EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fountain Creek Watershed Vision and Implementation Plan (named, COS Creek Plan) will establish a comprehensive vision for the future investments and stewardship of Fountain Creek Watershed with a specific focus on segments of the Monument and Fountain creeks adjacent to downtown Colorado Springs. The study area includes portions of Monument Creek and Fountain Creek along with the confluence of the two creeks at America the Beautiful Park. The area’s northern boundary is Popcycle Bridge, located at Monument Valley Park near Beacon Street and Van Buren Street. The study area extends south to the confluence of Fountain Creek and Shooks Run Creek, just southeast of Dorchester Park.

The vision plan has been made possible by a grant provided to The Greenway Foundation by Lyda Hill Philanthropies. The significance of re-envisioning the Fountain Creek and Monument Creek corridors within Colorado Springs cannot be overstated. The grant allowed for an open and engaged discussion of natural creek function, creekside recreation, economic vitality, and placemaking as well as provided the opportunity for a robust community discussion about the future of all of our waterways and wetlands.

Informed by research, data and historical perspective, the planning and design team met with more than 80 community leaders and stakeholders to explore what the Fountain Creek Watershed in Colorado Springs could become and build consensus on the key elements necessary to create a successful and sustainable plan.

The principles that guide this vision for the Fountain Creek and Monument Creek corridors are based on the belief that stormwater and flood risk management can be an integral part of a larger goal to maintain and restore natural functions of the creeks throughout the watershed. Moreover, it provides opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and enhancement of the economic value and quality of life for citizens and visitors of Colorado Springs. The plan identifies short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects for implementation. The goal of the initiation of construction involved with short-term projects is currently anticipated to take place within one to three years of the completion of the plan.

Funding of projects of the size and scope noted within the plan will involve “all four legs of the Progress Chair – private, public, philanthropic and political.” Potential sources of funding related to the realization of the vision plan involve numerous sources related to all four legs of the “Progress Chair.” Initial discussions involving numerous related funding sources have been taking place over the course of the last year in parallel with the development of the plan.

The next evolution of American the Beautiful (ATB) Park is the highest priority of the five priority projects identified in the COS Creek Plan. This priority is based on numerous factors including ATB being located at the historic confluence of Monument Creek with Fountain Creek, accessibility, visibility, current land ownership, evolving adjacent land development opportunities, and more. This priority is also contingent on the critical endorsement of and partnership with the City of Colorado Springs. Moving forward, the Leadership Team will continue to engage with the City as to the additional prioritization of the remaining four key project sites.

Efforts are already underway to establish a new, locally based 501(c)3 to engage in a partnership with the City to allow the plan to continue to evolve from “vision” to “reality.” This will allow funding opportunities for the projects to include private and philanthropic sources as well as local, regional, state and federal funding sources.

Implementing the recommendations of the COS Creek Plan will help the Monument and Fountain creeks corridor become a continuous multi-functional, multi-beneficial greenway leveraging foundational aspects of the Legacy Loop and Pikes Peak Greenway. Natural functions of the creeks can be restored while maintaining the corridor’s important role as one of the City’s primary stormwater conveyances. A seamless network of trails would support multiple options for access to the waterways and to the natural qualities of the corridor. Both existing and new neighborhoods would orient toward the corridor and connect directly to its natural and recreational assets.

The COS Creek Plan is available for viewing at: www.COSCreekPlan.org

For more information:

Chris Lieber
Principal, N.E.S. Inc.
(719) 471-0273 or clieber@nescolorado.com

Jeff Shoemaker
Executive Director, The Greenway Foundation
(303) 818-8078 or jeff@greenwayfoundation.org

SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS

Understand the Watershed
Fall-Winter 2020
Understanding the Fountain Creek Watershed at multiple levels of detail to assemble a framework of knowledge upon which to build the Vision Plan.
- Conducted Site Visits, Research, Data Compilation & Review
- Researched Historic Documentation & Perspective
- Examined Current & Past Planning Efforts
- Met with approximately 80 community stakeholders

Frame Opportunities & Build the Vision
Spring 2021
The expanse of the Fountain Creek Watershed within Colorado Springs lends itself to a strategic approach that results in the creation of related opportunities, which focus on planning resources within areas where multiple beneficial aspects of the watershed intersect.
- Identified Opportunities & Prototypical Solutions
- Explored Opportunities & Challenges
- Met with approximately 80 community stakeholders

Develop Vision & Concepts
Summer 2021
Explored what the Fountain Creek Watershed in Colorado Springs could become and maximized consensus on the key elements necessary to create a successful and sustainable Vision Plan.
- Visioning & Concept Development
- Produced Conceptual Design Alternatives
- Met with approximately 80 community stakeholders

Share the Vision
Spring-Summer 2022
Communicate the short-, mid- and long-term priority projects identified within the Vision Plan critical to building community momentum and fostering a track record of success.
- Distribute COS Creek Plan
- Continue Community Engagement
- Implement High Priority Projects

Informed by research, data and historical perspective, the planning and design team met with more than 80 community stakeholders to explore what the Fountain Creek Watershed in Colorado Springs could become and build consensus on the key elements necessary to create a successful and sustainable plan.

The principles that guide this vision for the Fountain Creek and Monument Creek corridors are based on the belief that stormwater and flood risk management can be an integral part of a larger goal to maintain and restore natural functions of the creeks throughout the watershed. Moreover, it provides opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and enhancement of the economic value and quality of life for citizens and visitors of Colorado Springs. The plan identifies short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects for implementation. The goal of the initiation of construction involved with short-term projects is currently anticipated to take place within one to three years of the completion of the plan.

Funding of projects of the size and scope noted within the plan will involve “all four legs of the Progress Chair – private, public, philanthropic and political.” Potential sources of funding related to the realization of the vision plan involve numerous sources related to all four legs of the “Progress Chair.” Initial discussions involving numerous related funding sources have been taking place over the course of the last year in parallel with the development of the plan.

The next evolution of American the Beautiful (ATB) Park is the highest priority of the five priority projects identified in the COS Creek Plan. This priority is based on numerous factors including ATB being located at the historic confluence of Monument Creek with Fountain Creek, accessibility, visibility, current land ownership, evolving adjacent land development opportunities, and more. This priority is also contingent on the critical endorsement of and partnership with the City of Colorado Springs. Moving forward, the Leadership Team will continue to engage with the City as to the additional prioritization of the remaining four key project sites.

Efforts are already underway to establish a new, locally based 501(c)3 to engage in a partnership with the City to allow the plan to continue to evolve from “vision” to “reality.” This will allow funding opportunities for the projects to include private and philanthropic sources as well as local, regional, state and federal funding sources.

Implementing the recommendations of the COS Creek Plan will help the Monument and Fountain creeks corridor become a continuous multi-functional, multi-beneficial greenway leveraging foundational aspects of the Legacy Loop and Pikes Peak Greenway. Natural functions of the creeks can be restored while maintaining the corridor’s important role as one of the City’s primary stormwater conveyances. A seamless network of trails would support multiple options for access to the waterways and to the natural qualities of the corridor. Both existing and new neighborhoods would orient toward the corridor and connect directly to its natural and recreational assets.

The COS Creek Plan is available for viewing at: www.COSCreekPlan.org

For more information:

Chris Lieber
Principal, N.E.S. Inc.
(719) 471-0273 or clieber@nescolorado.com

Jeff Shoemaker
Executive Director, The Greenway Foundation
(303) 818-8078 or jeff@greenwayfoundation.org
The Fountain and Monument Creek Corridor has always been the lifeblood of Colorado Springs. The Corridor’s rich natural resources sustained Native American tribes and attracted European settlers. General Palmer, the founder of Colorado Springs, realized the scenic and recreational value of the area and created a network of parkways that have been a defining element of Colorado Springs’ identity. Over time, the natural character and functions of the Corridor have been altered and disconnected, the richness diminished, and the Creek access made inaccessible.

This plan lays out a comprehensive vision and strategy to integrate and implement recommendations of multiple planning efforts completed in the recent past to restore the Creek’s environmental qualities, promote economic vitality, and to greatly enhance and expand the recreational opportunities that were important to General Palmer’s original vision.

To view the full report go to https://www.coscreekplan.org
A HOLISTIC VISION

A Vision for Restoring the Fountain and Monument Creek Corridor with Implications for the Watershed

The principles that guide this vision for the corridor, including Monument and Fountain Creeks, are based on the belief that storm water and flood risk management can be an integral part of a larger goal to maintain and restore natural functions of the creeks throughout the watershed. Moreover, it provides opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and enhancement of the economic value and quality of life for citizens and visitors of Colorado Springs. These principles include the following:

» Restore the Natural Functions of the Corridor
   Reestablish natural functions of the Monument and Fountain Creek floodplains as a part of a larger plan where all stream courses within the watershed are multi-use, multi-functional community assets.

» Create a Premiere Destination for Outdoor Recreation and Leisure
   Expand recreation opportunities to take advantage of the corridor’s natural scenic and recreational qualities to unlock its full potential.

» Support Economic Vitality and Revitalization
   Capitalize on corridor and waterway enhancements to encourage economic development and revitalization through traditional private development as well as public/private partnerships.

» Build a Strong Sense of Place Unique to Colorado Springs
   Enhance the corridor’s natural qualities and recreational potential integrated within the City of Colorado Springs to strengthen its sense of place, distinct identity, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide memorable experiences for visitors.

Restored natural functions, which include increased channel sinuosity and working floodplain terraces, can improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and increase groundwater recharge.

Provide opportunities for water access, water recreation, and environmental education.

Orient and link new development towards an enhanced creek to encourage revitalization and redevelopment along the corridor.

Placemaking and public art installations act as a beacon along the trail while creating moments of delight and fostering local identity.
PRIMARY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

A Continuous Linear Greenway
The Monument and Fountain Creeks corridor would become a continuous multi-functional, multi-beneficial greenway leveraging foundational aspects of the Legacy Loop and Pikes Peak Greenway. Natural functions of the creek would be restored, while maintaining the corridor’s important role as one of the city’s primary storm water conveyances. A seamless network of trails would support multiple options for access to the waterways and to the natural qualities of the corridor. Both existing and new neighborhoods would orient toward the corridor and connect directly to its natural and recreational assets.

Five New and Revitalized Parks
The greenway corridor would be punctuated by five major parks with naturalized riparian areas in between. Monument Valley Park, revitalized, restored, and supplemented with the new neighborhood parks, anchors the north end of the visioning corridor. The southern end of the visioning corridor is defined by a new linear park with multiple recreational opportunities for the existing Mill Street and adjacent neighborhoods, plus a formalized new gateway entry into downtown from the south.

Implementation
Colorado Springs expects continued and substantial population growth over the next twenty (20) years which makes sustainable waterway development critical. Final design, funding, and implementation of this vision would rely on community leadership through coordinated efforts between landowners and municipal agencies – all timed alongside funding opportunities via local, state, federal, and philanthropic sources. This vision seeks to align various planning efforts and impacts upon waterways. As a result of new infusion of federal dollars across the country, previously unavailable funds may accelerate projects in the first five (5) years for vision implementation.

Immediate Steps
Priority actions for the first twelve (12) months include alignment with the City of Colorado Springs and partners, engaging the community, developing financial strategies and preparing grant application materials, establishing a 501(c)3, as well as forming techniques and timelines for final engineering, design, and permitting of short-term projects.

Short-Term Projects
Within five (5) years, the short-term projects will be constructed. This vision identifies two (2) short-term projects that would redefine the southwestern corner of downtown Colorado Springs: America The Beautiful Park (ATB) and Gateway Park South. The projects will leverage current and near-term Community Development, Stormwater Enterprise, and Parks initiatives in coordination with economic renewal/development opportunities.

Mid-Term Projects
Projects with a mid-term horizon will be completed in coordination with planned development and creek related projects throughout the corridor. The mid-term projects identified are Monument Valley Park and Centennial Neighborhood and College Landing at Uintah. Planning for the Monument Valley Park and Centennial Neighborhood will be underway with potential land preparation activities and development planning in process. College Landing at Uintah is anticipated to be a multi-phase effort as there is private landownership, including Colorado College, which must function within the College’s existing master plan.

Long-Term Projects
Projects like Drake Waterfront Reimagined with a longer horizon (20 years) will rely heavily on major community planning and development activities in Colorado Springs. The decommissioning of the Drake Power Plant will require substantial planning and permitting efforts, as well as redevelopment planning. This vision assumes that the site will ultimately be developed to serve a variety of residential and commercial needs. This vision calls for an engaged creekside land use regardless of the intensity of redevelopment efforts.
Drake Waterfront Reimagined
A catalyst for redevelopment and neighborhood connections to the waterway
Long-Term Project:
Fountain Creek’s fifty (50) feet of elevation change between Cimarron Street and Mill Street will be utilized for paddle sports, tubing, and informal water play. A series of riffles, small drops, and pools framed by terraces and groves, form an urban edge to the new Drake neighborhood.

Gateway Park South
A new nature-based park for the existing Mill Street and surrounding neighborhoods
Short-Term Project:
The Fountain Creek corridor creates a new linear park celebrating the natural qualities of the creek and the potential for nature- and water-based recreation. A revitalized Dorchester Park is a central neighborhood gathering place and gateway to the Downtown from the south.

America the Beautiful Park
A Celebration of the Confluence of Fountain and Monument Creeks
Short-Term Project:
The original vision for America The Beautiful Park will be realized by restoring Monument Creek’s primary access for paddle sports, tubing, and enjoyment of its natural qualities.

College Landing at Uintah
A gateway to the Old North End and a connected Colorado College campus
Mid-Term Project:
Modifying existing walls that confine Monument Creek creates a defining entrance for both the Colorado College Campus and Downtown. Moreover, this establishes a gathering place along the creek that unifies Monument Creek Park and the campus.

Monument Valley Park and Centennial Neighborhood
A restored park design and a new neighborhood
Mid-Term Project:
General Palmer’s original concept for a pastoral, natural park along a free-flowing stream will be restored on the north end of Monument Valley Park while a new park and neighborhood is defined west of the creek at the existing Fontanero Maintenance Yard.

FIVE SIGNATURE PROJECTS - OVERVIEW
MONUMENT VALLEY PARK (MVP) AND CENTENNIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

1. **River Beach** provides access and direct interaction with the creek.
2. **River Access Sloped Lawn Terraces** define additional recreational spaces.
3. **Low Flow Crossing** connects Old North End and western neighborhoods.
4. **River Plaza** is a multi-purpose space near the creek for residents.
5. **Pedestrian Promenade** integrates new areas to existing trails and open spaces.
6. **Water Quality Open Space** developed as a public-private partnership.

Existing conditions
MVP AND CENTENNIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

1. River Beach provides access and direct interaction with the creek
2. River Access Sloped Lawn Terraces define recreational spaces
3. Low Flow Sloped Lawn Terraces define recreational spaces
4. River Plaza is a multi-purpose space near the creek for residents
5. Pedestrian Promenade integrates new areas to existing trails and open spaces
6. Water Quality Areas and Boardwalks establish natural riparian areas
7. Flexible Plaza and Open Lawn offer passive use and open space
8. Lower Trail enables seasonal access to lower creek areas
9. Future Development Areas fosters residential and commercial opportunities
10. Existing Electrical Substation to Remain
11. Levee Removal / Relocation in selective locations for floodplain management
12. New Pedestrian Bridge creates critical east-west connection for all
13. Reshaped Trailhead and Creek Access improves mobility and use of trail system

Land use, waterways, and park space are re-envisioned to pay homage to the values of public space in Colorado Springs as pioneered by General Palmer. This project site celebrates the creek areas around Monument Valley Park, restoring the creekside pastoral qualities imagined over a century ago. New opportunities include reclaimed land for development and restored natural corridor for active and passive recreation. The design explores opportunities for multi-purpose infrastructure that benefits the creek ecosystem, stormwater, and community. Geographically, this section follows the Monument Creek corridor from Popcycle Bridge south to Fontanero Street including the Fontanero Service Yard and a portion of Monument Valley Park.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
- Public funding will include municipal funding, state agency opportunities, and federal agency programs focused on specific outcomes
- Philanthropic funding and granting organizations will be critical partners in the visioning and specific elements
- Private funding sources will leverage the planned public investment to create new neighborhoods and supporting development

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- Environmental and riparian restoration
- Residential / commercial development opportunities
- Artistic and cultural interests
- Stormwater and floodplain management
- Recreational opportunities

Restored floodplain terraces
Development oriented towards the creek
Public pedestrian promenade edge
River Beach invites access and direct interaction with the creek.

River Access Sloped Lawn Terraces create study and social spaces.

Low Flow Crossing emphasizes cross-creek connection and exploration.

Upper Plaza connects students to corridor and provides views.

River Amphitheater and Stage Deck promotes performance and education.

New Pedestrian Bridge unites campus areas across the creek.
As the primary entry to Colorado College's campus and Old North End Neighborhood, this area should celebrate the educational and historical heart of Colorado Springs. The creek brings together the campus and southern end of Monument Valley Park to provide a destination for leisure activities and campus ceremonies along the creek, while maintaining the continuity of natural systems. This focus area section roughly follows Monument Creek corridor from north of Uintah Street south to Mesa Avenue including portions of Monument Valley Park and Colorado College.
River Beach offers access and direct interaction with the creek
River Access Terraces create creekside seating to view watersports
Water Quality Area and Boardwalk provide dynamic wildlife viewing
Restroom, Changing Area, and Plaza used by families and downtown tourism
Existing Lawn enhanced by robust programming of festival and events
Existing Julie Penrose Fountain with Terraced Expansion
New Pedestrian Bridges unites east and west while opening visual corridor
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Public funding including municipal, state agency, and federal agency programs
- Philanthropic funding and granting organizations
- Private funding sources

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Environmental and riparian restoration
- Residential / commercial development opportunities
- Artistic and cultural interests
- Stormwater and floodplain management
- Recreational opportunities

America the Beautiful Park is honored as a premier downtown amenity space established with its inception almost thirty (30) years ago in the 1992 Downtown Action Plan.

The confluence of Monument and Fountain Creeks has strong potential to stimulate further investment and create a more cohesive urban fabric from the downtown core to creekside. This will be the entry point for water activities such as fishing, tubing and stand-up paddle boarding. This will become a central recreation point for downtown residents and tourists visiting the Pikes Peak Region.

River Beach offers access and direct interaction with the creek

River Access Terraces create creekside seating to view watersports

Water Quality Area and Boardwalk provide dynamic wildlife viewing

Restroom, Changing Area, and Plaza used by families and downtown tourism

Existing Lawn enhanced by robust programming of festival and events

Existing Julie Penrose Fountain with Terraced Expansion

New Pedestrian Bridges unite east and west while opening visual corridor

Permeable Parking / Festival Court treats stormwater and expands programs

Future Development by private investment utilizes park and creekside

Existing U.S. Olympic Building will flourish as development of area continues

Cantilevered Promenade under Colorado Avenue connects to Downtown

Terraced Lawn and Confluence Access invites visitors with signature canopy

Relocated Turnaround (roadway alignment TBD with parcel development)

Existing Pedestrian Bridge leads to U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum
DRAKE WATERFRONT REIMAGINED

1. **River Beach** builds access and direct interaction with the creek
2. **Creek Access Terraces at Drop Structures** create river access for all
3. **Stepped Seating and Lawn Terraces** dedicates space to socialize and recreate
4. **Water Quality Areas and Boardwalks** receive and treat stormwater
5. **Pedestrian Promenade** connects new areas to existing trails
6. **Flexible Sloped Lawn** forms a new creekside space to interact and relax

Existing conditions
As the historic Drake site undergoes an extensive planning process, new possibilities must be considered for recreation, development, water quality, and habitat along the approximate one-mile of neglected and forgotten creek frontage. This project calls for engaged creekside land use and the reconnection of the Mill Street Neighborhood, following Fountain Creek from Cimarron Street south and east to Las Vegas Street.

The creek’s fifty (50) feet of vertical elevation change in this section will be utilized for paddle sports, tubing, and informal water-play. A series of riffles, small drops, and pools framed by terraces and groves form an urban edge to the new neighborhood.
River Beach offers a final one-mile float take-out
River Access Terraces dedicate space for programmed activities and events
Existing Historic Shade Structure retains historical community significance
Sloped Lawn provides creekside opportunities to socialize and relax
Flexible Plaza with Shaded Seating Edge extends terrace programming
New Signature Pedestrian Bridge connects creek and park to Ivywild area
New South Pikes Peak Greenway Trail transfers commuters to westerly trails
This is a vital renewal effort for the southern gateway into Downtown Colorado Springs. Designed around the existing historic structure, a revitalized and reconstructed park provides a central gathering place for the south-end as part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the park. The site functions as the final takeout along the one-mile instream water course. Significant social issues are integral to the overall planning effort for this site and the adjacent creek.

This site follows the Fountain Creek corridor between Tejon Street and Nevadas Avenue. The space is activated through re-imagined seating, creek access, and circulation. New connections to the creek, trails, and community reinvigorate one of Colorado Springs’ oldest parks.

GATEWAY PARK SOUTH

1. River Beach offers a final one-mile float take-out
2. River Access Terraces dedicate space for programmed activities and events
3. Existing Historic Shade Structure retains historical community significance
4. Sloped Lawn provides creekside opportunities to socialize and relax
5. Flexible Plaza with Shaded Seating Edge extends terrace programming
6. New Signature Pedestrian Bridge connects creek and park to Ivywild area
7. New South Pikes Peak Greenway Trail transfers commuters to westerly trails
8. Terraced Lawn Seating adds additional recreational and social spaces
9. New Roadway with Parking and Drop-Off creates access into site
10. Future Development utilizes park and creek
11. Water Quality Areas enhance riparian zones and treat stormwater
12. Pikes Peak Greenway Trail provides safe means of walking and biking
13. New Low Flow Crossing extends south trail connections
14. Riparian Planting provides critical ecological habitat

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Public funding will include municipal funding, state agency opportunities, and federal agency programs focused on specific outcomes
- Philanthropic funding and granting organizations will be critical partners in the visioning and specific elements
- Private funding sources will support public initiatives and investment

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Environmental and riparian restoration
- Residential/commercial development opportunities
- Artistic and cultural interests
- Stormwater and floodplain management
- Recreational opportunities
Special Acknowledgment: The project team built upon decades of initiatives, studies, implementation projects made possible by “watershed warriors” that included countless City of Colorado Springs staff, Colorado Springs Utilities staff, Fountain Creek Watershed District, volunteers, and philanthropists.
Learn more and stay engaged throughout the process at https://COSCreekPlan.org/