ELDORADO CANYON TO WALKER RANCH CONNECTION
FEASIBILITY STUDY

Public Open House
Nov. 28, 2018
WHY?

Previous planning efforts direct consideration of multi-use trail between Walker Ranch and Eldorado Canyon State Park:

- Boulder Comprehensive Plans
- Walker Ranch Management Plan
- City of Boulder OSMP Plan
- Colorado State Park plans and initiatives
Objectives

- Improve trail access
- Expand recreation opportunities
- Reasonably accommodate bicycles
- Maintaining the currently allowed activities
Land Ownership and Management

Eldorado Canyon State Park
- Eldorado Springs gate
- Crescent Meadows
- Trails within ECSP

City of Boulder Open Space
- South Boulder trail network
- Eldorado Canyon Trail

Boulder County Open Space
- Walker Ranch Open Space
- BLM South area
Trail Feasibility Study Process with Partner Agencies and Consultants

- Minimize environmental impacts
- Provide a meaningful visitor experience
- Meet design standards to construct and maintain a sustainable trail
- Technically feasible and fiscally responsible
- Consider ECSP impacts
Routes Considered
Options under consideration

1. North Route
2. South Route
3. No Action
No Action Option

• Maintain the status quo conditions.
• Would not complete a multi-use connection that accommodates biking activities.
• Would not address current issues or achieve desired improvements
Existing Condition

Challenges

• Eldorado Canyon Road and parking are private in Eldorado Springs

• Parking capacity within the park is often full on weekends and holidays during peak summer months

• Erosion and resource impacts along Eldorado Canyon Trail
North Route Options

- Total Distance: 3.9 to 4.8 miles
- Total Elevation gain/loss (east to west): +1,010 ft/-610 ft
South Route Options

- Total Distance: 7.2 or 7.8 miles
- New Trail Distance: 6.5 or 7.1 mi.
- Total Elevation gain/loss: (east to west): +930 ft./-480 ft.
  *Including Rattlesnake Gulch trail: (+1,860 feet/-480 feet)*
Analysis Criteria

Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Wetland and riparian areas
- Significant natural communities
- Wildlife habitat impacts
- Undisturbed habitat impacts

Visitor Experience
- Regional trail connectivity
- Trail aesthetic and character
- Access and parking
- Trail access opportunities
- Seasonality
- Visitor density
- Visitor conflict management

Trail Construction Costs

Trail Management and Maintenance
- Trail sustainability and maintenance
- Emergency response
- Interagency management

Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface
- Park capacity and visitation
- Access and parking
- Revenue and fee collection
- Trail and facility sustainability
- Visitor conflict and enjoyment
## Summary of Overall Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Category</th>
<th>North Route</th>
<th>South Route</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental and Cultural Resources</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visitor Experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Construction Costs</td>
<td>$360K to $660K</td>
<td>$410K to $810K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Management and Maintenance</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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</tbody>
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Summary of Overall Findings

Environmental and Cultural Resources

• **North** has minimal new impacts
• **South** has major impacts

Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface

*Both*:

• Adversely impact the park
• Increase traffic, congestion, visitation, and visitor density and potential for conflict on trails
Summary of Overall Findings

Visitor Experience

Both would provide an enjoyable and quality visitor experience.

North
- is shorter (3.9 - 4.8 miles)
- will accommodate more year-round use

South
- provides a new trail experience in an area that is currently inaccessible.
- may result in temporal and seasonal use restrictions.

Trail Construction

• Both have comparatively similar construction cost estimates

Trail Management and Maintenance

• Both are sustainable and can be constructed to achieve desired bike trail design standards (exception of the Rattlesnake Gulch Trail)
• North improves trail sustainability and emergency access
Analysis Category

Key Findings example

Summary of Trail Management and Maintenance Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Topic</th>
<th>North Route</th>
<th>South Route</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail Sustainability and Maintenance</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Response</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<td>Interagency Management</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Impact Score</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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Trail Sustainability and Maintenance
- **North**
  - would achieve the desired bike trail standards using the N4 alternative. Portions of N3 likely cannot achieve the standards.
  - improves the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail, which is in moderate to poor condition in some sections.
- **South** would achieve the desired bike trail standards with the exception of the Rattlesnake Gulch Trail will not meet desired bike trail standards which is the access to the south route and is not proposed to be improved.

Emergency Response
- **North** the improved Eldorado Canyon Trail would improve emergency access and response by implementing a more stable, less steep and sustainable route to facilitate emergency response, due to the improved trail sustainability and reduce grades.
- **South** - Due to the longer trail distance, emergency response times would be more complicated and longer.

Interagency Management
- **Both**
  - The partner agencies would formalize management responsibilities and procedures for law enforcement, emergency response and trail maintenance activities as part of the implementation process.
  - The partner agencies will work together on strategies to ensure visitors have enjoyable experiences, address capacity constraints including parking and traffic issues, and to protect existing resources.
- **South** would require coordination with Jefferson County to formalize an agreement for management, and emergency response and enforcement.
Partner Agency Recommendation – Part 1

**Preferred alignment is** North Route using N1-N2-N4

- Provides a meaningful and quality visitor experience
- Results in significantly fewer environmental impacts than the South Route.
- Meets multi-use design standards and improve the sustainability of the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail.
- Integrates with current uses and future activities within Eldorado Canyon - State Park (ECSP).
Partner Agency Recommendation – Part 2

**Continued collaboration**

- Agreement that current challenges facing Eldorado Canyon State Park must be addressed.
- Work together towards strategies that provide access, connect visitors to enjoyable experiences, address traffic and crowding issues, and protect resources.
- United by a commitment to address these challenges and implement the recommendation collaboratively.
Next Steps

Share your feedback on the Agency Recommendation

- Complete online questionnaire
- Feedback received by
  - By Dec. 9 will be considered by partner agencies in developing final recommendation
  - After this date will be forwarded to Boards for consideration
- Attend Public hearings