



## City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

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Boulder Mountainbike Alliance (BMA)

Dear BMA,

Thank you for submitting comments and suggestions regarding the Flatiron Vista Loop (FIV) trails. We share your desire that new multi-use trails should provide a high quality visitor experience and be designed to be physically sustainable. In addition our trails need to also be located in ways that protect the environment. As you recommended, staff looked at several sections of the FIV alignment to determine if there are some changes that would improve the long-term sustainability of the trail. Staff conferred with Pete Weber (IMBA Trail Solution employee) to ensure we understand his views. Two locations were assessed further, the south-eastern leg of the outer loop to improve trail sustainability and the south-western leg to create a natural flow to the alignment.

In designing the trail alignments, in addition to providing an enjoyable visitor experience, we had to balance various considerations including: providing alignments located very close to the trail corridors reviewed and approved by the public in the TSA plan; protecting pediment grassland communities and grassland bird habitat, protecting drainages and riparian areas; protecting cultural resources, and providing a durable trail with sustainable grades and drainage. We chose alignments that utilize the area already disturbed and used as social trails believing it to be the best solution to meet our various considerations, including physical sustainability.

Regarding the south-eastern part of the outer loop that descends from the pediment down toward the stock pond, we considered a reroute to the south of the existing social trail as well as a pair of shorter loop reroutes to the south. Unfortunately, there are no significant cross-slope gains to the south of the trail alignment until the trail is near the main channel of a neighboring small drainage (see attached map, Alternative B). This alignment would also be well beyond the agreed to trail corridor outlined in the TSA. We also considered two smaller, shorter in length, loop reroutes, that depart from the existing alignment (see attached map, Alternative A). However, moving the trail to the south by approximately 150' yields very little benefit from a cross-slope (sustainability) perspective, nor does it provide a significant difference in general visual interest. We could add some curves for user interest, but the cost of the additional disturbance seems to outweigh this minimal benefit. It should be noted that the existing social trail corridor in this area is generally less than 10% in running grade and wide enough to allow us

to establish a single trail tread instead of the existing multiple tracks. For the selected alignments, we will also be able to insert some minor drainage features to help sustainability while generally staying in the existing disturbed area.

On the south-west trail section, we looked at the existing straight stretch of two (sometimes 3 or 4) tracks and considered moving the trail to the north in order to create some interplay with the trees (see attached map, Alternative C). This could possibly give the trail more visual interest for that stretch. Unfortunately, the trail would need to be moved north by 100' to 300' to get into the trees in a meaningful way. As the pediment grassland in this area is a resource that we targeted as something to be preserved where possible, the reroute would be a lot of disturbance for not much user-experience gain, and even less sustainability gain. While there might be some short term gain in trail profile by using micro grades and turns, all trails on flat terrain will become incised and vulnerable to the concomitant effects.

Although the FIV area has some limitations and challenges for trails, we plan to shape and manipulate the trail tread wherever possible to take advantage of any contour relief available to increase the sustainability of the trail tread. We are committed to managing and maintaining this trail for multiple-use and if future use suggests the need to modify the trail alignment to make them more physically sustainable, we will consider making appropriate modifications. There are always trade-offs when designing a trail. However we feel that the proposed trail alignment will provide a nice trail, with outstanding views and interesting features that visitors will enjoy, while protecting valuable natural resources in this area.

Thank-you for your long-standing interest in OSMP.

Annie McFarland  
Recreation Resources Program Coordinator

