

3. Vision to Reality: Implementation





Grand Valley High Student with Proposed Trail Mile Marker with High School Mascots for Each High School's Segment

Vision to Reality: Implementation

Start building the trailway now and don't stop until it is done!

Key Implementation Components

1. Agree upon a vision and action plan.
2. Build community support.
3. Commit agency staff and community leadership to champion the plan.
4. Recruit project administration and professional services.
5. Begin securing land, rights-of-way and permits.
6. Identify and secure funding sources and partners.
7. Initiate pilot projects and phasing scheme.
8. Plan for follow-through and long-term continuity.

Scope and Cost Implications

This master plan provides the vision and steps for realizing the Colorado River Trail and River Corridor plan. The scope of the plan is large and, indeed, it may take a generation or more to realize all of the improvements envisioned in this plan. This chapter lays out the “roadmap” for taking the plan from vision to reality in a systematic series of steps with emphasis on accomplishing clear and publicly visible objectives each year. A key to this will be to understand the scope of the project, the costs, the likely available resources and how to build and maintain strong community support for and commitment to completing the project.



The Colorado River Trail and Corridor plan calls for building 50 miles of paved multi-use trail along with local primitive and loop trails and preserving 10,000 to 20,000 acres of open space and agricultural lands through a cooperative conservation process. Estimated cost to implement all of the recommended improvements may run from \$ 65 to \$ 95 million—a seemingly daunting amount. While realization of the total plan vision may take generations, LOVA and its partners should start with a realizable 5-year effort.

While these funding levers are not guaranteed, the projections below can help determine the scale of work that can be accomplished each year as well as setting a realistic 5-year target.



KEY POINTS

This a long term project that can be built in logical increments

Agree on a 5-year action plan and pilot projects

Build and maintain community support

Assess local resources, policies and potential seed money

Put an effective leadership program in place with people to champion the effort

Engage capable staff services and expertise to administer the project

Local Public Funds:	\$ 1,000,000
State Funds (GOCO, Legacy, DOW, CDOT):	5,000,000
Federal Public Funds (LWCF, TEA):	1,000,000
Foundations:	500,000
Corporations:	500,000
Individuals:	100,000
Volunteers, Youth and Local In-Kind:	250,000
Total:	\$ 8,350,000

Table: 3.1 Overview of Potential Funding Sources Over 5 Years

Phasing and Roster of Projects

Pilot Projects

Creating and sticking to a realistic plan implementation schedule is vital to, and will ensure the success, credibility and continuity of the project. The process begins with identifying a project or projects for immediate

implementation (begin construction or acquisition within 12-18 months) and creating a strategic roster of projects for implementation over the next three to five years. Several criteria for selecting and prioritizing projects include:



- Identified By Local Communities & Stakeholders as High Priority

- Broadest Range of Community and User Benefits
- High Visibility and Demonstrates the Concept and Mission of the Plan
- Provides a Vital Regional Linkage or Network Opportunity
- Provides a Vital Resource Preservation Opportunity
- Helps Form the Spine of a Larger System or Network
- Ties In With Multiple Objectives (i.e. Drainage & Transportation)
- Land or Financial Resources Available or Potentially Available Soon
- Can Be Completed Within a 1-5 Year Time Frame
- Opportunity May Be Lost If Not Pursued Now

Follow-through is key to maintaining the credibility and thereby the success of the project. Adopting and sticking to a roster of projects with demonstrated progress—building logical and meaningful segments each year—would do much to promote long-term continuity. The following pilot projects are recommended for immediate implementation:

1. Pursue with CDOT the trail link from West Glenwood to South Canyon Creek.
2. Build trail links and pedestrian bridges linking New Castle and Silt to the I-70 Service Roads—ultimately connecting New Castle to Rifle.

3. Support Battlement Mesa and Parachute in linking their communities with a trail.
4. Work with landowners, mining companies, hunters and anglers to preserve floodplain, agricultural lands, and the riparian environment.
5. Work with Grand Valley High School students and other schools to pursue local trails and interpretive projects.
6. Work with New Castle, Silt, Rifle, Parachute and Battlement Mesa to pursue development of the “Riverfront Commons” areas with trails, open spaces and other amenities.
7. Work with the RE-2 School District, Silt and New Castle to construct a safe trail along the north side of Hwy 6 accessing Coal Ridge High School.
8. Work with CDOT to improve Hwy 6 as a safe on-street bike route.

Building and Maintaining Community Support

Solid community support for the project is critical. Valley residents, business people and agency partners must not only be inspired by the plan, but also embrace it over the long term. Clearly, the community needs to be kept informed, involved and realize a direct benefit from the project. This can be accomplished by:

- **Engaging stakeholders and leaders in the planning and implementation process** through presentations, surveys, planning workshops, volunteer projects and special events. The

LOVA Trail Group should lead and coordinate this effort, perhaps through the creation of an outreach sub-committee.

- **Having an effective public information program** including clear, easy-to-read reports, brochures, web-site updates, posters, and progress presentations. Several prominently located “status boards” should be posted at prominent locations including existing access points along the river corridor. The status boards should show the plan map and key objectives and a contact number for more information or to volunteer. The boards should be regularly updated to show progress and need for suggestions, additional support and funds.
- **Prioritizing, completing and building public awareness of projects** to demonstrate the benefits of the Colorado River Trail and Corridor project—particularly to local towns and neighborhoods—that will provide access to the river and linkage to neighborhoods and recreational destinations.
- **Immediately moving forward with pilot projects** that demonstrate the plan’s vision as well as completing and dedicating additional projects or project elements year by year.
- **Having a quality management and maintenance program** that includes an effective citizen/user feedback mechanism to provide a responsive ear for each user concern.

Leadership Models

Organization and leadership are the two most important considerations in taking a plan from concept to reality. Key functions of leadership include:

- Citizen Advocacy to Champion the Plan
- Staff Oversight and Advocacy
- Build and Maintain Effective Partnerships Among Agencies, Jurisdictions and Stakeholders
- Garner Resources and Funds
- Assure Policy Consistency of Ordinances and Programs with Trail Implementation

Almost without exception, success hinges on the leadership of a committed individual (or a small group of individuals) to embrace and champion the plan. Often, these are public-spirited citizens, business leaders, or political leaders who have a passion for the plan, who embrace the effort and commit to its fulfillment over the long term. For example:

- Joe Shoemaker championed the \$ 20 million Platte River Greenway in Denver.
- Mary Carter, a local mayor in the Denver metro area, spearheaded the creation of the \$ 4 million Arapahoe Greenway in the south metro Denver area (later named the Mary Carter Greenway after her passing).
- Colorado Springs identified a cadre of “trail champions” who lead efforts in each of their respective districts to fulfill a city-wide trail and greenway plan.
- Eagle County, under the leadership of a former county commissioner, local business people and municipal staff,

spearheaded and passed a ½ cent multi-modal transportation sales tax; a per cent of which funds as much as \$400,000 annually for trails.



In each case it was this leadership, backed by local agency staff and recruited professional services that resulted in success. In each case the champions stayed with the efforts for many years posting accomplishments year by year. Their key skills were diplomacy, patience, resourcefulness and persistence.

Governance (the organizational structure for project ownership and administration) may take a number of different forms, including:

- **Single Agency**—where a designed governmental agency leads and manages the project. Pitkin County, CO and Boulder, CO are good examples of this model.

- **Multiple Agencies**—where several governmental agencies form a coalition or an intergovernmental agreement to lead and manage the project. The Colorado Springs effort is a good example of several city, county and non-profit entities working together to pursue trail and greenway projects.
- **Public-Private Leadership (strong side public)**—where a public agency takes the lead in partnership with a citizens’ action group or non-profit that helps promote the project and raise funds. Eagle County is pursuing its trail and greenway effort using this model.
- **Public-Private Leadership (strong side private)**—where a private organization leads the effort with strong support and backing by a public agency. The South Suburban Park Foundation, Inc. in Littleton is a very successful example of this approach.
- **Private Sector Leadership**—where a private organization takes on all or almost all of the project leadership, financial responsibility and ownership. The Yakima Greenway in Washington State is an excellent example of this model.

Initially, the Garfield County effort might best follow the public/private model with a designated staff person and ownership commitment at the county level or lead by one of the cities or towns with support from the others.

Administration and Professional Services

Project implementation will require several types of professional skills and services including:

- **Project administration and development services** such as fund raising; grant administration; right-of-way negotiation; budget management; hiring and supervising design and other technical consultants; agency coordination; project promotion and other services needed to implement the plan.
- **Professional and technical services** including landscape architects, engineers, ecologists, and attorneys to prepare construction documents, conduct environmental studies, prepare property conveyance documents and other necessary technical functions.

Professional and technical services would most likely be recruited from a very capable pool of consultants in Colorado. Administrative services could be provided by a designated city/county employee or by an outside consultant specializing in trail project development. In either case, this individual should be skilled in large-scale project management and able to devote a significant portion, if not all of their time to the project.

In addition to securing administrative and technical services, it will be important to designate a contracting agency or agencies that will act as the project “owner”. This may be best performed by the County, the individual cities and towns or by a special district (if created in the future). Initially, “ownership” might be a combination of the County and the local cities and towns coordinated by the LOVA Trails Committee.



Policies and Funding Resources

There are a number of resources that can be brought to bear in implementing the plan. These include:

- Policies and Regulatory Measures Including Incentives
- Local Public Funding and Public In-Kind Resources
- Outside Public Funding
- Private Sector Funding
- In-kind, Youth and Volunteer Resources

Begin with an assessment of Current Implementation Policies and Resources

The process should begin with an inventory of currently available resources. This includes a tabulation of grant programs and existing and potential taxation and regulatory measures. The tabulation should assess to potential annual amount that can be raised in order to project the scope and pace of improvements that can be financed.

Though not traditionally thought of as a “resource”, local, state and federal regulations and policies should be considered. This should begin with a review of existing policies and ordinances, particularly subdivision regulations. The examination should consider dedication of trail rights-of-way, dedication of open space, incentives for cluster development that sets aside common open space, funding for trails construction and other improvements that can be ethically and legally required. There are a number of examples of long-standing policies and ordinances in other communities in Colorado and nationwide that have already passed the required political and constitutional tests. A strong emphasis should be placed on incentives.

Identify local seed money and matching funds

There are a number of potential outside funding sources at the state and federal level as well as private sector grants that could bring substantial resources to the project. Most of these require a substantial local commitment of matching dollars as well as evidence of community support, a sound master plan, secured right-of-way and the administrative capability to complete and maintain projects. Identifying and securing these local resources and capabilities therefore is a top priority.

