ELDORADO CANYON TO WALKER RANCH CONNECTION FEASIBILITY STUDY

WELCOME

Project Purpose

This project is a feasibility study to consider opportunities for a multi-use trail between Eldorado Canyon State Park and Walker Ranch Open Space.

Project Objectives

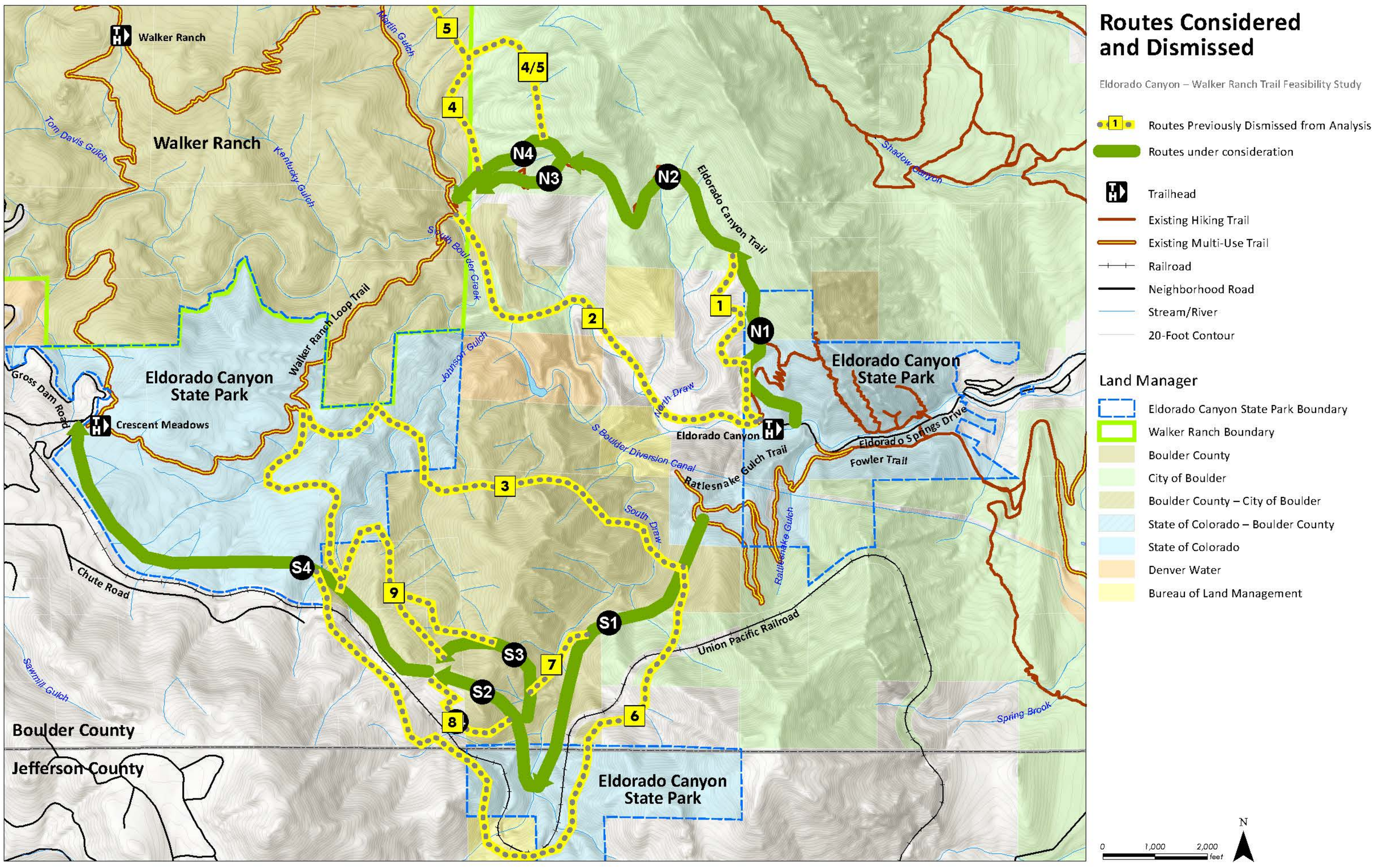
- Improve trail access.
- Expand recreation opportunities.
- Reasonably accommodate bicycles.
- Maintaining the currently allowed activities.

The feasibility study is supported by three partner agencies – Boulder County, the City of Boulder, and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Parks & Open Space

Routes Dismissed

The feasibility study identified over a dozen trail alignments for initial consideration. Through field visits and meetings with adjacent property owners, there were several routes dismissed.

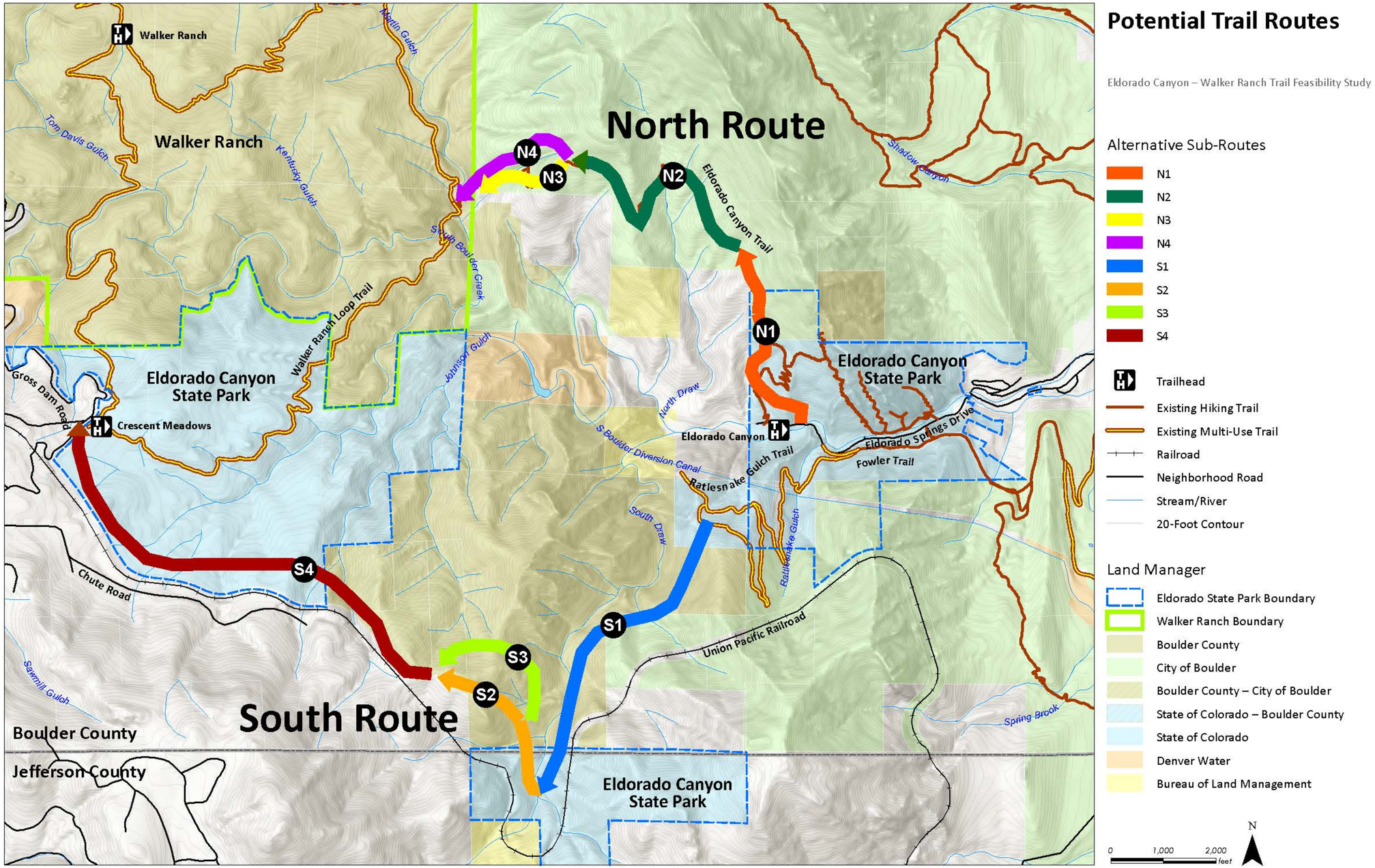


1. This route is on private land. The landowner has indicated it is not available for public access.
2. This route is on Kneale Road, a private subdivision road that is not open to public access. The owners of this road indicated it is not available for public trail access.
3. This route is a direct, high contour south of the greater Eldorado Canyon area. It was removed due to concerns about habitat fragmentation and impacts to undisturbed land and drainages.
4. This route extends north from the Eldorado Canyon Trail. It was removed due to concerns about impacts to wildlife and riparian habitat/drainages.
5. This route extends north from the Eldorado Canyon Trail and connects into the Ethel Harold Trailhead. It was removed due to concerns about impacts to wildlife and riparian habitat/drainages.
6. This route is on a high contour crossing the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Right of Way. The railroad has indicated it is not available for a public access.
7. This route is a shorter, direct crossing of South Draw. It was removed due to concerns about riparian habitat impacts and fragmentation.
8. This route is on private land. The landowner has indicated it is not available for public access.
9. This route follows a longer contour around a ridge. It was removed due to concerns about habitat fragmentation and impacts to riparian habitat/drainages.

Conceptual alignments for further study

The study has identified two primary conceptual study corridors and will evaluate the feasibility to complete the connection on either the north side or south side of South Boulder Creek.

A “do nothing” option that would not complete a connection accommodating biking activities also is included in this analysis.



Analysis Topics

The study will include a comparative analysis of conceptual level trail alignment options. The following ***criteria*** will be:

- Environmental and cultural resources.
- Visitor experience and trail system contiguity.
- Trail construction.
- Trail management and maintenance.
- Eldorado Canyon State Park interface.

Criteria and variables *for a comparative analysis between trail route options.*

Environmental and Cultural Resources

- Wetland and riparian areas.
- Significant natural communities.
- Sensitive wildlife habitat.
- Regional habitat fragmentation.
- Cultural resources.

Visitor Experience and Trail System Contiguity

- Regional trail.
- Trail aesthetic and character.
- Recreation opportunity and constraints.

Trail Construction

- Structures and treatments.
- Construction cost.

Trail Management and Maintenance

- Trail sustainability and maintenance.
- Visitor management.
- Interagency management.

Criterion and variables *common to any trail route option*

Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface

- Access and parking.
- Park capacity and visitation.
- Trail and facility sustainability.
- Visitor conflict and enjoyment.
- Emergency access and response.

Analysis process

Comparative Analysis Topics
Variables compared between trail route options

Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Wetland and riparian areas.
- Significant natural communities.
- Sensitive wildlife habitat.
- Regional habitat fragmentation.
- Cultural resources.

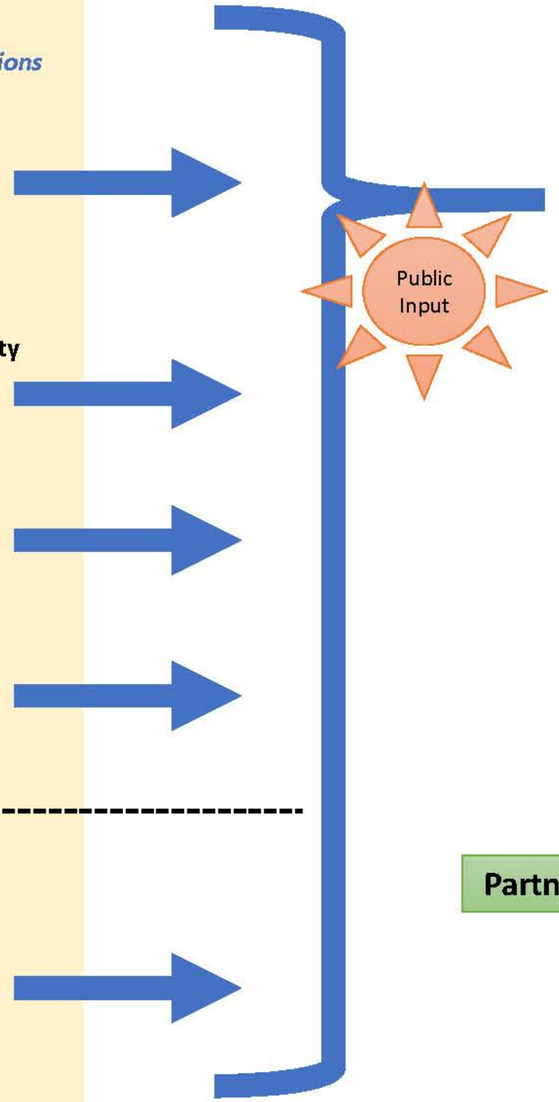
Visitor Experience and Trail System Contiguity
- Regional trail connectivity.
- Trail aesthetic and character.
- Recreation opportunities and constraints.

Trail Construction
- Major structures and treatments.
- Construction cost.

Trail Management and Maintenance
- Trail sustainability and maintenance.
- Visitor management.
- Interagency management.

Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface
Variables common to any trail route option

- Access and parking.
- Park capacity and visitation.
- Trail and facility sustainability.
- Visitor conflict and enjoyment.
- Emergency access and response.

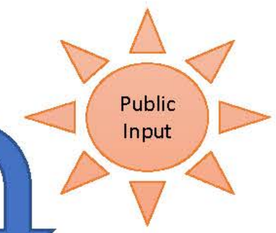


Findings and Evaluation

Summary of Findings	North route	South route	None
Environmental and cultural			
Visitor experience and trail system contiguity			
Trail construction			
Trail management and maintenance			
ECSP interface			

Benefits and Drawbacks
Define for each option.
Identify preferred route.

Resource	Benefits	Drawbacks
North route	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
South route	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
None	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.



Refinement
- Alignment changes to improve or reduce impacts.
- Mitigation options.
- Data gaps.

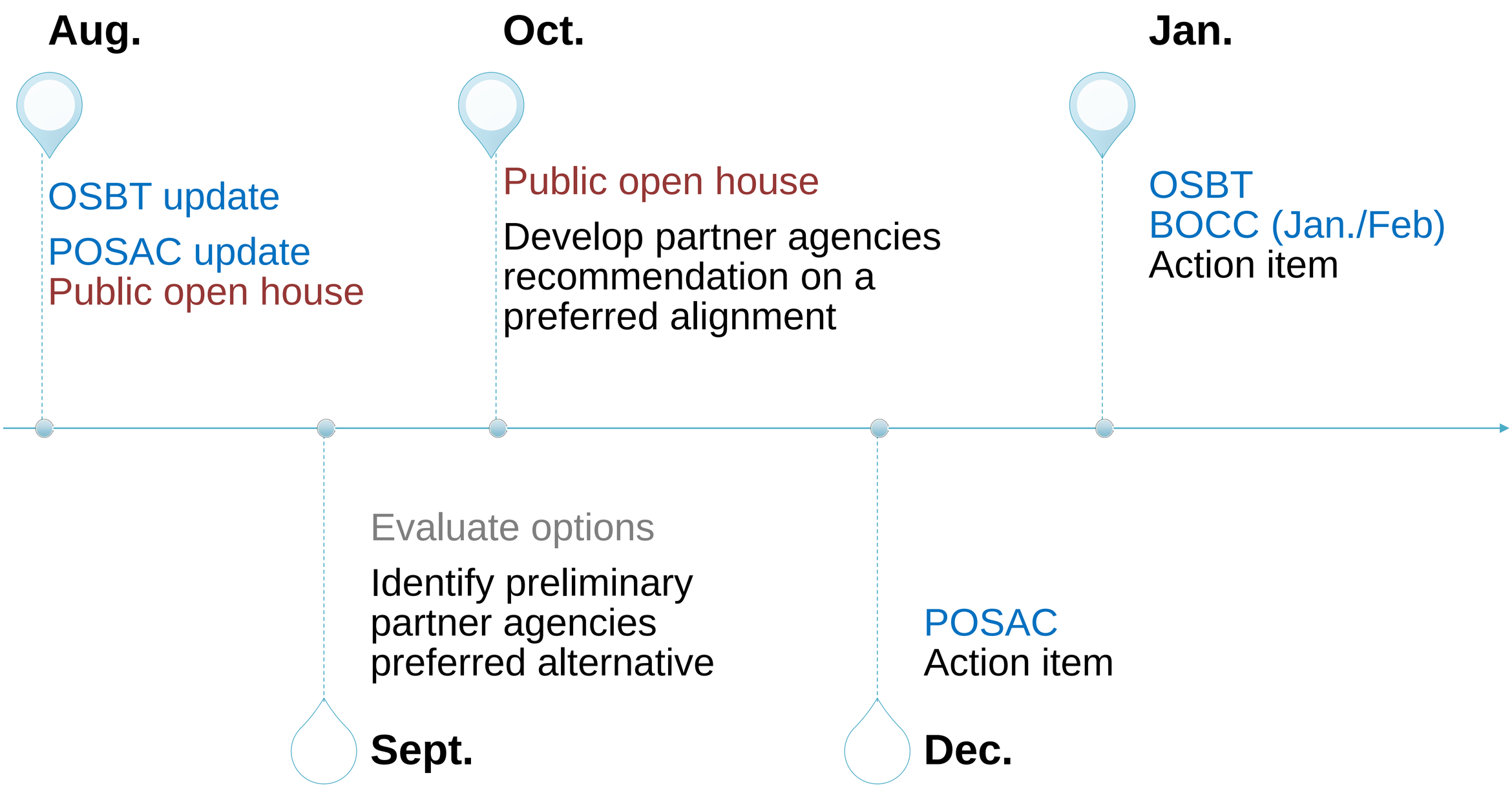
Partner agencies recommendation

Advisory Boards

County Commissioners

Study Completion

Design and construction
Not in this process

Next steps

- Public comment on the materials presented at the Aug. 28 open house will close on Sept. 11.
- In Sept. the project team, comprised of representatives from all three partner agencies, will complete the analysis of conceptual alignments under consideration.
- In Oct. a public open house will be hosted to share the findings of the comparative analysis and a draft preliminary agency preferred alternative for public comment.
- Confirmation or re-evaluation and refinements of a preliminary agency preferred alternative may be made based on public feedback.
- A final partner agencies recommendation will be presented in Dec. to the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) and in Jan. to the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) and Boulder County Commissioners (BOCC) for action.