



Southern Mountain Loop Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

Study Introduction



September 2019

Study Background



- Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT) by Colorado Parks & Wildlife
 - Planned Multi-use Trail from Wyoming to New Mexico
 - Identified the Scenic Highway of Legends (SHOL) Byway as the Southern Mountain Loop (SML)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant
 - Advance the planning of the CFRT along the SML
 - Submitted by Huerfano/Las Animas Counties – administered by SCCOG
- CDOT – Interested in highway safety along the SHOL
- SCCOG/CDOT Partnership – Perform an integrated highway safety and trail planning study as a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study



What is a PEL Study



- Planning-level study for transportation issues and environmental concerns along a corridor.
- Decision-making tool for “projects”.
- Enables CDOT and local agencies to advance projects into next steps based on priorities and funding.
 - NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)
 - Permitting
 - Design and Construction

Planning Decisions

- Scope and limits of projects
- Environmental setting and issues
- Plan for implementation

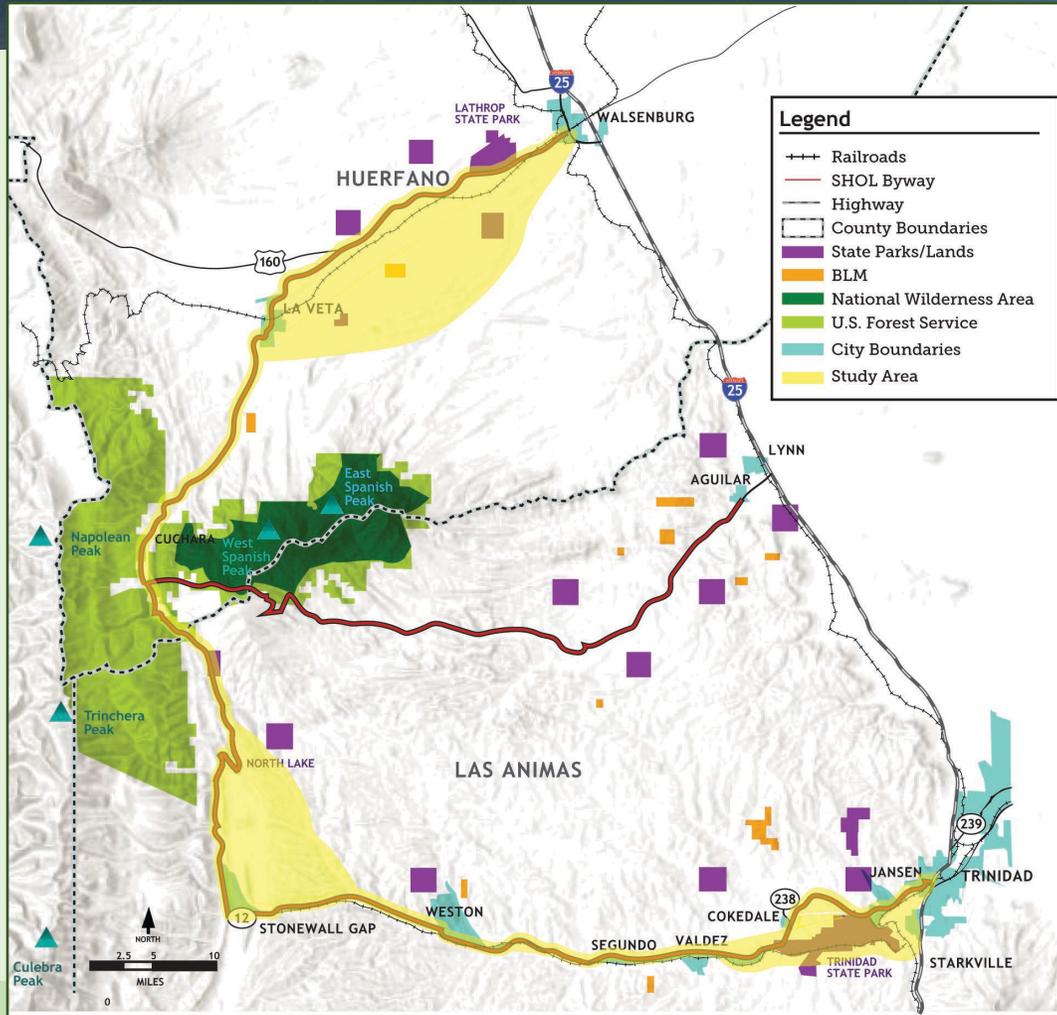
Planning Analysis

- Travel characteristics and demand
- Economic development and land use
- Natural and manmade environment
- Agency and public involvement

PEL Process: Enabling Action



Study Area Map



- Consistent with CFRT Master Plan
- Aligns with Scenic Highway of Legends Byway (US 160 and SH 12)
- Encompasses range of alternative routes
- Communities:
 - La Veta
 - Cuchara
 - Stonewall
 - Historic Mining Communities

Draft Purpose and Need



PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to improve highway safety and provide a regional and local multi-use trail along the Scenic Highway of Legends Byway between Walsenburg and Trinidad.

NEED

Integrated improvements to address:

- Highway Safety
 - Wildlife Crossings
 - Substandard Roadway Configurations
 - Rural-Urban Transitions
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
- Regional and Local Multi-Use Trail
 - Accommodations
 - Connections

Study Process and Schedule



TASK DESCRIPTION	2019												2020						
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	
1.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT																			
2.0 ALTERNATIVE SELECTION REPORT																			
3.0 PEL REPORT																			
4.0 MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION																			
5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT																			
5.A PI COORDINATION STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS																			
5.B GENERAL PUBLIC COORDINATION AND OPEN HOUSES																			
5.C TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATION AND MEETINGS																			
5.D STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE COORDINATION AND MEETINGS																			
5.E LANDOWNER WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS																			
5.F OFFICIAL BRIEFINGS (MATERIALS)																			
5.G GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS (MEDIA WEBSITE/NEWSLETTERS)																			

Agency/Public Information

- Study Intro – June/July 2019
- Existing Issues – Aug/Sept 2019
- Alternatives – Dec/Jan 2020
- Recommendations – April/May 2020
- Implementation Plan – July 2020

Agency/Public Involvement



- Goal – Active engagement with local opinions/views
- Study Committees (Technical/Steering/Stakeholder)
- Public Open Houses
- Communication Tools:
 - Website (SCCOG/CDOT)
 - Press Releases
 - Social Media
 - Newsletters/Fact Sheets
 - Email
 - Posters
 - Postcard Mailings

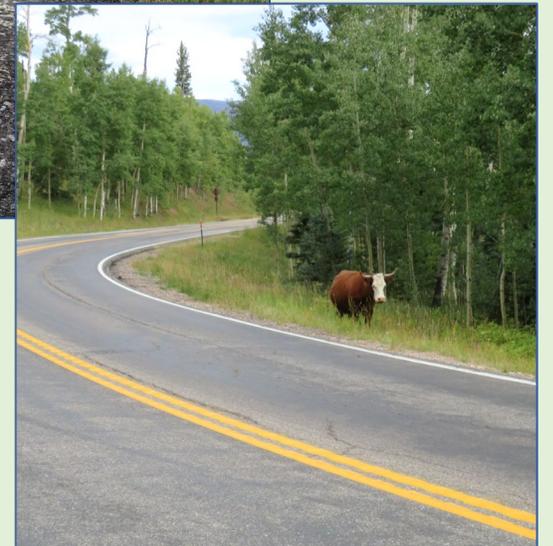


Study Stakeholder Committee with Signed Charter – June 19, 2019

Status of Study – Recent Events



- Existing Conditions Analysis:
 - Purpose and Need
 - Safety Assessment Study
 - Existing Corridor Conditions Report
 - Two Rounds – Committee Meetings
- Local Coffee Chats – August
- Community Events – August
- Public Open House – Sept. 18th
- Next Phase – Alternatives Development



Potential Alternatives



What are the issues and problems to be addressed?

What improvements potentially solve the identified issues and problems?

How well do the combined alternatives solve the problems and are the impacts reasonable?

What is the best combination of improvements and how should they be implemented?

Inventory

Analysis

Potential Alternatives (by Segment)

Alternatives Carried Forward (by Segment)

Recommended Alternatives

Highway

Existing roadway and bridges

Safety Assessment
Highway Geometry

Purpose and Need Statement

Alt 1 - No-Build
Alt 2 - Safety Improvements

Screening 1 - Potential Alternatives

Package 1 - No-Build
Package 2 - tbd
Package 3 - tbd

Screening 2 - Carried Forward Alternatives

Roadway Safety Project(s)

Bicycle/Trail

Existing trails

Bicyclist Stress Analysis
Roadway Compatibility

Alt 3 - On-Highway Trail
Alt 4A - Off-Highway Trail (Route A)
Alt 4B - Off-Highway Trail (Route B)
Alt 4C - Off-Highway Trail (Route C)

Package 4 - tbd

Trail Project(s)

Improvement Master Plan - Priorities and Funding

Alternatives Evaluation Process

Range of Alternatives:

- No-build
- Highway Safety
- On-highway Trail
- Off-highway Trail
- Byway-related Features

Highway Safety Alternative



- General - Edge Rumble Strips, Review Signage (Curves)
- Wildlife Crossings (4 Locations) – Evaluate mitigation options
- Widen Roadway Shoulders
- Roadway Configuration (3 Locations) – Evaluate improvements
- Access & Intersections (3 Locations) – Evaluate improvements
- Bicyclist Safety – Signage and pavement markings
- Pedestrian Crossings – Assess and correct as appropriate
 - La Veta, Cuchara and Stonewall



<i>Location</i>	<i>Recommended Shoulder Width</i>
Walsenburg to US 160/SH 12 Intersection	8'
US 160/SH 12 Intersection to La Veta	6'
La Veta to Cuchara	8'
Cuchara to County Road 47.7 (Valdez)	4'
County Road 47.7 (Valdez) to County Road 18.3 (Madrid Bridge)	6'
County Road 18.3 (Madrid Bridge) to Trinidad	8'



Multi-use Trail Alternatives



On-Highway

- Within CDOT ROW



Off-Highway

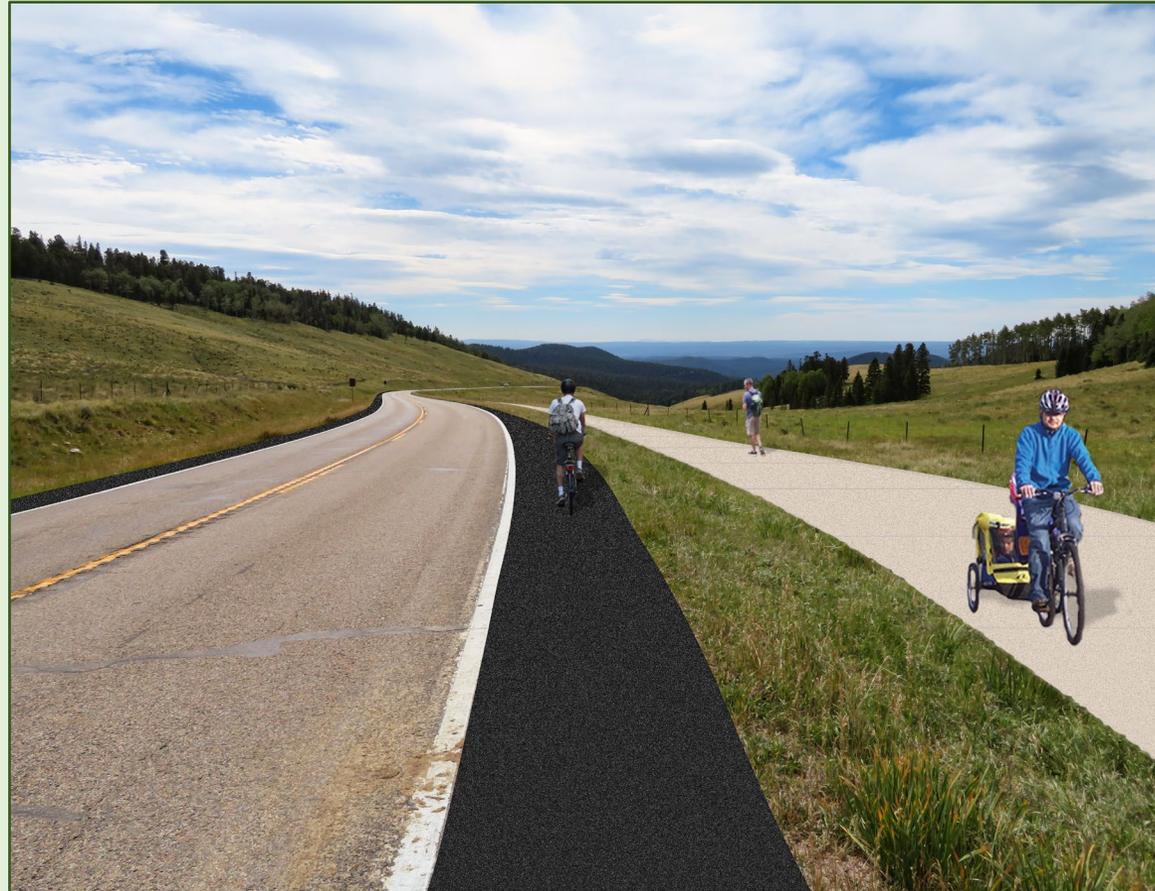
- Outside CDOT ROW



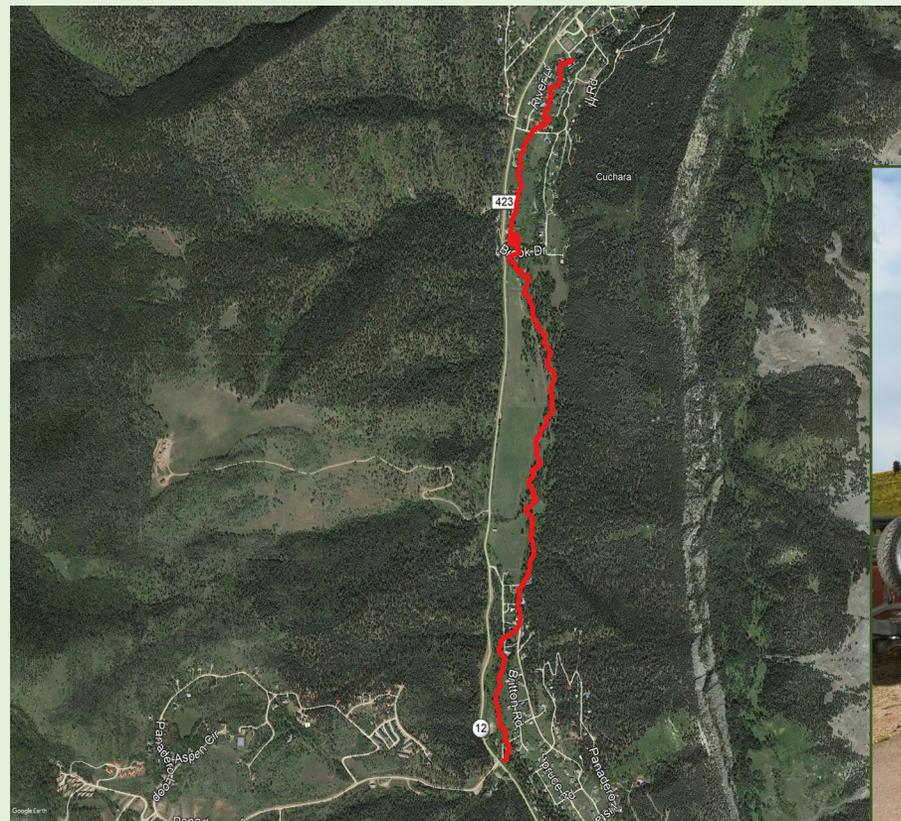
On-Highway (Buffer) Trail Alternative



On-Highway (Separated) Trail Alt.



Off-Highway Trail Alternative



Multi-use Trail Design Standards



- Colorado Front Range Trail
 - Not regulations or requirements
 - Meet ADA and AASHTO standards
 - Separated shared-use trail is ideal
 - Separation from road by open space or barrier(s)
 - 5-foot (horizontal) or 42-inch vertical
 - Non-motorized uses only
 - 10-foot wide is ideal
 - Surface type depends on location and use
- CDOT
 - Trail and shoulder Width
 - Cross-Slope
 - Vertical Gradient / Slope
 - Intersection Site Distance
 - Vertical clearance (i.e., underpass)



Trail Routing Considerations



- Purpose and Need
- Improving Safety for bicyclists, pedestrians, equestrians of all ages and abilities
- Access to/for greatest number of residents and visitors
- Connections to/between communities
- Recreational amenities (campgrounds, trailheads, trails)
- Cultural features/landmarks (plazas)



Trail Routing Considerations



- Avoidance of Adverse Environmental Impacts
- Feasibility (Engineering/Cost/Right-of-way)
- Implementation in segments or phases
- Marketability (Tourism/Visitation)
- Long-term ownership & maintenance



Byway-related Features



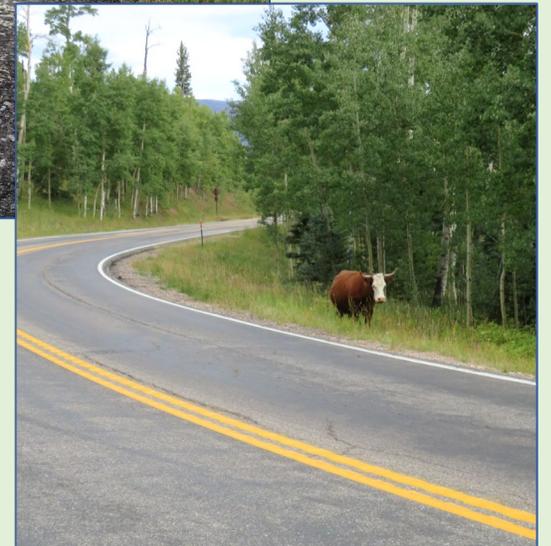
- Pulloffs
- Need for public restrooms and refuge
- Public areas for picnics
- Interpretive signage expanded
- Cultural amenities for the greatest number of visitors
- Focal point for each community
- Access to cultural amenities for the greatest number of visitors



Next Steps – Upcoming Events



- Existing Conditions Analysis – Wrap up
- Level 1 Alternatives Screening – October 2019
- Local Coffee Chats – Winter
- Committee Mtgs. No. 3 – February 2020



Study Hotline = (719) 427-1078

Discussion and Questions

