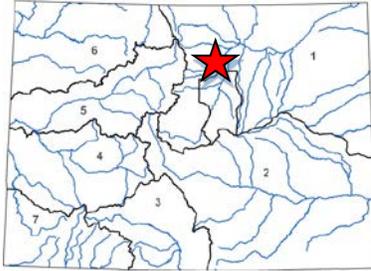




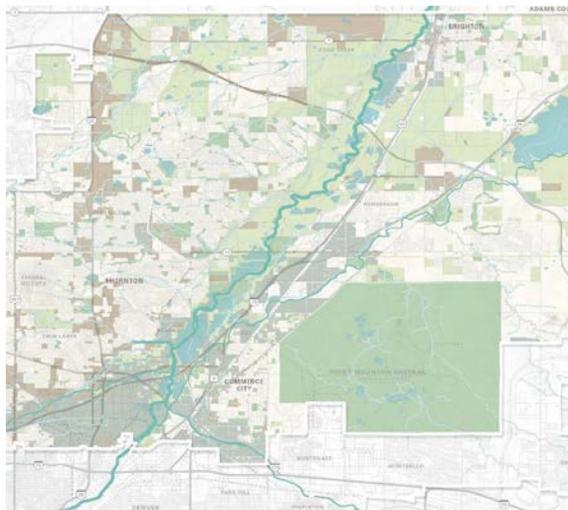
**Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Application**



L O C A T I O N	
County/Countries:	Adams
Drainage Basin:	Metro

D E T A I L S	
Total Project Cost:	\$600,000
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Request:	\$200,000
<b>Recommended amount:</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
Other CWCB Funding:	\$0
Other Funding Amount:	\$300,000
Applicant Match:	\$100,000
Project Type(s): Watershed Plan/Assessment	
Project Category(Categories): Watershed/Stream Restoration	
Measurable Result: River Corridor Assessment and Restoration; Riparian Buffers and Vegetation Communities Assessment; Aquatic Habitat Conditions Assessment; Wetland, Riparian, and Upland Conditions Assessment; Recreational and Cultural Opportunities Assessment; Engagement Strategy	

The Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan will be a significant undertaking by a Coalition comprised of Adams County and three municipalities - Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton - as well as the Mile High Flood District. The Plan will span 17 miles across the width of Adams County, from Franklin Street in Commerce City north to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton. The South Platte River corridor is highly challenging, in that average daily flows can cover a width of less than 100 feet, yet 100-year flood flows can also spread out more than one mile in width in most locations. Disturbances and alterations made to the river over time have impacted functioning and have dramatically changed the system, diminishing the flow for extended periods throughout the year. These flow reductions weaken stream power and the capacity of the river to move sediment. In addition to flow changes, the river is highly impacted by channelization and damaging adjacent land uses, such as heavy industry and mining operations, which have caused wildlife habitat fragmentation and high levels of pollution. Additionally, invasive species and overgrowth in some areas along the river corridor have impeded access and resulted in limited active and passive recreational use.



This project has the express goal of creating a healthy river corridor that not only enhances the quality of life, but also improves and inspires communities. This project aims to realize the following objectives:

- River corridor establishing founded on fluvial hazard zones and riparian buffers to provide space for the river and to promote a healthy river ecosystem
- River stabilization for flood hazard mitigation and protection of water supply delivery
- Uniform hydraulic continuity for appropriate sediment exchange and aquatic migration
- Wetland, riparian, and upland habitat protection and restoration
- Sustainable and diverse recreational opportunities
- Integration and resolution of river corridor with adjacent land uses
- Inclusive stakeholder engagement and public outreach



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# ADAMS COUNTY SOUTH PLATTE RIVER VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Watershed Restoration Program

NOVEMBER 5, 2020  
GRANT APPLICATION

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

**PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

**Project Title:** *The Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

**Project Location:** 17 miles of the South Platte River in Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Nearest Cities	Commerce City, Thornton, and Brighton
County	Adams
Latitude and Longitude	39.790903, -104.968850 to 40.000394, -104.827381
Stream Name and Watershed	South Platte River

**Grant Type:** Colorado Watershed Restoration Program

**Grant Request/Amount:** \$200,000

**Cash Match Funding:** \$400,000

<b>Total Study Cost</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>
Grant Request	\$ 200,000
Cash Match Funding	\$ 400,000
<i>Adams County 2020 Contribution (Funding Agreement being signed)</i>	\$ 100,000
<i>Thornton 2020 Contribution (Funding Agreement being signed)</i>	\$ 25,000
<i>Commerce 2020 Contribution (Funding Agreement being signed)</i>	\$ 25,000
<i>MHFD 2020 Contribution (Funding Agreement being signed)</i>	\$ 225,000
<i>City of Brighton 2021 Contribution</i>	\$ 25,000
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>

**Grant Applicant:** Adams County

**Project Sponsors:** Adams County, City of Thornton, City of Brighton, City of Commerce City, MHFD

**Fiscal Agent:** Mile High Flood District

**Grant Applicant Contact:** Byron Fanning, Adams County Director of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Arts

**Phone:** 303.637.8006 **Email:** BFanning@adcogov.org

**Project Description:**

*The Adam's County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* (the Plan) will be a once-in-a-generation collaboration. It will be multi-jurisdictional, involving Adams County, three municipalities (Commerce City, Thornton and Brighton), plus the Mile High Flood District. This Coalition is dedicated to restoring 17 miles of the South Platte River running through Adams County, and will together develop a plan for a cohesive and interconnected open space system and bicycle transportation network. The Plan has multiple ecological and social objectives. The ecological objectives include reviving the South Platte River's ecological processes, mitigating flood hazards, and protecting water, land, and other resources. The social objectives are to enhance the quality of life for residents and support communities, to provide increased and improved recreational opportunities, and to also serve as inspiration for other communities who aspire to reclaim their waterways. This Plan proposes bold action, such as reclaiming resource extraction sites and reverting them back to their native conditions, expanding critical wildlife habitats and providing essential protection from flood hazards through engineered and design solutions. These actions will spur investment, economic development, and provide surrounding communities and the entire region with recreational opportunities. Other foreseeable positive outcomes of the Plan include enhanced visual quality, improved access, mobility, and connection to and between surrounding communities. Support from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Watershed Restoration Program (CWRP) grant will facilitate this extraordinary planning effort, enabling Coalition members to take major steps in the restoration of the South Platte River corridor through Adams County.

## INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT NEED

The Plan is an important and timely undertaking by the Coalition, and one that will have lasting impact. The Plan will focus on 17 miles of the South Platte River flowing across the width of Adams County, from Franklin Street in Commerce City north to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton. The South Platte River needs critical restoration not only for healthy ecological functioning, but to reclaim it for public use and enjoyment. Disturbances and alterations made to the river over many years have dramatically changed the river and greatly diminished its flow, leading to sediment build-up. In addition, the river has been highly impacted by channelization and damaging adjacent land uses, such as heavy industry and mining operations, which have caused wildlife habitat fragmentation and high levels of pollution. Rapid development as well as invasive species and overgrowth in some areas along the river corridor have impeded access and resulted in very limited active and passive recreational use. The Plan will address these critical issues and devise solutions to restore the South Platte River. Videos to introduce the South Platte River are provided here: [Fly-Over Video 1](#) and [Fly-Over Video 2](#) .

## MULTI-OBJECTIVE ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

The Plan aims to realize the following objectives:

- River corridor establishment founded on fluvial hazard zones and riparian buffers to provide space for the South Platte River and to promote a healthy river ecosystem;
- River stabilization for flood hazard mitigation and protection of water supply delivery;
- Uniform hydraulic continuity for appropriate sediment exchange and aquatic migration;
- Wetland, riparian and upland habitat protection and restoration;
- Sustainable and diverse recreational opportunities;
- Integration and resolution of river corridor with adjacent land uses; and
- Inclusive stakeholder engagement and public outreach.

The South Platte River can be returned to health and full functioning by restoring the ecosystem of the river, its many wetlands and riparian habitats, and by building more resiliency into the aquatic, riparian and upland zones. The examination and addition of appropriate buffers and conveyances beyond the river corridor itself will protect stream health as well as surrounding life and property from flood hazard. Recreation planning along the corridor will focus on sustainability and protecting stream ecology, while combining active and passive activities. Access to the corridor from adjacent areas will be improved and enhanced through the addition of greenways, parks and regional trails. By redefining the South Platte River as a valuable amenity and by better integrating the river into existing land uses and linking it to other trails and greenways, it is possible to reclaim the river corridor as the valuable asset it is.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF ADAMS COUNTY

### Leadership and Collaborative Approach

Adams County has a proven history of leading and implementing projects in partnership with Brighton, Commerce City, Thornton and the Mile High Flood District. In 1996, Adams County formed a South Platte River Coalition (Coalition) comprised of thirteen Project Partners, a Steering Committee, and community representatives to develop a river vision for 17 miles of the South Platte River. With the establishment of the Coalition, Adams County was effective in facilitating a collaborative planning effort which generated the *1997 South Platte River Corridor Heritage Plan* (summarized in Appendix A, Figure 3).

Adams County has successfully implemented many of the projects from the *South Platte River Corridor Heritage Plan*. These projects highlight the success that Adams County and partner municipalities have had countywide in conserving land (a total of 3,093 acres) and demonstrate the long-standing effort to promote environmental stewardship. The *2012 Open Space, Parks and Trails Masterplan* (completed by Design Workshop), which lists the South Platte River Corridor as a focus area, is one example of this effort.

Now 24 years old, the *South Platte River Corridor Heritage Plan* needs to be updated to reflect changes in land use, demographics, hydrology, hydraulics, flood hazard, riparian buffers and vegetation communities, and to consider river

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geomorphology and sediment transport. Adams County will re-engage the Coalition to continue the partnership with Brighton, Commerce City, Thornton and the Mile-High Flood District, in order to develop the update to the *South Platte River Corridor Heritage Plan*.

**Cash Contribution to Match Grant**

Grant Type: Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant  
Grant Request: \$200,000  
Cash Match Funding: \$400,000

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**History of Accomplishments**

Adams County has worked closely with Brighton, Commerce City, Thornton and the Mile-High Flood District for 50 years, master planning, designing, building and maintaining projects along the 17-mile stretch of the South Platte River across the County. This history of collaboration between Coalition members has generated a series of beneficial plans, including the *Flood Hazard Area Delineation (FHAD)* initiated in 1977, and the *South Platte River Drainageway Masterplan* of 1985. Both of these plans laid the foundation for restoration projects in subsequent years, like the recently completed Pelican Open Space at 88th and Riverdale with Mile High Flood District, that made improvements to the river and open space property and added trails, fishing access, and a nature playground. Adams County’s previous projects and studies also serve as technical resources for this Plan. A summary of Adams County’s collaborative efforts and example projects is provided in Figure 1.

**COLLABORATION ALONG SOUTH PLATTE RIVER**

Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, Thornton, MHFD

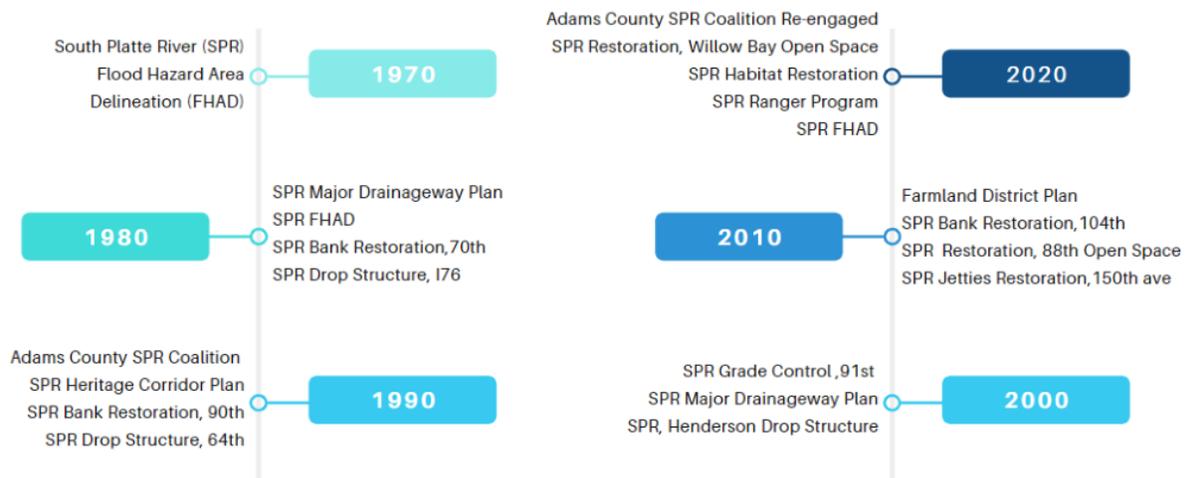


Figure 1: Timeline of collaborative efforts along the South Platte River.

**Project Level of Staffing**

The *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* will be led by a diverse team of planning professionals, engineers, ecologists, landscape architects and specialists (See Appendix E for team member bios). This team has the experience and knowledge to guide a complex and thorough planning and visioning process. The agency staff commitments and levels of effort listed below are based on an anticipated 12-month project schedule, and the collective experience of the group from comparable past projects.

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Mile High Flood District	3 Staff, 800 hours	Design Workshop	5 Staff, 2800 hours
Adams County	2 Staff, 400 hours	Muller	6 Staff, 1900 hours
Commerce City	2 Staff, 400 hours	Biohabitats	3 Staff, 1000 hours
Thornton	2 Staff, 400 hours	Green Ecology	3 Staff, 1000 hours
Brighton	2 Staff, 400 hours	ERC	2 Staff, 800 hours

**Project Budget and Schedule**

The Coalition recently formed a team of consultants from multiple disciplines to develop *the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*. Drafts of the Plan’s Scope of Work and budget are provided in Appendix C. Work on the Plan will kick-off in December 2020 and it is anticipated to take 12 months to complete. This will provide adequate time for the Coalition to develop a funding approach to implement restoration projects beginning in 2021.

**TECHNICAL BASIS FOR THE MULTI-OBJECTIVE PROJECT**

**River Corridor Assessment and Restoration**

The Plan aims to restore the South Platte to an ecologically functional river and open space corridor, to create recreational opportunities, and to protect surrounding communities from the risk of flooding. The ability to achieve these goals rests on developing a sound understanding of the complex hydraulics of the South Platte River through Adams County. Average daily flows can encompass a width of less than 100 feet, but 100-year flood flows can exceed more than one mile in width in most locations, making it a very challenging corridor. The 100-year flood risk has and continues to be evaluated, an example of which is the current FHAD update. The Plan team will draw on past and current hydraulic modeling and available published information to develop a plan that provides an appropriate balance between function and flood conveyance, as well as land use. In addition, the Plan will lay the groundwork for future Flood Hazard Zone evaluations that will focus on identifying areas outside the mapped 100-year floodplain that would still be vulnerable to fluvial hazards.

Fluvial geomorphology on the South Platte River through Adams County is impacted by a number of influences. Flow alterations have dramatically changed the system, which now carries little-to-no flow for extended periods of the year. With these flow reductions come decreases in stream power and sediment transport capacity. In addition to flow changes, channelization and adjacent land uses heavily influence the river’s behavior. At the southern (upstream) end of the reach, the corridor is tightly constrained by a variety of high-density urban development. Downstream of Sand Creek, the stream corridor abruptly changes, and the current river alignment is flanked by gravel pits that are reminders of the river’s tendency for lateral migration. Each of these variables presents different stressors on the natural system.

The Plan will investigate and identify differences in sediment transport through Adams County. The study will define current areas where aggradation and degradation are expected, and it will help identify strategies to reduce sediment problems for future planning. The assessment will utilize site data collection, existing hydraulic models, and sediment sampling to create a sediment model of the system that can help inform current and future modifications.

Fluvial hazard zones (FHZ), which often extend beyond the flood hazard zones, are another important consideration for visioning and planning associated with the river corridor. A FHZ analysis identifies areas that historically, currently, or may in the future be impacted by flow and sediment. Understanding and ultimately mapping FHZs is an important step in proactively managing stream systems. This Plan will evaluate FHZs through the project area and ultimately allow for planning that understands current and likely future risks.

### **Riparian Buffers and Vegetation Communities**

The South Platte River corridor begins to widen, relative to its upstream reaches, as it enters Adams County, but this has not necessarily equated to increased ecological functioning. Current and historic land uses, including a long history of gravel mining and reservoir development, restrict river movement and limit native plant communities.

Therefore, a key first step will be to establish a preliminary ecological framework to categorize potential resource management zones, including buffers, based on the historical floodplain extent and eco-hydrological context. The Plan will use aerial imagery and remote sensing data, coupled with targeted on-the-ground data collection, to create a site-specific as well as overarching database to assess the width and ecological health of the river corridor and its associated plant communities. By utilizing approaches that are already being implemented in areas around Adams and Denver counties, such as the Landscape Typology and Regional Conservation Assessment, the Plan will provide Coalition members with information to make data-driven decisions on where to focus time and resources, in order to achieve Plan goals and objectives as they relate to improving stream functioning and restoring wildlife habitats.

### **Aquatic Habitat Conditions Assessment**

Sustaining the South Platte River's aquatic resources depends on complex, interdependent river processes and conditions, including a range of flows to maintain flow-ecology relationships. Across Adams County, however, the flow regime and physical habitat are highly altered due to historical and current water management. Numerous diversion structures are impacting aquatic resources by fragmenting habitat and limiting fish passage, altering sediment transport, and impairing channel evolution. Piecemeal land use decisions—associated with industrial, agricultural, development and gravel pits – have further impacted resource quality by reducing floodplain connections and contributing to water quality impairments. Despite these challenges to aquatic resources, there are numerous opportunities for improvement and protection within a landscape that is currently experiencing “*death by a million mosquito bites*” (Jill Baron, 2002. *Rocky Mountain Futures: An Ecological Perspective*). This Plan will be the first step in a coordinated approach to addressing regional aquatic resource issues facing this urban portion of the South Platte River.

### **Wetland, Riparian, Upland Conditions Assessment**

The Plan vision for terrestrial resources will include protecting and improving wetlands, riparian areas, upland buffers, and associated wildlife habitat in the corridor. Within the modified landscape, the goal is to reduce the stress on these resources from fragmentation, habitat loss, insufficient hydrology, lack of diversity, and invasive species. The Plan will use a two-pronged approach for assessing terrestrial resources based on an assessment of plant communities and unique wildlife habitat features, followed by a habitat connectivity analysis. Desktop analysis supported by field observations will map and describe indicators of wetland and riparian health, along with surrounding landscape typologies. Opportunities to improve terrestrial resources will be identified and will likely include stream bank restoration, increasing riparian width and wetland construction in target locations, floodplain restoration, non-native species control, enhancement of native species structure, and improved recreation and land use management.

### **Recreational and Cultural Opportunities Assessment**

The Coalition is dedicated to improving recreation in Adams County along the South Platte River, to engage residents and promote environmental stewardship. The Plan will prioritize creating sustainable and diverse recreational, cultural and educational opportunities, including an array of active and passive activities, ranging from bird watching/wildlife viewing and walking/hiking, to hunting, fishing and river rafting. These activities all speak to the need for a vibrant network of open spaces and an active, healthy watershed and riparian ecosystem. Developing environmentally sensitive and sustainable recreational opportunities along the South Platte River will involve extensive restoration of extraction sites and pits, due to the scope of production and damage caused by the oil & gas and mining industries. However, this does present unique opportunities for innovative designs and reclamation strategies, and the Plan will identify areas where restoration work can be prioritized for maximal benefit. The Plan will also examine the existing network of open spaces and trails and assess fully where there may be gaps or barriers to accessibility by the adjacent communities.

### Engagement Strategy

With this multi-jurisdictional planning initiative, inclusive stakeholder engagement and public outreach will be paramount. The engagement strategy centers around five key principles: *Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower*. By using these fundamental principles as tools to guide interactions with stakeholders and community partners, the outreach campaign will be more deliberate, informed and fruitful. Key stakeholders that will be integral to this process have been identified across agencies and fields, from businesses like Xcel Energy to non-profit organizations like the Sierra Club, to academic institutions like the University of Colorado at Denver. Individuals, such as property and business owners, residents, and people experiencing homelessness will be engaged along with governmental agencies at multiple levels, such as Adams County, the cities of Aurora, Brighton, Commerce City and Thornton, the Chatfield Watershed Authority, Mile High Flood District, Denver Water, et al. Additionally, water interests, agriculture, and the extractive industries will be included in the conversations, as well as federal agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The extensive scope of the engagement strategy is intended to ensure equitable and fair outcomes for all parties involved in this 17-mile stretch of the South Platte River corridor.

See Appendix B for additional discussion regarding the [Aquatic Habitat Conditions Assessment](#), [Wetland, Riparian and Upland Conditions Assessment](#), [Land Use Planning Assessment](#), and [Policy and Regulation Assessment](#).

### Implementation of Plan

The *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* will include short-range and long-range implementation plans designed to guide the Coalition and private sector collaborators. The implementation plans will identify projects to achieve the objectives of protecting the river corridor and restoring the South Platte River. The Coalition has a reliable revenue source from its members, including Adams County, the cities of Brighton, Commerce City and Thornton, and the Mile High Flood District. During the first few years, between 2 and 4 million dollars will be available to fund design and construction projects following the completion of the Plan. Restoring the South Platte River has begun this year with a Habitat Restoration Project that calls for the removal of non-native/invasive species and indicates intent to acquire the floodplain adjacent to Steel Street Park. The Plan will inform the second part of the Habitat Restoration Project that will include revegetating these areas with appropriate species. Figure 2 provides examples of projects that will be implemented in the coming years as a result of the Plan.



Figure 2: Projects and Plan implementation efforts anticipated in the next four years

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Appendices

Appendix A – Maps and Figures

Appendix B – Existing Conditions Photos

Appendix C – Scope of Work, Budget and Project Schedule

Appendix D – Support Letters

Appendix E – Staff Bios

Appendix A: Maps & Figures

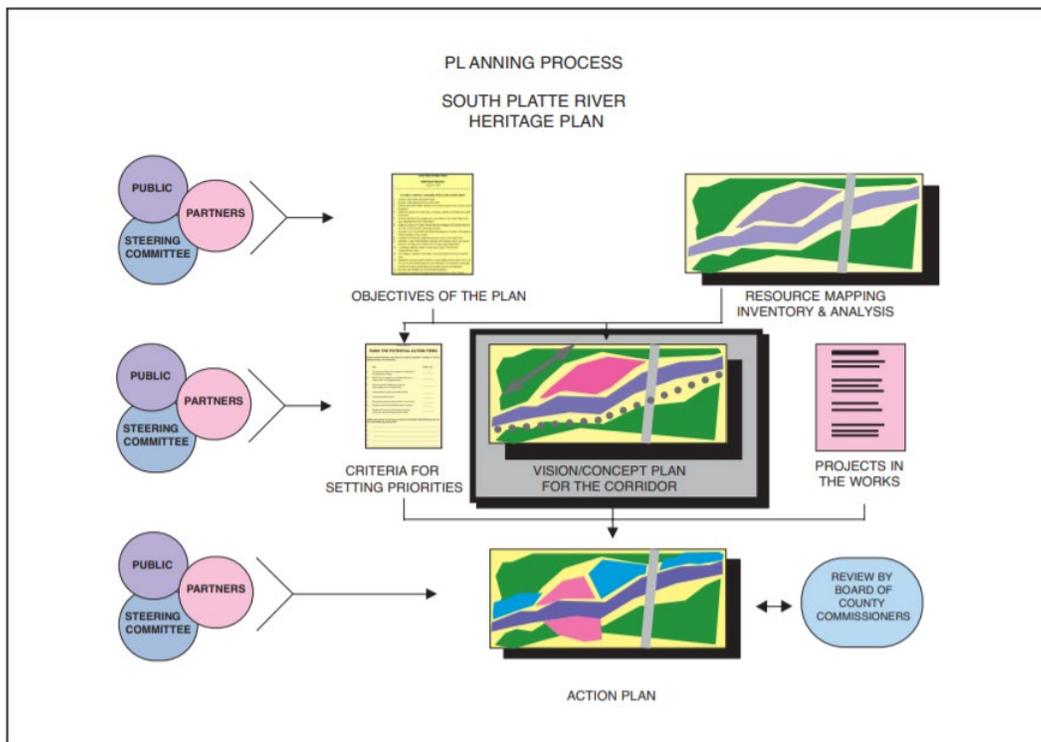


Figure 3: Diagram illustrating the process for developing the South Platte River Heritage Plan

South Platte River Heritage Plan

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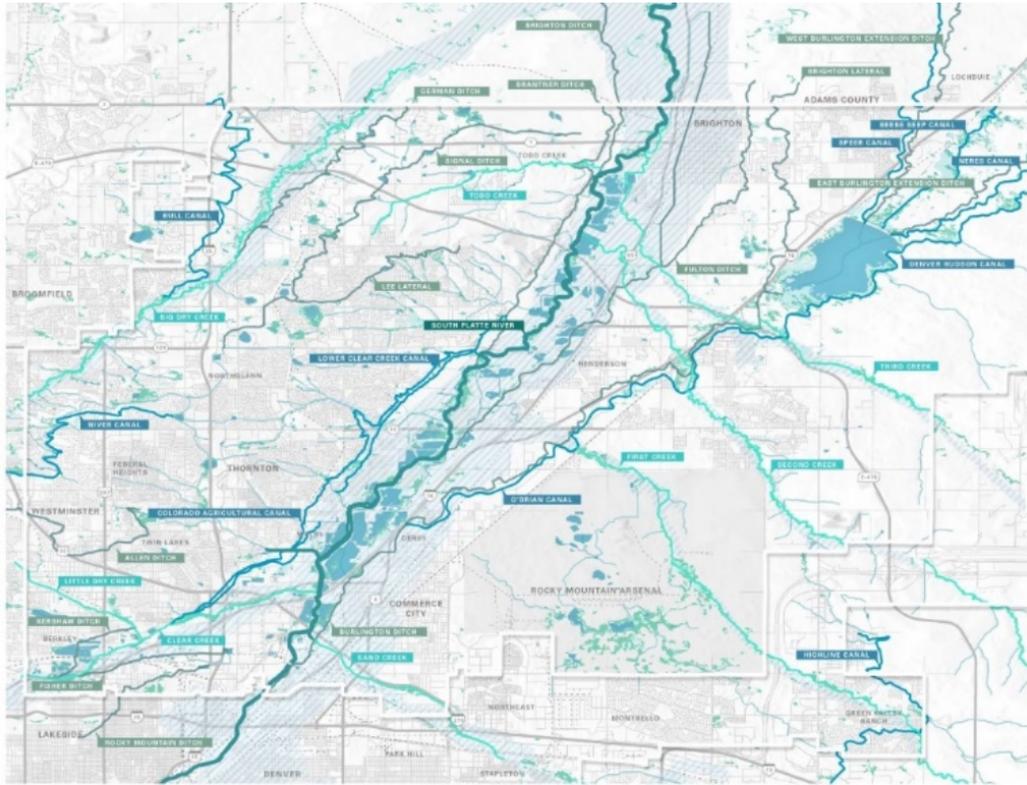


Figure 4: Hydrology of the South Platte River

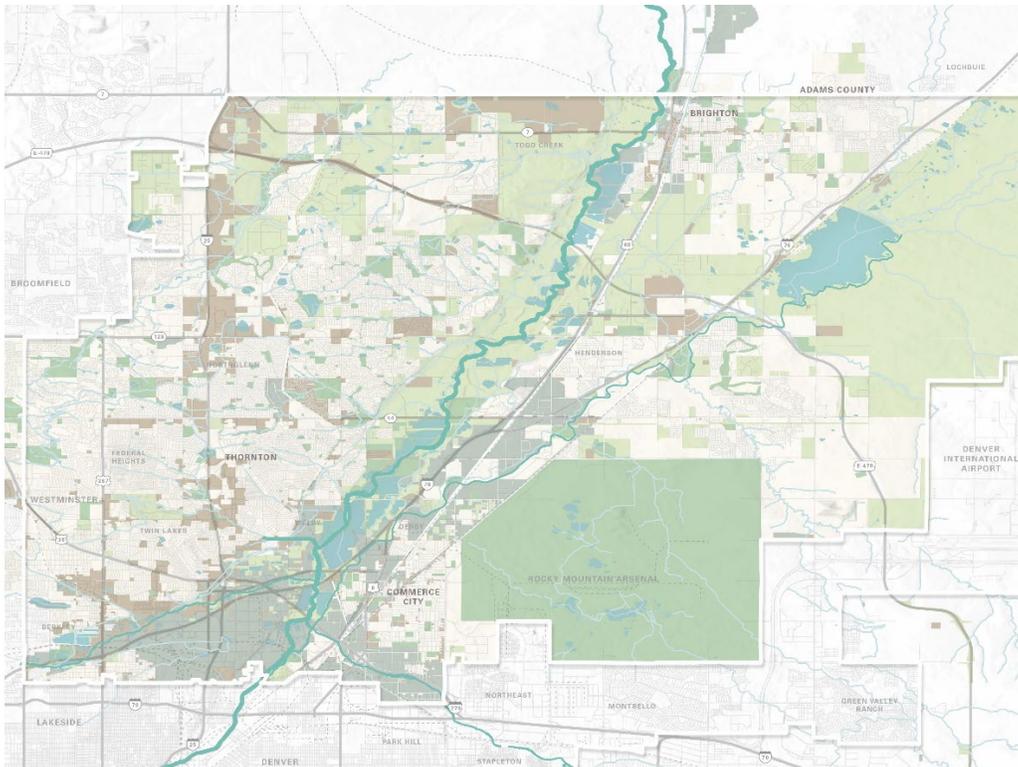


Figure 5: Land Use Map shows a patchwork of land uses along the river corridor



### **Aquatic Habitat Conditions Assessment**

The Plan will synthesize existing information on hydrology, hydraulics, fluvial geomorphology, water quality, land use and habitat for a high-level assessment of reach conditions. A key aspect of the discovery and visioning process will be to evaluate the flow regime in relation to other ecological health indicators. Such indicators are expected to include longitudinal connectivity, sediment exchange and transport, channel geometry, CPW fish and benthic macroinvertebrate data as available, point and non-point source pollutant sources, and CDPHE 303d impairment data. The resulting analysis will identify issues and opportunities for aquatic resource improvements with multiple benefits for floodplain connectivity, instream habitat diversity and continuity, dynamic and functional channel morphology, sediment regime and biodiversity.

### **Wetland, Riparian, Upland Conditions Assessment**

The Landscape Typology tool was originally developed for Denver Parks and Recreation Department as a tool to delineate different landscape types and assign a typology function score for the purposes of asset tracking and management. This process has since been utilized by other municipalities like the cities of Erie and Arvada, as well as Adams County to provide a better understanding of how their landscapes are performing relative to their management goals and objectives. Typology function is scored with focus on a variety of ecological and stream function parameters, such as species diversity, noxious and non-native weed populations, wildlife habitat, and streambank stability, among others. Function is split into four levels (poor, fair, good, and excellent) based on the scores the area receives for the 14 or 21 focus areas, depending on if it is an upland or riparian community. Field observations and data collection will be used for rapid ground-truthing and refinement of the vegetation characterization and restoration potential. See figures 8A – 8C for an illustrative example of the mapping process and expected visual outputs for the Landscape Typology process. The accompanying geodatabase will also provide the project sponsors and team with an extensive dataset that will help inform vegetative structure, dominant plant communities, and issues in need of repair. The goal is not to evaluate every inch of the corridor, but to collect enough data from representative sites to be able to extrapolate findings for the full extent of the South Platte River through Adams County.

The habitat analysis will build on the Landscape Typology to incorporate planimetric data and connectivity metrics as inputs for evaluating wildlife movement barriers and resistance. The analysis will include integration of geomorphic and hydrology/hydraulic findings to identify relationships between habitat quality and erosion, sediment regime, flows, floodplain connectivity, and other factors that affect ecological risk. With input from stakeholders, the process will identify high-quality patch indicators, e.g. based on wildlife species, size, context, condition and qualitative indicators of ecological risk. One to two naturalness models will then be developed based on select focal species or wildlife guilds, and the resulting connectivity mapping will help prioritize habitat conservation and restoration opportunities (including pinch points) based on fauna connectivity needs.

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Figure 1A: Base Aerial Imagery for Landscape Typology

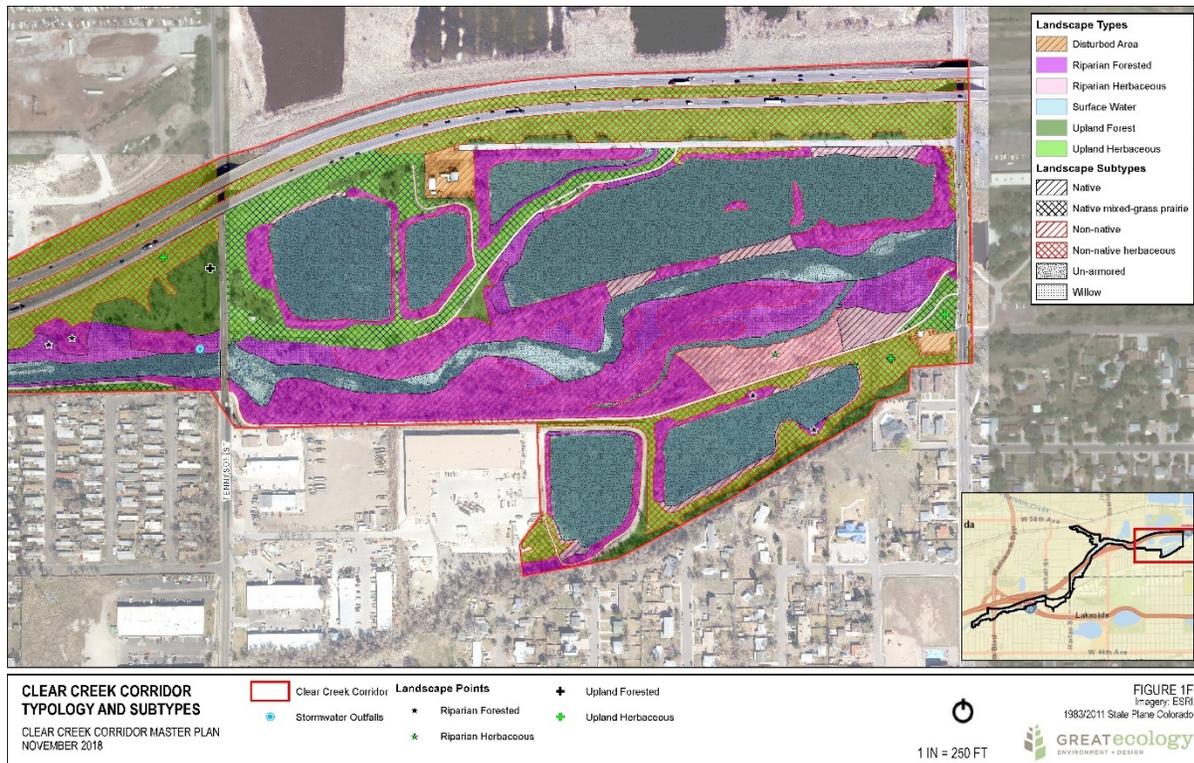


Figure 8B: Landscape Typology Community Types and Sub-types

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Figure 8C: Typology Function Scores

### Land Use Planning Assessment

Creating a cohesive vision with integrated land uses for the 17-mile length of the South Platte River corridor is a critical objective of the Plan. Currently along the South Platte River there is a disjointed amalgamation of heavy industry, mining/extraction, and agriculture, interspersed with residential nodes and scattered commercial development. Each municipality has developed its own land use strategies separately, which has adversely impacted, fragmented, and constrained the river through Adams County. High-density development, extraction, and industrial and agricultural waste are all stressors that have divided and polluted the corridor, impacting water quality, harming aquatic species, and impairing channel evolution. The Plan will guide Coalition members through the process of analyzing and evolving their land use policies, codes, and development practices, in order to redefine the South Platte River as an asset. Complete streets policies as well as stormwater infrastructure and management policies will be reviewed to devise a way forward and form the foundation for future design interventions.

### Policy and Regulation Assessment

River corridor functions and water resources are influenced by numerous direct and indirect land and water management decisions and local policies. As a result, the need for integrated land and water planning was highlighted in the Colorado Water Plan, and significant efforts are underway to improve coordinated planning by state and local groups such as the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), CWCB, Mile High Flood District and Western Resource Advocates. Therefore, the Plan will develop strategies that are based on an understanding of the current and potential future policy contexts for the multi-jurisdictional area. The Plan will also review existing and relevant planning documents, zoning policies, ordinances and programs related to open space, stream setbacks, recreation and education, watershed protection, stormwater green infrastructure, low-impact development, planning reviews, and sustainability goals. In addition to administrative mechanisms, organizational structures, and communication both internal and cross-jurisdictional, will be evaluated to identify opportunities for partnerships and joint planning efforts. Approaches being used in the various Coalition municipalities will be compared to each other as well as to other precedent communities, to identify consistencies and opportunities for strengthening existing policies or incorporating new ones.

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Appendix B – Existing Conditions Photos



*Figure 9: Heavy industries along the South Platte River are highly visible*



*Figure 10: Aerial imagery illustrates how close industrial uses are to the waterway*

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Figure 112: Current obstacles exist for on-water recreation



Figure 32: Gravel pits and catchment ponds scattered along the river corridor

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Figure 43: Public art installations along the South Platte River Trail



Figure 14: Opportunity for trail improvement along the river corridor

## Appendix C – Scope of Work, Budget and Project Schedule

### **Scope of Work**

**Grantee:** Adams County

**Fiscal Agent:** Mile High Flood District

**Primary Contact:** Byron Fanning

**Title:** Director of Adams County Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Arts

**Phone:** 303-637-8000

**Email:** [bfanning@adcogov.org](mailto:bfanning@adcogov.org)

**Project Name:** Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan

**Grant Amount:** \$200,000

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* will be a significant undertaking by a Coalition comprised of Adams County and three municipalities – Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton – as well as the Mile High Flood District. The Plan will span 17 miles across the width of Adams County, from Franklin Street in Commerce City north to 168th Avenue in Brighton. The South Platte River corridor is highly challenging, in that average daily flows can cover a width of less than 100 feet, yet 100-year flood flows can also spread out more than one-mile in width in most locations. Disturbances and alterations made to the river over time have impacted functioning and have dramatically changed the system, diminishing the flow for extended periods throughout the year. These flow reductions weaken stream power and the capacity of the river to move sediment. In addition to flow changes, the river is highly impacted by channelization and damaging adjacent land uses, such as heavy industry and mining operations, which have caused wildlife habitat fragmentation and high levels of pollution. Additionally, invasive species and overgrowth in some areas along the river corridor have impeded access and resulted in limited active and passive recreational use.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* has the express goal of creating a healthy river corridor that not only enhances the quality of life, but also improves and inspires communities. This project also aims to realize the following objectives:

- River corridor establishment founded on fluvial hazard zones and riparian buffers to provide space for the South Platte River and to promote a healthy river ecosystem;
- River stabilization for flood hazard mitigation and protection of water supply delivery;
- Uniform hydraulic continuity for appropriate sediment exchange and aquatic migration;
- Wetland, riparian and upland habitat protection and restoration;
- Sustainable and diverse recreational opportunities;
- Integration and resolution of river corridor with adjacent land uses; and
- Inclusive stakeholder engagement and public outreach.

The South Platte can be returned to health and full functioning by restoring the ecosystem of the river, its many wetlands and riparian habitats, and by building more resiliency into the aquatic, riparian and upland zones. The examination and addition of appropriate buffers and conveyances beyond the river corridor itself will protect stream health as well as surrounding life and property from flood hazard. Lateral and longitudinal processes, grade controls, and terracing within the floodplain will ensure that the channel can remain active but is also safely contained. To safeguard life and property of the surrounding areas, hydraulic continuity is essential. This may require sediment exchange and transport within the project area, but this will be done sensitively and deliberately in order to not compromise upstream and downstream reaches of the South Platte.

Recreation along the corridor will focus on sustainability and protecting stream ecology, while combining active and passive activities. Access to the corridor from adjacent areas will be improved and enhanced through the addition of

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greenways and parks, as well as regional trails. The trail system as a whole will be reimagined and brought up to new standards. By redefining the South Platte as an amenity and by better integrating the river into existing land uses and linking it to other trails and greenways, it is possible to reclaim the river corridor. The input of the community and stakeholder groups will be integral to the planning process.

### **TASKS**

The following narrative describes a comprehensive list of services required to prepare the *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*, from the initial start-up phase to the concluding report. It should be noted that this work plan is not final, and that further refinement will ensue, with subsequent iterations of the work plan being guided by input from stakeholder groups, which may impact the schedule and final list of deliverables. The study area for this vision plan is defined as the South Platte River, inclusive of the waterway and adjacent contiguous properties from Commerce City to Brighton. Efficiently organizing the work will be essential to completing the project in a timely fashion. While the following narrative is organized in a linear manner, many of the sub-tasks may proceed in a parallel or concurrent fashion.

The scope of work to be performed by Design Workshop (DESIGN WORKSHOP) and its subconsultants in connection with this Plan is as follows:

#### **TASK 1 – Start-Up**

Description of Task: The general objective for this task is to develop a thorough understanding of the work that has been completed to date, to become familiar with the river corridor, and to develop the necessary processes and frameworks to efficiently and effectively draft the Plan.

The specific tasks to be completed are as follows:

1. Meet with the Coalition and consultant team to review/develop/refine project goals and visions.
2. Define the roles and responsibilities of the project team, including the consultants retained by the client.
3. Identify Working Groups that will provide focused strategic thinking and guidance for the design team. Design Workshop will organize project stakeholders into working groups focused on the following key functions of the river corridor:
  - a. Hydrology/Hydraulics/Geomorphology
  - b. Ecology
  - c. Human Connection
  - d. Economics
  - e. Policy
4. Define and develop the Plan's public and stakeholder engagement approach and strategy. Design Workshop will work with each represented Coalition member organization to develop a comprehensive communication tool that can be shared, linked to, and promoted throughout the Coalition's area of influence.
5. Visit the river corridor to become familiar with site conditions, such as perceived river health, soils, slopes, views, and surrounding context(s).
6. Prepare a detailed project schedule/work plan.
7. Establish Plan performance metrics.
8. Establish project-wide GIS project standards and a format that is compatible with Coalition member requirements.
9. Produce the draft version of the Table of Contents for the final Plan report.
10. Attend up to five (5) meetings with the Client and/or other consultants.

Method/Procedure: Name stakeholder groups and specify an engagement approach, strategy and techniques, and develop a risk management plan, which are critical to achieving the identified critical success factors.

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

Deliverables:

1. Project Charter with a matrix on roles and responsibilities;
2. Working Group roster with established reoccurring meetings scheduled;
3. Public and Stakeholder engagement approach and strategy;
4. Public and Stakeholder communication framework;
5. Project schedule/work plan;
6. Vision Plan performance metrics;
7. Draft Table of Contents for the final Vision Plan report; and
8. Meeting notes and written documentation of specific research topics.

**TASK 2 – Discovery: Understanding Challenges and Opportunities**

Description of Task: The general objective for this task is to collect all pertinent information and data in order to facilitate the visioning and implementation process. For this task Design Workshop will direct additional consultant team members to conduct a detailed inventory and analysis of the river corridor.

The specific tasks to be completed by **Design Workshop** are as follows:

1. Create a bibliography of prior reports, plans, and studies;
2. Provide a summary of City and County plans and studies;
3. Review available information and plans for the Arapahoe and Denver County segments of the South Platte River corridor. Integrate GIS maps on property ownership, zoning, land use, vacant parcels, parks, greenbelts, etc., utilizing city and county assessor information;
4. Prepare an inventory and/or analysis of existing signage and wayfinding, of trail connections and bridges, of existing property values, tax revenues and other BIDs, of existing parks, amenities, and services, of existing irrigation infrastructure, of current maintenance standards, policies, and funding for each municipality, and an inventory of existing available air, water, and soil quality monitoring based on data provided by municipal agencies;
5. Create a “Distance to Nature” analysis for adjacent communities along the river corridor;
6. Prepare up to three precedent project comparisons, and up to three examples of cost benefit models;
7. Attend up to ten meetings with the Client and/or other consultants to the work; and
8. Facilitate a project team bike tour of the river corridor.

The specific tasks to be completed by **Muller Engineering** are as follows:

1. Perform data gathering, file database creation, and CAD base drawing setup;
2. Research and gather publicly available LIDAR, utility, ownership and right-of-way information and prepare CAD base drawings;
3. Obtain and review South Platte River master planning documents;
4. Prepare draft river plan and profile sheets (includes available data such as GIS utilities, LIDAR topography, aerial imagery, FEMA floodplain; and
5. Research and compile available information and generate draft Plan and profile sheets. It is anticipated that topography, aerial imagery, floodplain, and some utilities will be easily accessible. HEC-RAS models and record drawings will be used to identify and incorporate riverbed and bridge crossing information. Along with existing river corridor conditions, Muller will integrate references to anticipated master plan improvements along the river corridor.

**Assumptions/Exclusions**

1. Existing bridge observations will be limited to taking photographs generally confirming conformance with data contained in existing floodplain models.

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2. The Plan and profile sheets are intended to capture river-related conditions and known planning and will not include off-river improvements. It is anticipated that Design Workshop will lead the development of separate drawings which will focus on trails and other off-river improvements or planning studies. Muller will coordinate and support this effort through research, document sharing, and coordination.
3. It is anticipated that discovery and research specific to sediment transport modeling will be provided by others. Muller will provide support and assist with the coordination of this effort.

The specific tasks to be completed by **ERC** are as follows:

1. Review existing data, including historic aerials, available flow data, sediment data and potential past sediment studies.
2. Complete a site tour to become familiar with stream and corridor conditions and identify existing challenges and opportunities related to channel morphology.
3. Prepare a report of initial reconnaissance-level conditions.

The specific tasks to be completed by **Biohabitats** are as follows:

1. Habitat Connectivity Analysis
  - a. Review available habitat information (birds and species occurrence observations/mapping) and overlay them with the vegetation layer and land use to identify preliminary criteria for high-quality habitat, movement barriers and restoration opportunities.
  - b. Meet with stakeholder/advisory group meeting to confirm high-quality habitat indicators, e.g. based on focal species, size, context, condition (richness, vulnerability, uniqueness).
  - c. Set up two naturalness models calibrated for select focal species or wildlife guilds, including identification of inputs for habitat cores and fauna resistance.
  - d. Execute connectivity analysis to produce prioritization of habitat conservation and restoration (including pinch points) based on habitat connectivity needs.
  - e. Produce graphics and mapping for presentations to team and advisory group with supporting technical memorandum.
2. Integrated Stormwater Quantity and Quality/Low-Impact Development/Green Infrastructure Policy Review
  - a. Based on national experience and compiled best GI practices, as well as Mile High Flood District's recommended BMPs, evaluate completeness of Adams County's and municipal green infrastructure policies, stormwater management, like LID, strategies, and codes including specifications. Create a result comparison matrix.
  - b. Assess policy effectiveness (aids and barriers to implementation) through interviews with County and City staff (planning design and maintenance) and measures, such as numbers and types of projects along the corridor based on available information on tracking and status. As part of the review, assess the extent to which stacked environmental and community benefits are considered and evaluate project goals/incentives and funding sources.
  - c. Prepare a technical memorandum summarizing the evaluation results and potential strategies for increasing implementation effectiveness.

The specific tasks to be completed by **Great Ecology** are as follows:

1. General Coordination
  - a. Coordinate with Design Workshop and the Plan Team to define the assessment and analysis approaches that will meet project objectives.
  - b. Coordinate with Biohabitats on habitat connectivity analysis, data needs, and approaches to ensure alignment and efficiency.
  - c. Coordinate with Muller Engineering on floodplain and riparian ecological elements including

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vegetation density as it relates to Manning's n-values for more accurate HEC-RAS modeling outputs.

- d. Coordinate with Design Workshop on any restoration or potential land acquisition opportunities following data collection and analysis.
2. Habitat Mapping and Vegetation Assessment
    - a. Utilize existing data collected for Adams County Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan to inform potential approaches for project objectives and to leverage data to minimize costs while still providing relevant information.
    - b. Utilize DRCOG aerial imagery and other GIS data to develop habitat maps of the 17-mile riparian corridor, excluding areas already mapped. Use this information to get measurements of the riparian corridor width utilizing the definition of riparian corridor and buffer area from the Colorado Stream Quantification Tool.
    - c. Conduct field evaluations of select properties (number to be defined with input from client group) to assess plant community composition, including estimates of plant cover by strata (trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses) and documenting dominant species (if seasonally appropriate). Assess noxious weed populations of the selected properties.
    - d. Outcomes of this data collection and analysis will provide stop-light style interpretation of ecological function for rapid determination of priority areas.
    - e. Data will be provided to project partners to help inform or validate other assessments (e.g. habitat connectivity analysis).
    - f. Data collected as part of the field assessment will be used to help provide verified current and potential n-values for hydrologic modeling.
  3. Regulatory Buffer Analysis
    - a. Complete research and review of the current municipal codes that define the riparian buffer distances for development within the County and cities along the South Platte River.
    - b. Create a graphic that displays the identified buffer requirements along the river corridor to show where buffer distances may not be effectively in place and areas where there is ample room to protect the river and perhaps provide opportunities for preservation.

The specific tasks to be completed by **Pinyon Environmental** are as follows:

1. Develop a programmatic framework by which hazardous materials should be evaluated and treated during the follow-on Plan phases:
  - a. This framework will identify, in coordination with the planning team, key risks for hazardous materials that must be considered (e.g., health and safety, scheduling, cost implications, regulatory constraints), and how those risks will be qualified or quantified based on, among other topics, the type of facility (Superfund, landfill, leaking storage tank, etc.), proximity to the work proposed near those facilities, or other considerations identified by the team.
  - b. The framework document will summarize the information to be gathered, and how the team will assimilate that information into the decision-making process.
  - c. This framework will be presented in a brief white paper or delivered as GIS layers, that will then be utilized during future phases of the Plan.

Method/Procedure: Engaging the participating municipalities, as well as other stakeholder groups from the business and environmental communities, will lead to an extensive compilation of research materials for project analysis.

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Deliverables:

1. Property ownership map
2. Bibliography of existing reports and studies
3. Summary of relevant plans and studies
4. Inventory of existing signage and wayfinding
5. Inventory of existing trails and bridges
6. Distance to Nature analysis
7. Property value analysis
8. Existing park and amenity inventory
9. Qualitative analysis of existing air, water, and soil conditions
10. Summary memorandum of current maintenance standards, policies, and funding
11. Project precedent study (up to three)
12. Cost benefit model examples (up to three)

**TASK 3 – Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement**

Description of Task: Public outreach for this Plan will be bolstered by a wide-reaching set of engagement tools, including social media initiatives and a series of (in-person and virtual) meetings for individual participants and focus groups. Core stakeholder groups will be formed with participants from state and federal agencies, water interest groups and ditch companies, mining companies, oil and gas companies, farming/agriculture organizations, water and sanitation districts, and environmental and recreational NGOs.

Method/Procedure: A series of workshops/meetings will be created to introduce stakeholder groups to the various stages of the project, from discovery and exploration to vision and implementation.

Workshop 1 – the discovery phase will involve taking inventory and conducting analysis and mapping, and ascertaining from stakeholder groups all necessary information for a thorough examination of the river corridor.  
Workshop 2 – the exploration phase will focus engagement with the public and stakeholder groups on listening and solidifying priorities, and may involve in-person site visits or a bicycle tour of the river corridor.  
Workshop 3 – the visioning phase will facilitate the articulation of specific goals and objectives with the various core stakeholder groups and will turn participant commentary into Plan actions.  
Workshop 4 – the implementation phase will involving the confirming of metrics for the assessment of Plan elements once they are put into effect.

Deliverables:

1. Agendas for working group meetings
2. Meeting notes/summary memoranda on results of working group meetings
3. Infographics/metrics on stakeholder groups and public participation
4. Social Media outreach tools
5. Website/app for Plan dissemination
6. Storymap(s) for communicating mapping & analysis
7. Performance metrics on implementation phases of Plan projects/elements

**TASK 4 – Visioning: Refresh Corridor Vision, Goals, and Objectives**

This task aims to solidify the primary goals and objectives of the Plan in order to create a singular and sensible vision for the South Platte river corridor. A strong implementation strategy will arise from the visioning and goal-setting process, and those strategies can then be enacted through a cohesive vision that is succinctly expressed.

Goals/objectives include:

- Restoring the South Platte to a high-functioning river corridor;
- Introducing low-maintenance flood and sediment management strategies;
- Creating diverse active and passive recreational opportunities;

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- Integrating varied land uses and rectifying conflicting land uses; and
- Devising inclusive stakeholder engagement and public outreach initiatives.

Method/Procedure: Project manager conference calls will be scheduled on a biweekly basis, as well as monthly stakeholder working group meetings, to further refine the vision and subsequent tasks. Working group meetings will examine water rights and delivery methods, identify ownership and control of dams, reservoirs, canals, and ditches, and assess non-consumptive water use. A strategy for reaching communities of all social and economic backgrounds and for promoting equity and inclusion will be a priority of the visioning phase. Outreach to communities, City/County departments, as well as various business interests will be done to obtain needed information and guidance and to secure support and funding for the implementation phases of the Plan.

Deliverables:

1. Agendas for working group meetings
2. Presentations to various stakeholder groups
3. Visioning Charette
4. Summary memoranda on working group meetings/charette
5. Project goals/objectives
6. Design Strategies for accomplishing goals

**TASK 5 – Short-Range Implementation Plan**

Description of Task: Due to the scale and magnitude of the Plan, this task will involve identifying opportunities in the form of tactical interventions and demonstration sites that will immediately realize the transformative potential of the project and educate local communities of its benefits. This task will allow municipalities to pick the ‘low-hanging fruit’ and see results quickly after adoption, while working to implement more involved sections of the Plan over time.

Method/Procedure: Demonstration sites are identified and refined with the stakeholder group based on evaluation criteria that ranks them on their suitability to fulfill the project’s goals, and their ability to catalyze development. Informed by the research and community engagement processes, conceptual designs will be developed to serve as models for development along the South Platte River corridor. It is recommended that design guidelines be developed to ensure consistency along the river corridor.

Deliverables:

1. Demonstration site evaluation criteria that reflect the project’s goals
2. Selection process with stakeholder group
3. Conceptual design of proposed interventions
4. Rendered visualizations of proposed interventions

**TASK 6 – Long-Range Implementation Plan**

Description of Task: This vision will require a phased approach and a capital and operating budget must be developed, as well as a total asset management strategy. Future improvement funding requires creative combinations of multiple city, state, federal and private funds by mobilizing property owners, businesses, residents and public sector officials. The project can maximize effectiveness over time if a single entity can champion the recommendations.

Method/Procedure: A phasing schedule and general timeline for implementation will help guide the project in the coming years. A funding toolkit will be developed to identify sources, grants, and credits that could be utilized for the implementation process. Defining the roles of primary stakeholders and partner organizations ensures continued

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community involvement in the management and maintenance of the project. The creation of a 'Summary Action Matrix' can be utilized by the Plan team as a checklist to assess progress over time.

Deliverables:

1. Phasing schedule and timeline for implementation
2. Funding toolkits
3. Asset management and maintenance plans
4. Summary action matrix

**TASK 7 – Plan Report**

This task will be to generate a report that summarizes the research and findings, results from the public outreach and engagement efforts, and that will narrate the evolution of the Plan through the multiple iterations and refinements of goals and strategies. The final report will also include direction and guidance on the adoption process for Adams County and the cities of Commerce City, Thornton, and Brighton.

**FINAL DELIVERABLE**

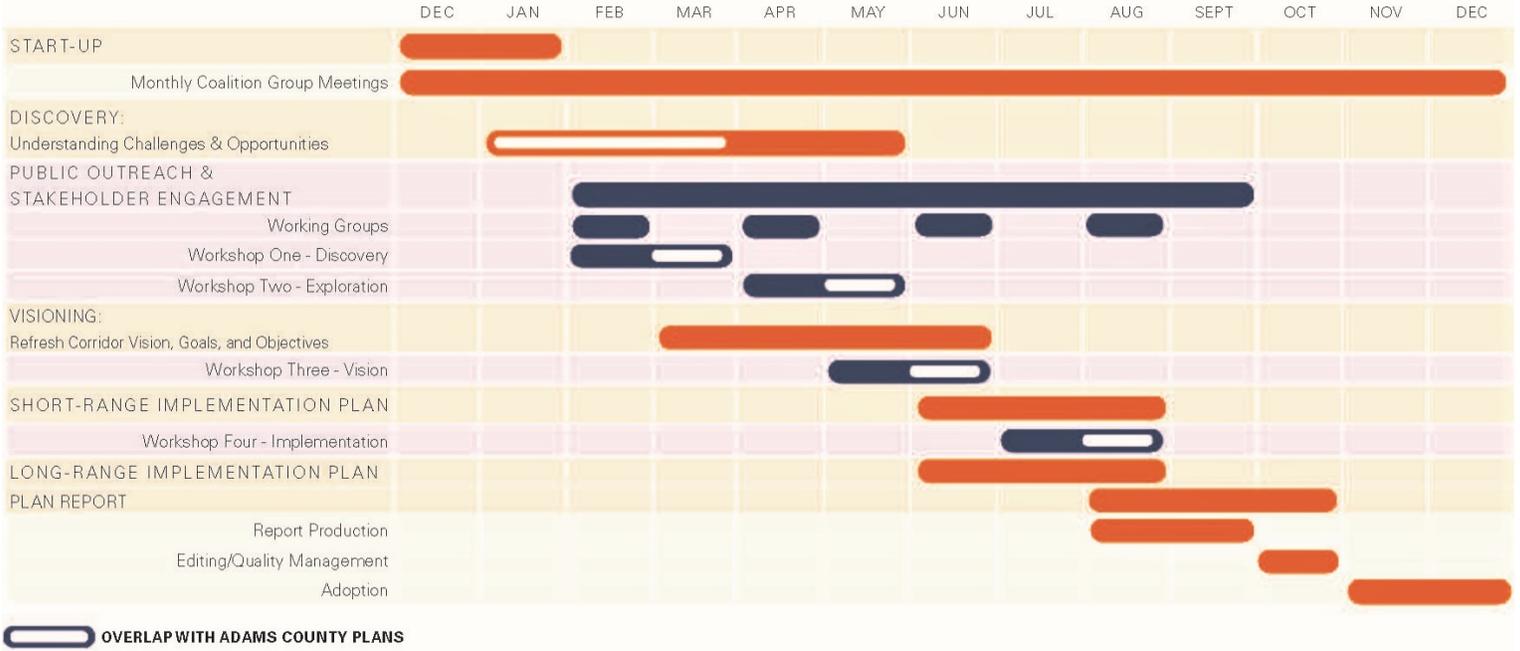
At completion, the applicant shall provide the CWCB with the final report detailing the visioning and planning process, as well as the final implementation plan. The *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* will provide details as to the next steps for realization, as well as summaries of research findings and the assembled results from the engagement process. The Plan may also contain photographs, mappings, memos, meeting records, engineering reports, and conceptual designs.

**Budget**

Task	Description	Start Date	Completion Date	CWCB Funds	Other Funding Cash
1	Start-Up	DEC 2020	JAN 2021		\$ 15,000
2	Discovery: Understanding Challenges and Opportunities	JAN 2021	MAY 2021	\$ 200,000	\$100,000
3	Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement	FEB 2021	SEPT 2021		\$ 25,000
4	Visioning: Refresh Corridor Vision, Goals, and Objectives	MAR 2021	JUN 2021		\$ 50,000
5	Short-Range Implementation Plan	JUN 2021	AUG 2021		\$ 25,000
6	Long-Range Implementation Plan	JUN 2021	AUG 2021		\$ 10,000
7	Plan Report	AUG 2021	OCT 2021		\$ 25,000
	<b>Total</b>			<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

**Project Schedule**



Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

Appendix D – Support Letters



  
2480 W. 26th Ave Suite 156-B | Denver, CO 80211  
TEL 303 455 6277 | FAX 303 455 7880



November 3, 2020

Chris Sturm  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, Co 80203

RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Study

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the Mile High Flood District (District), I am writing in support of the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Study (Study) and recommend the Study for the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant.

The District has been working with Adams County, Brighton, Thornton and Commerce for over 50 years to protect and restore the 17 miles of the South Platte River in Adams County. The Study will establish a vision for the South Platte River Corridor and develop a project implementation plan to guide public and private sector collaborations.

Developing a plan to restore and protect the South Platte River complements the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land, and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach. In addition, the plan to create open space and riparian habitat along the river front also aligns with our core value of being stewards for watersheds and streams.

In summary, we believe that this project will be an important step in the process of protecting the South Platte River and thus recommend funding of the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Study. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Ken Mackenzie', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Ken Mackenzie  
Executive Director

Protecting People, Property and Our Environment.



Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

***Metro Basin Roundtable is approving this Letter of Support at their Board Meeting on November 12, 2020. Signed letter will be provided to CWCB following the Board Meeting.***

November 12, 2020

Chris Sturm  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, Co 80203

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the Metro Basin Roundtable, I write in support of the application by Adams County, City of Brighton, City of Commerce City, and City of Thornton for the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will develop and prioritize project plans to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

Mile High Flood District, Adams County, the cities of Brighton, Commerce City and Thornton, The Greenway Foundation and the other project sponsors have worked collaboratively planning, designing, and implementing projects. Collectively, they have restored streams to mimic natural stream processes while enhancing recreation and open space amenities for their communities. The South Platte River Plan will be another great partnership to continue this vital work.

Developing a plan to restore and protect the South Platte River complements the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

Metro Basin Roundtable supports this grant application and welcomes the opportunity to enhance this partnership. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at (303) 979-7286.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Barbara Biggs  
Chairperson  
Metro Basin Roundtable

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

**A RIVER IS MORE THAN AN AMENITY,  
IT IS A TREASURE**

- Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes



Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, Co 80203

Monday, October 19, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

**BOARD OF  
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Katie Navin

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

Jeff Shoemaker

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the Greenway Foundation, I am writing in support of the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will develop and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

The Greenway Foundation, Adams County, and the other project sponsors have worked collaboratively planning, designing, and implementing projects. Collectively, we have restored streams to mimic natural stream processes while enhancing recreation and open space amenities for the community. The South Platte River Plan is another great partnership to continue our great work.

Developing a plan to restore and protect the South Platte River complements the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

I support this grant application and welcome the opportunity to enhance our partnership. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

With Regard;

Jeff Shoemaker  
Executive Director

1800 Platte St., Denver, CO 80202 | 303.455.7109 | [www.GreenwayFoundation.org](http://www.GreenwayFoundation.org)

*The Greenway Foundation is supported in part by a gift from the Estate of Robert V. and Billie Mae Behrent.*

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application



Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, Co 80203

October 19, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of Denver Trout Unlimited, I am writing in support of the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will develop and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

Denver Trout Unlimited, along with The Greenway Foundation, Adams County, and the other project sponsors have worked collaboratively planning, designing, and implementing projects. Collectively, we have restored streams to mimic natural stream processes while enhancing recreation and open space amenities for the community. The South Platte River Plan is another great partnership to continue our great work.

Developing a plan to restore and protect the South Platte River complements the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

I support this grant application and welcome the opportunity to enhance our partnership. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at [denvertu@gmail.com](mailto:denvertu@gmail.com).

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Thank you,

Dan Kubik  
President

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application

Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts  
Department  
Riverdale Regional Park  
www.adcogov.org



9755 Henderson Road  
Brighton, CO 80601  
PHONE 303.637.8000  
FAX 303.637.8015

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

October 21, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of Adams County, please accept this strong letter of support for the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for funding from the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will identify and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

The Adams County Mission Statement is to responsibly serve the Adams County community with integrity and innovation. This project meets both of these criteria. First, there is a great need to improve the habitat of the Adams County Reach of the South Platte River and preserve/improve this important natural resource for years to come. Second, this coalition is taking a very innovative way of looking at these improvements with great cooperation between the County, Mile High Flood District, Commerce City, Thornton and Brighton. This is a timely and very important project for Adams County.

The plan's vision to restore and protect the South Platte River complements our mission as well as existing and past plans. It also achieves the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

I enthusiastically support this grant application and welcome the opportunity to enhance our partnership. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at [bfanning@adcogov.org](mailto:bfanning@adcogov.org).

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

**J. Byron Fanning Jr.**  
Director, Adams County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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DISTRICT 4

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DISTRICT 5

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application



Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, Co 80203

October 28, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the Metro Denver Nature Alliance, please accept this strong letter of support for the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for funding from the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will identify and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

Metro DNA is a growing coalition of non-profit, government, research, and private sector partners seeking to align nature-based efforts to ensure more equitable access to nature and to promote healthy people, communities, and natural places across the seven-county region. The South Platte River is a central ecological and cultural feature of this region, an environmental education destination, and a driver of community engagement.

The plan's vision to restore and protect the South Platte River complements our mission and those of our 50+ partners while also achieving the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

I enthusiastically support this grant application and welcome the opportunity to enhance our partnership. Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information. I can be reached at [dana@metrodna.org](mailto:dana@metrodna.org) or 303-883-9405.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dana Coelho", is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Dana Coelho  
Alliance Director

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application



Parks, Recreation and Community Programs Department  
9500 Civic Center Drive  
Thornton, Colorado 80229  
www.ThorntonCO.gov

Open Space and Capital Projects Division  
303-255-7831  
FAX 303-255-7710

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

October 26, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the City of Thornton, please accept our letter of support for the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for funding from the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will identify and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

Thornton's mission is to strategically work with the surrounding jurisdictions to preserve and enhance the natural ecosystem throughout the river corridor by improving the natural habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species, restoring riparian areas, and expanding the corridor to incorporate the city's water reservoir system to provide increased accessibility, connectivity, educational and recreational opportunities.

The plan's vision to restore and protect the South Platte River complements our mission as well as existing and past plans. It also achieves the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

The City of Thornton enthusiastically supports this grant application and welcomes the opportunity to enhance our partnership. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Seve Ghose", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Seve Ghose, Director – Parks, Recreation and Community Programs

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,  
RECREATION AND GOLF

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

October 21, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the City of Commerce City, please accept this strong letter of support for the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for funding from the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will identify and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

Commerce City's Mission is to provide excellent public services and customer experiences by anticipating needs, embracing diversity, and fostering relationships to sustain a growing and vibrant community. The South Platte River Plan is an extraordinary opportunity to fulfill this mission by working with other municipalities, government agencies and non-profits to create a plan that will identify much needed connections, restoration opportunities and amenities along the South Platte River corridor.

The plan's vision to restore and protect the South Platte River complements our mission as well as existing and past plans. It also achieves the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

I enthusiastically support this grant application and welcome the opportunity to enhance our partnership. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at [ckeith@c3gov.com](mailto:ckeith@c3gov.com).

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Thank you,

Carolyn J. Keith, CPRP  
Director of Parks, Recreation and Golf  
City of Commerce City

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant Application



City of Brighton  
500 South 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brighton, CO 80601  
303-655-2000 Office  
[www.brightonco.gov](http://www.brightonco.gov)

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Chris Sturm  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

October 22, 2020

*RE: Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan*

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the City of Brighton, please accept this strong letter of support for the application by Adams County, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton for funding from the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant for the *Adams County South Platte River Vision and Implementation Plan* (South Platte River Plan). The South Platte River Plan will identify and prioritize projects to restore and protect the entire 17 miles of the South Platte River within Adams County from Franklin Street to 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brighton.

The City of Brighton has adopted an official Strategic Vision that is comprised of nine focus areas. This Strategic Vision Plan is intended to provide a high-level focus on the most critical priorities facing the City in future years. The Creation of the South Platte River Plan supports five of the ten Strategic Focus Areas: Facilities, Amenities and Open Space; Safe, Active and Engaged Community; Strategic, Supportable, Infrastructure; Strong Regional Relationships and Partnerships; and Sustainability.

The plan's vision to restore and protect the South Platte River complements our Strategic Vision Plan as well as past plans. It also achieves the objectives of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant to restore and protect water, land and natural resources while integrating a multi-objective approach.

I enthusiastically support this grant application and welcome the opportunity to enhance our partnership. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Travis Haines at [THaines@Brightonco.gov](mailto:THaines@Brightonco.gov) or Brett Sherman at [BSherman@Brightonco.gov](mailto:BSherman@Brightonco.gov).

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Thank you,

Brett Sherman, Director of Utilities

Travis Haines, Director of Parks and Open Space

## Appendix E – Staff Bios

### ADAMS COUNTY

#### [Byron Fanning, Adams County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts, Director](#)

Byron is an Adams County resident with a passion for parks, recreation and open space. Byron has 13 years of experience in the Park and Open Space industry. During his 12-year tenure with the City of Aurora he held various positions including Manager of Business Services and Manager of Recreation, having worked on funding scenarios for many open space and buffer acquisition projects. Byron has been the Director with Adams County since early 2019 and is excited to meet the many challenges facing the agency such as improving the habitat along the County's main trail corridors, the South Platte River and Clear Creek as well as preservation of open space and farmland in those areas.

#### [David Rausch, P.E. CFM, Infrastructure and Stormwater Manager](#)

David is a Certified Floodplain Manager and has over 15 years of a wide range of experience in roadway, ADA, water, wastewater, and stormwater design, design review, and construction support. David currently manages a staff of 15 construction and stormwater inspectors as well as working closely and reviewing engineering projects with County Engineering Staff.

### COMMERCE CITY

#### [Traci Ferguson, Parks Planner](#)

Traci has been with the City for 15 years and has been involved in several master planning projects involving the City as well as regional parks, trails and open space.

#### [Carolyn J. Keith, CPRP](#)

Carolyn has worked for the City of Commerce City since January 2002 as the Director of Parks, Recreation & Golf. Carolyn has worked in the public sector in parks and recreation for over 40 years. As the Director of Parks, Recreation & Golf for Commerce City, Carolyn provides leadership and direction for the essential operating services and strategic planning of the City's nationally recognized Park, Recreation & Golf Department. Throughout her career, she has been an active participant in both state and national professional associations.

#### [Brent Soderlin, P.E.](#)

Brent has worked for the City of Commerce City since February of 2018 as the City Engineer. Brent has worked in the public sector as a Development Review Engineer, Design Engineer and Senior Design Engineer for over 20 years. As the City Engineer, Brent is in charge of the City's Stormwater program, traffic and transportation systems, development review, and the Capital Improvements program. He is also a Certified Floodplain manager and ensures that developments within Commerce City comply with FEMA regulations. Throughout his career he has been an active participant in the Colorado Association of Floodplain Managers and the APWA.

### THORNTON

#### [Jim Kaiser, PE, CFM, Floodplain Manager](#)

Jim has participated in numerous masterplans with Mile High Flood District over the last 13 years of service to the City of Thornton.

#### [Rachelle Plas, PE, CFM, Stormwater Project Manager](#)

Rachelle has worked on several drainage and stormwater projects over the past year and a half with the City of Thornton's Infrastructure Department.

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[Diane Van Fossen, Deputy Director, Parks, Recreation and Community Programs](#)

Diane has been with the City for 23 years and manages the Projects and Planning Division. She has participated in numerous citywide and multi-jurisdictional master planning efforts including the original *South Platte River Heritage Corridor Plan*.

**BRIGHTON**

[Travis Haines, Director of Parks & Recreation](#)

Travis has worked in the field of Parks and Recreation for 25 years as a Director and Assistant Director in Kansas and Colorado.

[Scott Olsen, Stormwater Coordinator](#)

Scott has a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources Management from Colorado State University in Fort Collins and has worked more than six years in stormwater and environmental management with the City of Brighton.

**MILE HIGH FLOOD DISTRICT**

[Barbara Chongtoua, P.E., C.F.M., Development Services Manager](#)

Barbara has 25 years' experience working with the municipalities managing and delivering contracts for stream restoration and storm water infrastructure projects. Barbara joined CH2M Hill in 1994 and served as a project and client service manager responsible for contract negotiation, administration, project team management and project delivery. In 2008, she joined the Mile High Flood District leading and managing planning, design, construction, and maintenance projects. Currently, Barbara is managing 40 million dollars of planning, design, construction and maintenance projects.

[Dan Hill, Project Engineer](#)

Dan is a Project Engineer with Mile High Flood District and has five years of experience in the Front Range region. He worked on many master plans and channel projects with MHFD before joining the staff in 2019.

[Drew Roberts, Staff Engineer](#)

Drew is a Staff Engineer with the Mile High Flood District, and formerly was a consulting engineer at Atkins Global. Drew studied Civil Engineering at Michigan Technological University with a focus in transportation and highway design, before shifting to water resources.

**CONSULTANTS**

[Marge Price, Capitol Representatives, Principal](#)

Marge is a Principal in the firm of Capitol Representatives, with offices in Washington, DC and Denver, Colorado. She serves as a senior manager of the government relations firm. The firm specializes in providing government relations support for the public and private sector, local, regional and national clients. Her background includes managing a Denver office of a Washington lobby firm, staffing one of the caucuses of the Colorado State Senate, and serving as a staff assistant to U.S. Senator Gary Hart. She has been active in Colorado politics for many years. She represents public agencies at the local level seeking to obtain funding and seeking prompt decisions from the federal government. She also assists private sector entities on a project-by-project basis, primarily in strategies for working with government at all levels. She has more than 15 years' experience in federal, state and local government, plus more than 32 years in the private sector.

[David Howlett, Capitol Representatives, Principal](#)

David is a Principal with the firm of Capitol Representatives, with offices in Washington, DC and Denver, Colorado. He serves as a senior manager of the government relations firm. The firm specializes in providing government relations support for the public and private sector, local, regional and national clients. His background includes senior-level consulting with a Washington, DC-based firm, Interim President/Civic and Economic Development Director for the Downtown Denver Partnership, Economic Development Director for the City of Littleton, and public

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policy work with the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. David's work has involved a number of infrastructure projects in the Denver area, including C-470, 23rd Street Viaduct, Broadway Viaduct, Santa Fe Drive, Bowles Avenue, the Lowry Air Force Base redevelopment project, 6th Avenue and the South Platte River. In addition, he has worked on several community-based programs, including the Downtown Denver Agenda, Lowry Air Force Base/ Metropolitan Homeless Initiative, C-470 Parkway Inter-Chamber Task Force and River North (RINO) Greenway Master Plan (South Platte River), River South (RISO) Greenway Master Plan (South Platte River), River Vision Implementation Plan (RVIP) (South Platte River), USACE South Platte River & Tributaries, Adams and Denver Counties, Colorado Project, USACE Southern Platte Valley Sec. 1135 CAP Project, and Chatfield Reservoir Storage Reallocation Project.

[Jeff Shoemaker, The Greenway Foundation, Executive Director](#)

Since 1982, Jeff Shoemaker has been the Executive Director of The Greenway Foundation (TGF). Under the course of his leadership, TGF has partnered with countless public and private organizations to collectively create over \$750 million of environmental, recreational, water quality and flood control improvements along the South Platte River and its numerous tributaries throughout the Metro Denver Area and beyond. These priceless amenities include the watersheds of the City and County of Denver, along with Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas and Jefferson counties, as well as a larger number of related municipalities. This collective investment over the last four decades to the reclamation and preservation of the related community's greatest natural resources is directly connected to the creation of over \$30 billion of additional economic development and related benefit to the surrounding area. The Metro Denver Area's waterways are now home to over 100 miles of multi-use recreational trails, over 100 acres of parks and natural areas, and over 100,000 A.F. of enhancements to these rivers and creeks in terms of both water quality and water quantity enhancements.

[Claudia Browne, Biohabitats](#)

Claudia has over 30 years of experience in conservation and restoration planning, water resource management, riparian and wetland habitat assessments and maintenance. Her work strives to increase the resiliency of natural and human systems by integrating strategies for restoration and sustaining ecological functions into all phases of master planning, design, construction, and monitoring projects.

[Chris Kroeger, Muller Engineering Company](#)

Chris is a senior project manager with Muller Engineering Company and has been with Muller for 21 years. Chris' professional experience focuses on stormwater management and site design, and projects which integrate innovative engineering and community-focused improvements.

[Joshua Eldridge, Great Ecology](#)

Joshua Eldridge is an ecologist with over 16 years of experience, including 14 years as an ecological consultant. He directs the Great Ecology Intermountain West Ecology Team and specializes in wildland and urban restoration, with particular emphasis on developing resilient and sustainable plant communities. His extensive ecological experience includes project management on complex, multi-year permitting and redevelopment projects, open space design, innovative stormwater management strategies, urban stream restoration, mitigation planning, assessment of disturbed riparian and upland systems, plant community design, and wetland delineations.

[Robb Berg, PLA, CDT, Design Workshop, Principal](#)

Robb is known for the high value he places on individuals and teams. From partnerships with communities and clients, to collaboration with design teams, Robb leads through respect and trust. He optimizes teamwork, keeping a focus on the distinct needs and opportunities of each project. His two decades in planning and design have given him a deep appreciation of the science and art of the built environment, and a dedication to environmental stewardship and resiliency. He has a keen eye for detail and is skilled in every phase of project development. His projects, spanning the U.S. and abroad, have received numerous awards for innovation in planning and design.