



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE: October 19, 2023**

**AGENDA TITLE**

Consideration of a motion to adopt Resolution 1340 supporting a Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife State Trails Program Grant Application by the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department to fund improvements to trails in the vicinity of Mount Sanitas

**PRESENTERS**

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager  
Dan Burke, Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks  
Jeff Haley, Deputy Director, Trails and Facilities, Open Space and Mountain Parks  
Mark Gershman, Senior Project Manager, Open Space and Mountain Parks

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this memo is to request that City Council adopt Resolution 1340 (**Attachment A**) confirming council's support for a grant application submitted by the Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Department for approximately \$1,231,000 from the Colorado's Parks and Wildlife (CPW) State Trails Program's allocation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to improve visitors' experiences and trail sustainability by making improvements to trails on city-owned lands managed as Open Space on at Mount Sanitas (**Attachment A**); and authorizing the city manager to apply for the grant, confirming City Council's support for the completion of the project and intent of the city to support long-term maintenance and dedication of the affected land to public recreation in perpetuity. The trail improvements are elements of the West Trail Study Area Plan which was approved by the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) and City Council following an extensive community engagement process.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **Suggested Motion Language:**

Staff requests council consideration of this matter and action in the form of the following motion:

Motion to adopt Resolution 1340 supporting a Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife State Trails Program Grant Application by the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department to fund improvements to trails in the vicinity of Mount Sanitas

## **COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS**

- **Economic** – The item requests City Council approve the use of federal funding sources administered by the State of Colorado to leverage city funds for priority facility improvement on city Open Space land. Grant funds will allow for the use of materials and techniques that will reduce periodic and long-term maintenance costs.  
Open Space land contributes to the economic vitality goal of the city as it provides the context for the diverse and vibrant economic system that sustains services for residents. The land system and the quality of life it represents attract visitors and helps businesses to recruit and retain quality employees.
- **Environmental** – This project has been designed specifically to avoid and minimize impacts to ecological resources. Trail improvements will decrease the degree to which OSMP visitors travel off trail reducing impacts to the surrounding habitat.
- **Social** - This proposed trail improvements would improve recreational opportunities for Boulder residents and other OSMP visitors. Since the trails, like all OSMP lands, facilities and programs, are equally accessible to all members of the community, the proposed project helps to support the city's community sustainability goal because all residents "who live in Boulder can feel a part of and thrive in" this important place for community enjoyment and renewal.

## **OTHER IMPACTS**

- **Fiscal** – The total project cost is estimated at \$2,270,000. The city's share (cash match) of the proposed trail improvements is approximately \$1,144,000 over three years, to be supported by the Open Space Fund. The city proposes to request approximately \$1,226,000 in grant funding.
- **Staff time** – This project is included in the OSMP work program.

## **BOARD AND COMMISSION FEEDBACK**

At its October 11, 2023, meeting, the Open Space Board of Trustees was provided a written update related to this grant application and proposed project, and discussed including the OSBT's support for this grant application in the City Council memo and resolution, which was confirmed and emphasized through a unanimous (5-0) straw poll.

## **PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

The council-approved Visitor Master Plan (2005) identified trail study area planning a way to provide specific on-the-ground action to deliver a high-quality visitor experience and sustainable trails system while protecting OSMP resources. The trail and facility improvements identified for funding with the LWCF were identified in the *Sanitas, Anemone and Red Rocks Sub Area* of [West Trail Study Area \(TSA\) Plan](#). The West TSA plan was approved by the City Council in March 2011 following an extensive community engagement process and the OSBT's recommendation for council approval.

Staff believes that there is on-going community support for efforts to identify and apply for supplemental sources of funding to deliver priority community services. This item has been publicly noticed and council's consideration is taking place during a public meeting with opportunities for public comment.

## **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The proposed resolution is in support of the city's application to the State of Colorado, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Wildlife **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LCWF) Grant Program**. The purpose of the LWCF grant program is to help government agencies nationwide protect valuable natural resources and provide meaningful public recreation opportunities. Since 1965, LWCF has been administered locally by the state for the National Park Service (NPS). The program has distributed around \$70 million in support of more than 1,100 Colorado-based projects focused on land acquisition to create new outdoor spaces, or the development of existing sites and facilities. In 2022, the city received \$750,000 from LCWF to support the development of the "Violet Park" site.

With mounting costs for materials, supplies and contracted services, OSMP staff has been seeking alternative funding sources to supplement sales tax revenues in the Open Space Fund. The proposed project would fund critical trail improvements and renovations in the Mount Sanitas area that were identified and prioritized in the council-approved West TSA Plan. These trails see approximately 375,000 visits per year and serve a diverse range of visitors with a "close to home" natural experience that inspires stewardship and connection to the environment. With the high visitation and increasing extreme weather events, these trails are at a tipping point and the city is seeking the leveraged resources of the LWCF to advance this work beyond our annual cycle of just keeping up with use.

This funding will allow the team to focus on Mount Sanitas for three years (2025-2027) by designating and improving new trails, providing direct open space access to Boulder's neighborhoods, repairing and improving the trails leading to the summit and providing sustainable and safe access to bouldering areas. **Attachments B and C** show the location of proposed improvements.

Staff identified these improvements at Mount Sanitas as good candidates for the LWCF because of their widespread benefit to visitors and ecological systems alike, as well as reduced annual and long-term maintenance costs. Grant funding will free up resources to address other stewardship priorities.

As part of the application process, CPW requires a Resolution from the governing body confirming their support for: 1) the completion of the project, 2) long-term maintenance of the site, and 3) the dedication of the affected land to public recreation in perpetuity. Resolution 1340 (Attachment A) provides those assurances subject to annual appropriation of funds and the provisions of the City Charter.

The laws and regulations associated with the LWCF discourage the conversion of the affected properties from public outdoor recreation and require the city to record that the property has been dedicated to that use in perpetuity. The city owns the properties identified in the grant application in fee, they were purchased with open space funds and consequently are bound by the pertinent charter provisions regarding the use and management of open space. Staff believes that requirements for federal funding are consistent with the City Charter purposes of open space and does not anticipate conflicts with the future use or management of the affected OSMP-managed land. Staff has consulted with CPW staff to ensure that management for the full range of open space purposes as defined in the charter will continue to be allowed. For example, the city's practice of enacting seasonal closures to protect raptors and other wildlife would be allowed. The project is consistent with the 2019 OSBT and City Council approved OSMP Master Plan. The Master Plan identifies four focus areas, including *Responsible Recreation Stewardship and Enjoyment (RRSE)*. RRSE is based upon the aspiration that people are united by their connection to and enjoyment of nature and their obligation to protect it. Here are some of the key Master Plan strategies (in **bold**) and how they relate to the project(in *italics*):

**Assessing and managing increasing levels of visitation:** *Mt Sanitas is among the most popular destinations on OSMP, the proposed project is intended to improve the quality of visitors' experience while creating more sustainable facilities.*

**Reducing the Trail Maintenance backlog:** *The proposed project will use materials and techniques specifically designed to reduce the amount of time and money for annual maintenance in the Mt. Sanitas area.*

**Support a range of passive recreation experiences:** *Part of the proposed project includes collaborating with our climbing partners to manage bouldering as a passive recreation activity along the Mt. Sanitas trail.*

**Building new trails as guided by past and future plans:** *Move swiftly, using the direction of the 2011 West TSA Plan , to add to the OSMP trail system by constructing new trails and converting undesignated trails to be part of a sustainable trail system.*

**Developing a learning laboratory approach to recreation:** *Use OSMP's trail standards coupled with trail condition monitoring to assess the effectiveness of restoration, construction and trail maintenance practices.*

**Stabilize Funding:** *Steadily generate funds through sales and use tax collections while strategically leveraging other revenue streams and local dollars to support OSMP's capacity to deliver open space services.*

## **NEXT STEPS**

If approved by council, a copy of the executed Resolution will be provided to CPW thereby completing the city's LWCF grant application and conferring eligibility for participation in the remainder of the review process. Final decisions will be made by the

governor-appointed CPW Commission during the first quarter of next year and funding from the National Park Service is anticipated to be available later in 2024.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- **Attachment A** – Proposed Resolution 1340
- **Attachment B** – Vicinity Map
- **Attachment C** – Site Map

RESOLUTION 1340

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A COLORADO DIVISION OF  
PARKS AND WILDLIFE STATE TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT  
APPLICATION BY THE CITY OF BOULDER OPEN SPACE  
AND MOUNTAIN PARKS DEPARTMENT TO FUND  
IMPROVEMENTS TO TRAILS IN THE VICINITY OF MOUNT  
SANITAS; AND SETTING FORTH RELATED DETAILS

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BOULDER, COLORADO, HEREBY**

**FINDS AND RECITES THAT:**

A. City Council recognizes the health and conservation benefits of connecting residents and visitors to the natural world and encourages and supports projects that provide those benefits.

B. From 2006-2011 the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department working with the community developed the West Trail Study Area Plan (WTSA) that calls for investments in the city's trail system and related facilities including those in the vicinity of Mount Sanitas to improve the quality of the visitors' experience, the sustainability of trails and condition of ecological systems.

C. The Open Space Board of Trustees approved and recommended City Council's approval of the WTSA Plan on February 25, 2011. On March 30, 2011, City Council unanimously approved the WTSA Plan.

D. The city has the opportunity to apply for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant in the amount of up to \$1,250,000, administered by the Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant Program which is a partnership of Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the National Park Service.

E. This grant funding, if awarded, would help fund implementation of the WSTA Plan by taking the following actions identified in the plan: 1) Providing access by constructing and designating trails to Quarries 1, 2, and 3; 2) Constructing and designating a trail from Linden Drive and Fourth St to the Goat Trail; and 3) Clean up trails and restore historical views from the Mt. Sanitas summit. The funding would also 4) Mitigate the impacts from and better manage bouldering—a management priority consistent with the guidance in the WTSA plan added to OSMP's work program after the plan's completion.

F. The grant application requires a resolution from the applicant's governing body that specifies that the applicant will contribute at least half of all project costs, maintain the site and any facilities for their reasonable life expectancy and dedicate the land for public recreation in perpetuity.

G. Article XII, Section 171(a) of the City of Boulder Charter authorizes the city to acquire, supervise, administer, preserve, and maintain all open space land.

H. Article XII of the City of Boulder Charter limits the use of open space funds to certain purposes including open space and passive recreation and outlines a comprehensive and public disposal process prior to conveyance of any open space land interest.

I. It has been the historic practice of the city to retain properties acquired as open space, and to approve a disposal of open space land only where the city could still maintain control of the land or where the property is found to no longer satisfy an open space purpose set forth in Article XII, Sec. 176 of the City of Boulder charter.

**NOW THEREFORE, BASED ON THE FINDINGS MADE IN THIS  
RESOLUTION, ABOVE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY  
OF BOULDER, COLORADO, THAT:**

1. The City Council supports the application by the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department, unanimously supported by the Open Space Board of Trustees, for a grant provided by the Colorado State Recreational Trails Program administered by Colorado Parks & Wildlife and authorizes the city manager to apply for such grant.

2. If the Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant is awarded to the city, City Council supports completion of the project and long-term maintenance, recognizing that this support is subject to annual appropriation.

3. If the Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant is awarded to the city, City Council supports the dedication of the affected land to public recreation in perpetuity, recognizing that all open space acquisitions, management, and disposal are subject to the City of Boulder home rule Charter.

ADOPTED this 19th day of October 2023.

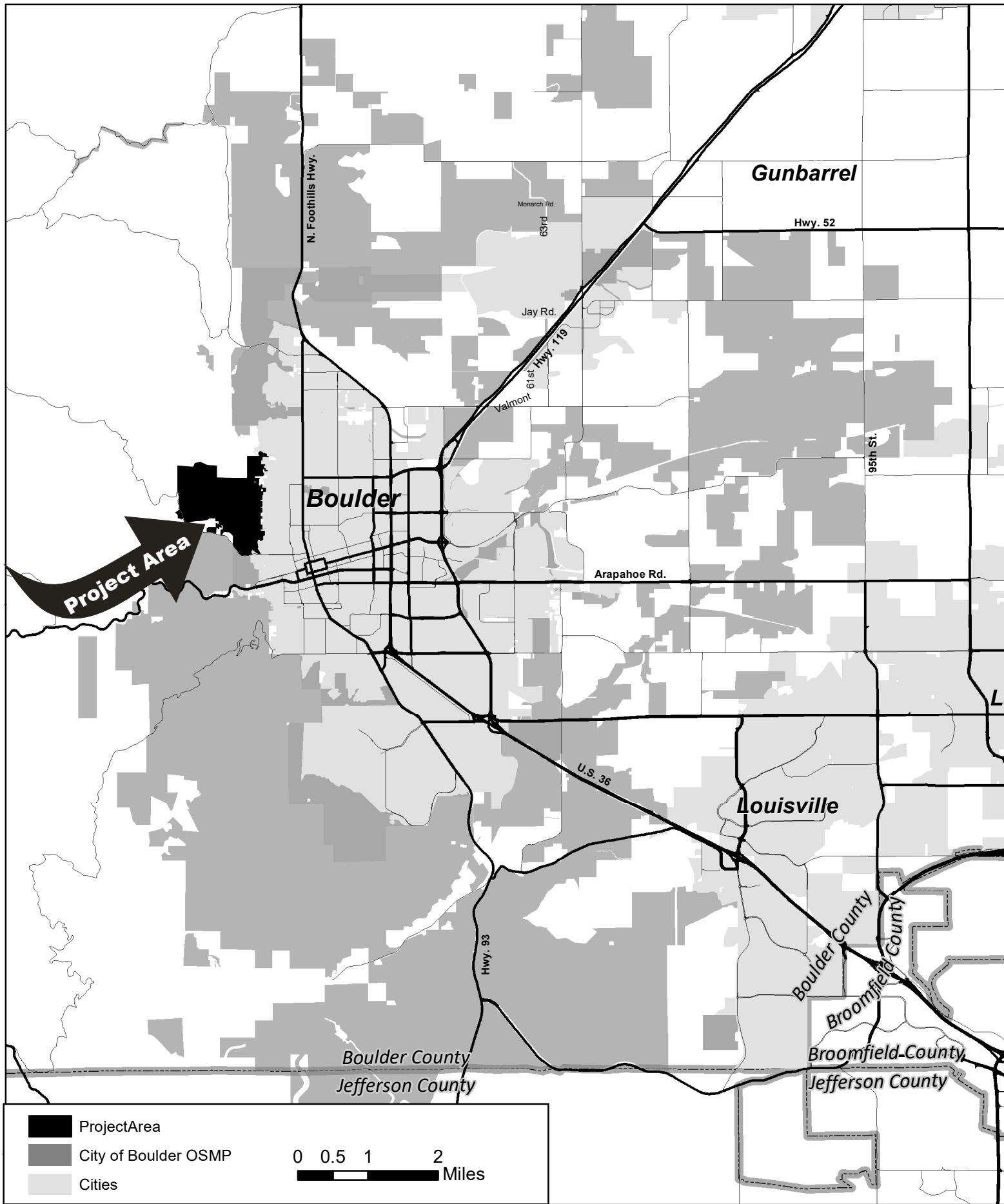
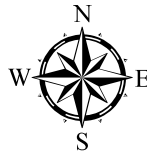
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Aaron Brockett, Mayor

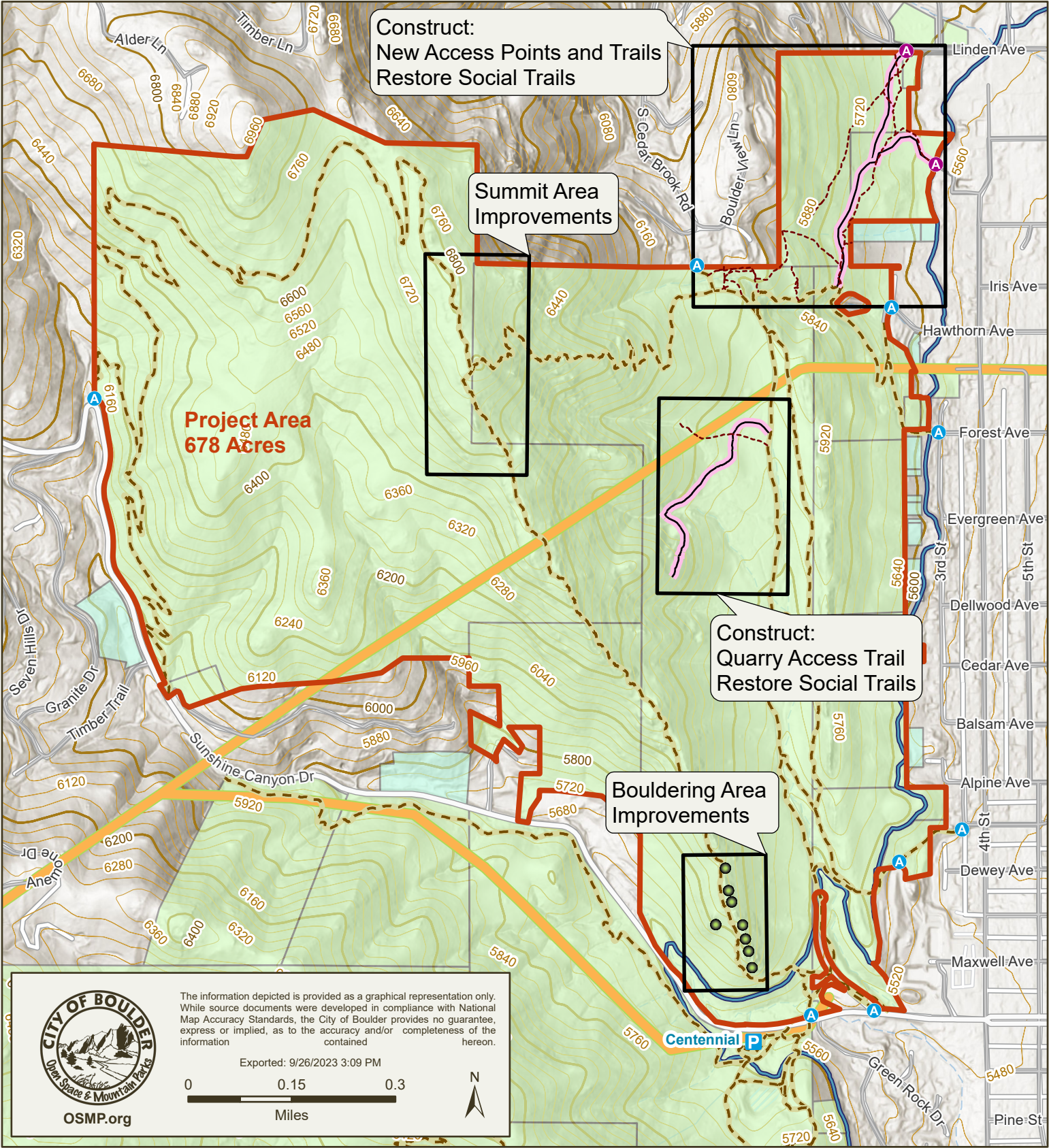
Attest:

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Elesha Johnson, City Clerk







**Project Elements**

- Conceptual Alignmentnet
- Social Trails to Restore
- New Access Point
- Project Boundary

**Right of Ways**

- Electric Transmission Line (75ft)
- Silver Lake Ditch (25ft)

**Managed by OSMP**

- Hiking Trail
- Climbing Formations and Boulders

**Managed Trail Access Locations**

- OSMP Trailhead with Designated Parking
- Access Point - Parking Along Public Streets Unless Otherwise Posted

**OSMP Lands**

- OSMP Fee Ownership
- OSMP Easement