o Louisville’s trail system is heavily used for recreation, mobility, and access to nature.
- o Connectivity gaps exist throughout the City.
- o Louisville lacks continuous connections to downtown, open spaces, and parks.
- o Physical barriers limit use for children, older adults, and less confident riders (South Boulder Road and BNSF railroad corridor).
- o On-street crash data from 2019-2023 indicates areas where trail improvement opportunities exist. Notable locations include McCaslin Boulevard, West Cherry Street, and 96th Street.
- o Current trail design and management standards are not consistent between the Public Works and PROS Departments. The City needs a comprehensive trail design standards source for all trail types and management practices.
- o Multimodal projects compete for limited general fund resources. Additionally, funding for multi-modal projects is divided between the Public Works and PROS Departments.
- o Undesignated (social) trails may fragment ecologically important habitat areas.
- o Continued public information and awareness campaigns on trail use etiquette (such as travel speeds, creation of undesignated trails, and respect between user groups) are needed.
- o City-wide strategies for enforcement of e-bike use on multi-modal pathways and recreation trails should be prioritized.

Primary Trails

-  Powerline Trail
-  Old Town Link
-  Farmers Trail
-  Lake to Lake Trail
-  Mining Trail
-  Goodhue Ditch Trail
-  Coal Creek Trail
-  US 36 Bikeway

-  Hard Surface
-  Soft Surface
-  On-Street Routes
-  Future Routes

Secondary Trails

-  Undesignated (Social) Trails
-  Connectors
-  Street Routes

-  City Boundary
-  Recreation & Senior Center
-  City Hall

Scale: 1" = 2000'-0"

0' 1000' 2000' 4000'

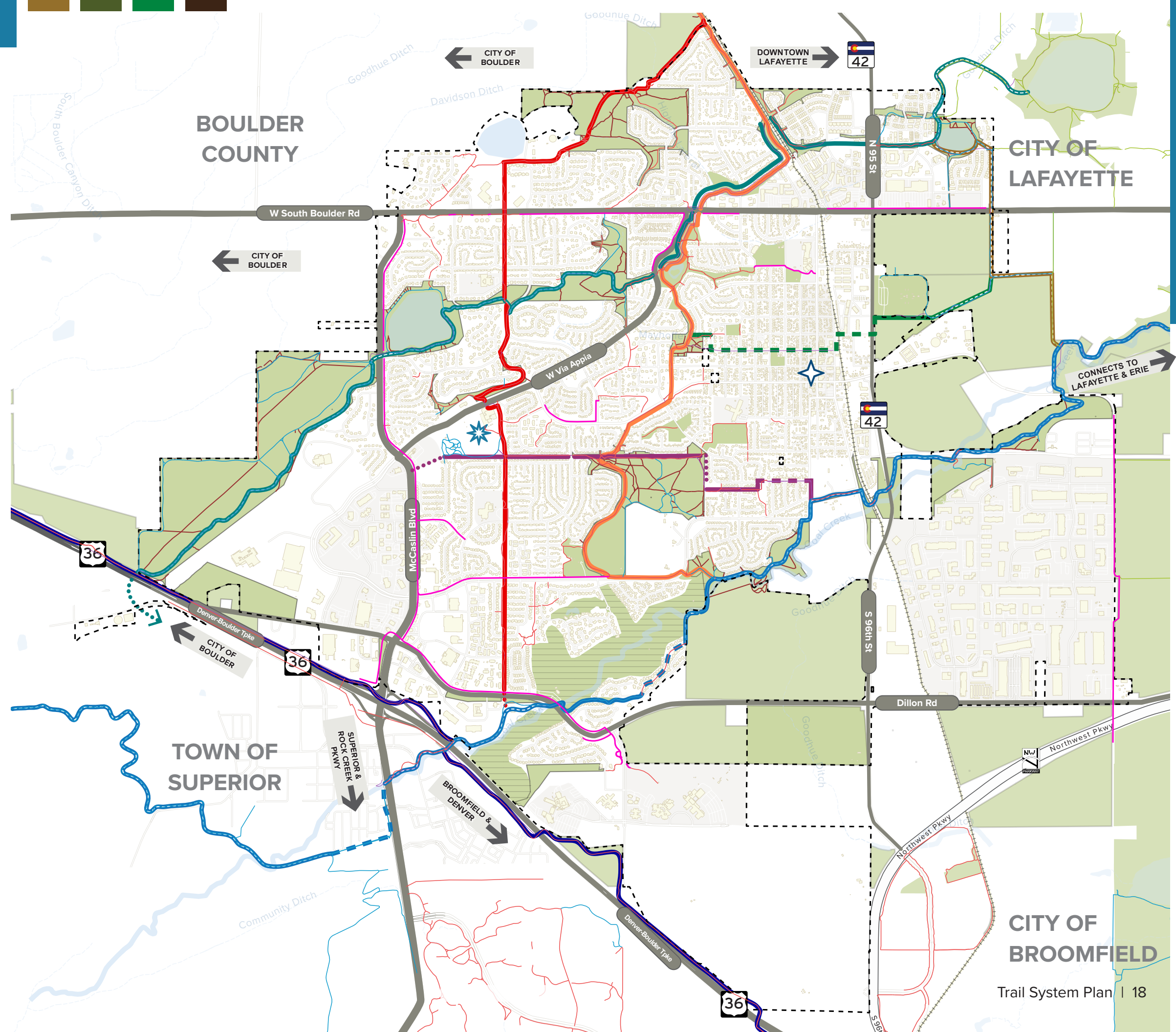


Figure 6. Existing Shared-Use Pathways and Trails
(Sources: City of Louisville, Boulder County, ESRI)

2.2. RELATIONSHIP WITH OPEN SPACE

Under Article 15 of the [City of Louisville Home Rule Charter](#), public trails and access are permitted on open space lands only when consistent with each property's classification and management intent. The City municipal code also specifies OSAB as the overseer of the Trails System Plan (Section 4.02.030.B.d). The City classifies open space parcels according to ecological sensitivity, habitat value, and the appropriate level of human use. These classifications directly determine where trails may be located and how they must be managed. Louisville's open space system is managed to preserve cultural resources, agriculture, scenic vistas, and appropriate passive recreation activities, as well as to protect native plants and wildlife habitats, with the aim of practicing good stewardship and sound ecological principles.

Community concerns often arise where undesignated trails are present in ecologically important areas. These trails can fragment habitat, disrupt wildlife movement, and conflict with the City's open space management standards. As a result, perceived conflicts typically stem from unmanaged access in areas intended for conservation. The TSP seeks to address these conflicts by clarifying where trail access is and is not appropriate based on open space classification. This will allow the PROS Department to evaluate which undesignated trails to formalize and which to restore as native vegetation. For more information on Undesignated Trails, refer to Section 2.3, Undesignated (Social) Trails



Trail through open space (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)



Trail Bridge Crossing (Credit: PROS Staff)

Open Space Classifications

Article 15 of the City of Louisville Home Rule Charter classifies open space land by its ecological, recreational, and scenic value. Open space classifications reflect relative ecological importance and levels of habitat fragmentation. These classifications are used to manage wildfire mitigation, habitat protection, and balance conservation with appropriate levels of passive recreational use. They also guide the ongoing research and monitoring necessary to steward Louisville's open space system over time.

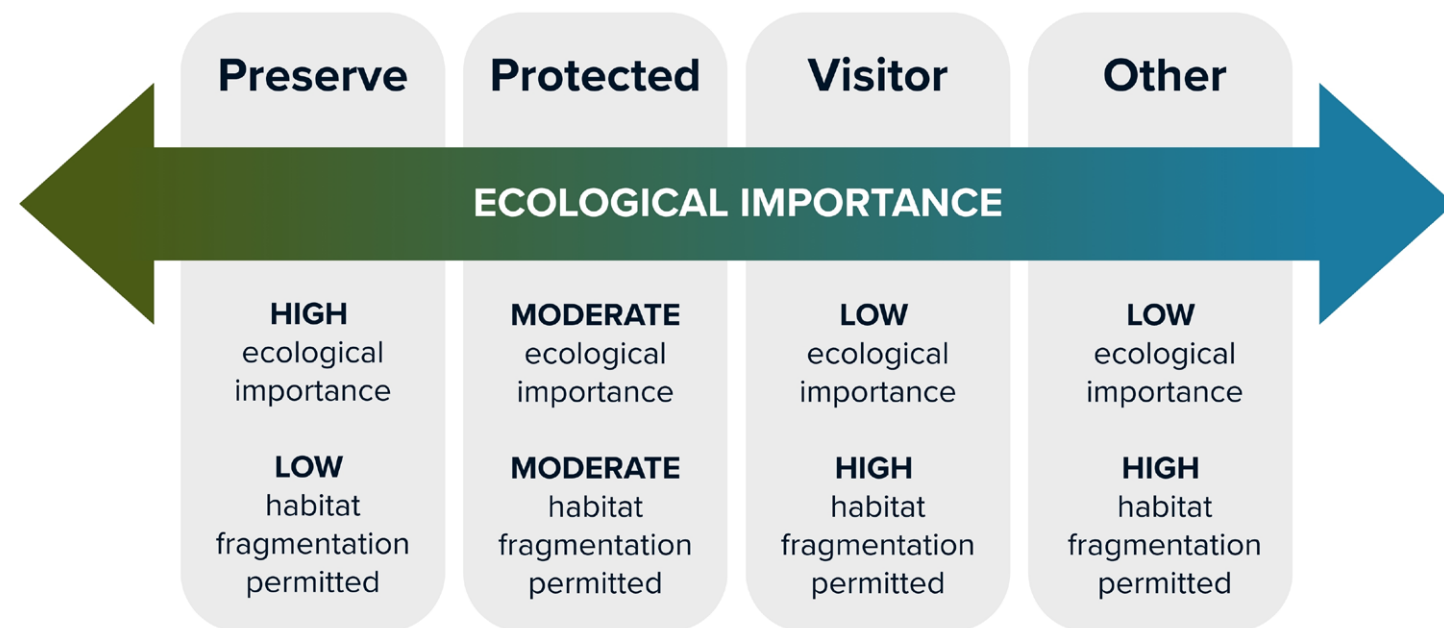


Figure 7. Open Space Classifications Diagram

Louisville's open space properties contain areas with one or several of the following classifications:

- **Preserve:** open space of moderate to high ecological importance that is managed to protect and restore native species and habitats. It allows only minimal supervised visitation, and prioritizes ecological needs over human uses.
 - o Management: Preserve and promote the long-term viability of native flora and fauna, restoration potential and ecologically sound agricultural use.
 - o Recreational Use: No or very low levels of passive recreational visitation. Visitation is for research purposes and formal supervised educational purposes.
- **Protected Land:** Ecologically important open space that is managed to safeguard native species and ecosystems while allowing carefully controlled passive recreation and moderate visitation. Ecological needs take precedence over human use when conflicts arise.
 - o Management: Managed in the same manner as Preserve Open Space, except passive recreational uses are permitted.
 - o Recreational Use: Visitation levels shall be moderate to moderately high. Recreational impacts must be contained to prevent spillover to Open Space-Preserve Land, and uses encourage resource protection, long-term ecological viability of native flora and fauna, restoration, ecologically sensitive agricultural use, research and education.
- **Visitor Land:** Open space of lower ecological importance that supports moderate to high recreational use, managed to provide visitor opportunities while protecting natural resources.
 - o Management: Managed so that recreational opportunities are compatible with resource protection with minimal landscaping using native plants and limited irrigation.
 - o Recreational Use: Moderate to high levels of visitation may be permitted.
- **Other Lands:** Open space managed for high visitation and passive recreation that accommodates entry features, trail rests, and native buffer plantings while minimizing their environmental impact.
 - o Management: Include entryway features and trail rests, planting of trees and other buffer plantings. Reasonable effort is made to minimize the impact of entryway features and trail rests and to use native trees and plants.
 - o Recreational Use: High levels of visitation consistent with existing patterns shall be permitted. Recreational uses are compatible with resource protection with minimal landscaping using native plants and limited irrigation.

Open Space Classifications

Symbol	Category	Acres	Percent
	Preserve	36	6.00%
	Protected Land	185.5	30.00%
	Visitor Land	278.5	45.00%
	Other Lands	117.6	19.00%

Total 617.6*

**Acreage mapped at time of publication.*

-  City Boundary
-  Recreation and Senior Center
-  City Hall

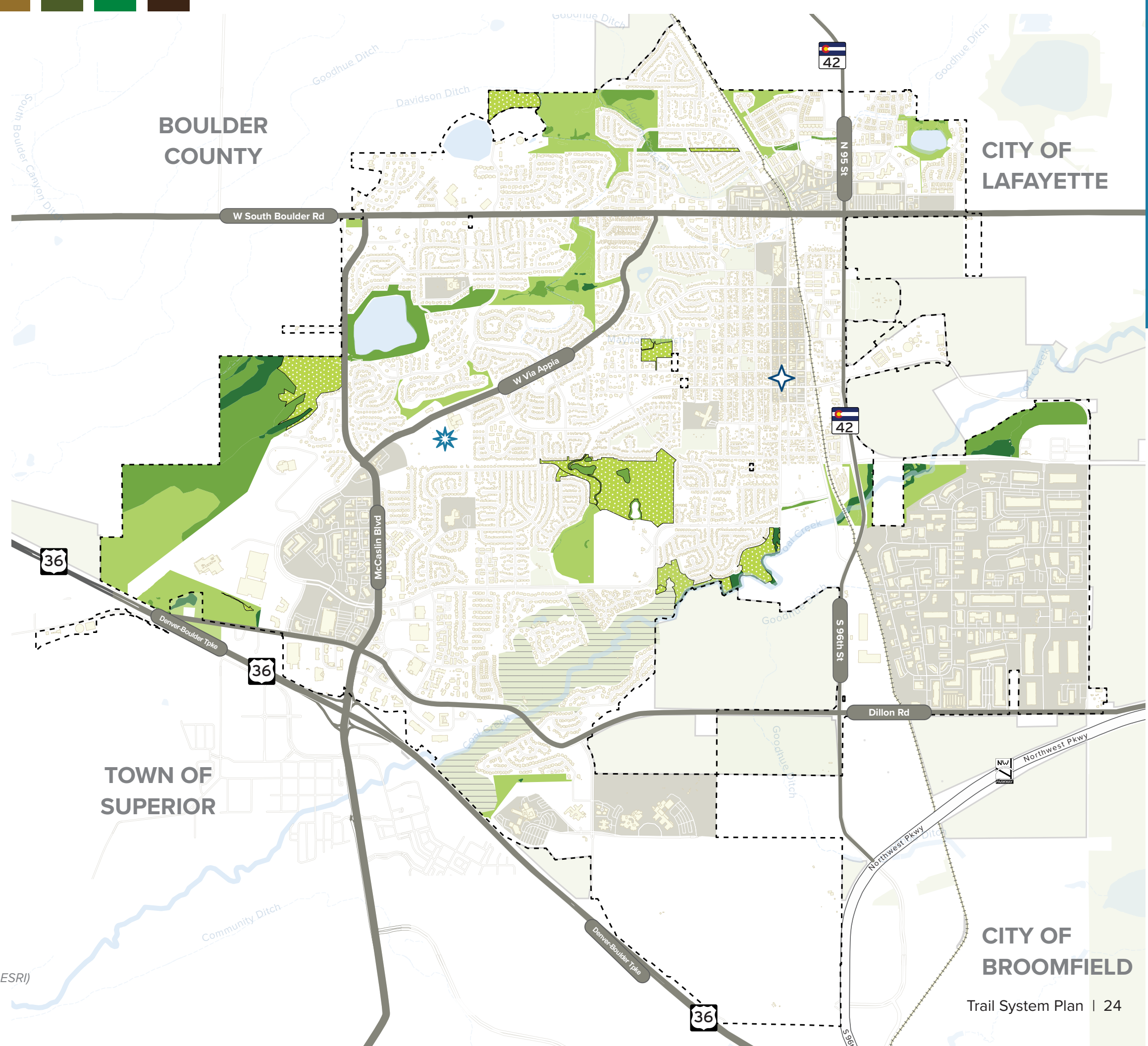


Figure 8. 2026 Open Space Classifications Map
(Sources: 2026 Vegetation Survey, City of Louisville, Boulder County, ESRI)

2.3. UNDESIGNATED (SOCIAL) TRAILS

According to the National Park Service, an undesignated (social) trail is an unofficial, user-created path that forms over time, as visitors take detours off of designated trails. With enough foot traffic, these paths get worn down and can look like an official trail. In Louisville, these user-created paths form as visitors take detours through neighborhoods and off of designated trails. In 2025, the PROS Department conducted an inventory of undesignated trails in Louisville to determine their locations and potential ecological impact. According to GIS data, there are currently about 11 miles of undesignated (social) trails through Louisville’s parks and open spaces.

Undesignated Trail Evaluation

Undesignated trail management should be guided by a consistent, context-sensitive evaluation process. Because the appropriate management response varies by location, potential management actions of undesignated trails should be evaluated based on the context and circumstances of each trail segment, as indicated by the **decision-making flowchart** on the next page. Considerations include property type, land classification (for Open Space properties), trail viability, and potential resource impacts.

For Open Space properties, the land classifications defined in Article 15 of the City of Louisville Home Rule Charter establish the foundational decision points for evaluating undesignated trails. Only where a designated trail is consistent with the applicable land classification should additional factors—such as trail viability and resource impacts—be considered to determine whether a sustainable trail alignment can be supported. This structured approach promotes consistent and transparent decision-making while recognizing that site-specific conditions remain an important consideration.

The accompanying **criteria** provides a quantitative method for prioritizing implementation once a management action has been identified—either formalizing the trail into the designated network or closing the trail and restoring the area. By scoring a common set of criteria, the matrix helps compare projects across the trail system and directs available resources toward the highest-priority management needs. For example, undesignated trails presenting significant safety concerns or substantial resource impacts may receive a higher priority for closure and restoration than trails with fewer adverse effects.

The resulting priority ranking should inform, but not dictate, implementation timing. Completion of management actions will remain dependent on available funding, staffing, partnership opportunities, and other operational considerations. Implementation schedules should continue to be established and adjusted by staff as part of ongoing work planning.

Evaluation Criteria

Undesignated (social) trails located in the Open Space “Preserve” land classification will be removed and revegetated in alignment with Article 15 of the City of Louisville Home Rule Charter. Additionally, social trails interfering with Open Space & Parks operations will be removed and revegetated. Social trails meeting one of the three categories below, will remain in place. Social trails that do not meet the Open Space Preserve Land Classification, do not interfere with operational needs, and do not meet one of the three criteria, shall be evaluated utilizing this matrix for future management guidance.

1. The trail alignment is identified for future construction in an adopted Transportation Master Plan, Open Space Master Plan or the TSP.
2. The City Council has approved the alignment through a Capital Improvement Project or other adopted planning document.
3. Staff has identified the corridor for future trail connection consideration requiring additional public input.



Undesignated (social) trail through open space (Credit: PROS Staff)

Decision Making for Undesignated Trails

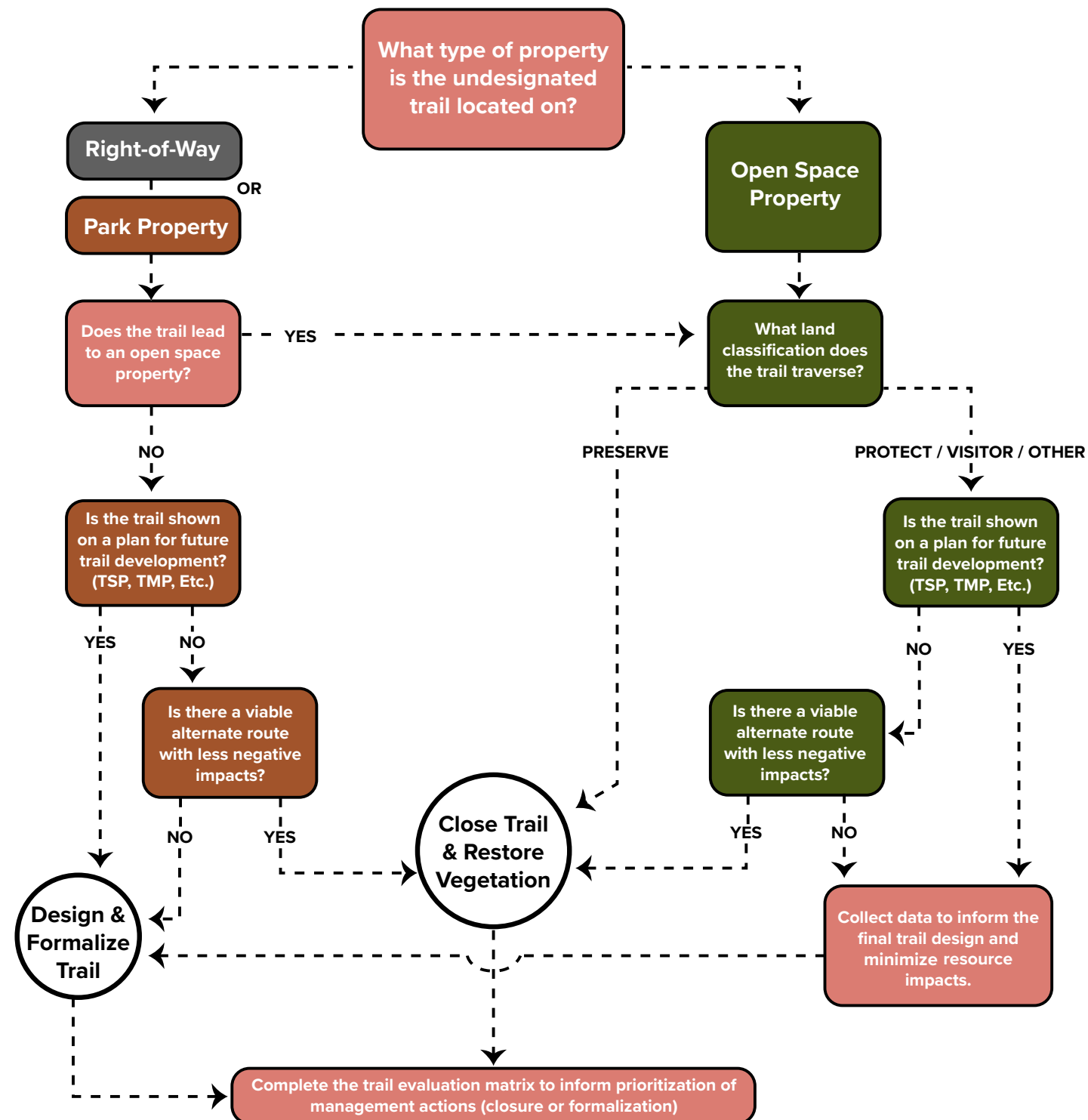


Figure 9. Undesignated (Social) Trail Decision-Making Flowchart

FACTORS	SCORE (Select one score per row):	1	2	3
TRAIL LOCATION (score only 1 of the next 2 lines): If on Open Space, score based on Land Classification If on Park/ROW, score based on land sensitivity				
If on Open Space, score based on Land Classification		Other	Visitor	Protect
If on Park/ROW, score based on land sensitivity				
SAFETY		Low hazard (Ex. low user conflict)	Moderate hazard (Ex. Erosion and sediment loading onto designated trail; creates pedestrian: pedestrian conflict)	High hazard (Ex. Directs users through, or to, hazardous areas such as road edge, blind corner, unstable terrain; pedestrian: vehicular conflict)
WILDLIFE HABITAT QUALITY		Low potential for habitat destruction	Moderate potential for habitat disturbance (Ex: 100 ft. from riparian areas)	High potential for habitat disturbance (Ex: 50 ft. from riparian areas, critical wildlife habitat; frequently used sensitive raptor nests; prairie dog colony; contributes to expansion of prairie dogs colonies.)
TRAIL SATURATION		No duplication of designated or social trails; high use	Duplicates 1 designated or social trail; social trail short cuts within 100 ft. of a designated trail; moderate use	Duplicates 2+ designated or social trails; provides access to an unapproved destination; low use
EROSION		Minor levels of erosion (Ex. Minor trail tread wear)	Moderate levels of erosion (Ex. active soil erosion, mud deposit; trail widening, trenching, braiding)	High Levels of erosion (Ex. impacts to waterways or root exposure)
INVASIVE WEEDS		Low-level weed cover ; low potential for weed seed spread	Moderate-level weed cover; moderate potential for weed seed spread	High-level noxious weed cover, highly invasive species; high potential for weed seed spread
TOTAL SCORE:				

Table 2. Sample Undesignated (Social) Trail Evaluation Matrix

Undesignated (Social) Trails

Key Map

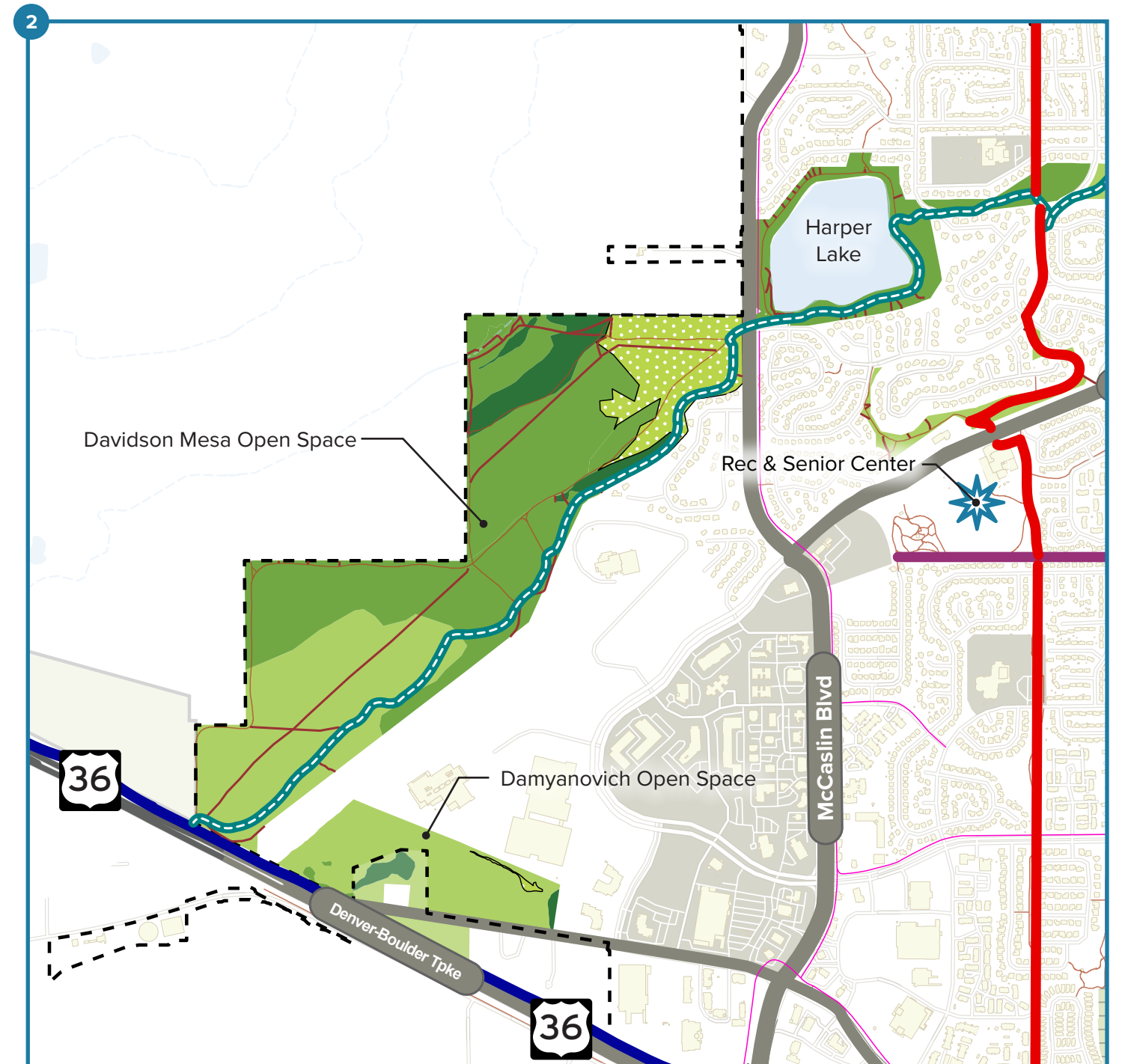
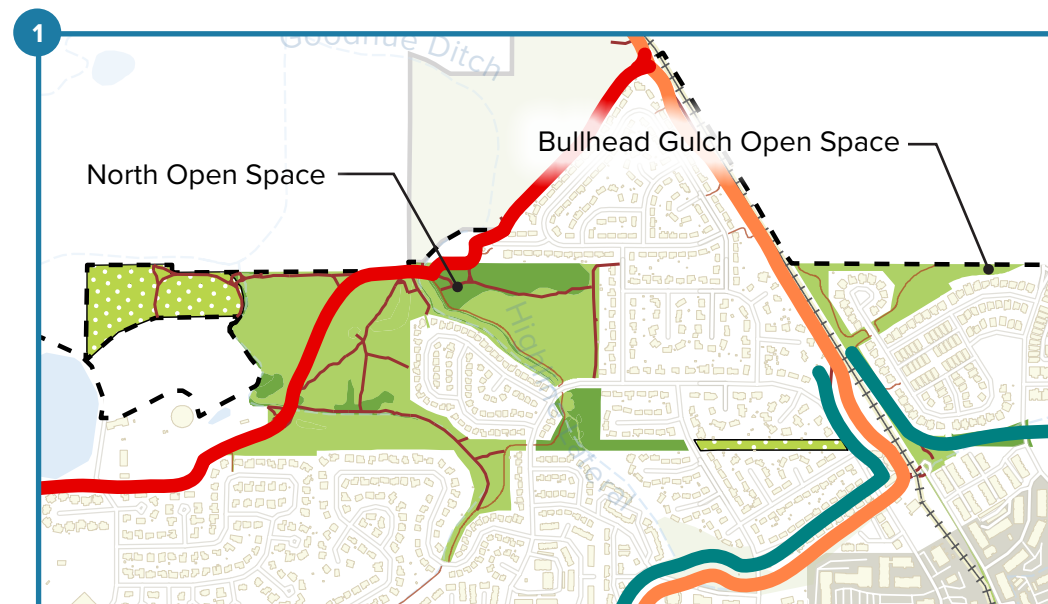
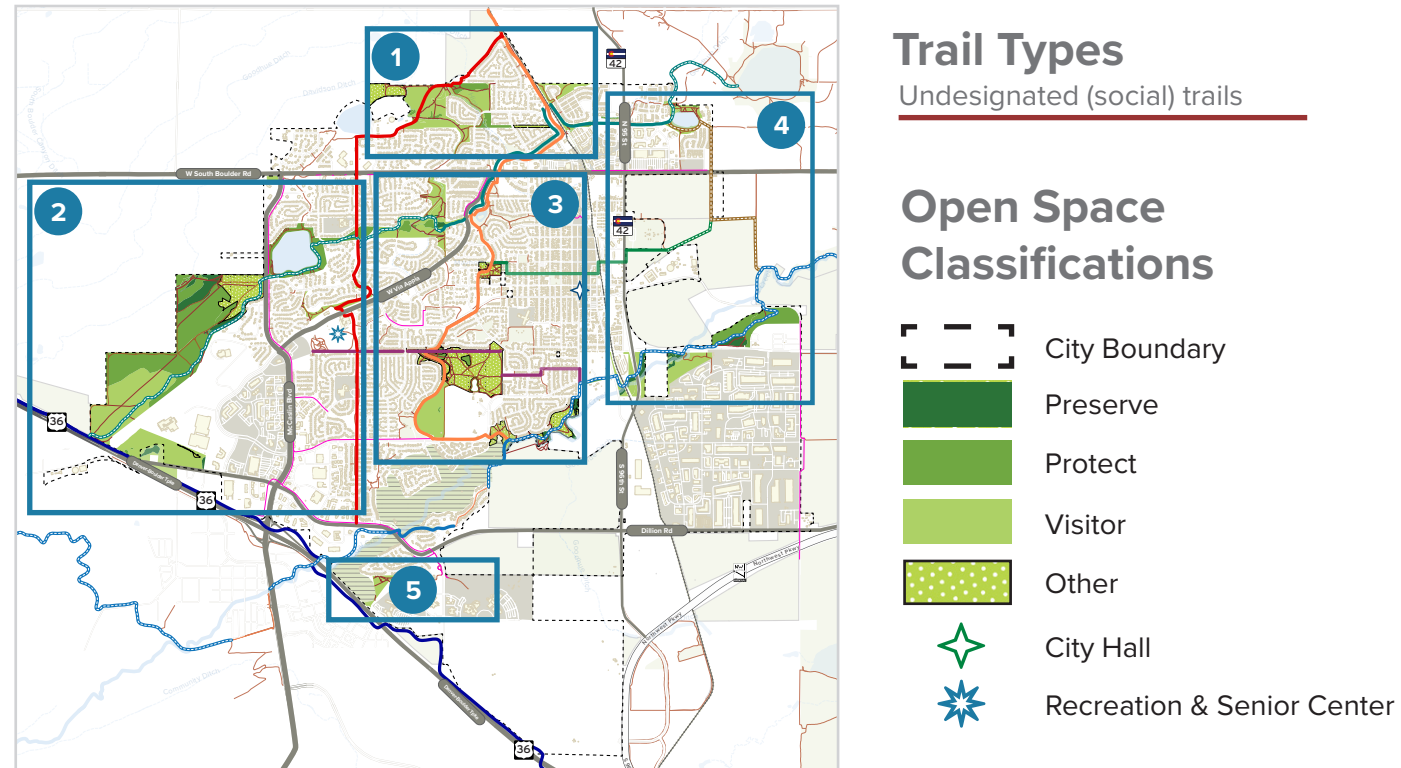
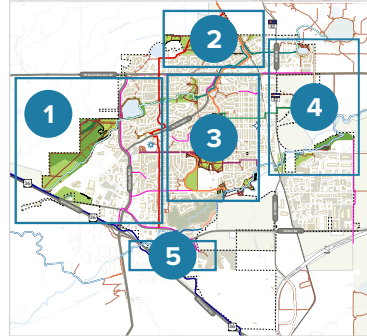


Figure 10. Existing Undesignated Trails
(Sources: Open Space staff field observation/mapping, City of Louisville, Boulder County, ESRI)

Undesignated (Social) Trails

Key Map

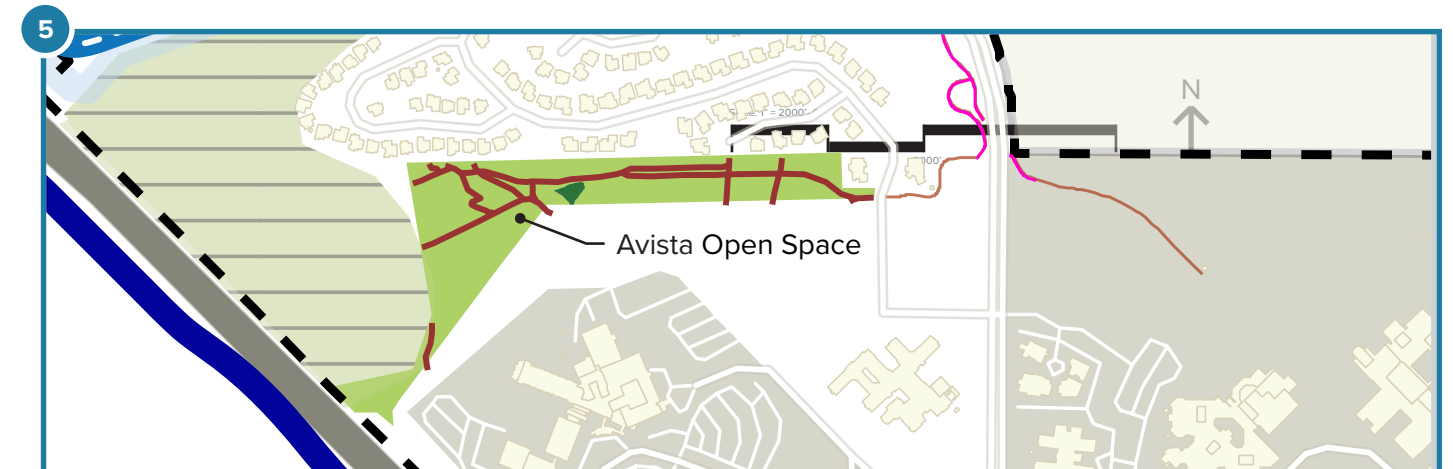
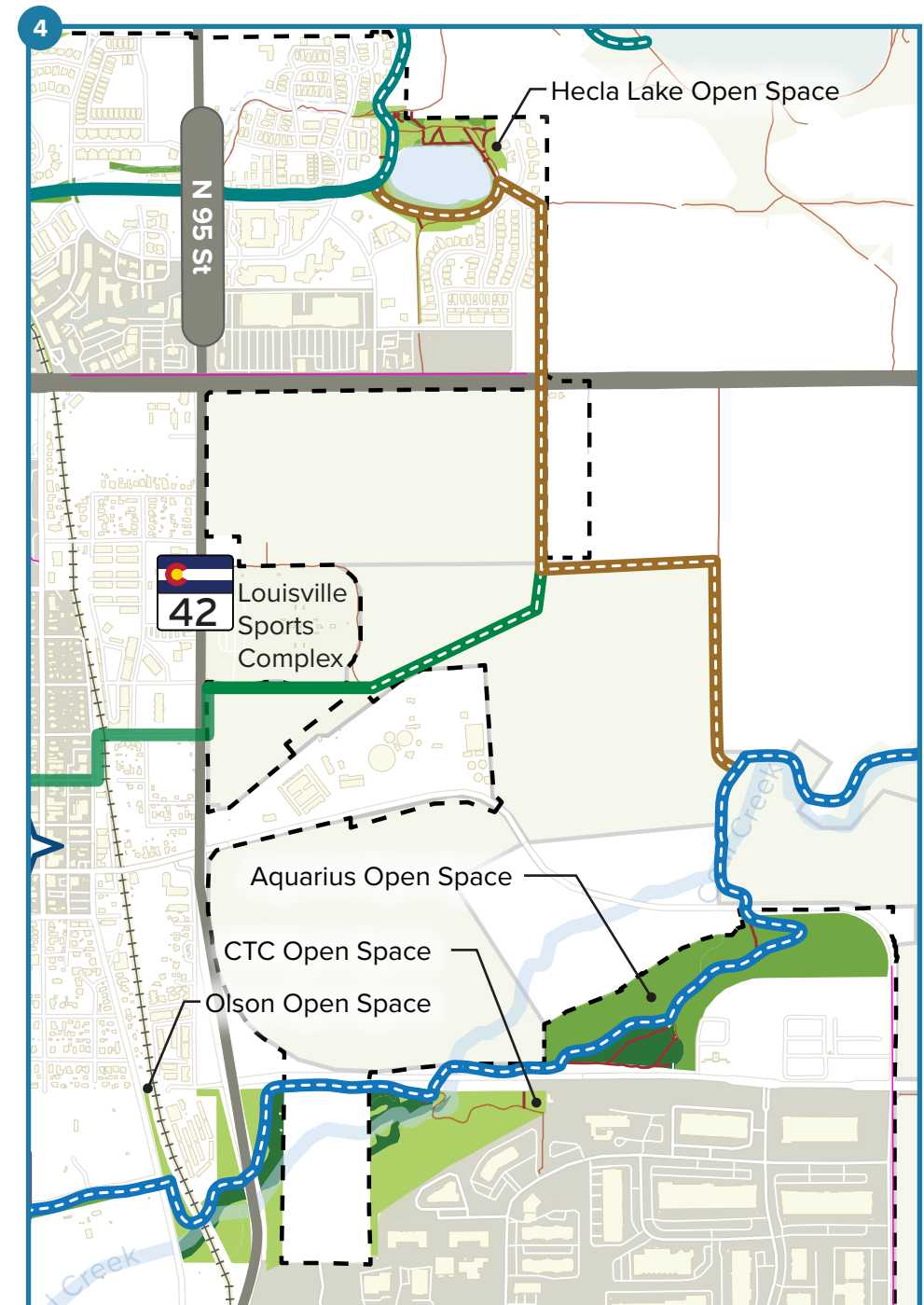
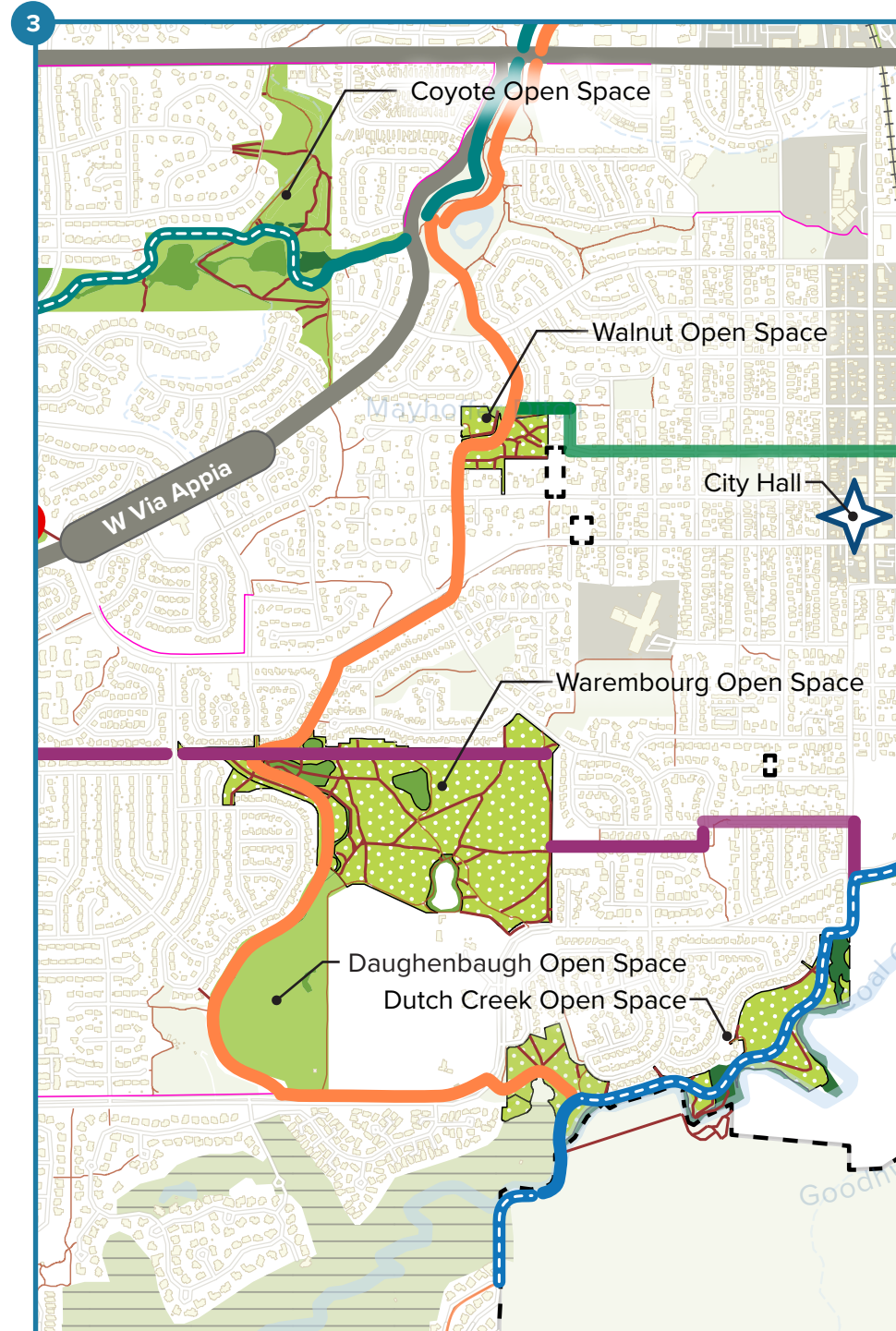


Trail Types

Undesignated (social) trails

Open Space Classifications

-  City Boundary
-  Preserve
-  Protect
-  Visitor
-  Other
-  Recreation & Senior Center



2.4. COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

Community engagement is a critical step that shaped the TSP. The 12-month engagement process included numerous opportunities for community members to provide insights and helped in the creation of a cohesive plan that represents the community's values. The engagement process addressed topics for the entire PROS Guidebook, including those regarding the trail system. For more information see the Community Engagement Summary in Appendix B.

The following highlights are for the overall PROS Guidebook engagement process:

-  31,500 webpage views
-  766 statistically valid survey responses
(+/- 3.5% Margin of Error)
-  1,407 open-link survey responses
-  2 Community Open House Events
182 Open House #1 attendees (10/29/25)
80 Open House #2 attendees (3/12/26)
-  7 Pop-Up Events
-  18 stakeholders interviewed
(multiple topics)
-  25 Open Space and Trails Workshop participants
(11/14/25)
-  10 Advisory Board Meetings
-  2 City Council Updates

Community Survey

The purpose of the community survey was to gather community feedback on the City of Louisville Parks, Open Space, Recreation & Senior center, Coal Creek Golf Course, trails, future planning, communication, and more. This survey tool was designed to learn from community members on preferences, needs and current trends. For more information, see the Community Survey Report in Appendix B.



7,770 Postcards Mailed
7,601 Delivered

STATISTICALLY VALID (INVITE) SURVEY

- 1** Postcards were mailed to every residential address within the City of Louisville, with instructions to complete online through password protected website (1 response per household). Paper surveys and postage-paid return envelopes were also available upon request, and the survey was translated into Spanish.

 **766** Invitation surveys completed
+/- 3.5% Margin of Error

OPEN LINK SURVEY

- 2** Later, the online survey was made available to all City of Louisville stakeholders, including non-residents (e.g., commuters, residents of nearby communities)

 **1,407** Open Link surveys completed

Trails Workshop

On November 14, 2025 a joint Trails Workshop was conducted. Approximately 25 workshop participants helped to identify key gaps and safety concerns in the current trail system. The workshop was designed to encourage positive discourse among participants to define a strategy for balancing environmental protection and recreational trail use.

Big Ideas

- Connectivity and Wayfinding
 - o Create safe, clear connections between neighborhoods, downtown, and regional trails.
 - o Address barriers like railroad crossings, South Boulder Road, and steep grades.
 - o Improve wayfinding with maps, signage, and consistent trail standards to help users navigate easily.
- Trail Standards
 - o The TSP now provides clear direction on a process for evaluating and prioritizing Undesignated Trails
 - o Balance trail development with sustainability and habitat protection measures.
 - o Include enforcement and education to support compliance and stewardship.
- Habitat and Ecosystem Protection
 - o Prioritize ecologically important habitats in planning.
 - o Implement buffers and restoration Strategies to minimize fragmentation.
 - o While recreational trails are present outside of open spaces, it is particularly challenging to balance recreational access with ecological protection on open space properties. Balance recreation with conservation through science-based land assessments and monitoring.

What We Heard

The following takeaways are based on the community engagement process, including pop-up events, stakeholder meetings, the first community open house, advisory board meetings, the open space and trails workshop, and the community survey. The takeaways are not in any order of priority.

CHALLENGES

- ✕ Missing key connections to regional trail network
- ✕ Safety concerns - Crossings, Underpass flooding, lighting, and visibility
- ✕ E-bike safety, etiquette, and enforcement
- ✕ Natural resource impacts from undesignated (social) trails
- ✕ Lack of consistent trail standards

OPPORTUNITIES

- ✓ Fill gaps between local and regional trail systems
- ✓ Prioritize protected crossings and signage/stripping in key locations
- ✓ Impliment signage, education, and stricter enforcement of e-bike regulations
- ✓ Inventory and establish management policy for social trails
- ✓ Develop consistent design, use, and maintenance standards



Trails Workshop (Credit: DTJ Design)

03.

PLAN INITIATIVES

3.1. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The TSP applies four levels of organization to explain values, aspirations, and implementable steps toward realizing those aspirations. The levels are Guiding Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Action Items.

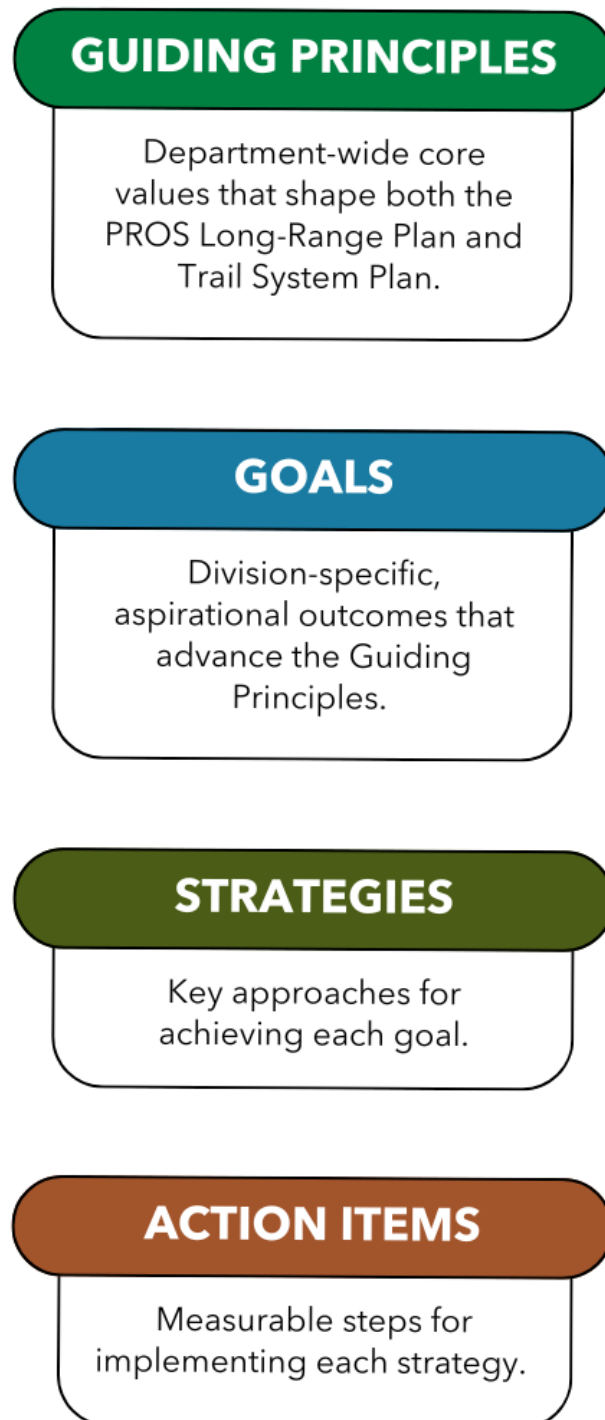


Figure 11. Plan Organization Diagram

3.2. FRAMEWORK

At the beginning of the planning process, the PROS Department identified several **Guiding Principles** that informed both the LRP and TSP.

Based on the results of extensive community engagement, stakeholder outreach, and existing conditions analysis, a series of plan recommendations emerged. The recommendations serve as a bridge between what was heard from the community and what the Department intends to do. These recommendations help prioritize the Department action that will have the greatest impact and provide a clear summary of direction for the TSP.

In order to realize the Guiding Principles and recommendations, a series of **Goals** and **Strategies** was defined. Goals represent desired outcomes that advance the Department's core values, while Strategies provide the primary approaches for achieving those outcomes.

Action Items developed from the Strategies and recommendations as specific, measurable, and implementable steps that guide day-to-day decision-making and investment.

Together, this framework creates a clear line of sight from community input to Guiding Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Action Items, ensuring that the Plan is both aspirational and actionable. The Implementation Plan is intended to be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to reflect evolving community needs, opportunities, and available resources.



Pedestrian bridge at open space (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

3.3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A guiding principle is a core belief or standard that shapes how decisions are made and priorities are set. It provides direction by helping organizations stay aligned and intentional as conditions, Strategies, and needs evolve.

NORTH is the department's guiding compass—translating shared values into a clear framework that informs planning, investment, and day-to-day decision-making across all programs, facilities, and services.

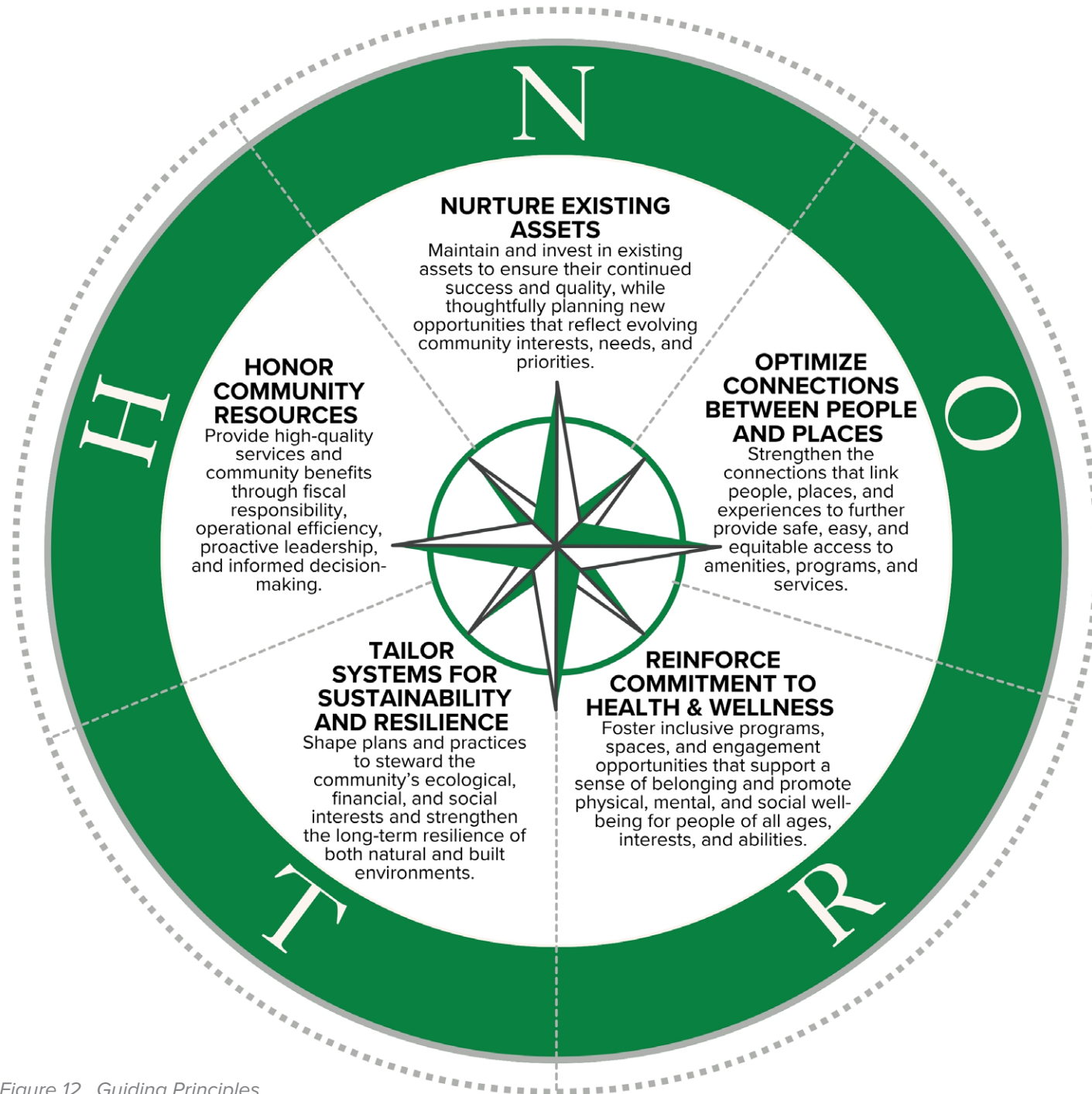


Figure 12. Guiding Principles

3.4. GOALS

Goals are aspirational outcomes that advance the Guiding Principles of the Department. Goals are an essential component to incorporating high-level Department values into daily actions. While unexpected things are sure to happen throughout the implementation of this Plan, the Goals help to guide decision-making processes and ensures the desired outcomes. The Goal statements are all important and shall be equally applied in the decision making process.

Improve trail connectivity.

Enhance safety for all users.

Protect natural resources through data-informed management practices.

Formalize trail design standards, maintenance, operations and construction protocols.

Adopt a social trail policy.

Support funding and partnerships.

3.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The trail system recommendations are based on the findings of the Needs Assessment Report, the community engagement process, and industry best practices. They are not in any order of priority. For more information see the Needs Assessment Report and the Community Engagement Summary in Appendix B.

- **Connectivity & Access**

- o Expand roadway and regional trail connections, including LOBO, BERT, CO 119 Bikeway, and the Rocky Mountain Greenway.
- o Close gaps between local, neighborhood, and regional trail systems to enable continuous, seamless travel.
- o Complete missing links between key destinations such as schools, downtown, parks, open spaces, regional corridors, and underserved neighborhoods.
- o Strengthen regional connections while creating neighborhood trail loops to improve local circulation.
- o Reduce reliance on on-street routes by enhancing off-street trail connectivity.
- o Improve, standardize, and unify signage, striping, and wayfinding across the entire network.
 - Durable, accessible surfacing for high-use corridors
 - Consistent trailhead amenities (e.g., shade, rest areas, trash service)
 - Standardized trail width, grade, sightlines, and overall user comfort
- o Prioritize system-wide connectivity improvements as a top planning objective, with emphasis on safety, accessibility, and ease of navigation.

- **Safety**

- o Enhance safety at crossings, including railroad crossings (e.g. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway), and expand protected crossings and upgraded underpasses.
- o Improve lighting, visibility, drainage, and navigation at underpasses and high user conflict areas.
- o Address vehicular crash hotspots by improving trail connections and intersection treatments.
- o Extend e-bike speed, age, and etiquette standards with stronger signage and enforcement.

- **Equity & Engagement**

- o Ensure diverse and representative voices are incorporated in planning and engagement.
- o Improve physical access to safe, nearby trails for youth, seniors, and people with limited mobility.
- o Partner with local schools (e.g., Boulder Valley School District Safe Routes to School) to expand safe walking and biking routes.
- o Increase educational outreach and stewardship programming at trailheads and online.

- **Operations**

- o Consider additional staffing on the PROS team to address cross-departmental trail system needs and to lead partnerships and funding for trail system planning, design, and maintenance.
- o Ensure consistent and diverse funding sources for trail system improvements.

- **Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability**

- o Protect riparian corridors, ecologically important habitats, and mitigate wildlife impacts by using buffers and ecologically informed planning.
- o Prioritize maintenance of existing trails over major trail expansions, including new trail construction on future open space acquisitions.
- o Use baseline ecological studies to guide access decisions and support adaptive management.
- o Improve weed and invasive species control and long-term ecological monitoring.
- o Ensure alignment with Article 15 of Louisville’s Home Rule Charter.
- o Ensure proper precautions are taken to protect ecologically important habitat in the suggested Coal Creek Management Plan area and other applicable ecologically important areas.
- o Develop buffer standards for recreational trail buffers in riparian zones.

- **Undesignated (Social) Trails**

- o The 2025 vegetation survey and an updated undesignated (social) trails inventory will inform future decisions regarding the management of these trail segments and associated native landscape restoration efforts. Some undesignated (social) trails provide a useful function, while others may cause damage and fragmentation to ecologically important areas. The intent is not to eliminate all undesignated (social) trails, but to reduce those that do not provide functional value, damage native vegetation and habitats, or on Open Space that conflict with the land classifications in Article 15 of the Louisville Home Rule Charter.
- o Going forward, the PROS Department should apply the following criteria when deciding which undesignated (social) trails to formalize and which to revegetate:
 - Prioritize formalization where trails improve safety, fill key connectivity gaps, and/or serve high use community routes.
 - Undesignated (social) trails in the Preserve Land Classification shall be closed and revegetated per available funding and resources.
 - Undesignated (social) trails in the Protect, Visitor, and Other Open Land Classifications shall be further evaluated to determine the recreation benefits, impact on Open Lands and potential conflict areas that may require mitigation such as temporary closures, habitat restoration, and ongoing monitoring.
 - For trail segments that are determined to be formalized, the Trails Design Guidelines of the TSP shall be referred to determine trail access, material, width and clearances.

These criteria only apply to undesignated (social) trails. Existing formalized trails will remain and shall not be closed and revegetated, regardless of Land Classification.



Cyclists on Mesa (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)



Airplanes over mountain views (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

Concepts for Trail System Improvement

The following concepts represent industry best practices that help inform trail and shared-use pathway planning and design. These high-level approaches are to be considered as part of the decision-making and plan implementation process.

15-Minute City

Louisville is a compact, centrally located community where most daily destinations are accessible by multiple modes of travel. The 15 Minute City concept promotes safe, barrier-free routes that allow people to reach essential destinations within a short walk or bike ride. Louisville's shared-use paths and trail system are central to achieving this strategy by supporting convenient, active transportation and recreation.

Trail Diversity

A diverse range of trail types enhances user interest and allows infrastructure to respond to varying conditions throughout the City. A well-connected network provides users with multiple route options to match different abilities, activities, and needs, increasing overall system flexibility and usefulness. In addition, a safe, well-connected mix of soft and hard-surface trails is essential in an urban environment. Offering a variety of trail types accommodates a wide range of users, including cyclists, runners, families, and older adults. All trail types should be maintained to high standards to improve safety and reduce user conflicts and accidents.

Wayfinding and Signage

Navigating the trail system can be challenging, particularly for new or visiting users. Clear, consistent signage and branding are essential for helping users understand where they are and how trails connect. As the trail network has developed incrementally, gaps and inconsistencies exist; addressing these through improved wayfinding will strengthen system legibility and connectivity.

Balancing Trails and Conservation

Protecting land and habitat is a core principle of the Trail System. Conservation priorities must be integrated into all planning, design, and management decisions. Trails should be designed and constructed in accordance with open space classifications, habitat protection standards, and Trail Planning and Design Guidelines. All off-road trail development should respect site context, preserve natural features, minimize impacts to adjacent properties, and apply low-impact stormwater management practices.

Loop Development

While Louisville has a robust trail system, overlapping routes and transitions between trails can be confusing, particularly for visitors. Improving clarity will require filling network gaps, reconfiguring select trail segments, and expanding neighborhood trail loops. Completed loops can also serve as effective tools for branding, wayfinding, and user orientation.

New, Expanded, and Upgraded Trail Connections

A decision-making framework is essential for identifying and prioritizing trail improvements. Criteria for evaluating proposed trail segments guide decision-making while allowing for site-specific conditions, evolving trends, and community needs. New and upgraded connections may include short linking segments that improve circulation, close network gaps, or connect neighborhoods to the broader trail system.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, and operating streets so they safely and comfortably serve all users, regardless of age, ability, or travel mode. For Louisville, this concept supports stronger coordination between trails, shared-use paths, sidewalks, bike facilities, and roadways to ensure seamless connections and safer crossings. Applying Complete Streets principles helps integrate the trail system into the broader transportation network, reducing barriers, improving safety, and supporting active transportation options throughout the city.

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School focuses on making walking, biking, and rolling to school safe, convenient, and appealing for students and families. In Louisville, this concept supports the use of trails and shared-use paths to connect neighborhoods to schools while minimizing conflicts with vehicle traffic. Prioritizing safe crossings, clear wayfinding, traffic calming, and trail connections near schools strengthens youth mobility, encourages healthy travel habits, and improves overall community safety.

Universal Design

Universal Design is the practice of designing environments that are usable by people of all ages, abilities, and mobility levels without the need for specialized adaptations. For Louisville PROS, this concept guides trail planning and design to provide equitable access through appropriate grades, surfaces, widths, rest areas, and clear wayfinding wherever feasible. Incorporating Universal Design principles helps ensure the trail system supports aging residents, people with disabilities, families with children, and users of adaptive equipment, reinforcing trails as inclusive public infrastructure.

3.6. TRAIL CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY OPPORTUNITIES

The following TSP proposed trail improvements have been identified as part of the community input process. The map exhibits define trail infrastructure improvements based on regional and neighborhood connectors, at-grade crossings and intersections, and underpass and overpass improvements. The proposed trail improvements are for consideration purposes only, each of which will require further evaluation prior to final approval. All proposed trail system improvements will undergo a thorough staff review and City Council approval prior to implementation. Evaluation criteria may include connectivity, safety, ecological protection, maintenance, cost, and staff resource ability.

The proposed trail project(s) will require partnership with external departments or entities, including, but not limited to, the Louisville Public Works Department, the Louisville Fire Protection District, the Louisville Police Department, adjacent municipalities, and/or joint owners of open space.



Coyote near Train Tracks (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)



Path Near Creek (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

Regional (Primary) Trail Connectors

The following projects are not listed in any order of priority.

#	Need
Regional Trail Connectors*	
1	Trail connection needed.
2	Trail connection needed.
3	Trail connection needed.
4	Off-street shared path needed. Completes north-south regional trail connection through Louisville with future SH42 multi-use path.
5	Off-street shared path needed. Adds comfort along wide road (2 lanes each direction). Connects trail users to from Lake to Lake Trail to regional trail network.
6	Off-street shared path needed. Completes north-south regional trail connection through Louisville with future SH42 multi-use path.
7	Off-street gravel trail or shared path needed. Connects Lake to Lake Trail users with the regional trail network.

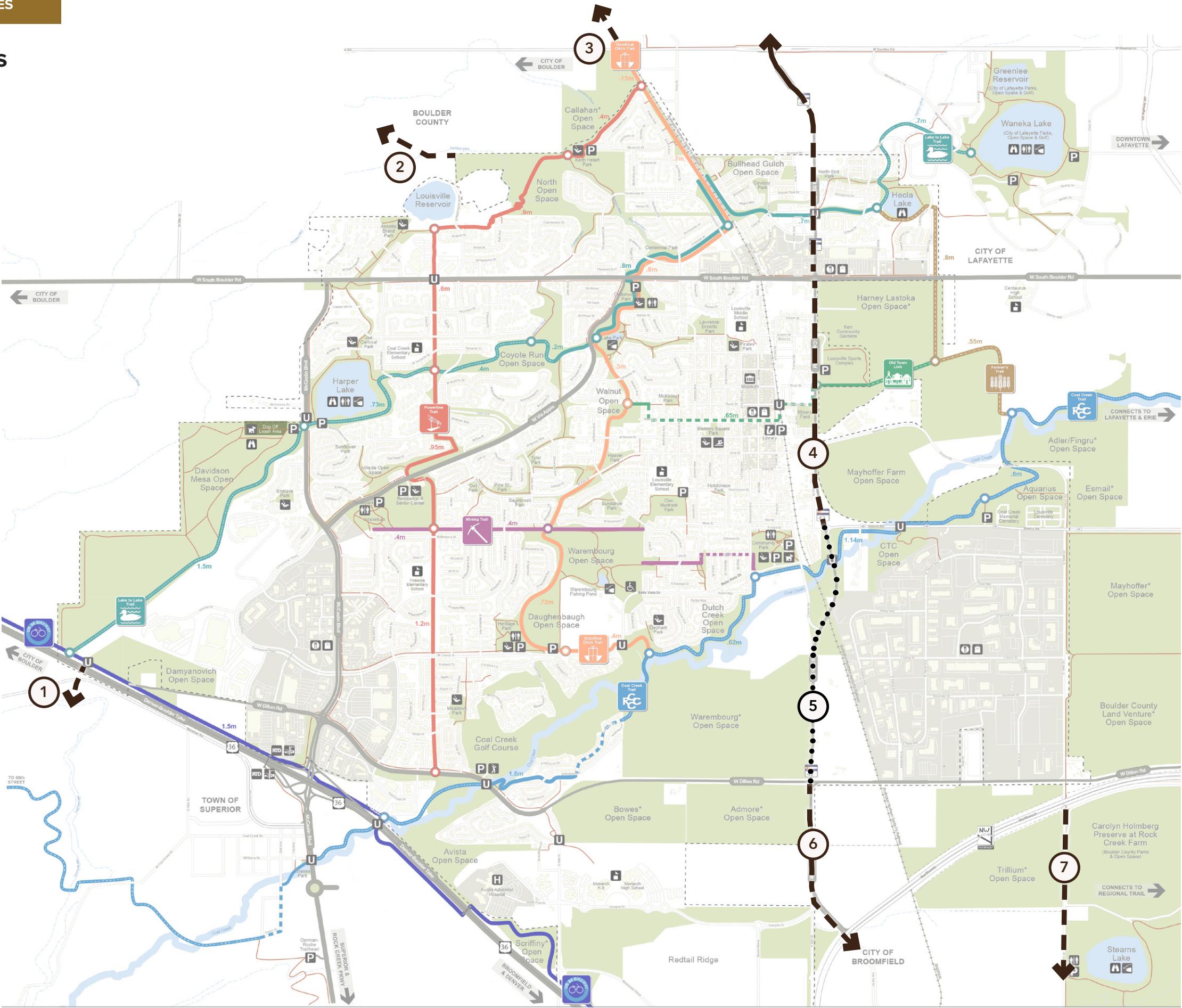


Figure 13. Proposed Regional Trail Connectors

Neighborhood (Secondary) Connectors

The following projects are not listed in any order of priority.

#	Need
Neighborhood Connectors	
1	Off-street gravel trail needed. Connects users from Lake to Lake Trail east to on-street bike lanes on Centennial and Century, and to proposed future off-street shared path on McCaslin (#3).
2	Off-Street Shared Path Needed - Add east-west connection between Arboretum and McCaslin and add north-south connection along the east side of Warembourg Open Space to Bella Vista Dr.
3	Trail alignment revision needed - current switchbacks cause safety issues.
4*	off-street gravel path needed
5*	off-street shared path needed
6	Off-Street Shared Path Needed. Adds east-west connection between Goodhue Trail, Lake to Lake Trail, and Powerline Trail.
7	Off-Street gravel Path Needed. Adds north-south connection between Centennial Park, Goodhue Trail, Lake to Lake Trail, and proposed connection to Powerline Trail (#5).
8*	Off-Street Shared Path Needed. Connects users from school to on-street bike lane on South Boulder Rd and Centennial Rd, which connects to proposed connection to Powerline Trail (#5), Goodhue Trail, and Lake to Lake Trail.
9*	Off-Street Shared Path Needed. Adds comfort along wide, high-crash road (2 lanes each direction, median, and turn lanes). Connects trail users from future off-street shared path along SH 42 to Farmers Trail.
10*	Off-street shared path Downtown connector trail needed. Provides east-west connection from Via Appia to Downtown.
11*	Off-Street Shared Path Needed. Provides east-west connection from Goodhue Trail to future off-street shared path along SH 42.
12*	Connection needed through Mayhoffer Open Space to Farmer's Trail - proposed route TBD
13*	Separated off-street pedestrian path to become multi-use (bike and pedestrian) to replace existing on-street bike lane. Provides east-west connection between Goodhue Trail and Powerline Trail and to proposed McCaslin shared path (#3).
14	off-street shared path needed
15	off-street gravel path needed.
16	Off-Street Shared Path Needed. Completes connection from Coal Creek Golf Course, Monarch High School, and Bowes Open Space to US36 bikeway.
17*	Off-Street Shared Path Needed. Connects users to regional trail network from Coal Creek Trail.
18*	Establish a new, off-street connection between the Campus Drive extension (Red Tail Ridge) and the Coal Creek Regional Trail
19*	Off-Street Shared Path Needed, connects future SH42/S 96th Multi-use path southeast to Dillon Rd.

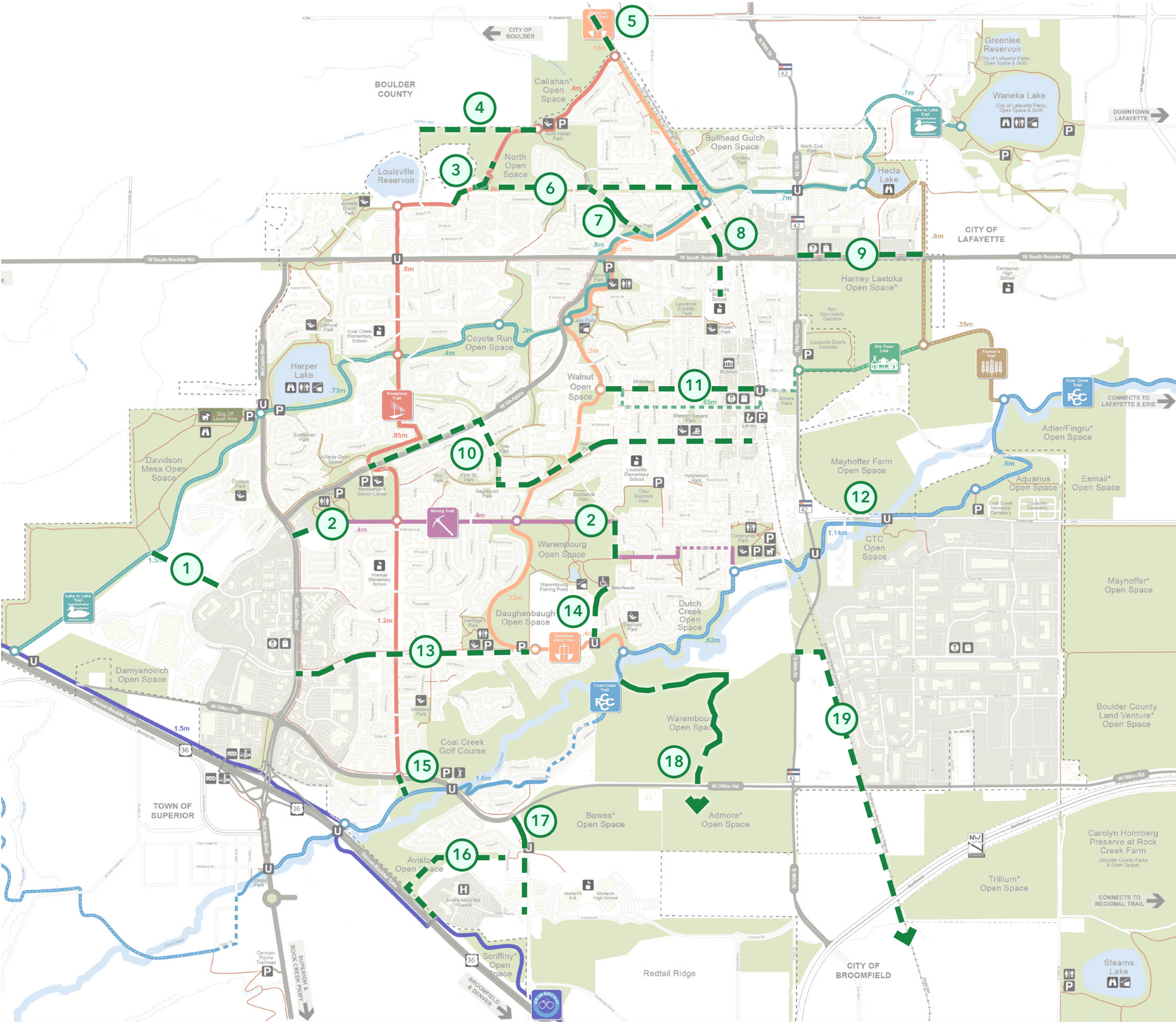


Figure 14. Proposed Neighborhood Connectors Enhancements

At-Grade Crossings and Intersections

The following projects are not listed in any order of priority.

#	Need
At-Grade Crossings and Intersections*	
1	Crosswalk or enhanced crossing needed.
2	Enhanced crossing needed - Wide road (3 lanes in each direction, medians, turn lanes). High crash intersection.
3	Enhanced crossing needed - Wide intersecting roads (2-3 lanes in each direction, median, turn lanes). High crash intersection.
4	Intersection improvement needed - Wide road (Cherry-- 2 lanes in each direction, median on South Boulder, turn lanes). High crash intersection.
5	Enhanced crossing needed.
6	Enhanced crossing needed.
7	Intersection improvement needed - Wide road (2 lanes in each direction, median, turn lanes). Intersection has high concentration of crashes.
8	Enhanced crossing needed - High-crash intersection. Connection needed from on-street bike lane on Tyler Ave across Via Appia Way to future Downtown Connector Trail
9	Enhanced crossing needed - High crash intersection.
10	Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) needed.
11	Enhanced crossing needed - Wide road (Roosevelt) and high crash intersection. Improvements needed to provide safer access across Roosevelt along Mining Trail.
12	Traffic signal recommended for pedestrian and cyclist safety.

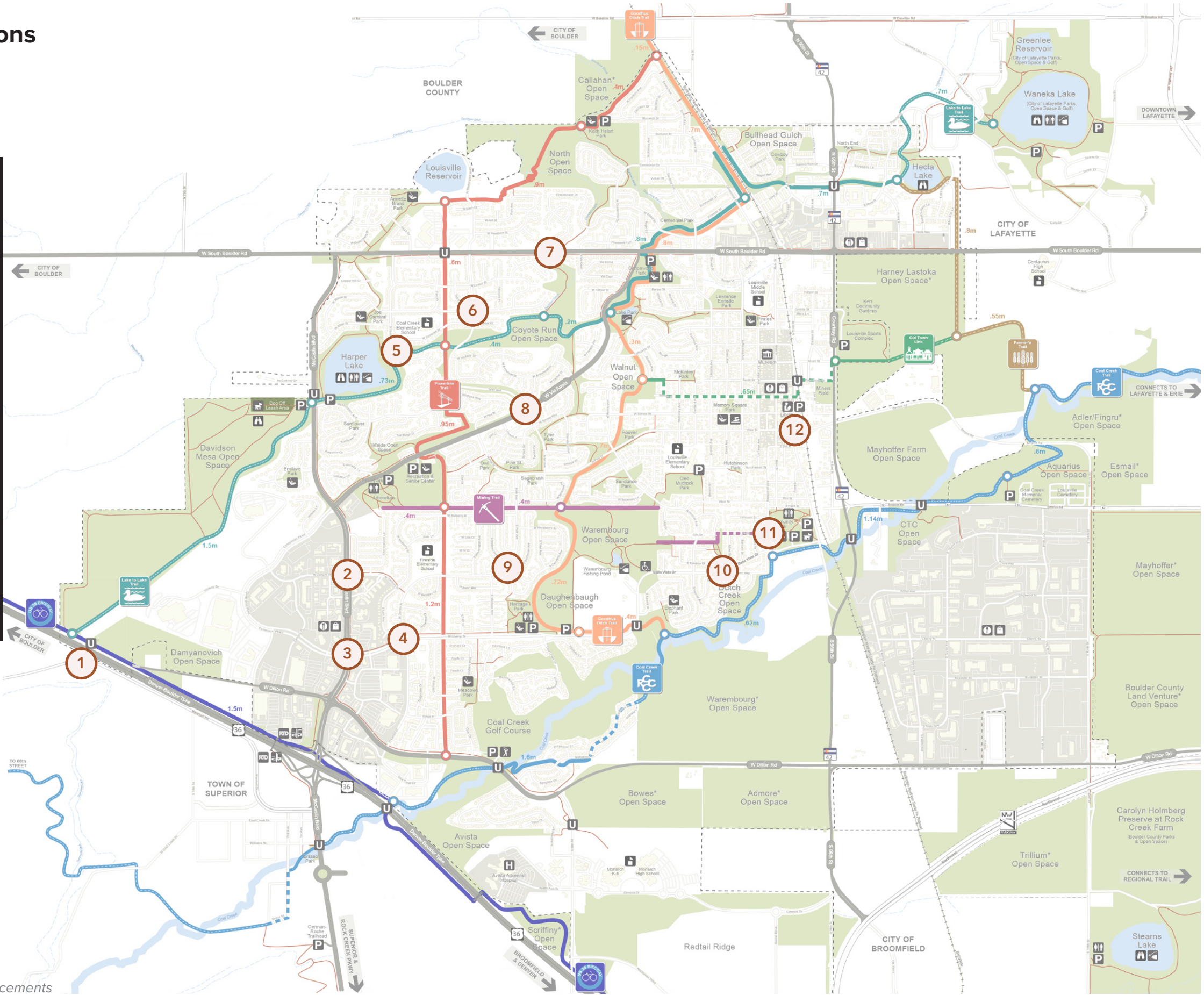


Figure 15. Proposed At-Grade Crossing and Intersection Enhancements

Underpasses and Overpasses

The following projects are not listed in any order of priority.

#	Need
Underpasses and Overpasses*	
1	Maintenance - Better visibility and wider turn radius entering and existing underpass are needed for safety reasons.
2	Underpass needed - High-crash area (east of intersection) on wide road (2 lanes in each direction, medians, turn lanes).
3	Underpass needed - Wide road (2 lanes in each direction, medians). Connection missing from Powerline Trail to Coal Creek Trail. Would support connection to regional trail network.
4	Better drainage infrastructure needed to prevent underpass flooding.
5	Underpass Needed -High crash intersection despite signalized crossing.
6	Underpass needed
7	Underpass needed - Wide road (2 lanes in each direction, median, turn lanes). Intersection has high concentration of crashes.
8	Underpass needed
9	Underpass needed - Connection from future off-street shared trail to on-street bike lane on Centennial Dr needed.
10	Underpass needed - Wide road intersecting roads (2 lanes in each direction, median on South Boulder, turn lanes). Intersection with high-concentration of crashes.
11	Above-grade crossing needed - Wide road (2 lanes in each direction, medians, turn lanes). Intersection has high concentration of crashes despite existing HAWK.
12	underpass needed
13	Lighting and drainage improvements needed

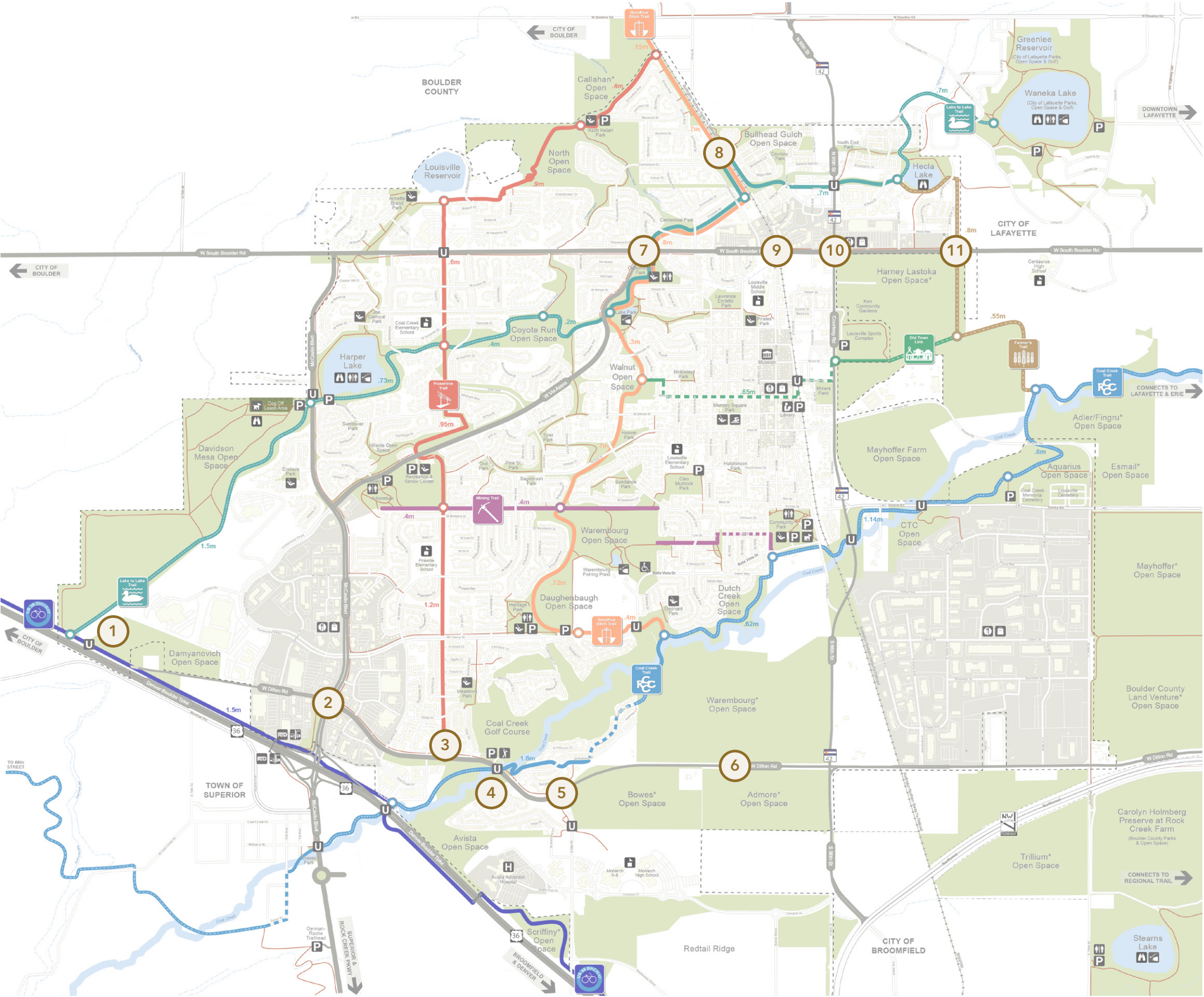


Figure 16. Proposed Underpasses and Overpasses Enhancements

OSAB and Trails Taskforce Priorities

Early in the Plan process, a Trails Taskforce was established, comprised of PROS Advisory Board Members, with members from each board (PPLAB, RAB, and OSAB). The OSAB and the Trails Taskforce jointly reviewed the proposed projects and prioritized each initiative in order of importance. Based on the provided maps, participants selected their top 2 regional connections, top 3 underpasses or overpasses, and top 5 neighborhood connections. Participants did not rank at-grade crossings as those are in the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department.

Results

Top 2 Regional Connectors

- 1: Lake to Lake underpass at US-36
- 4: SH 43 North of Empire Rd

Top 5 Neighborhood Connectors

- 1: Centennial Parkway to Davidson Mesa Trail
- 6: Via Appia to North Open Space
- 8: Louisville Middle School
- 15: Dillon Rd to Coal Creek Trail
- 17: Dillon Rd south to health Park Dr along 88th St

Top 3 Underpasses and Overpasses

- 3: McCaslin Blvd and W Cherry St
- 7: West South Boulder Rd at Coyote Run Callahan Trail
- 9: South Madison Ave and South Polk Ave

Community Priorities

At the second Community Open House event, the public voted on prioritization for the trail connectivity and safety opportunities. Participants were asked to place dots on maps to reflect their top 3 choices of trail connections they would like to see across Louisville.

Of all votes, the following top 5 opportunities emerged:

- 1 (tied): At-Grade Crossing/Intersection - Via Appia Way and Tyler Ave
- 1 (tied): Regional Trail Connector - Lake to Lake Underpass at US-36
- 3: Regional Trail Connector - Connection to Boulder through Boulder County open space.
- 4: Neighborhood Connector - Dillon Rd to Coal Creek Trail
- 5 (tied): Underpass / Overpass - South Boulder Rd and Courtesy Rd
- 5 (tied): Underpass / Overpass - Courtesy Road and Old Town Link Trail

Additional analysis is needed to evaluate all projects further based on objective criteria. Evaluation criteria may include technical feasibility, funding and budget impacts, joint agency support funding (as needed), and staff resources. After evaluation, the CIP will be updated to reflect high priority projects. Implementation priority may shift over time in response to unforeseen events, evolving needs or opportunities for funding or project collaboration.

04.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This chapter translates the Goals of the TSP into measurable and achievable Strategies and Action Items. These Action Items are intended to be flexible and adaptive as funding, partnerships, and community needs evolve.

Action Items focus on:

- Safety and connectivity improvements
- Environmental stewardship
- Consistent trail standards
- Education and communication
- Partnerships and funding
- System monitoring and performance

The Action Plan Matrix clarifies action timeframes, responsible parties, priority, and relationship to the PROS Guiding Principles. The Action Items will be reviewed regularly and amended accordingly to reflect the critical advancements of the Plan. It is recommended that the Action Items be published and be highly visible throughout the PROS Department and on the City website to acknowledge progress of the TSP.

Implementation of Action Items requires coordination across multiple City departments, external agencies, and partners within the community. This collaborative approach maximizes efficiency and ensures consistent progress. Primary responsibilities include:

- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Department
- Public Works and Transportation Departments
- Planning and Development Services
- Emergency Management and Sustainability staff
- Regional partners and advisory boards
- Each Action Item should be incorporated into:
 - Annual work plans
 - Capital improvement planning
 - Departmental budgets
 - Grant applications

4.1. PHASING AND PRIORITIZATION

The Implementation Plan categorizes initiatives into the following timeframes:

- **1-5 Year Action Items** focus on “quick wins” that improve safety, clarity, and system function while building momentum for larger projects. These may include addressing staffing needs, signage and wayfinding improvements, small gap closures, and undesignated (social) trail management.
- **6-10 Year Action Items** focus on system-wide improvements, regional connections, and sustained environmental stewardship.
- **Ongoing Action Items** focus on sustained system health and continuous improvements that maintain or enhance current programs and operations.

Progress should be tracked using measurable performance indicators and annual reporting.



Midday on Trail (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

N = Nurture and Evolve Community Assets
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4.2. ACTION PLAN MATRIX

The following Action Items are not listed in order of priority.

TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN										
Level	ID #	Description	Timeframe	Priority	Guiding Principles					Responsible Agency / Staff
			1-5yr / 6-10yr / Ongoing	L/M/H	N	O	R	T	H	
Goal	T.1	Improve trail connectivity.								
Strategy	T.1.1	Prioritize maintenance, rehabilitation, and safety upgrades of existing trails.								
Action	T.1.1.1	Continue routine maintenance to provide reliable and functional trails.	Ongoing	Medium	●	●		●	●	Open Space, Parks, Public Works
	T.1.1.2	Implement safety upgrades where needed, with consideration to equity and access priorities.	Ongoing	High	●					Public Works, Parks, Open Space
	T.1.1.3	Prioritize new trail connections that close identified gaps and enhance inclusive, safe use.	1 - 5 year	Medium		●	●	●		Project Manager
Strategy	T.1.2	Expand and connect the trail network to improve local and regional connectivity.								
Action	T.1.2.1	Prioritize missing connections that link neighborhoods, PROS facilities, schools, commercial areas, and regional corridors.	1 - 5 year	Medium		●	●	●	●	Project Manager
	T.1.2.2	Implement improvements from the Transportation Master Plan in partnership with PROS trails.	Ongoing	Medium		●	●			Project Manager
	T.1.2.3	Collaborate with nearby communities to strengthen regional connections (e.g., Superior, Lafayette, Boulder, Erie).	Ongoing	Low		●	●	●		Project Manager, Public Works, Open Space Superintendent
Strategy	T.1.3	Collect and use trail data to inform planning and investment decisions.								
Action	T.1.3.1	Maintain accurate mapping and inventory of existing and planned trail corridors, access points, and easement needs.	Ongoing	Medium	●			●		OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.1.3.2	Monitor trail use through counters and other technology to inform planning and prioritization.	Ongoing	Medium	●	●			●	OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.1.3.3	Use collected data to guide capital planning, development review, and system improvement decisions.	Ongoing	Medium		●	●	●	●	Project Manager
Strategy	T.1.4	Promote trail use to support recreation, health, and alternative transportation.								
Action	T.1.4.1	Encourage trail use consistent with system capacity and ecological considerations.	Ongoing	High	●				●	OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor, OS Natural Resource Supervisor
	T.1.4.2	Develop outreach and education programs to highlight recreational, wellness, and transportation benefits.	1 - 5 year	Low	●		●		●	PROS Volunteer Coordinator
	T.1.4.3	Celebrate trail enhancements that improve user experiences.	Ongoing	Low		●	●			Communications

Table 3. Trail System Strategies and Action Items

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TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN										
Level	ID #	Description	Timeframe	Priority	Guiding Principles					Responsible Agency / Staff
			1-5yr / 6-10yr / Ongoing	L/M/H	N	O	R	T	H	
Goal	T.2	Enhance safety for all users.								
Strategy	T.2.1	Monitor trail conditions and use data to inform improvements.								
Action	T.2.1.1	Continue regular inspections using staff, contractors, and volunteers to identify maintenance and operational needs.	Ongoing	High	●					OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.2.1.2	Track trail-related data (e.g., incidents, flooding, frequent repairs) to prioritize improvements.	Ongoing	Medium				●		OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.2.1.3	Implement targeted operational or capital improvements based on inspection and data findings.	6 - 10 year	Medium		●	●	●	●	Project Manager
Strategy	T.2.2	Reduce user conflicts and promote responsible trail use.								
Action	T.2.2.1	Apply signage, trail markings, and physical separation where appropriate to minimize conflicts between user groups.	1 - 5 year	High		●				Project Manager, Open Space, Parks
	T.2.2.2	Expand community outreach and education on trail etiquette and regulations (including e-bike and prohibited motorized vehicle use).	1 - 5 year	Medium	●		●			Rangers, Police Department
	T.2.2.3	Coordinate with relevant departments and neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistent messaging.	Ongoing	Medium				●		Communications
Strategy	T.2.3	Enhance crossings and navigation to support user confidence.								
Action	T.2.3.1	Support implementation of pedestrian and bicycle crossing treatments at high-risk locations.	Ongoing	High	●	●				Public Works, Project Manager
	T.2.3.2	Refine wayfinding and mapping tools to help users navigate trails effectively.	1 - 5 year	High	●	●	●			Project Manager, Parks, Open Space
	T.2.3.3	Minimize unintended impacts on the environment through thoughtful placement of improvements.	Ongoing	Medium	●			●	●	Project Manager, Parks, Open Space
Strategy	T.2.4	Optimize physical conditions to improve visibility and the user experience.								
Action	T.2.4.1	Maintain sightlines, lighting, and other physical conditions that facilitate user comfort and awareness.	Ongoing	High	●					OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.2.4.2	Evaluate strategic locations for improvements to maximize visibility and reduce conflicts.	Ongoing	Medium		●				OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.2.4.3	Ensure physical changes align with ecological protection and passive recreation objectives, where applicable.	Ongoing	Medium	●					Open Space Natural Resource Supervisor, Parks Supervisor

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TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN										
Level	ID #	Description	Timeframe	Priority	Guiding Principles					Responsible Agency / Staff
			1-5yr / 6-10yr / Ongoing	L/M/H	N	O	R	T	H	
Goal	T.3	Protect natural resources through data-informed management practices.								
Strategy	T.3.1	Align trail planning, design, construction, and maintenance with applicable policies.								
Action	T.3.1.1	Apply design standards and management guidance when making trail-related decisions.	Ongoing	Medium		●				Project Manager
	T.3.1.2	Coordinate with appropriate divisions (Open Space, Parks, Public Works) to integrate land management objectives.	Ongoing	Low	●			●	●	Project Manager
	T.3.1.3	Document trail alignment decisions to support consistent application and transparency.	Ongoing	Medium					●	Project Manager
Strategy	T.3.2	Use data and science to minimize ecological impacts.								
Action	T.3.2.1	Apply property-specific classifications, management plans, condition surveys, and ecological data to plan trail routes.	Ongoing	Medium				●	●	Project Manager, Open Space Natural Resource Supervisor, Open Space Superintendent, Parks Superintendent
	T.3.2.2	Establish appropriate buffers or setbacks to inform trail planning and management decisions.	1 - 5 year	Medium	●			●	●	Project Manager, Open Space Natural Resource Supervisor, Open Space Superintendent, Parks Superintendent
	T.3.2.3	Incorporate best available information to reduce impacts on sensitive resources.	Ongoing	High	●			●	●	Project Manager, Open Space Natural Resource Supervisor, Open Space Superintendent, Parks Superintendent
Strategy	T.3.3	Manage trail use to protect sensitive resources.								
Action	T.3.3.1	Implement property-appropriate off-trail restrictions on sensitive lands (e.g. open space).	1 - 5 year	Medium	●				●	Natural Resource Supervisor, Rangers, OS Manager
	T.3.3.2	Apply seasonal closures during breeding or migration periods as required by law or recommended based on ecological monitoring.	Ongoing	High	●				●	Natural Resource Supervisor, Rangers, OS Manager
	T.3.3.3	Monitor trail use and evaluate interventions using trail and ecological data to ensure effective resource protection.	Ongoing	High	●				●	Natural Resource Supervisor, OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor

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TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN										
Level	ID #	Description	Timeframe	Priority	Guiding Principles					Responsible Agency / Staff
			1-5yr / 6-10yr / Ongoing	L/M/H	N	O	R	T	H	
Goal	T.4	Formalize trail design standards, maintenance, operations and construction protocols.								
Strategy	T.4.1	Apply guidelines for trail types, accessibility, maintenance, and supporting features.								
Action	T.4.1.1	Define trail types, access levels, maintenance needs, and supporting infrastructure (trailheads, signage, parking, wayfinding).	Ongoing	High		●		●		Parks, Open Space, Public Works, Community Development
	T.4.1.2	Provide clear guidance for selecting design and management approaches appropriate to each trail context.	1 - 5 year	Medium					●	Parks, Open Space
	T.4.1.3	Ensure guidelines integrate ecological protection, passive recreation, and equitable access considerations.	1 - 5 year	Medium				●	●	Parks, Open Space
Strategy	T.4.2	Apply adopted and recognized standards consistently across the trail system.								
Action	T.4.2.1	Refine and adopt trail design and maintenance standards to ensure predictable and equitable trail management.	1 - 5 year	Medium		●			●	Parks, Open Space, Public Works
	T.4.2.2	Incorporate regional and national standards (e.g., Boulder County, USFS, MUTCD, AASHTO) where applicable.	1 - 5 year	Medium	●					Parks, Open Space, Public Works
	T.4.2.3	Monitor compliance and provide staff guidance to maintain consistent application across projects.	Ongoing	Medium		●			●	Parks, Open Space, Public Works
Strategy	T.4.3	Use sustainable and context-sensitive trail design best practices.								
Action	T.4.3.1	Apply design practices such as contour alignment, durable surfaces, and context-appropriate materials.	Ongoing	High		●		●	●	Project Manager, OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.4.3.2	Minimize environmental impacts while improving trail durability and long-term maintainability.	Ongoing	High	●				●	Project Manager, OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.4.3.3	Evaluate and update sustainable design approaches to reflect evolving needs.	1 - 5 year	Medium				●		Parks, Open Space, Sustainability

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TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN										
Level	ID #	Description	Timeframe	Priority	Guiding Principles					Responsible Agency / Staff
			1-5yr / 6-10yr / Ongoing	L/M/H	N	O	R	T	H	
Goal	T.5	Manage undesignated trails through a consistent, transparent decision-making framework.								
Strategy	T.5.1	Document existing undesignated social trails.								
Action	T.5.1.1	Update inventories and maps to reflect current conditions, locations, and use patterns.	Ongoing	Medium	●					OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.5.1.2	Collect trail use data through observations, counters, or staff / volunteer reporting.	Ongoing	Medium	●				●	OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor
	T.5.1.3	Formalize a social trail framework for case-by-case evaluations.	1 - 5 year	High	●			●		Parks, Open Space
	T.5.1.4	Establish criteria and decision-making framework to guide restoration, removal, or formalization of social trails.	1 - 5 year	High				●		Parks, Open Space
	T.5.1.5	Evaluate social trails on open space lands based on ecological data, habitat protection priorities, and land classification policy.	1 - 5 year	High					●	OS Natural Resource Supervisor
	T.5.1.6	Apply the framework consistently across property types to ensure balanced outcomes.	6 - 10 year	Medium	●	●		●		Parks, Open Space
	T.5.1.7	Maintain records to support informed, consistent decision-making.	Ongoing	Medium					●	Parks, Open Space
Strategy	T.5.2	Communicate social trail decisions to the public.								
Action	T.5.2.1	Share data research and outreach notifications through blog post, newsletters, and signage.	Ongoing	Medium			●	●		Communications
	T.5.2.2	Communicate ecological, safety, and resource protection data points that support social trail management actions.	Ongoing	Medium	●				●	Communications
	T.5.2.3	Engage the community to promote responsible trail use and ongoing monitoring.	Ongoing	Medium		●	●	●		Communications

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TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN										
Level	ID #	Description	Timeframe	Priority	Guiding Principles					Responsible Agency / Staff
			1-5yr / 6-10yr / Ongoing	L/M/H	N	O	R	T	H	
Goal	T.6	Strengthen trail system management, partnerships, and funding.								
Strategy	T.6.1	Foster collaboration within PROS and across City departments.								
Action	T.6.1.1	Coordinate with other PROS divisions to maximize alignment and achieve efficiencies for shared initiatives.	Ongoing	Medium					●	Parks, Open Space
	T.6.1.2	Enhance cross-department collaboration with key City partners, including Community Development, Public Works, Sustainability.	Ongoing	Medium	●		●	●	●	Parks, Open Space
	T.6.1.3	Solidify roles and responsibilities of PROS and Public Works Departments for managing trail segments within parks and public rights-of-way.	1 - 5 year	High		●		●	●	Parks, Open Space, Public Works
	T.6.1.4	Leverage department communications, project management, and administrative expertise to support service and project implementation.	Ongoing	Medium				●		Parks, Open Space
Strategy	T.6.2	Promote external partnerships to support programs and services.								
Action	T.6.2.1	Identify partnership opportunities that support facility, programming, or operational enhancements.	Ongoing	Low			●		●	Parks, Open Space
	T.6.2.2	Build upon relationships with external partners, including: adjacent jurisdictions, trail advocacy organizations, and potential funding partners.	Ongoing	Medium			●			OS Trails & Maintenance Supervisor, Project Manager
	T.6.2.3	Develop a formal volunteer trails ambassador program.	1 - 5 year	Low	●			●		OS Superintendent, Parks Superintendent
	T.6.2.4	Coordinate with community and development stakeholders to identify opportunities that support trail infrastructure and service needs.	Ongoing	Medium		●				Project Manager
	T.6.2.5	Participate in industry and community networks to support knowledge sharing and collaboration.	Ongoing	Medium			●			Parks, Open Space, Public Works
Strategy	T.6.3	Align staffing and funding resources to sustain service delivery.								
Action	T.6.3.1	Monitor staff capacity and align assignments with operational and capital project demands.	Ongoing	Medium	●			●	●	Superintendents
	T.6.3.2	Evaluate divisional staffing needs relative to project support, trail management and volunteer coordination efforts.	Ongoing	Medium	●			●	●	Superintendents, Director
	T.6.3.3	Incorporate trail program priorities into annual budgeting and the capital planning process.	Ongoing	High		●	●	●		Director, Project Manager
	T.6.3.4	Pursue external funding opportunities such as grants, partnerships, and development contributions.	Ongoing	Medium				●	●	Project Manager, Parks Superintendent, Open Space Superintendent
	T.6.3.5	Track resource needs and constraints to inform future planning and funding requests.	Ongoing	Medium		●		●		Project Manager, Parks Superintendent, Open Space Superintendent

4.3. FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Long-term success of the Trail System Plan depends on sustainable funding sources and strong partnerships. The PROS Department has a number of funding programs in place today that can be applied to the TSP programs. However, additional funding will be required to expand the TSP, hire new staff and ensure ongoing operations and maintenance needs are fully addressed as outline in the TSP. Trail projects should be coordinated with other City initiatives, including transportation, capital improvement planning, and emergency preparedness.

- Recommended funding and partnership strategies include continuation and/or pursuit of the following:
- Integration of trail projects into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
 - Coordination with Public Works and Transportation programs.
 - Pursuit of state and federal grants.
 - Partnerships with Boulder County and neighboring jurisdictions.
 - Collaboration with schools, nonprofits, and advocacy groups.
 - Volunteer and stewardship programs.
 - Trail improvements should also be bundled with related infrastructure projects when possible (e.g., street resurfacing, drainage upgrades, underpass improvements) to reduce costs and maximize impact.
 - Public-private partnerships and grant funding can expand capacity while maintaining City oversight and accountability.

PROS Department Internal Funding Sources			
Fund	Applicable Division(s)	2026 Budget	Description and Purpose
General Fund	Parks Recreation & Senior Services Trails	\$28,567,274.00	City's main operating fund. Finances day-to-day operations that are financed from the general sales tax, property tax, charges for services, and other general revenues, including those that are not financed in other funds.
Capital Projects Fund	Parks Recreation & Senior Services Open Space Trails	\$16,068,067.00	Accounts for monies received as a result of an additional one-percent (1%) sales tax that was effective July 1, 1989. Finances various capital improvements throughout the City including street reconstruction, sidewalks, traffic improvements, facility improvements , etc. It also accounts for salaries and benefits costs for staff allocated to capital projects.
Conservation Trust Fund	Parks Recreation & Senior Services Open Space	\$288,800.00	The City receives an annual distribution from the State of Colorado from the proceeds of the Colorado State Lottery. State law mandates that funds be restricted for the use in the acquisition, development, and maintenance of "new conservation sites" or for capital improvements or maintenance for recreational purposes on any public site.
Impact Fee Fund	Open Space Trails	\$1,415,380.00	Funds municipal facilities, parks and trails, recreation, and transportation improvements.
Open Space Fund	Open Space Trails	\$2,669,346.00	Revenue from voter-approved estension to the dedicated sales tax of 3/8% by 10 years (through 2033) , and increase to the tax by an additional 1/8% to 1/2%. Revenue is split with the Parks Fund, and finances development, construction, operation and maintenance of open space land. Tax increase finances Open Space to acquire, improve, restore, preserve, protect, and maintain open space land and mitigate wildfire risks within open space areas.
Parks Fund	Parks Trails	\$1,622,369.00	Revenue from voter-approved estension to the dedicated sales tax of 3/8% by 10 years (through 2033) , and increase to the tax by an additional 1/8% to 1/2%. Revenue is split with the Open Space Fund, and finances the development, acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of parks.

Table 4. PROS Department Internal Funding Sources
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05.

TRAIL PLANNING, DESIGN GUIDELINES, AND MANAGEMENT

Trail Near Creek (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

5.1. TRAIL DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Although the TSP focuses on recreational trails, it acknowledges the multi-faceted characteristics of trail types and trail users in Louisville (commuters, recreationalists, novices, and beginners). Any initiatives in the TSP must coordinate with the existing City of Louisville Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to ensure a balanced and safe multi-modal trail user experience.

This section provides the PROS Staff with trail design guidelines that are consistent, context-sensitive, and aligned with the TSP Goals. It provides a structured framework to help staff understand how trail context, and user experience should inform trail design decisions, rather than prescribing the actual standards. PROS Staff will reference the Boulder County Multimodal Transportation Standards and Louisville Design & Construction Guidelines for specific standards guidance. Should conflicts arise, City of Louisville standards would rule unless on jointly-owned lands in which case Boulder County guidelines would rule. This framework is meant to support future development of trail standards by clarifying key considerations and trade-offs across different trail contexts.

Consistent trail design standards are necessary to improve safety, reduce user conflicts, and enhance overall trail experience. The City should adopt clear guidelines for:

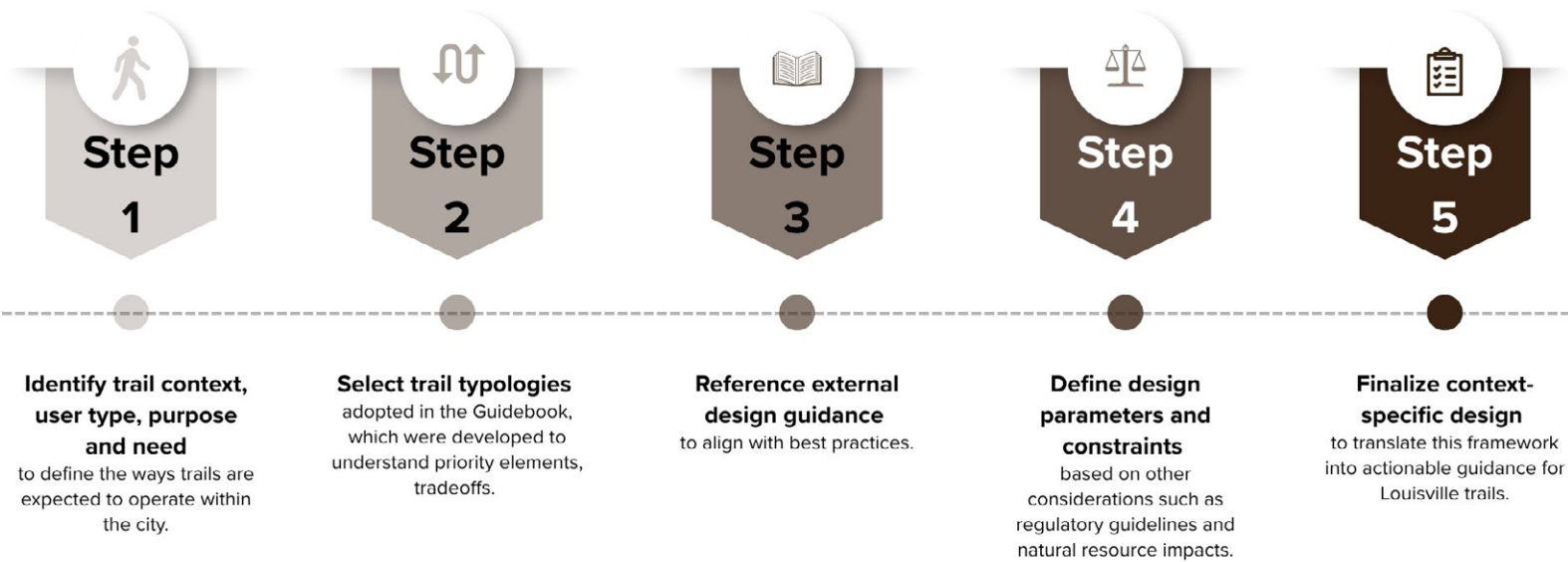
- Trail width and surfacing
 - Trail widths should be based on user behavior and peak hour counts; [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) Shared Use Path Level of Service Calculator](#)* is recommended.
- Transitions between trail types
- Visibility and sight lines
- Drainage and flood resilience
- ADA accessibility
- Intersection and crossing treatments
 - A range of crossing types including rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs), pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHBs), pedestrian islands, curb extensions, raised crosswalks, protected intersections, and grade-separated crossings are recommended based on traffic conditions and road design.
- Design standards should be aligned with national best practices, including AASHTO and FHWA guidance.

5.2. TRAIL DESIGN PROCESS

Trail design should be responsive to:

- Expected user volumes
- User types (walkers, cyclists, families, commuters)
- Environmental context and impact (per City municipal code)
- Maintenance capacity

The steps for developing trail design guidelines are as follows:



Following a description of these steps, this document proposes potential trail context typologies (with related user types, trail purposes, and design considerations) that the PROS Staff may consider including in its trail design standards.

Step 1. Identify trail context, user type, and purpose

When developing trails standards, PROS Staff should determine trail context, user type, and purpose separately to inform detailed design considerations.

How Does Context Inform The Design?

Determine the physical setting in which trails are/will be located. This step establishes trails function within the broader system. Because trails often span long distances, they may serve multiple functions across different contexts. As a result, typologies may overlap. Therefore, each typology emphasizes individual trail’s primary or core function within the broader system.

Potential Trail Context Typologies for Louisville

- o Urban and Downtown Connector: Trails in the downtown core, commercial areas, or higher-density neighborhoods.
- o Neighborhood and School Connector: Trails linking residential areas to schools, parks, and community facilities.
- o Natural Greenway and Open Space Corridor: Trails located within creek, drainage, and greenway corridors, such as Coal Creek Trail, and extend through open space and natural areas.
- o Regional Multi-Modal Corridor: Trails that function as high-capacity connectors linking Louisville to neighboring communities and regional trail systems, often aligned with major transportation corridors such as highways, arterials, or rail lines.
- o Social or informal trails may exist within multiple trail contexts, but most commonly within natural greenway and open space corridors. The City should establish guidance for evaluating whether these routes are retained, or restored based on intended use, environmental protection, and maintenance considerations.

For more information, refer to section [5.3. Trail Typologies](#).

*[**Note on Accessibility:** All trails should be designed to be accessible wherever feasible. Hard-surface trails should follow the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), and soft-surface trails should reference the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG), ensuring inclusive access across the entire trail system.]*

Who Will Use The Trail?

Determine the type of user(s) trails should accommodate. This step is important for ensuring design ultimately meets the needs of a broad spectrum of users.

- o Pedestrians: Includes walkers, people using wheelchairs, dog walkers, people walking with baby strollers, people with one or more disabilities (physical, vision, auditory, and/or cognitive), and runners. These users can benefit from a higher degree of separation between users, longer sight distances, and wider paths to support the social function of the trail and give more space to safely and comfortably pass slower trail users.
- o Slower bicyclists and micro-mobility device users: Includes new and/or casual bicyclists, children and families bicycling together, people on tricycles/tandem bicycles/recumbent bicycles/adaptive bicycles/pulling bike trailers, and people on self-propelled micro-mobility devices such as in-line skates, roller skates, kick scooters, and skateboards. These users can benefit from a greater turning radii’s, regular pull out areas, and wider paths to support the social function of the trail and operating width of users.
- o Faster bicyclists and micro-mobility device users: Faster bicyclists, people using electric micro-mobility devices like e-bikes (adaptive e-bikes), and e-scooters. These users can benefit from longer sight distances to give faster users more time to adjust their movements to slower trail users and striped or dedicated separated lanes for different user groups.

How Will The Trail Be Used?

Determine the different trail purposes such as commuting, recreation, etc. This step helps ensure design provides opportunities for the wide range of recreational, travel, and commute activities to occur comfortably and safely.

- o Design for Recreation Areas and Open Space: Some Louisville trails should be designed to support recreation by providing safe, convenient access to both active recreation and more passive experiences like birdwatching, picnicking, and enjoying scenic open spaces, as well as ensure a balance between recreation and environmental stewardship.
- o Design for Movement: Some Louisville trails should be designed to facilitate active transportation to connect people to important destinations. The design for through movement must reflect user needs and local context but also balance the needs of both passive and active recreation uses.
- o Design for Continuity and Connectivity: Some Louisville trails should be designed to ensure seamless continuity and connectivity, providing direct pedestrian and bicycle links to adjacent cities, activity centers, parks, recreation areas, and public transit facilities. A well-connected and easy-to-follow network should include not only the main trail spine but also clearly marked spurs and connector trails that enhance access, close gaps, and integrate with local and regional transportation systems.

Step 2. Develop applicable design considerations

Use the context-based considerations to understand what elements are most important in the potential trail settings. Considerations should include key priorities, potential trade-offs, and constraints that should shape decisions.

Trail Design Consideration Categories

Materials and Durability

Guides material/pavement choices based on expected use, environmental conditions, and long-term performance. Considerations include anticipated wear, exposure to weather or flooding, ease of maintenance, repair, or replacement, and compatibility with surrounding urban or natural contexts.

Amenities and Placemaking

Considers how supporting elements contribute to trail usability, comfort, and identity. This includes wayfinding, seating, shade, trailheads, gathering areas, and opportunities for public art, interpretation, and reinforcement of community character.

Operations and Maintenance

Focuses on how the trail will be managed over time. Key aspects include maintenance roles and responsibilities, a routine inspection program, seasonal needs such as snow or debris removal, coordination with partner agencies, and alignment with lifecycle costs and available resources.

Width and Clear Zones

Focuses on the relative amount of space needed to support trail function and user comfort. This includes accommodating different user speeds, providing separation from vehicles, responding to physical constraints, and allowing flexibility for future expansion or changing use patterns.

Safety and Comfort

Addresses both actual and perceived safety, emphasizing design decisions that create predictability and user confidence. Key considerations include crossings and conflict points, visibility and lighting, proximity to traffic or hazards, and comfort factors such as noise, and speed differentials.

Step 3. Establish project priorities and constraints

Define the primary Goals that influence the prioritization and decision-making for trail development, such as right-of-way, environmental sensitivity, funding, and maintenance capacity. Apply appropriate design criteria, available funding sources and other metrics to define project priorities as required. Use established priorities and design criteria to develop trail standards or project designs that respond to the specific context and local conditions.

This table provide an overview of trail planning and design considerations.

Trail Planning and Design Considerations	
Assess Habitat Impacts Early in the Process	Survey and evaluate potential new trails or expanded trails for regional-scale habitat impacts and site-level habitat impacts. Seek opportunities to reclaim or enhance habitat areas within or near established trail corridors.
Avoid Ecologically Important Areas and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation	Avoid impacts to native wildlife habitat, native vegetation, streams, wetlands, and riparian areas. Consider introducing buffer standards in key areas to protect ecologically important resources. Avoid new trail routes that fragment large blocks of ecologically important habitat areas.
Prioritize Trail Gaps Needs	Evaluate new tail and expanded trail projects based on prioritization considering various factors such as demand, safety, cost, and conformance with acceptable design standards.
Consolidate and Cluster Trail Density	Focus on improving and promoting high-use trail or shared pathway loops that already have high levels of existing human use and disturbance.
Define Trail and Trailhead Amenities and Standards	Adopt comprehensive trail standards and programmed amenity standards and evaluate the application of standards as part of new and expanded trail projects. Apply best practice standards like AAHSTO, MUTCD and other trail standards.
Consider Scenic Views and Visual Impacts	Plan trail alignments considering viewsheds and visual impacts on adjacent uses.
Existing Trails Proximity	Evaluate existing social trails and resolve inconsistencies in the Trails System to mitigate informal and duplicative trails at a site level.
Current and Future Maintenance and Operations	Plan and design trails with long term maintenance and operations in mid: apply routine maintenance practices consistently and routinely

Table 5. Trail Planning and Design Considerations

Step 4. Reference external design guidance

Consult relevant trail design manuals, best practices, and peer examples to inform technical decisions. While this guide provides general information on what elements are most important by context, local and national standards and guidelines should be reviewed when making design decisions (e.g. guidance on specific trail dimensions, wayfinding placement, etc.).

National Resources

- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
 - [NACTO Bikeways Design Guide, 2025](#)
 - [NACTO Designing for All Ages and Abilities, 2017](#)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
 - [Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access, 2001](#)
 - [Trails as Resilient Infrastructure Guidebook, 2023](#)
 - [Shared-Use Path Level of Service Calculator](#)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
 - [Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines \(FSTAG\), 2013](#)
 - [Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines \(FSORAG\), 2013](#)
 - [Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation and Trails](#)
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
 - [Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 2025](#)
 - [Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities, 2021](#)
- U.S. Access Board
 - [Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines \(PROWAG\)](#)

Nonprofit Resources

- Rails to Trails Conservancy
 - [Maintenance Practices and Costs of Rail-Trails, 2015](#)
 - [Yearly Routine Rail-Trail Maintenance Costs Per Mile, 2022](#)
- American Trails
 - [Resource Library](#)



Crosswalk and Trail Segment at Cleveland Ave. (Credit: PROS Staff)

5.3. TRAIL TYPOLOGIES

Trail Typologies are based on context, trail purpose, and user experience and needs. The PROS Department will consider unique conditions and appropriate design solutions when developing the trails system in Louisville. While the TSP recognizes street routes as key connectivity corridors, this section of the Plan focuses on the primary and secondary trails that are managed and maintained by the PROS Department.

Typical Attributes by Trail Typology						
Trail Typology		Width	Material*	Named	Potential Amenities	Maintenance Responsibility
Primary	Multi-Modal Corridor	10'-12' (plus 2' shoulder)	Concrete	Yes	Trailhead Parking, Restrooms, Signage, Waste Receptacles, Seating, Enhanced Road Crossings, Limited Lighting	PROS Department
	Greenway	10'-12' (plus 2' shoulder)	Concrete or Crusher Fines		Trailhead Parking, Restrooms, Signage, Waste Receptacles, Seating, Enhanced Road Crossings	
Secondary	Neighborhood Connector	6' - 10' (plus 2' shoulder)	Concrete or Crusher Fines	No	Signage, Limited Seating and Waste Receptacles, Limited Lighting	Public Works Department
	Street Route	3' - 12'	Concrete	No	Signage, Lighting	

Table 6. Typical Attributes by Trail Typology



Trail through Aquarius Open Space (Credit: PROS Staff)

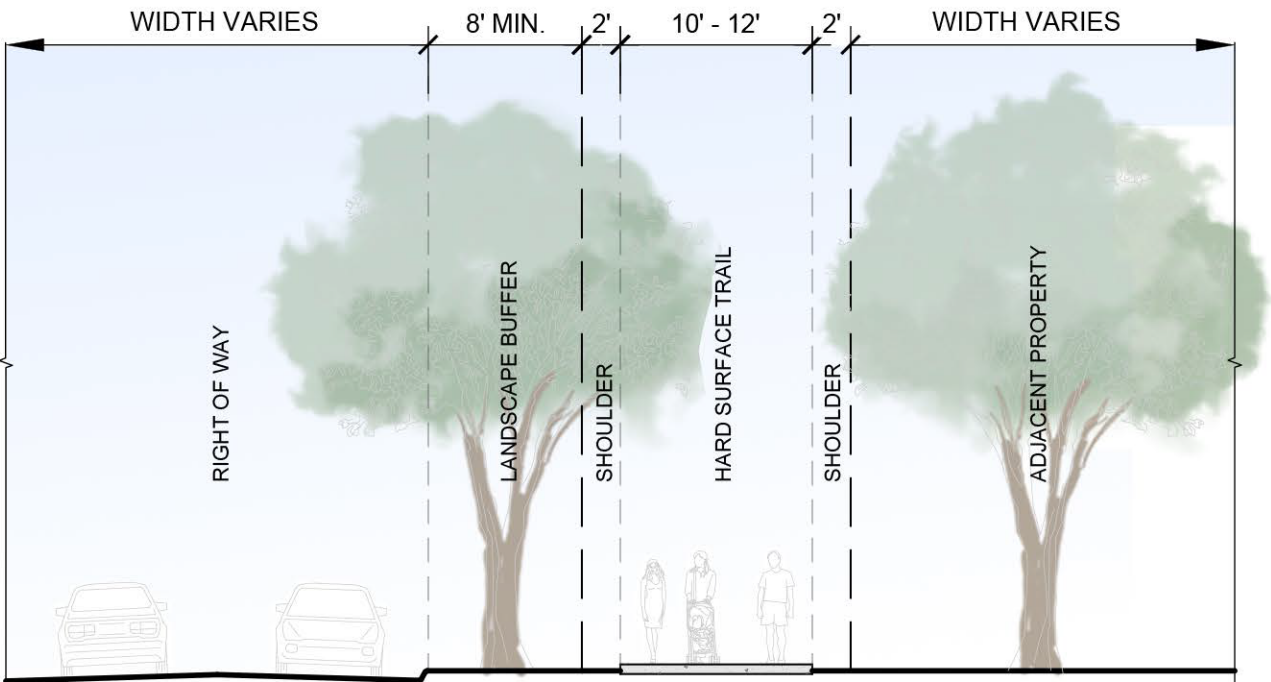
Multi-Modal Corridor

Multi-Modal Corridors are the principal trail corridors within the network, providing continuous, high-quality connections between major destinations and serving as the backbone of the trail system. These corridors often follow major transportation routes such as highways, arterials, rail lines, utility corridors, or other linear alignments that support direct travel across the community and beyond. Because they frequently traverse multiple jurisdictions, Multi-Modal Corridors may face greater right-of-way, regulatory, and coordination constraints than other trail types.

Multi-Modal Corridors prioritize direct, efficient travel between destinations with minimal delays, emphasizing continuous movement, connectivity, and transportation functions. They support a range of users, including commuters, students, residents, and visitors making longer-distance trips, while also accommodating recreational use. Given their transportation role, these facilities are more likely to serve faster-moving cyclists and other users traveling at higher speeds than on primarily recreational trails. Design decisions should focus on continuity, accessibility, wayfinding, and minimizing barriers to travel, with a primary emphasis on utilitarian and active mobility-focused trips while also supporting recreational needs.



Community Solutions (Credit: Town of Superior)



Trail through Underpass (Credit: PROS Staff)

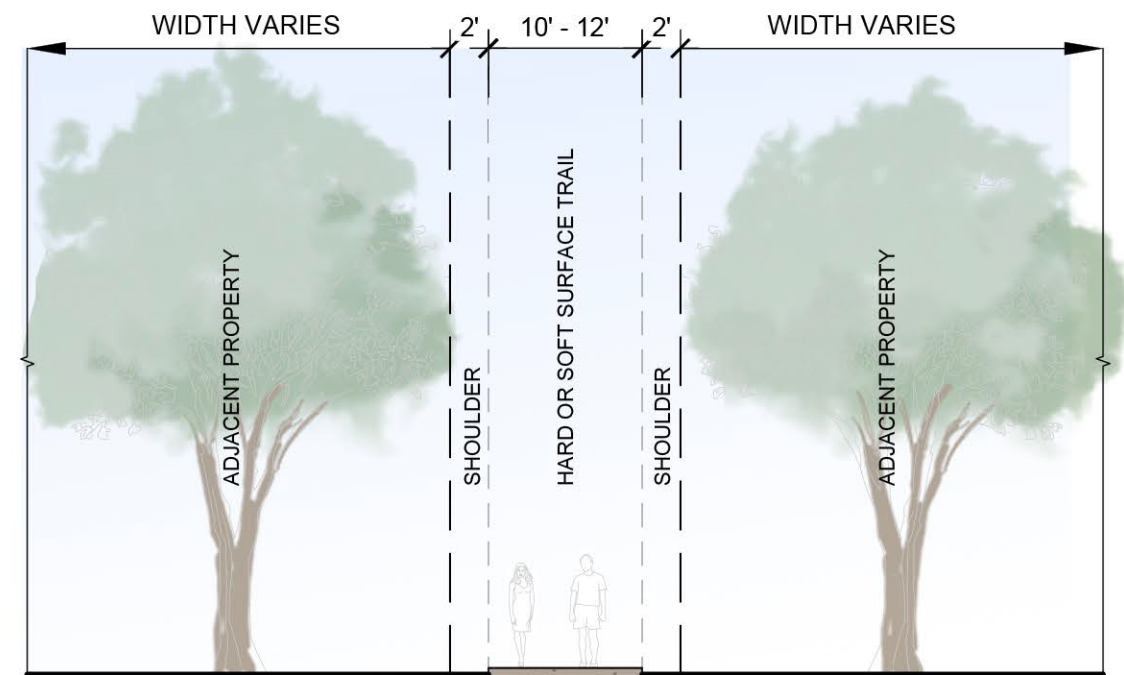
Greenway

Greenways are often located along streams, floodplains, riparian areas, open space, and other conserved natural landscapes. Greenways offer opportunities to experience natural environments and park settings while supporting environmental stewardship, habitat protection, and conservation objectives. Environmental conditions along these corridors may vary seasonally and in response to weather events, requiring thoughtful design and management.

Greenways should be designed to accommodate moderate to high volumes of active and passive users with a range of abilities and comfort levels. These corridors support both local and longer-distance trips while providing access to parks, open spaces, and natural amenities. Design should balance recreation, environmental sensitivity, and transportation functions, with an emphasis on continuity, connectivity, user comfort, and resource protection. Inherent seasonal and weather-dependent variations in use and environmental conditions should be considered in trail planning, design, and maintenance.



Cyclists on Coal Creek Trail (Credit: DTJ Design)



Coal Creek Trail Signage (Credit: DTJ Design)

Figure 18. Example Greenway (Coal Creek Trail) Cross Section

Connector

Connectors are secondary trails that link neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, open space, and other destinations to primary trails and to one another. These trails provide critical local connections within the broader trail network, improving access to everyday destinations and expanding the reach of the primary trail system. Located in a variety of contexts, including residential areas, commercial districts, parks, and community corridors, connectors support safe and convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other trail users.

Connectors serve a mix of users of varying ages, abilities, and trip purposes, with design focused on comfort, accessibility, and safety for pedestrians and slower-moving users. Connectors typically accommodate short to moderate local trips and should be designed to emphasize movement, continuity, and connectivity between destinations and the broader trail network. Design considerations should support frequent crossings, access points, and transitions between different land uses, while providing a seamless and intuitive user experience that encourages active transportation and recreation.

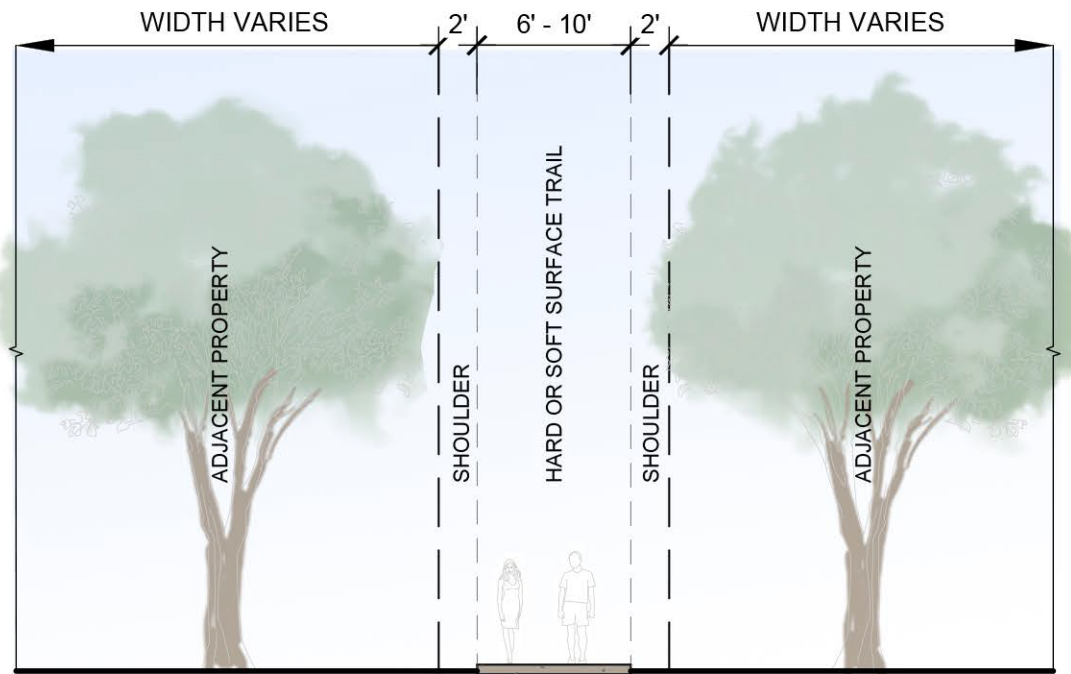
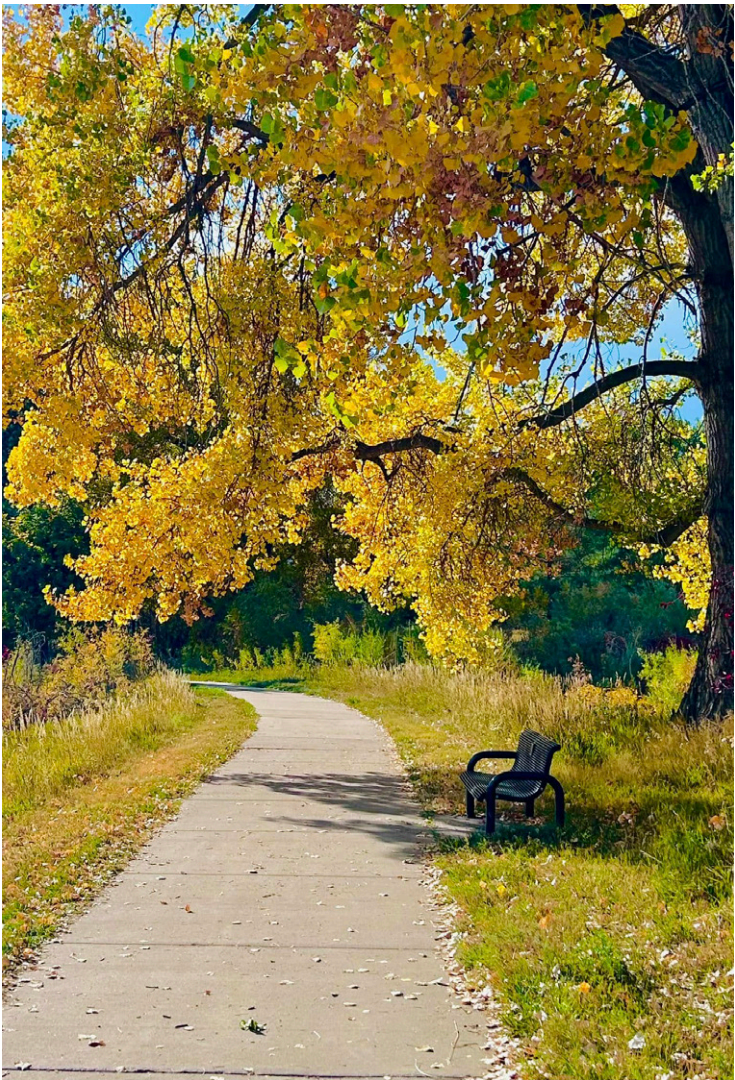


Figure 19. Typical Connector Trail Cross Section



Trail through Keith Helart Park (Credit: PROS Staff)



Trail through Keith Helart Park (Credit: PROS Staff)



Hardscape Trail (Credit: PROS Staff)



Trail near Water (Credit: PROS Staff)



Davidson Mesa Open Space Signage (Credit: PROS Staff)

5.4. COAL CREEK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The proposed Coal Creek Management Zone is intended to protect and manage the riparian area and floodplain while accommodating recreational access and compatible land uses. The Coal Creek Corridor is also a high priority within the Boulder County Regional Trail System. The TSP recommends establishing a Coal Creek Management Plan to recognize its unique regional natural resource value, prioritizing habitat conservation and resource protection while balancing recreation and connectivity. This Plan would support long-term corridor protection, and define measures to balance resources and trail access.

Louisville contains several riparian zones; however, Coal Creek emerged as a focal area during public engagement process, including the Trails Workshop. While there are other riparian corridors that are not specifically highlighted, the same recommendations may apply to those areas as appropriate.

Further study should define specific management practices and tools to protect undeveloped reaches of Coal Creek and establish criteria to guide future development within the corridor. This may include development buffer zones and mitigation measures to address impacts from undesignated (social) trails.

Trails along Coal Creek contain high levels of human activity, ecologically important habitats, and scenic views. Infrastructure in this area should be limited to soft-surface gravel trails, hard-surface concrete at underpasses and street crossings within the flood zone, wayfinding and interpretive signage, and private property access points. Emphasis should be placed on managed access, habitat protection, and restoration.

Key Attributes to be Considered

Use

High ecological value protected riparian watershed with active recreation uses (bike, joggers, walkers, birders). Conservation and protection are a priority.

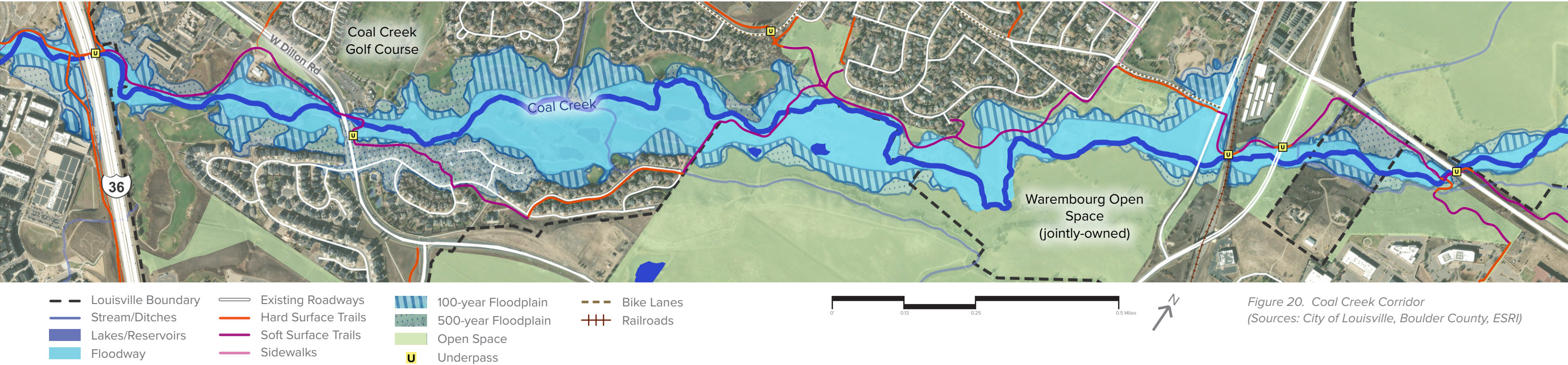
Experience

High levels of human activity and interaction, high value solitude experiences along segment of the corridor. Habitat and scenic views

Infrastructure Limited to moderate infrastructure includes 8-10 ft wide soft surface gravel trail material, hard surface concrete trails at flood zone underpasses and street crossings, wayfinding and interpretive signage. Private property drive access points. Highly managed human controls, high habitat protection and restoration

Examples

Coal Creek Corridor from Boulder County and Superior City limits downstream to City of Louisville and City of Lafayette.



5.5. TRAIL SYSTEM LAND ACQUISITION CRITERIA

The recreational trail system should apply criteria to evaluate future property or easement acquisitions, at a parcel-specific or area-specific scale. The criteria should be organized into defined value categories – recreational value, improvements to the overall trail system (connectivity and safety), conservation values, land use values, and cultural values. With the criteria in mind, the City will be able to make informed decisions on land and easement acquisitions, as well as have a broader understanding of the best use for a property.

These criteria are intentionally not weighted or prioritized. This approach allows the PROS Department to maintain flexibility in evaluating land conservation opportunities and responding to unique circumstances. For example, a property with high wildlife and habitat value (such as wetlands or an elk migration corridor) and a property with the potential for a critical trail connection may individually be important for different reasons, while a property that provides both benefits would be a significant opportunity.

These criteria allow the PROS Department to evaluate the characteristics of a property and its suitability for open space conservation, allowing for quick decision-making when land becomes available. It is recommended that Open Space staff strategically and creatively pursue public and private partnerships to identify and implement unique conservation opportunities.

5.6. SAFETY AND USER EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENTS

Safety and user experience should be central to all trail investments. Priority improvements include:

- Safer crossings at major roads and rail corridors
- Upgraded underpasses with lighting, drainage, and visibility
- Improved signage and wayfinding
- Consistent surfacing for durability and accessibility
- Amenities such as shade, seating, and restrooms where appropriate
- Education and communication should accompany physical improvements, including:
 - Trail etiquette guidance
 - E-bike regulations
 - Stewardship messaging
 - Seasonal safety updates



Spring Evening (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

5.7. DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

A formal Decision-Making Framework is essential for evaluating proposed trail projects in a consistent and transparent way. This framework allows the PROS Department to assess new, expanded, or upgraded trails using a set of guiding criteria rather than ad hoc decision-making.

The framework considers:

- Environmental sensitivity
- Connectivity value
- Safety and accessibility
- Community demand
- Feasibility and cost
- Maintenance and operational impacts

Rather than ranking criteria by priority, the framework allows flexibility for site-specific conditions and evolving community needs.

This approach supports:

- Defensible planning decisions
- Alignment with sustainability Goals
- Balanced recreation and conservation outcomes
- Efficient use of resources

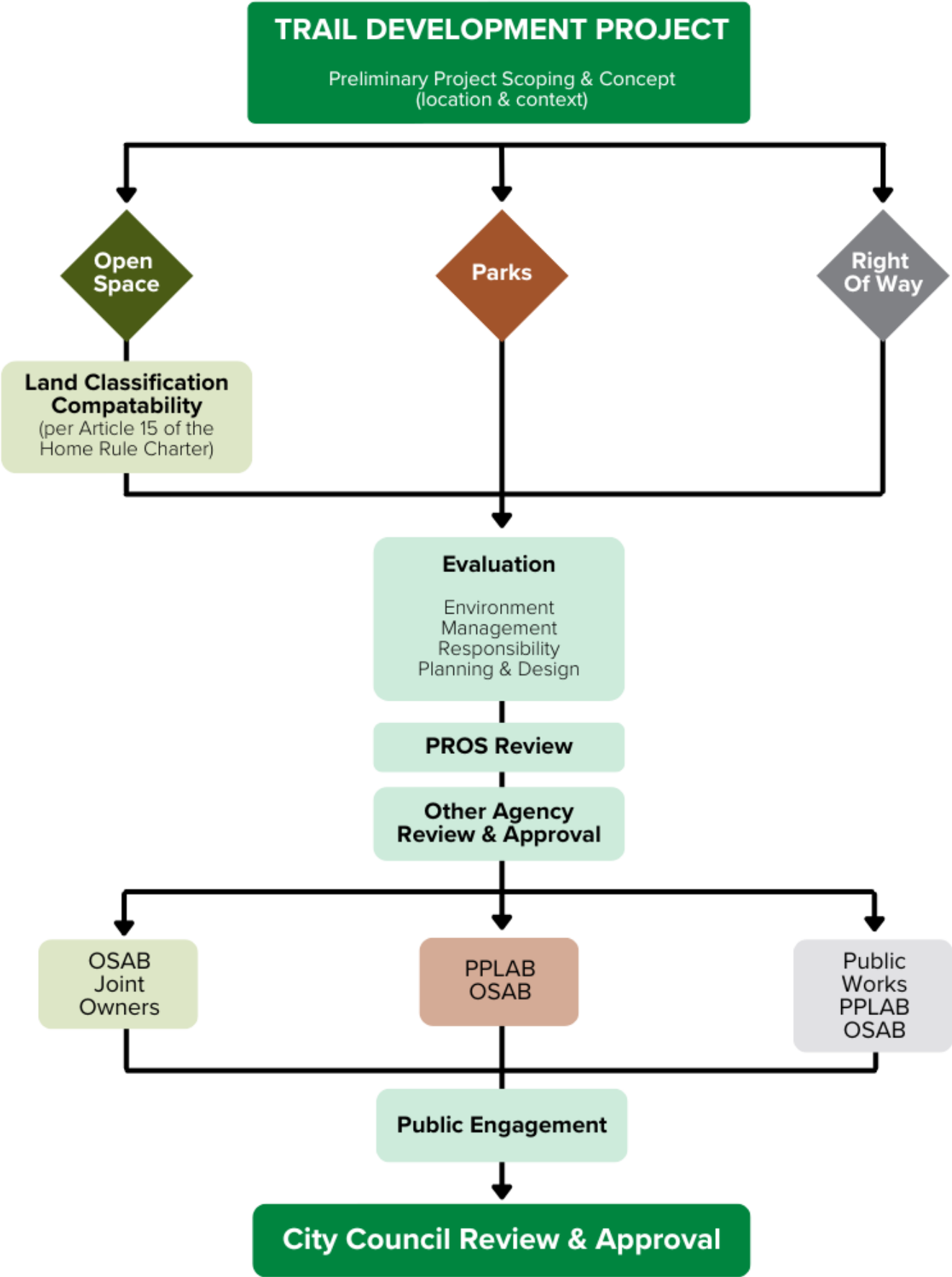


Figure 21. Decision-Making Flow Chart

5.8. OPERATIONS

The table below provides guidance on how to evaluate new, expanded or renovated trails capital improvement projects. The criteria are intended to be applied as a check to ensure projects are well-vetted prior to the PROS Department capital improvement program list of needs is finalized.

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK	
Environmental	Does the proposed trail or expanded trail alignment: Avoid sensitive habitat and areas of high-quality natural resources? Minimize fragmentation of habitat blocks? Utilize existing roads or disturbance corridors?
User Experience	Does the proposed trail or expanded trail alignment: Provide new or unique user experience? Provide an experience that the differently abled could benefit from in open space? Provide trail access and open space experiences for all age groups? Improve user experience and circulation? Mitigate or improve real and/or perceived user conflict?
Community Context	Does the proposed trail or expanded trail alignment: Impact the surrounding area either positively and/or negatively? Provide access to underserved communities?
Management and Operations	Construction, maintenance and management: How feasible is construction? Will the project result in any additional maintenance requirements? Is the proposed project compatible with the Open Space Classification in which it falls? Will the project mitigate against wildfire impacts (setbacks, materials)?

Table 7. Decision-Making Framework

Effective operations are essential to maintaining a safe, accessible, and sustainable trail system. Operations include routine maintenance, inspections, vegetation management, safety improvements, and response to environmental conditions such as flooding and wildfire risk. The PROS Staff should continue to prioritize proactive maintenance over reactive repairs to reduce long-term costs and improve user experience. Based on industry best practices, key operational priorities include:

- Regular inspection of trails, crossings, and underpasses
- Consistent maintenance of trail surfaces and drainage
- Vegetation management to improve visibility and reduce wildfire risk
- Repair of erosion, cracks, and structural deficiencies
- Snow and debris removal where appropriate
- Monitoring of high-use and high-risk locations
- Trail operations should be guided by:
 - o Open Space Classifications
 - o Trail design standards
 - o Environmental protection policies
 - o Safety priorities

Data collection and performance tracking should be strengthened to support planning and budgeting. A centralized system for tracking trail conditions, maintenance needs, and completed projects will improve accountability and resource allocation.



Ride Across Mesa (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

Management Tools

Conservation Associated with Trails

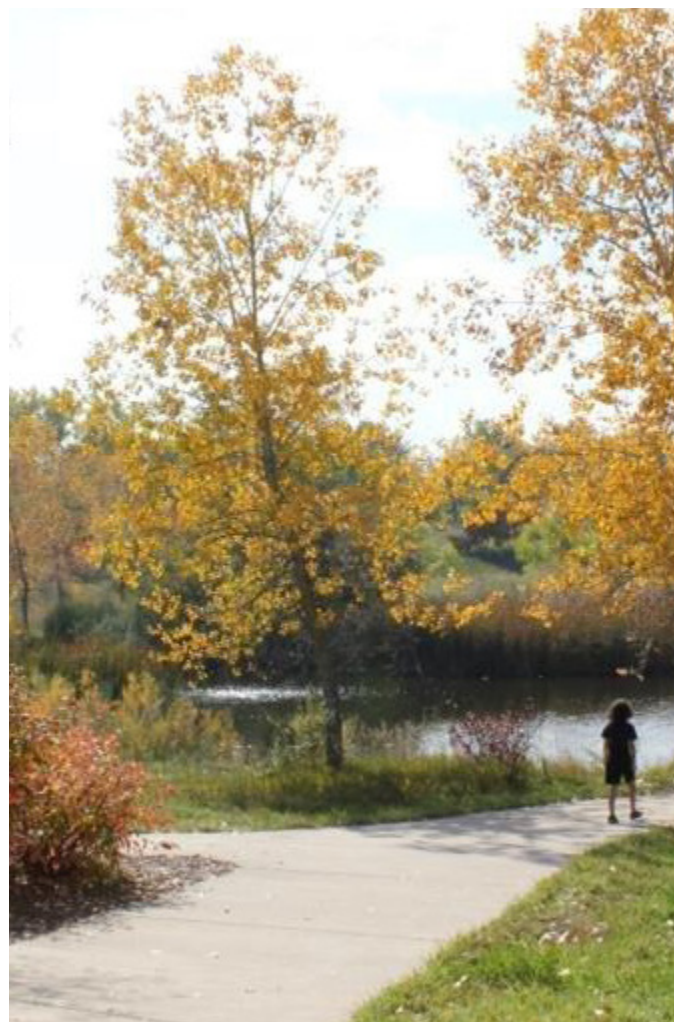
Conservation of open space is a top priority in trail planning, design, construction, and management decisions. All new trails are to be designed and constructed in a thoughtful and sustainable manner, consistent with the Trail Planning and Design Guidelines, Decision Making Framework for New Trails, and Open Space Classifications outlined in this plan.



Bicyclists on Trail (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

Trail Access Acquisitions

Trail access acquisitions are an important tool for completing gaps in Louisville’s trail network, improving connectivity, and enhancing the safety and usability of the overall system. Acquiring strategic parcels, trail easements, or access rights can provide critical links between existing trails, neighborhoods, parks, schools, employment centers, and regional trail corridors. In some cases, acquisitions may also support trail widening, grade-separated crossings, trailhead development, or other infrastructure improvements that improve user safety and accessibility. The City has a history of working with Boulder County, neighboring jurisdictions, and private property owners to secure trail connections that benefit both local and regional users. Because acquisition opportunities are often limited and occur unpredictably, the City should pursue a range of tools, including fee-simple acquisition, trail easements, and partnership agreements, to secure long-term public access. Prioritizing acquisitions that close network gaps, eliminate barriers, and improve route continuity will help create a more connected, safe, and resilient trail system while maximizing available Trail System Program resources.



Trail Near Lake (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

Parking

While dedicated trail system parking is desired to be kept to a minimum (i.e. users are encouraged to access trails directly from their place of residence or work) some formal parking opportunities are warranted to support equitable access and alleviate informal parking impacts within neighborhoods. Where appropriate, the goal is to ensure users park in designated areas at trailheads and access the Trail System via one of many portals. This strategy promotes fewer car trips (“More Boots and Bikes, Less Cars”) but also requires additional coordination, infrastructure, informational signage, and branding for trail users. Partnering with Public Works and regional transit providers to promote multi-modal systems and access to public transit systems to advertise trailheads and portals and encouraging the use of public transportation will reduce the stress on local neighborhoods. Trailheads located at the City limits and along major bus routes should be highlighted.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public partnerships are a useful tool for reducing the financial and management burden of property ownership, while also meeting other community objectives. The City has partnered with Boulder County and the City of Lafayette in the past to purchase and maintain properties for conservation and open space purposes. Grants are another partnership tool which allow the City to achieve Goals for purchasing, developing, or maintaining a property. In addition to partnering with organizations outside of the City, it is beneficial to coordinate with other City departments to assess how separate capital improvement and programmatic objectives can be achieved simultaneously. Private partnerships are another tool used to meet conservation and outdoor recreation Goals, on a case-by-case basis. For example, access or trail easements and long-term leases with private landowners can allow the City to secure tracts of land, which contribute to the broader trail and open space system.

Open Space Stewardship

The City of Louisville is faced with a shrinking supply of undeveloped private land which increases the need for various Strategies when properties suited for open space or conservation become available. Land protection tools such as acquisition, and public or private partnerships can be used to employ the most efficient financial strategy. These tools can be used to ensure that most lands with the greatest conservation value (e.g., wildlife or scenic value) are protected. Guidelines to evaluate opportunities for future open space conservation are designed to be flexible and to respond to site-specific considerations and unique circumstances. The guidelines are purposefully not presented as prioritized or weighted, which could be very limiting. The following stewardship topics should be considered and integrated on an ongoing basis.

Inclusion and Equity

A core objective of the trail system is to promote equity and accommodate all members of society in publicly available and accessible resources. Recommendations to encourage and improve inclusion and equity are:

- Strive to design and implement a fully accessible one-mile-long trail loop.
- Consider ways and means to encourage underserved communities to enjoy and learn about nature, the outdoors, and the open space and Trail System of Louisville.
- Connect with existing programs and organizations that can help to increase inclusivity and accessibility with regards to open space and the use of trails in Louisville.
- Coincide transit stops with trail portals.
- Develop an equipment library for sharing expensive and hard-to-come-by gear.
- Assist in establishing a volunteer ‘friends of trails’ with group whom share common interest to support equitable trail access.
- Promote a volunteer based Open Space and Trails Ambassador Program within communities that historically were not included to share information at events in multiple languages, including passing out trail maps.
- Evaluate trails and other opportunities for universal ADA accessibility.



Community engagement at Davidson Mesa trailhead (Credit: DTJ Design)

5.9. SYSTEM MONITORING

Adaptive Management

The TSP should be implemented through measurable Goals and ongoing evaluation. Performance monitoring allows the City to assess progress, identify challenges, and adjust Strategies as conditions change.

Based on industry best practices, key performance measures may include:

- Miles of new or improved trails
- Number of gap closures and safe crossings completed
- Reduction in crash incidents near trail facilities
- Condition ratings of trail segments
- Participation in stewardship and volunteer programs
- User satisfaction and feedback

Adaptive management ensures that decisions remain responsive to:

- Environmental conditions
- Community needs
- Funding availability
- Emerging technologies and best practices
- The needs for transparency and accountability in open government
- Advisory Board priorities and City Council directives

Implementation should be flexible and responsive to:

- Changing environmental conditions
- New funding opportunities or reduced funding
- Emerging technologies
- Community priorities
- Regional coordination efforts
- Action Items may be refined over time based on performance data and lessons learned.

Staffing and Capacity

Successful implementation of the TSP requires sufficient staffing and technical capacity. As trail usage continues to increase, additional and/or designated staff resources are needed to support:

- Maintenance and inspections
- Education and outreach
- Volunteer coordination
- Data collection and monitoring
- Project planning, design and implementation

The City should periodically assess staffing needs and consider dedicated roles for trail management, stewardship, and community engagement. Investing in staff capacity will promote long-term system health through allowing more proactive maintenance, enabling regulatory enforcement and ensuring the trail network satisfies evolving community needs.

Coordination with Emergency and Environmental Management

Trails play an important role in emergency response, evacuation, and environmental resilience. Management practices should align with:

- Wildfire risk reduction and mitigation Strategies
- Floodplain management
- Habitat restoration
- Climate resilience planning

Operational coordination should include:

- Underpass drainage improvements
- Trail closures during hazardous conditions
- Emergency access planning

Trails should be recognized as both recreational assets and critical infrastructure for community safety.

Performance Measures

To ensure accountability and transparency, progress should be evaluated using measurable indicators such as:

- Miles of trail constructed or improved
- Number of trail gaps closed
- Number of safe crossings completed
- Reduction in trail-related crashes
- Condition ratings of trail segments
- Participation in volunteer and stewardship programs
- Community satisfaction and feedback
- Annual reporting to City Council and advisory boards will support informed decision-making and continuous improvement.



Bikeway Underpass (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

5.10. COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

Clear communication and education are critical to the success of the Trail System. Users need to understand how to use trails safely and responsibly, how to navigate the system, and how their actions impact natural resources. Ongoing communication builds public trust, reduces conflicts, and increases community stewardship.

Based on industry best practices, a coordinated communications strategy should include:

- Consistent trail signage and wayfinding
- Trail etiquette and safety messaging
- E-bike regulations and speed guidance
- Seasonal updates (flooding, fire risk, closures)
- Stewardship and conservation education

Communication tools should include:

- Trailhead signage
- City website and interactive maps
- Social media and newsletters
- Printed materials and QR codes
- Multilingual outreach, including Spanish-language resources

Education efforts should focus on:

- Leave No Trace principles
- Respect for native plants and wildlife, and their habitats
- Shared-use trail behavior
- Volunteer opportunities

How To Effectively Communicate The Trails Program

- Knowing the target audience
- Being intentional
- Being relevant
- Being up to date with current trends and practices

Education And Enforcement

The purpose of education and enforcement should be to increase awareness of trail users - regardless of their level of experience and familiarity with the trail system. Examples of educational topics include nature interpretation, learning about the value of open space, system regulations, contextual cultural and historical significance, outdoor ethics (e.g. Leave no Trace), and trail etiquette. While education can largely be achieved with intentional signage, it does require education by staff and/or volunteers. In this regard, a volunteer Open Space and Trails Ambassadors Program could be powerful to help convey and educate people about the natural environment, as well as proper etiquette and respectful behavior.

Branding and Wayfinding

Effective branding and wayfinding within the trail and share pathway system helps users to understand the overall system, identify their location, and make choices about easy-to-find routes, preferred loops and intended experiences. The PROS Department is currently working on an Open Space and Trails Wayfinding and Signage program. This program should be fully implemented to address branding of routes and promote a wayfinding system that is informative, consistent, durable, legible and aesthetically pleasing. The program should be updated and expanded over time as the system is further developed and can be outwardly promoted to residents and visitors as a uniquely designed sustainable recreational economic strategy.

Trail Etiquette

Trail etiquette is about respectful behavior and being considerate towards other trail users. Continued and proactive communication about trail etiquette is essential and an ongoing endeavor. Continued collaboration between the PROS Department and the Louisville Police Department will be essential for educating the public on appropriate trail etiquette and enforcing applicable regulations when violated.

E-Bikes

E-bikes are recognized as a growing industry with increasing users throughout the country and the demand for e-bike trail access is increasing. The City of Louisville’s current strategy is to allow Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on all trails and pathways. Class 3 e-bikes are limited to on-street use. All trail users are expected to observe a 15 MPH speed limit throughout the trail system. The current recommendation is to continue to remain vigilant and stay ahead of the curve to understand emerging trends, community needs/user demands, and data-based information, and to adjust the Strategies as needed. Promoting regulations such as speed limits and other trends from local and regional jurisdictions is important as the Open Space staff continue to work with City communications and law enforcement agencies on future policies.

5.11. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The TSP establishes a clear framework for guiding the future of Louisville’s trails and shared use pathways as an integrated system that supports mobility, recreation, community health, and environmental stewardship. Informed by extensive community engagement, technical analysis, and coordination with regional partners, the Plan recognizes trails as some of Louisville’s most widely used PROS amenities and as critical infrastructure that connect neighborhoods, parks, open spaces, schools, employment centers, and regional destinations. The recommendations in this Plan balance the need to close connectivity gaps, improve safety, and enhance user experience with the responsibility to protect ecologically important landscapes, manage undesignated (social) trails, and steward open space resources. Together, these Strategies provide a unified approach to building a safer, more legible, and more resilient Trail System that reflects community values and supports Louisville’s long term Goals.



Park Ranger on Trail (Credit: PROS Staff)

Next Steps

Following City Council adoption as part of the PROS Guidebook, implementation of the Trail System Plan (TSP) will occur incrementally as resources allow. Successful execution will depend on continued collaboration between the PROS Department, Public Works Department, Advisory Boards, outside agencies, and the community – as well as the pursuit of diverse funding and partnership opportunities. Approaching this Plan as a living document, and revisiting its Strategies regularly, the City can adapt to changing conditions and ensure its Trail System continues to serve Louisville’s people, places, and natural resources for generations to come.

The TSP identifies the following as top overall priorities to be pursued following Plan adoption:

- 1. Formalize Trail Standards and Policies:** Consolidate existing trail standards, policies, procedures, and management practices into a comprehensive framework to support implementation of the TSP. This effort should clarify management roles and responsibilities across PROS divisions and City departments while advancing data-driven tools for monitoring trail use and conditions to inform future planning, maintenance, and investment decisions.
- 2. Integrate Trail Projects into the Capital Improvement Program:** Coordinate implementation of trail-related capital projects identified in the TSP and the City’s Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to advance shared safety and connectivity priorities. Early efforts should focus on high-priority improvements such as neighborhood connections, roadway crossings, wayfinding, and Strategies that reduce conflicts among trail users.
- 3. Advance and Adopt the Undesignated (Social) Trail Decision-Making Framework:** Continue working with the public, Advisory Boards, and City Council to refine and adopt a decision-making framework for evaluating restoration, removal, or formalization of undesignated (social) trails. Building upon work completed to date, additional public engagement will help ensure future policies reflect community values while supporting long-term stewardship of the trail system.
- 4. Strengthen Trail System Management Capacity:** Evaluate staffing roles, responsibilities, and resource needs to support planning, design, construction, maintenance, and long-term management of the City’s trail system. Hire a new FTE to advance educational and awareness programs and priority TSP initiatives. Aligning organizational capacity with the Goals of the TSP will help preserve existing assets while supporting future trail improvements.



06.

APPENDICES

6.1. APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

Agricultural Uses

The use of land for grazing and for growing and cultivation of crops and plants.

Benchmarking

A measurement of the quality of an organization’s policies, products, programs, strategies, and their comparison with standard measurements, or similar measurements of its peers. Parks and recreation agencies can build a customized benchmark report based on their specific agency size, type, and geographic region through resources such as the NRPA. The objectives of benchmarking are:

- To determine what and where improvements are called for.
- To analyze how other organizations achieve their high-performance levels.
- To use this information to improve performance.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Comprehensive plan for maintaining, enhancing, and expanding parks and recreation infrastructure. Helps prioritize improvement needs of the department to assist in the planning and budgeting process.

Cost Recovery Rate

Cost Recovery Rate indicates the percentage of costs the Department recovers from its revenue.

Critical Wildlife Habitat

An environment that supports plants and wildlife by providing food, water, shelter, and space. High-quality habitat includes diverse, functional native plant communities that meet the structural and nutritional needs of wildlife.

Director

The director of the department of parks and recreation or their designated agent or employee. The director shall make and publish such regulations, not inconsistent with the terms of this title, as necessary for the orderly use and management of the city’s park and recreation facilities and programs.

Ecologically Important Areas

Areas including native plants, native wildlife, and their habitats.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

The full-time equivalent (FTE) position is a standardized measurement used to determine the total number of full-time employees a company would have if all employees worked full-time hours. It accounts for the actual hours worked by both full-time and part-time employees, converting them into equivalent full-time positions.

Gaps

Discrepancies between current conditions and desired future outcomes within the City of Louisville parks, recreation, open space, or Trail System.

Greenway

Linear corridors that link together natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Help conserve a variety of unique resources, create many types of recreational opportunities, and help link these spaces together.

Native Plants

Plant species that occur naturally in Louisville habitats without direct or indirect human actions.

Native Wildlife

Animal species that occur naturally in Louisville habitats without direct or indirect human actions.



Trail through open space (Credit: PROS Staff)

Open Space

Land that is included in the open space zone district pursuant to Article 15 of the City of Louisville Home Rule Charter.

- **Preserve:** Open space land with no or very low level of visitation. This land consists of:
 - o Moderate to high level of relative ecological importance with lower levels of habitat fragmentation.
 - o Preserves and promotes the long-term viability of native plants and native wildlife, restoration potential, and ecologically sound agricultural use.
 - o No or very low levels of passive recreational activities shall be permitted
- **Protect Land:** Open space land with moderate to moderately high level of visitation. This land consists of:
 - o Moderate to high level of relative ecological importance with higher levels of habitat fragmentation.
 - o Management may permit passive recreation activities so long as they are designed to encourage resource protection, long-term ecological viability of native plants and native wildlife, restoration, ecologically sensitive agricultural use, re-search, and education, and they prevent any adverse effects on Preserve Land.
- **Visitor Land:** Open space land with moderate to high level of visitation. This land consists of:
 - o Lower level of relative ecological importance with higher levels of habitat fragmentation.
 - o Recreational opportunities are designed to encourage resource protection with minimal landscaping using native plants and limited irrigation.
- **Other Land:** Open space land with high level of visitation. This land consists of:
 - o Include construction of entryway features and trail rests, planting of trees, and other buffer plantings. Reasonable attempts shall be made to minimize the impact of entryway features and trail rests on the land, and to use native trees and plants.

Park Land

Land acquired or owned as a whole or in part by the city that is:

- Designated, maintained, or reserved by the city for such recreation uses as are not prohibited by the city; or
- Composed primarily of irrigated turf designed for public use.

Parks

All park land, as defined above, and all grounds, roadways, avenues, parking lots, and areas and recreation facilities therein.

- **Community Park:** A park that has an area of 15 acres or more.
- **Neighborhood Park:** A park that is 1-15 acres in size.
- **Pocket Park:** A park that has an area of 1 acre or less.

Passive Recreation

Recreational activities that are determined by the City Council, after consideration of the recommendations of the Open Space Advisory Board, have minimally harmful effects on native plants and native wildlife. Include activities such as hiking, photography, or nature studies, and if specifically designated, bicycling, or fishing.

Peer Cities

Cities that are relatively similar in key demographic indicators (population, affordability, diversity, etc.) that are used as a comparison to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of Louisville’s parks and recreation offerings.

Public Right-Of-Way

Any street, road, sidewalk, alleyway, bike or pedestrian trail or path, or any other right-of-way owned by the city.

Quartile

Statistical value that divides the number of data points into four parts, or quarters.

Recreation facilities

Specialized recreation facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, ballfields, and similar facilities under the supervision of the city department of parks and recreation.

Shelter

Includes, without limitation, any cover or protection from the elements other than clothing.

Trail Types

- **Bicycle Lane:** A designated portion of roadway that is designed for use preferentially or exclusively by cyclists.
- **Grade Separated Crossing:** Provides continuity of a bicycle/pedestrian facility over or under a barrier, typically in the form of a bridge or underpass. It is desirable to provide a grade-separated crossing to separate multi-use pathway users from conflicts with motor vehicle traffic.
- **Hard Surface Trail:** A trail that is paved, typically with asphalt or concrete.
- **Local Path:** A trail (paved or unpaved) that creates short connections within neighborhoods, parks, or community areas. Local paths typically provide access to nearby destinations and connect to larger trail or street networks
- **Multi-Modal Path:** A paved, off-street facility designed to accommodate multiple types of non-motorized users, such as people walking, biking, or using mobility devices. Shared paths are typically wider than sidewalks with consistent design standards to allow safe two-way travel.
- **Recreational Trail:** Trails that are used for recreational purposes, such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, bicycling, etc., along routes of scenic, natural, historic, geologic, or water-oriented interest.
- **Sidepath (or Detached Sidewalk):** A trail that runs parallel to a roadway, separated by a buffer such as grass, curb, or landscaping. Sidepaths provide a comfortable alternative to riding or walking directly in the roadway while maintaining connectivity along major travel corridors.
- **Soft Surface Trail/Unpaved Path:** Trails that remain unpaved and use natural materials such as crusher fines to construct the final trail. Soft surface trails are typically used for recreation, nature access, or connections where paving is not feasible or desired, and they may support both walking and bicycling depending on conditions.
- **Undesignated (Social) Trail:** An unofficial, user-created path that forms over time as users take detours off designated trails. With enough foot traffic, these paths get worn down and can look like an official trail. They have no “improved” surface materials, are not maintained by the City and may lead to erosion, flooding, and habitat fragmentation.



Trail through open space at sunset (Credit: PROS Staff)

6.2. APPENDIX B: LINKS TO SUPPORTING PLANS

To access the supporting plans, please visit Engage Louisville at

<https://www.engagelouisvilleco.org/join-the-journey>



Coyote Run Open Space (Credit: Life in Louisville Photo Contest)

6.3. APPENDIX C: HABITAT INTEGRITY ANALYSIS RESOURCES

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6.4. APPENDIX D: POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

GRANT NAME	AWARD TYPE	DOLLAR VALUE and LOCAL MATCH
Colorado Parks and Wildlife - Outdoor Equity Grant Program	- This was saved at 2:44pm - Outdoor educational programs - Outdoor sports programming - Outdoor space improvement - Gear purchases - In-school programming - After school programming - Summer camps - Job and career training programs	Up to \$100,000 (max)
Colorado Parks and Wildlife - Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative and Grant Program	- Development, coordination, and facilitation of a regional coalition - Governance structure and charter development - Regional conservation and recreation visioning and planning - Recreation and conservation assessments - Mapping, data collection and surveys - Public outreach and stakeholder engagement efforts including traditionally underrepresented communities - Webpage design, marketing and communications	Partnership capacity grants: up to \$150,000 Planning grants: up to \$250,000 Local match- 10%

GRANT NAME	AWARD TYPE	DOLLAR VALUE and LOCAL MATCH
Colorado Parks and Wildlife – Non-Motorized Trails Grants	The Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant Program funds projects to continue to improve outdoor recreation opportunities, including trail construction, maintenance, planning, and support while protecting wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources. Funded by Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP), eligible project types include trail construction, maintenance, planning, and support. Local, county, federal and tribal government agencies, recreation and metro districts, and charitable organizations (tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are invited to apply.	- Construction and Maintenance – no minimum, up to \$250,000 - Planning and Support – no minimum, up to \$45,000 - Trails Stewardship – no minimum, up to \$150,000 - Match: 25% of the total grant request, 10% of that minimum amount must be cash
Colorado Parks and Wildlife – Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants	Administered locally by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), the program focuses on land acquisition to create new outdoor spaces, or the development of existing sites and facilities dedicated to public outdoor recreation.	Varies by project
National Park Service - Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants	- Provides funding to enhance recreation opportunities in rural and urban communities. - For creation of new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors. - Projects may include sports fields, playgrounds, walking trails, community gardens, and more. - Land acquisition, site development, or renovation of existing facilities are all possible ORLP projects.	ORLP is dollar for dollar match, meaning it funds and reimburses up to 50% of all project costs.

GRANT NAME	AWARD TYPE	DOLLAR VALUE and LOCAL MATCH
Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Base Programs	- Includes separate grant opportunities for Community Impact, Land Acquisition, and Pathways Community Impact: The Community Impact program funds the planning and/or construction of new or upgraded parks, trails, natural areas, and other outdoor amenities. Funding may also be used for stewardship work. Land Acquisition: Competitive projects consider opportunities for passive public recreation access; wildlife habitat and migration corridors; critical watersheds, waterways, and riparian ecosystems; scenic viewsheds and greenways; and open spaces, particularly those that serve disproportionately impacted communities. Eligible projects are fee-simple land acquisitions that provide public access. GOCO also considers conservation easements when tax credits are financially insufficient or impractical. Pathways: This program supports high-level visioning processes, equity initiatives, climate resilience efforts, and community engagement strategies that build networks and partnerships. Projects must address current issues affecting Coloradans, prioritizing proposals that consider disproportionately impacted communities and meaningfully involve community members in project design and implementation. - Organizations eligible for GOCO funding include Colorado cities, towns, and counties; Title 32 special districts; land conservation organizations that advance the acquisition of open space; political subdivisions of the State of Colorado whose missions are to identify, manage, or acquire open space and natural areas; and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.	Community Impact: \$100,000 - \$2,000,000 per project Land Acquisition: up to \$3,000,000 per project Pathways: \$100,000 - \$300,000 per project

GRANT NAME	AWARD TYPE	DOLLAR VALUE and LOCAL MATCH
Conservation Service Corps Grant	In partnership with the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA), GOCO offers funding for our partners to hire conservation service corps for outdoor recreation and natural resource stewardship projects. CYCA is a statewide coalition of eight accredited conservation service corps. These organizations employ and train youth, young adults, and veterans (typically ages 14-25) to address important conservation and stewardship issues. Through this work, young people contribute to their communities while gaining valuable job skills and leadership experience, preparing them for future natural resource careers. Most corps members receive a stipend and an Ameri-Corps education award for college tuition or to reduce student loans. Together, CYCA-accredited corps serve more than 1,700 participants a year. Project types include: - Trail construction and maintenance - Tamarisk, Russian olive, and other invasive species mitigation (chainsaw crews and/or pesticide/herbicide application available) - Fence installation and deconstruction - Wildlife habitat improvement - Riparian restoration - Beetle kill hazard mitigation (chainsaw crews available) - Forest health activities (chainsaw crews available)	Up to \$1.5 million statewide (\$1,200,000 per year to the program and another \$500,000 through GOCO's investment in Colorado Parks and Wildlife.)

GRANT NAME	AWARD TYPE	DOLLAR VALUE and LOCAL MATCH
RESTORE Colorado Program	The RESTORE Colorado Program (Restoration and Stewardship of Outdoor Resources and the Environment) employs a collaborative funding model to support large-scale habitat restoration and stewardship projects across public and private lands. The program is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and funded by NFWF, GOCO, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Gates Family Foundation, OXY, Chevron, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. By pooling funder resources, RESTORE provides a single grant application that can support larger, multi-benefit projects that enhance wildlife resilience, ecosystems, and communities across the state. What's more, funding from a combination of state, federal, and private sources allows for more flexibility to get projects done. Project types include: • Watershed resilience (wetlands, riparian, and upland habitats including forests) • Eastern Colorado grasslands • Sagebrush rangelands • Big game winter range and migration corridors Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies and other political subdivisions of the state, local and municipal governments, Tribes, and educational institutions.	TBD for 2026 In 2025, approximately \$4.5 million were available
Boulder County – Parks and Open Space Small Grants Program	Parks and Open Space awards small grants for research and biological inventories on open space lands. These research projects and inventories provide valuable data to monitor management practices, advance our ability to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change, and improve resources and park visitor experiences.	Up to \$12,500
Boulder County – Strategic Fuels Mitigation Grant	The purpose of these funds is to support large landscape and community-wide forest and grassland management projects to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protect water supplies, and promote resilient ecosystems.	\$2 million annual budget across all projects, divided between two grant cycles (Spring and Fall) Minimum 50% match required

GRANT NAME	AWARD TYPE	DOLLAR VALUE and LOCAL MATCH
Conservation Trust Fund (CTF)	The Department of Local Affairs distributes Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) dollars quarterly, on a per capita basis, to over 470 eligible local governments: counties, cities, towns, and Title 32 special districts that provide park and recreation services in their service plans. Funding can be used for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of new conservation sites or for capital improvements or maintenance for recreational purposes on any public site. A public site is defined by the department as a publicly owned site, or a site in which a public entity/local government holds an interest in land or water.	Varies annually
US Department of Transportation: Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program	Grants will be rewarded to support planning and operational initiatives to prevent serious injury on roads and streets. Applicants can register for a planning and demonstration grant or an implementation grant. • Awards will improve roadway safety planning for around 75 percent of the nation's population. • About half of communities awarded are new direct Federal funding recipients to USDOT. • Almost half of communities are in rural areas. • 44 percent of communities receiving funding have populations under 50,000. • Over 97 percent of first-year award recipients have grant agreements in place and over 57 percent of second-year award recipients have grant agreements in place.	\$982 Million awarded to 521 communities to date Recipients must contribute a minimum of 20% of the total eligible project costs from non-Federal sources
Environmental Justice Grant Program	The grant program will fund projects that measure, prevent, or reduce pollution to protect public health or restore the environment.	No local match required
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program	The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program provides grants for surface transportation infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impact. The eligibility requirements of BUILD allow project sponsors, including state and local governments, counties, Tribal governments, transit agencies, and port authorities, to pursue multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects that are more difficult to fund through other grant programs.	There is a local match that is usually around 20%.

Table 8. Possible Funding Matrix

City of
Louisville

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