

# Mid-Valley Trails Plan



EAGLE COUNTY  
Community  
Development

September 2020



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# 1. Acknowledgments

## Eagle County Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission

Charles Spickert, Vice-Chair  
 Bob Andre  
 Laura Smith  
 J.R. Spung  
 Jason Wright

## Mid-Valley Trails Committee

George Trantow  
 Philip Ring  
 Bryan Schaefer  
 Susan Wilson  
 Temple Glassier, Administrator

## Eagle County Staff

Kris Valdez, Senior Planner  
 Morgan Beryl, Community Development Director  
 Scott Fleming, GIS Analyst  
 Ben Gerdes, Eagle County Engineer  
 John Harris, Road and Bridge Director  
 Kelley Collier, Deputy County Manager  
 Ellie Caryl, Veracity, LLC

## Photo Credits

Laurel Smith, Sopris Media  
 Ellie Caryl, Veracity, LLC  
 Kris Valdez, Senior Planner  
 Cliff Simonton, Former Senior Planner  
 Holly McClain  
 Mike Pritchard  
 Roaring Fork Transportation Authority  
 Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council  
 Pitkin County

## Participating Agencies and Organizations

Town of Basalt including the Basalt Parks, Open Space and Trails Committee  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Colorado Department of Transportation  
 Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
 Crawford Properties, LLC  
 Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District  
 Eagle County Engineering Department  
 Eagle County Historical Society  
 Eagle County GIS Division  
 Eagle County Planning Division  
 Eagle County Road and Bridge Department  
 Eagle County Sustainable Communities Department  
 Garfield County Community Development Department  
 Hooks Spur Neighborhood Collaborative  
 Mid-Valley Trails Committee  
 Pitkin County Open Space and Trails  
 Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association  
 Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers  
 Roaring Fork School District  
 Roaring Fork Transportation Authority  
 Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council  
 Summit Vista Homeowners Association  
 United States Forest Service  
 WE-cycle

## 2. Glossaries

### 2.1. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in the Plan:

BSWA	Basalt State Wildlife Area
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CMPRD	Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District
CODEX	Colorado Conservation Data Explorer
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CRVFO	Colorado River Valley Field Office of the BLM
ECLUR	Eagle County Land Use Regulations
ECCD	Eagle County Community Development Department
HOA	Homeowners Association
HSNC	Hooks Spur Neighborhood Collaborative
MVTC	Mid-Valley Trails Committee
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PCOST	Pitkin County Open Space and Trails
PUD	Planned Unit Development
RFVHC	Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
RFMBA	Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association
RFOV	Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
RFTA	Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
RFVRPC	Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission
SH 82	Colorado State Highway 82
SRMA	Special Resource Management Area
TMP	Travel Management Plan
USFS	United States Forest Service
WRNF	White River National Forest

### 2.2 MAPS

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### 3. Mid-Valley Trails Plan Purpose

**The Eagle County 2020 Mid-Valley Trails Plan (the “Plan”) documents the Mid-Valley community’s belief that a connected and well-maintained network of paved and unpaved trails and shared roadways is an essential component of public infrastructure.** Trail and shared roadway networks directly contribute to community health, economic vitality, inclusive accessibility and environmental sustainability.

**The Plan is a supporting document to the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and the 2018 Mid-Valley Area Community Plan.** The Plan reflects the goals and strategies detailed in those Eagle County foundational land use plans that support safe, environmentally friendly transportation facilities and quality of life-enhancing recreation opportunities. The Plan is an update to the 2006 Mid-Valley Trails Plan (the “2006 Plan”), and replaces that document in its entirety.



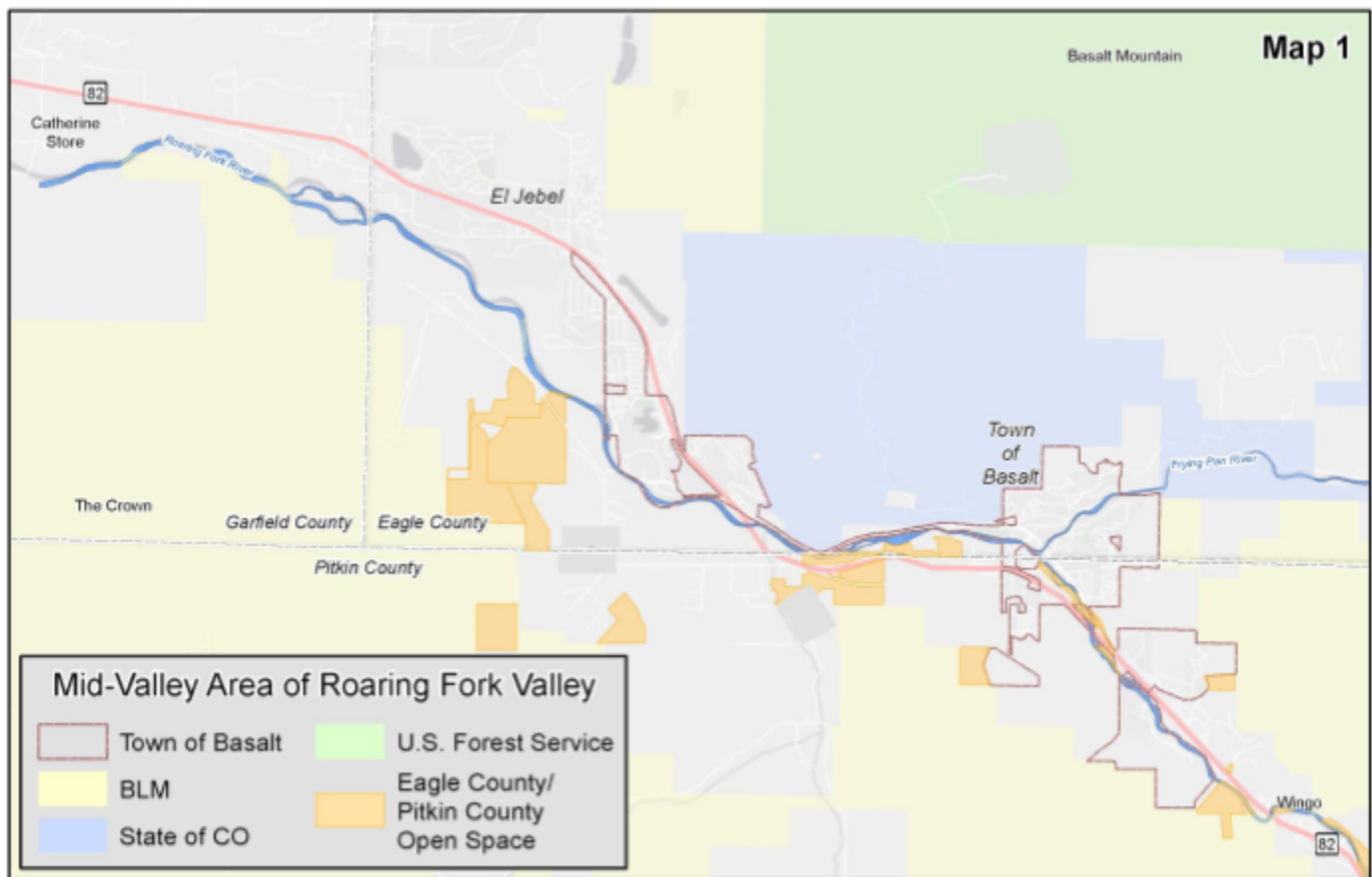
*Bike to Work Day in the Roaring Fork Valley. Photo: RFTA*

**The Plan primarily focuses on the Roaring Fork Valley “Mid-Valley” area in Eagle County.** It also includes information related to trail networks extending from Eagle County into neighboring Garfield and Pitkin Counties. The Mid-Valley area evaluated for this planning effort generally includes the valley floor and Colorado State Highway 82 (SH 82) corridor between Catherine Store Road to Wingo bridge and framed on the west by the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) “Crown” management area and on the east by Missouri Heights and Basalt Mountain and extending up the Frying Pan Valley to Ruedi Reservoir.

**The Plan supports increasing opportunities for active transportation and recreation by underserved and underrepresented populations.** The Plan’s proposed improvements and programs are aimed to support increased active transportation by underserved and underrepresented populations through providing low or no-cost recreation areas, increased engagement in outdoor activities and improved transportation route connectivity.

The Plan is a moment in time and updating the Plan is necessary on a routine basis based on performance measures. Eagle County intends to update the Plan every five years. Updates will use performance measure benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan while noting the areas of deficiency so they can be focused on in the future including how projects and programs are implemented and well as how the trail system is functioning.





**Map 1. The "Mid-Valley" Area of the Roaring Fork Valley**

The Mid-Valley area is unique in terms of its convergence of several managing jurisdictions including Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, Crown Mountain Park Recreation District, Mid-Valley Metropolitan District and many homeowner and property owner associations. Additionally, the regional and state-managed transportation facilities of RFTA and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) form the backbone of the local transportation system, and federally managed BLM and United States Forest Service (USFS) lands frame the populated area. Residents and visitors routinely cross boundaries on roads and trails within the Mid-Valley during their daily activities.

**To acknowledge and include the significant expertise and wide-ranging public input that has been gathered to date, this Plan relies strongly on prior community planning work in the Mid-Valley area and public involvement in those processes.** For example, through planning efforts by Town of Basalt and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA)<sup>1</sup>, a substantial amount of constituent input and data was gathered and priority trail projects were identified to direct their organization's future planning and budgeting.

Proposed projects from those documents are included in this Plan but due to the number of overlapping jurisdictions and varying priorities in the Mid-Valley, are not prioritized in the context of this Plan. The majority of proposed projects listed in the Plan also have yet to be fully evaluated for feasibility.

<sup>1</sup> See documents referenced in Section 6.1

There are multiple new projects proposed in the Plan. The tables below details the name of the proposed alignment, the proponent - meaning the agency or entity interested in moving the project forward, the decision making authority or the landowner, Eagle County's role in the process, and the feasibility considerations that should be investigated as part of the analysis for implementation.

**Table 1. List of Proposed New or Expanded Projects**

Project Name	Proponent	Decision Authority (Landowner)	Eagle County Role	Feasibility Considerations
<b>PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROUTE PAVED TRAILS</b>				
Emma Trail Relocation and Bridge	Basalt	Basalt	Referral	The project is supported by the Town of Basalt's 2020 Master Plan and memorialized in their Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and received limited comment during review.
Hooks Lane Trail Bridge	MVTC	Private Eagle County	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion	Multiple entities identify this section of trail as a safety and maintenance concern. There is support from these entities to improve this section. Public comment supported this project.
Rio Grande - Crown Mountain Park Bridge	MVCA Plan RFTA Plan	Eagle County USFS Private	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion	Included in multiple jurisdictional plans. Implementation challenges include potential impacts on sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitat and private property owner support. Extensive public comment received.
Rio Grande Equestrian	RFVHC	RFTA	Referral	Request made by local nonprofit to implement or improve this trail. Limited public and referral comments received on this expansion.
SH 82 Frontage Road Trail	MVTC	Eagle County Garfield County CDOT	Referral / Possible Partner	Supported by MVTC and the public. A partnership of Eagle County, Garfield County and CDOT is required to study and construct, with support from MVTC, private property owners and other agencies.
Two Rivers Road to downtown Basalt	Basalt	Basalt	Referral	Supported by the Town of Basalt's Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan and Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan. No public comment was received.
Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm - East side of SH 82	MVTC Basalt	Basalt CDOT Eagle County HOA PUD	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion/Possible Partner	The trail connection is recognized as a necessary improvement by multiple jurisdictions to improve walking, bicycling and transit connectivity within the Mid-Valley SH 82 corridor. It may be necessary to request right-of-way from adjacent private properties to complete the connection to the Tree Farm PUD if the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will not permit construction of the trail within the SH 82 primary right of way. No public comment was received.



**Table 1 Continued. List of Proposed New or Expanded Projects**

Project Name	Proponent	Decision Authority (Landowner)	Eagle County Role	Feasibility Considerations
<b>PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROUTE PAVED TRAILS</b>				
West side of SH 82 Trail	MVTC Basalt	CDOT	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion /Possible Partner	The project is supported by the Town of Basalt and the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. A partnership with CDOT is necessary for this project. No public comment was received regarding this segment of trail.
Willits Connections	Basalt	Basalt Eagle County	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion or a referral if located in Basalt	The project is supported by the Town of Basalt and memorialized in their Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan. Project would reduce safety concerns along Willits Lane. Limited comments were received.

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**Table 2. List of Proposed New or Expanded Projects**

Project Name	Proponent	Decision Authority (Landowner)	Eagle County Role	Feasibility Considerations
<b>SINGLETRACK TRAILS</b>				
Arbaney Kittle connection	Basalt	Private BLM	Referral from Basalt or BLM	Supported by the Town of Basalt and identified as a connection in the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. Would require a partnership among multiple agencies and a NEPA review is required since the project is located on federal lands.
Basalt Mountain top and Basalt State Wildlife Area	RFMBA RFVHC Basalt	BLM USFS CPW	Referral from BLM, USFS, CPW	Supported by the Town of Basalt and identified as a connection in the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. It is unclear if appropriate routes are possible to connect with the upper reaches of Basalt Mountain, with minimal impact on the wildlife habitat area and a NEPA process is required.
Blue Lake to Missouri Heights	RFMBA	Private HOA	Referral from HOA	A nonprofit proposes a singletrack trail connection to Missouri Heights through Blue Lake Open Space. The connection would require access across private property. Due to lack of public comment on the project, it is unclear if the property owners impacted are in support of the connection.
Crown SRMA Crown Royale	RFMBA	BLM RFTA	Referral from RFTA or BLM	Proposed by the RFMBA. Public comments were concerned about the amount of trails already located on the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the impacts on wildlife.
Crown SRMA Monte Carlo	RFMBA	BLM	Referral from Pitkin County or BLM	Proposed by the RFMBA. Public comments were concerned about the amount of trails already located on the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the impacts on wildlife.
Shadowrock Trail	MVTC	Private HOA BLM	Referral from BLM	MVTC supports investigation of a potential trail easement with Shadowrock HOA, Tree Farm PUD, Eagle County, BLM, CPW and USFS to allow access to singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain. No public comment was received.
Valley Floor to Basalt Mtn	MVTC RFMBA Basalt	Private HOA BLM USFS CPW	Referral from BLM, USFS or CPW	Supported by multiple agencies and included in multiple jurisdictional plans. Collaboration is required with private property owners and homeowner associations, BLM, USFS and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to identify and study appropriate routes that might allow this connection to travel from the valley floor in El Jebel and downtown Basalt to access established trails higher up on Basalt Mountain. A new trail connection on federal lands would require a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and a public input process. Per BLM, wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM. Public comment received supported the concerns of the CPW and BLM regarding wildlife habitat protection.



The Plan is an inventory of programmatic priorities, existing and proposed trails and roadway infrastructure, both paved and unpaved. The Plan outlines opportunities and challenges for each proposed alignment and documents input from stakeholders of all types such as trail users, non-profit organizations, private developers, and public agencies. Additionally, the Plan includes guidelines for trail design and maintenance best practices. The Plan will serve multiple purposes to benefit the residents, visitors, businesses and public entities, in the following ways:

1. **Guidance for Land Use Application Review:** The Plan will serve as a guiding document for Eagle County's review of land use applications and the related need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to serve the community. Conformance with the policies of the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and Mid-Valley Area Community Plan is a standard required for most land use applications located in the Roaring Fork Valley. In some cases, the addition or connection to an existing trail facility will be required while in other cases it may be recommended or voluntarily provided by the applicant based on a verified nexus to the land use application.
2. **Infrastructure Inventory:** The Plan provides an alphabetical inventory and maps of the existing paved and unpaved trails network and shared roadways used by people who walk, bike, run, horseback ride or travel with other power driven mobility devices in the Mid-Valley area.
3. **Suggested Trail and Roadway Improvements:** The Plan includes recommendations and suggestions for future trail and shared roadway projects that are either already included in adopted local jurisdiction documents, or were suggested through the referral agency and public comment process. The majority of suggested or proposed improvement projects listed are expressed as concepts and will require further evaluation to determine feasibility and assure compliance with the guiding policies and regulations of the underlying jurisdiction, such as Eagle County, Town of Basalt, BLM or USFS.
4. **Standards:** The Plan provides standards for constructing and maintaining safe and enjoyable shared-use paved and unpaved trails and roadways and references required and recommended specifications.



*View of El Jebel Community Center. Photo: Eagle County*

## 4. Vision for Trails and Shared Roadways in the Mid-Valley

The vision for the Mid-Valley trails and shared roadway network is to seamlessly connect the community's residential, commercial and civic destinations safely and provide a wide range of enjoyable, sustainable, and appropriately located recreational routes on the valley floor and surrounding public lands.



*East Valley Road Trail in Willits.  
Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

## 5. Planning Area Description: Roaring Fork “Mid-Valley”



*The Roaring Fork Mid-Valley as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County*

The Mid-Valley area is considered the mid-point in the length of the Roaring Fork River Valley spanning roughly 60 miles between the city of Glenwood Springs and Independence Pass south of Aspen.

Several jurisdictional entities overlay the Mid-Valley area including Eagle, Pitkin and Garfield counties, the Town of Basalt, State of Colorado, BLM and USFS in addition to metropolitan and

special districts. The linear Mid-Valley features of the Roaring Fork River, SH 82 and the Rio Grande Trail are critical community assets that have a defining role in land use and transportation patterns in the Mid-Valley area. Approximately 6,000 people reside in the 245 square miles of the portion of the Mid-Valley that Eagle County administers, including the Frying Pan River Valley east of Basalt.

The following descriptions from the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan and slightly modified for this Plan context, demonstrate the variety in land use, character and activity in the Mid-Valley area.

- **SH 82 Corridor** - SH 82 parallels the Roaring Fork River as it runs the length of the Mid-Valley, serving the communities of El Jebel and Basalt located on the valley floor. SH 82 is the main arterial roadway for the Roaring Fork Valley with an average of 25,000 vehicles per day (2018) passing through El Jebel in Eagle County. Numerous commercial and retail services are located in El Jebel or within Basalt town limits in the corridor area, with mixed-density residential neighborhoods in close proximity. The Rio Grande Trail, the Roaring Fork Valley's trail arterial, generally parallels SH 82 on the western edge of the valley floor. Many secondary trail segments facilitate trips to and from the corridor's commercial, residential and public facility centers.
- **Emma** - South and west of the Roaring Fork River is the Emma area featuring historic ranch lands, irrigated fields and expansive views. Residential densities are relatively low in this part of the valley floor, and preservation of rural character is the predominant focus. The Rio Grande Trail travels through the Emma area adjacent to the Roaring Fork River and Hooks Spur Road. From the Rio Grande Trail, several trails access “The Crown,” an elevated backcountry area to the south and west that is popular with hikers, bicyclists and equestrians.



- **Missouri Heights** - To the north of El Jebel is the Missouri Heights area, where scattered neighborhoods enjoy lower density living with views of the Roaring Fork Valley, Mount Sopris and the Elk Range. The area also includes larger agricultural properties. Horse ownership and horseback riding along County roads and trails in this area is fairly common. Primary access roads in the area are paved, but many side roads are not. Trailheads on Missouri Heights provide access to public lands on Basalt Mountain managed by the USFS.



*View of Mid-Valley in winter from Missouri Heights. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

- **Frying Pan River Valley** - The Mid-Valley area also includes portions of the Frying Pan River Valley located below and to the north of Ruedi Reservoir located east of the Town of Basalt. Renowned for its fishing and scenery, the Frying Pan River Valley is a significant tourist attraction. Frying Pan Road parallels the river, serving agricultural properties and small pockets of residential development. Numerous turnouts exist for anglers and sightseers. The paved road is narrow and can be busy at times, and it is increasingly popular with bicyclists in warmer months. There are concerns for safety given the mix of users, poor sight distances and the narrow or non-existent road shoulders.

## 6. The Planning Process

**During the 2016-2018 process to update the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan, stakeholder and public input included detailed comments about trail and shared roadway policy and projects.**

In response to the interest in trail and shared roadway infrastructure and policy, it was determined by the sitting Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission (RFVRPC) and staff that an update to the 2006 Plan was the appropriate method for documenting the community's suggestions and requests. Additionally, many of the trail projects recommended by the 2006 Plan were complete, such as the Rio Grande Trail and Willits Lane Trail, and new project recommendations had emerged.



*Kids walking near Basalt Elementary School. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

Furthermore, in the last decade, the Town of Basalt, RFTA and others have adopted detailed planning documents that include recommendations for improvements to the trail and transportation systems in the Mid-Valley with significant community support for continued expansion or enhancements.

Eagle County regularly updates land use documents ensuring the goals reflect current community priorities and jurisdictional policies. As specified by the Eagle County Land Use Regulations (ECLURs), preparation and adoption of planning documents are overseen by the planning commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

**The Eagle County RFVRPC is ultimately responsible for the preparation and adoption of this Plan.** The current ECLUR requires that certain land use applications be in “substantial conformance” with the Comprehensive Plan, Sub Area Plans or other goals, policies, and intents of any applicable County adopted documents pertaining to natural resource protection, affordable housing or infrastructure management.

Plans such as this Plan are a key component in the review of land use applications by both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. The standard of “Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan” for certain land use applications demonstrates the importance of a clear and visionary document which reflects the desires of Eagle County residents, visitors and businesses.

For the projects to become a reality and investigated for compatibility, an overall plan helps frame the goals and metrics that should be considered prior to moving a project forward. There is a delicate balance between serving many different user types, the environment, and ensuring all stakeholder concerns are addressed.

When new or proposed trails are considered, it is with the understanding that in-depth analysis, as is required for all development projects, may unearth unmitigatable impacts that make the project unfeasible for implementation. If a trail is identified in this Plan, it is not a guarantee that the proposed project can or will be implemented. The majority of proposed projects or upgrades described in the Plan are in the concept stage. Inclusion in the Plan is not intended to imply Eagle County government's approval, but to capture conceptual proposals that may or may not be investigated for further action by the lead proponents. It is also possible that some of the proposed projects that may have merit may not proceed past the planning and feasibility stage if the challenges outweigh potential benefit such as if impacts to sensitive lands, wildlife or neighborhoods are unavoidable or unmitigatable, or if the project otherwise cannot comply with government policies or regulatory requirements.

Any entity who desires to create or expand a trail requires approval from the appropriate government and environmental agencies before proceeding forward. It is with these safeguards in place, that Eagle County endorses the investigation of the trails included in the Plan and to use this Plan as a guiding document during the review of applicable land use proposals.

Getting a trail implemented is a multi-step process. Below is an example illustration of how the process could proceed for a new trail.

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## Example Process for a Trail Project



Trail Project Examples: Trail maintenance Trail construction Trail educational events

### Step 1: Analyze



Approach decision making authority to gain permission to begin analysis



Clarify the scope of analysis with partners



Conduct analysis



Community Outreach



Submit to decision making authority for consideration

### Step 2: Decision



Decision making authority reviews project analysis



Public meetings for project determination



Determination made by decision making authority

### Step 3: Implement



Present to Mid-Valley Trails Committee (MVTC)



Determination of funding or project coordination



Installation of trails





## 6.1. Mid-Valley Trails Plan Timeline 2017 - 2020

### 2017:

- **Work began to review and revise the 2006 Plan**, with Eagle County Community Development (ECCD) and Mid-Valley Trails Committee (MVTC) staff guiding the effort.
- In May 2017 approximately **30 people attended a public meeting** hosted by the MVTC and ECCD at the El Jebel Community Center to gather trail and shared roadway input from Mid-Valley residents and other interested parties. The majority of comments received focused on expanding singletrack trail networks in and adjacent to Eagle County on county, state or federal public lands. MVTC staff reports that this was a shift from the 2006 Plan public input that focused primarily on completion or expansion of several valley-floor paved trail connections, many of which are now complete.

### 2018:

- **Basalt Park Open Space and Trails Committee (POST)** hosted a joint meeting to review trail and shared roadways priorities and a USFS Basalt Mountain forest salvage project. MVTC, Roaring Fork Outdoors Volunteers (RFOV), Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA) and Pitkin County Open Space & Trails (PCOST) participated, with meeting findings incorporated into this Plan update that indicated a strong interest in singletrack trail completions and enhancements, as well as completing and upgrading paved trail connections and improving shared roadways.
- The **Mid-Valley Community Area Plan** process concluded following two years of public process and draft reviews with an adopted plan that includes multiple references to Mid-Valley Community goals for safe connectivity to enable bicycle and pedestrian transportation and the desire for recreational trails provided those amenities can be appropriately located and not impact wildlife, sensitive landscapes and adjacent properties.

### 2017-2018:

- **ECCD staff prepares the first draft of the revised Plan.** MVTC and MVTC staff, and interested stakeholders, such as RFMBA, contributed text, editing and map content to the first draft document.

### 2019:

- **ECCD staff and MVTC staff expanded the draft for MVTC review** as the next step towards preparation of a public review draft for release in early 2020.
- **Stakeholder Outreach:** The late 2019 MVTC review draft included information from phone interviews or email exchanges with Mid-Valley jurisdictional and organizational stakeholders<sup>2</sup>, including:
  1. Town of Basalt including Basalt Parks, Open Space & Trails Committee
  2. Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
  3. Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District
  4. Crawford Properties, LLC
  5. Eagle County Road and Bridge Department
  6. Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
  7. Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association
  8. Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
  9. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department

<sup>2</sup> see Appendix F for discussion notes

10. Garfield County Community Development Department
11. Colorado Department of Transportation
12. Colorado Parks and Wildlife
13. Bureau of Land Management
14. United States Forest Service

■ **Data gathering and research** including review of the following related land use, transportation, trails and resource management plans pertinent to the Mid-Valley area and Roaring Fork Valley<sup>3</sup>:

1. [Basalt 2020 Master Plan](#) with [Community Outreach Summary](#)
2. [Basalt Area Parks Open Space and Trails Master Plan \(2013\)](#)
3. [Basalt Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan \(2007\)](#)
4. [CDOT 2040 Regional Transportation Plan \(2015\)](#)
5. [CPW Basalt State Wildlife Area Management Plan \(2015\) - links to map only](#)
6. [BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office Resource Management Plan \(2015\)](#)
7. [BLM Crown Special Recreation Management Area - Travel Resource Management Plan Implementation \(2019\)](#)
8. [Eagle County Climate Action Plan \(2016\)](#)
9. [Eagle County Comprehensive Plan \(2005\)](#)
10. [Eagle County Environmental Policy Statement \(2013\)](#)
11. [Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan \(2018\)](#)
12. [Eagle County Mid-Valley Trails Plan \(2006\)](#)
13. [Eagle County Strategic Plan \(2017\)](#)
14. [Garfield County 2030 Comprehensive Plan \(2013\)](#)
15. [Pitkin County Down Valley Comprehensive Plan \(1987\)](#)
16. [Pitkin County Frying Pan Master Plan \(2016\)](#)
17. [Pitkin County Glassier Open Space Management Plan \(2105\)](#)
18. [Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan \(2015\)](#)
19. [Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Policies \(2018\)](#)
20. [Pitkin County Rio Grande Trail Management Plan \(2015\)](#)
21. [RFTA Access Control Plan \(2018\)](#)
22. [RFTA Corridor Investment Study \(2003\)](#)
23. [RFTA Recreational Trails Plan Update - Draft Rio Grande Trails Master Plan \(2018\)](#)
24. [RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan \(2015\)](#)
25. [RFTA Rules and Regulations for Trail Use](#)
26. [USFS Motorized Vehicle Travel Management Map \(2011\)](#)
27. [USFS WRNF Travel Management Plan \(2011\)](#)

### Common Themes in Adopted Plans and Stakeholder Interviews:

Several common themes emerged from the stakeholder outreach conversations and from the review of the resource and community documents list above:

- **Safe, efficient and connected infrastructure** for people walking and bicycling are an important component of community health and economy.
- **Roadways need to be upgraded and maintained** to safely accommodate non-motorized users.
- **Recreation is an important element** of the Roaring Fork Valley lifestyle.
- **Sustainability and environmental stewardship** must be considered and impacts avoided or mitigated.
- **Partnerships and regional cooperation are a necessity** to complete projects.

<sup>3</sup> see Appendix C for related map excerpts

**2020:**

- **January:** A work session was held with the MVTC at their regular meeting to discuss the first draft of the Plan, draft maps, and the proposed project schedule. Parties attending included ECCD, RFOV, RFMBA and Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council (RFVHC). The draft Plan was released on January 28 for review and comment in compliance with the ECLUR stipulated "Referral" review process to 70 public agencies, property associations and organizations. The draft Plan was also advertised in local papers and public radio as available for public comment with a 30-day review period.



*Setting Nordic Ski Tracks at Crown Mountain Park. Photo: Laurel Smith / Sopris Media*

- **February:** The RFVRPC reviewed the draft Plan as a worksession item at their February 6 regular meeting. ECCD hosted an Open-House prior to and following the meeting to invite comment on the Plan text and maps on display. The RFVRPC scheduled an additional work session for mid-March to review comments received regarding the Plan. 35 comment responses were submitted by the February 28 deadline.
- **June:** Due to Eagle County and state public health orders prohibiting public gatherings, all public hearings were postponed. In the March through May period, staff advanced Plan edits related to formatting, exhibits, new or updated project details and other information to improve the Plan. At the RFVRPC June 4 meeting, referral comments and related revisions for the final draft Plan were reviewed and the RFVRPC directed staff to further update the Plan to include additional discussion on regulatory reviews, compliance with pertinent plans and environmental sustainability.
- **July:** The revised Plan was presented to the RFVRPC and the public on July 2 for adoption consideration. A second and final public hearing was tabled on July 16, 2020 to provide staff additional time to comprehensively address the comments from the RFVRPC and the public received during the July 2, 2020 adoption hearing. A second and final public hearing was tabled on July 16, 2020 to address the comments from the RFVRPC and the public received during the July 2, 2020 adoption hearing.
- **August:** The second and final hearing was held on August 20, 2020 to formally adopt the Plan under Resolution No. 2020-01.

## 7. Plan Goals for Trails and Shared Roadways

The following are the **goals for the Mid-Valley trails and shared roadways network** and this Plan have been identified:



*Rio Grande Trail near Glassier Open Space in Eagle County. Photo: Pitkin County*

### ■ **PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK**

Continue to provide and maintain, and improve safe, connected and enjoyable transportation and recreation routes for Roaring Fork Valley residents and visitors for non-motorized uses such as walking, running, hiking, road biking, paved trail biking, mountain biking (including electrical assist bicycles where permitted), Other Power Driven Mobility Devices, cross-country skiing and horseback riding.

### ■ **EVALUATE LAND USE APPLICATIONS FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION NEEDS**

Support Eagle County, Town of Basalt, Garfield and Pitkin County land use review processes and adopted comprehensive planning documents to ensure connected walking and bicycling facilities to and within proposed developments.

### ■ **ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY VALUES**

Review suggested trail and shared roadway improvements for conformance to adopted community master plan and sub-area plan goals, policies and strategies, and continued compliance through the life of the project.



## ■ **MEET DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS**

Support the provision of facilities that meet national standards for pedestrian, bicycling, accessibility and shared roadways. Properly designed infrastructure also promotes ease of maintenance and sustainability of the community asset. A well-designed and well-built trail should require less resources to maintain, and is sustainable or “manageable” compared to the budget and staffing available and tasks required.

## ■ **ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Support trail projects that adhere to local, state and federal government environmental sustainability and stewardship policies to protect and preserve wildlife habitat, sensitive lands and other natural resources. Sustainability refers to the study and careful use of a resource (such as public lands) so that the environmental resources are not depleted or permanently damaged.



*Frying Pan Valley. Photo: Eagle County*

Eagle County is a place where natural ecosystems are preserved and maintained to assure the health and well-being of local wildlife populations. Trail projects must provide analysis and evidence the wildlife surrounding the trail will not be impacted or unduly affected, and that Colorado Parks and Wildlife approved mitigation measures can be utilized and enforced.

## ■ **CLOSE PAVED TRAIL NETWORK GAPS**

Support closing all gaps in the paved trail network and prioritize gaps where safety is an issue due to adjacent roadways and deficient facilities. The RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan included stakeholder input from all communities of the Roaring Fork Valley and found that the top factors that discourage biking and walking include gaps in the system, substandard or poorly maintained facilities, dangerous intersections and crossing busy roads.

## ■ **SUPPORT SINGLETRACK FOR MULTIPLE USER GROUPS**

Work with public land managers on improved and additional singletrack trail opportunities, located where appropriate and in compliance with pertinent regulations and management

plans, for walking, bicycling and horseback riding on the Roaring Fork Valley floor as well as connections to surrounding public lands such as on Basalt Mountain and The Crown.

## ■ **IMPROVE TRAILS AND ROADWAYS FOR SHARED USE**

Support the consistent improvement of roads and trails to enable safe sharing by people walking, biking, and riding through widening, additional striping, safety and wayfinding signage, educational information and consistent maintenance, where appropriate.

- **CONSISTENTLY MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Support consistent and enhanced maintenance of existing trail networks and shared roadways.

- **SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION CLIMATE ACTION GOALS**

Support programs and infrastructure, such as bike-share programs, that in combination with improved trail and shared road infrastructure advance Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals.

- **ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

When considering or prioritizing trail project additions or improvements, the economic development impacts should be considered. The economic benefits of recreational trails have been studied nationwide by advocacy groups including American Trails, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and others, verifying that trails can spur economic development through construction and maintenance, equipment sales and rentals, services, restaurants, lodging and increased property values.

- **COLLABORATE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS**

Support public and private partnerships essential for trail and shared roadway construction or maintenance including collaboration with landowners, incorporated communities, adjacent counties, local, state and federal agencies and advocacy organizations.



*Handcrafted pedestrian bridge in El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County*



## 8. Summary of Existing and Proposed Trails and Shared Roadways



*Cross country skiers at Crown Mountain Park. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

The following summary lists the trails and shared roadways in the Mid-Valley area as well as projects identified by the participants in this Plan update process and by the relevant trails and transportation planning documents adopted between 2013 and 2019<sup>4</sup> for the Mid-Valley area and Roaring Fork Valley. For a full description of each trail, shared roadway and suggested projects, as well as related implementation considerations, see Section 11 - Inventory of Existing Trails and Shared Roadway with Proposed Projects.

The list of trails is organized in alphabetical order *and it is important to note that trail or roadway project improvement or expansion suggestions are not organized in order of recommended completion or priority. Many of the suggestions are in concept stage only and have not been fully evaluated to be feasible.* With partnerships, studies, public outreach, budget planning and permit approvals by applicable jurisdictions, some projects may move forward to completion. Others may not move past the concept or feasibility stage due to issues ranging from inability to comply with agency regulation or policy, to mitigate impact, to respond to public concerns, or due to budget constraints or insurmountable constructability or environmental issues.

Several of the existing planning documents for Mid-Valley jurisdictions or management agencies have clearly identified their jurisdictional priorities. **Project implementation would presumably be led by the jurisdiction, management agency or advocacy group whose interests or mandates the project will serve,** and a collaboration formed of supporting partners. When a project is identified as a priority to move into a feasibility study or planning phase, the “Goals” of this Plan<sup>5</sup> as well as the “Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design” located in Appendix B are recommended as guiding principles.

<sup>4</sup> See Section 6.1


<sup>5</sup> See Section 7

### Common Themes Found in the Project Summary List Include:

- **Closing gaps:** Close gaps in the paved trail network to improve overall connectivity for people walking, bicycling or safely accessing transit stops in all seasons.
- **Streamline valley-floor trail connections:** Reconstruct or realign trail segments that are not functioning well due to safety, navigation or accessibility issues, such as Hooks Bridge area.
- **Comply with natural resource policies:** Evaluate proposed trail and shared roadway improvements to ensure compliance with adopted comprehensive and natural resource plans goals for avoiding impacts to wildlife, wildlife habitat and other sensitive lands.
- **Consistent maintenance:** Improve local collaboration to provide consistent trail maintenance of all paved surfaces.
- **Access to public lands:** Provide singletrack trail connections from the valley-floor population areas to adjacent public lands, such as the El Jebel and Basalt link to Basalt Mountain.
- **Upgrade roadways:** Upgrade local roadways to maintain and widen shoulders and add additional safety and wayfinding signage such as on Frying Pan Road.
- **Collaboration:** Address various user-group needs and encourage collaboration among jurisdictions, agencies and interest groups such as between mountain bikers, horseback riders and hikers.

**Table 3. Programs and Studies**

Project Name	Description
<b>Accessibility</b>	Encourage a multi-jurisdictional accessibility study of paved trails in the Mid-Valley area to ensure universal access is available to users with disabilities or low-skill levels. Potential partners include Eagle County, Basalt, RFTA, Pitkin County, Garfield County, WE-Cycle, Mid-Valley Metro Districts, CPW, POA's/HOA's.
<b>E-Bikes</b>	Consider a campaign to publicize and educate about legal and appropriate uses of electrical assisted bicycles (E-Bikes) on paved or singletrack trails as a Mid-Valley multi-jurisdictional effort. This should include E-Bike policy signage improvements as well as the development of a clear regional policy through multi-jurisdictional collaboration and adoption. Potential partners include Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, MVTC, Town of Basalt, WE-cycle, RFTA, PCOST, USFS, BLM, CPW.
<b>Leadership</b>	MVTC may be the appropriate entity to lead monitoring the programs and projects suggested in this Plan, and encourage partner involvement or leadership as necessary. Potential partners include MVTC, RFTA, Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, Town of Basalt, CPW, RFMBA, RFOV, RFVHC, WE-cycle.

Project Name	Description
<b>Maintenance and Funding</b>	<p><b>Collaborative and Consistent Maintenance:</b> Appendix A includes recommended schedule and tasks for trails and shared roadways that, if collaboratively followed by local trail managers, would create a consistent level of maintenance service throughout the Mid-Valley area. Other recommended goals and next steps include providing Plan information to all jurisdictions, combine equipment needs, add trails to pavement management inventories, and incorporate trails into capital improvement planning.</p> <p><b>Maintenance Funding:</b> Through the MVTC, develop a funding program to support existing singletrack trail adoption programs and create a paved trail adoption program to support enhanced maintenance by local government, HOA and special districts. MVTC to provide resident/user input to jurisdictions about maintenance issues observed throughout the Mid-Valley area. Potential partners for consistent and adequately funded maintenance include MVTC, RFTA, RFMBA, RFOV, RFVHC, Town of Basalt, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County HOA/POA's, CPW, Crawford Properties, Metro Districts.</p>
<b>Mid-Valley Trails Committee Outreach</b>	<p>As a committee of RFTA and Eagle County government, MVTC is tasked with increasing public awareness about MVTC and all Mid-Valley trail resources through local government and trail organization websites and inviting increased public meeting involvement by individuals, interest groups and agencies. Make meeting notes, budget, funding priorities, and other documentation available to the public. Expand MVTC partnerships with RFTA, Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, Town of Basalt, CPW, RFMBA, RFOV, RFVHC, HSNC, HOA's/POA's, WE-cycle, Metro Districts and other interested organizations.</p>
<b>Signage Coordination and Enhancement</b>	<p><b>Wayfinding:</b> Review the entire Mid-Valley paved and unpaved network to determine areas that require additional wayfinding signage to improve navigation. Encourage standardization with a common visual appearance while adhering to traffic sign specifications.</p> <p><b>Etiquette and Education:</b> Continue and expand current efforts to educate users about etiquette and regulations for sharing trails and roads. This work is important to foster understanding and avoid conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, hikers, horseback riders and wildlife. Include information about area wildlife, seasonal closures, permitted shared uses, speed and passing, avoidance during wet conditions and consequences of non-compliance with use regulations. Also identify areas for installation of historic and natural environment interpretive signs at trailheads or appropriate locations along trails. RFMBA and RFVHC are currently collaborating on an etiquette and education campaign with radio public services announcements and trail signage.</p> <p><b>Current "hot spots" for signage coordination</b> are Hooks Spur Bridge, south end of East Valley Road Trail, Aspen Junction Trail, Summit Vista - Valley Road, the Crown and Basalt Mountain. Potential partners for these efforts include MVTC, Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, Town of Basalt, CPW, RFTA, RFMBA, RFOV, RFVHC, HOA/POA's, Crawford, Metro Districts, WE-cycle, USFS, BLM.</p> 



Project Name	Description
<b>Pets</b>	Rules vary throughout the area and are periodically revised. A regularly updated public information notice through the MVTC to inform trail and public lands users where pets are prohibited or allowed seasonally, year-round, on-leash and off-leash could be developed. Develop consistent signage to alert the public where pets are or are not allowed on trails. Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Crown Mountain Park, Town of Basalt, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS, CPW.
<b>Trailhead Improvements</b>	MVTC could coordinate trailhead improvements throughout the Mid-Valley to support appropriate, well-organized and “right-sized” parking and enhancements such as trailhead signs, refuse containers, structures, etc. that accommodate a range of users. Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, CPW, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS, RFVHC, RFMBA, RFOV.
<b>Target Outreach Program for Underserved and Underrepresented</b>	To increase active transportation and recreation among underserved and underrepresented communities, MVTC could partner with community stakeholders and local organizations such as Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, Wilderness Workshop, Aspen Center for Environmental Education, Aspen Nature.org and Valley Settlement.org to enhance programming. Efforts should include supporting active transportation and recreation opportunities by taking advantage of existing infrastructure and understanding where gaps are located and should be included in future iterations of this Plan. Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, CPW, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS, RFVHC, RFMBA, RFOV.
<b>Digital and Hard Copy of Mid-Valley Trails Map</b>	MVTC should undertake the creation of a digital and hard copy of map program for the entire Mid-Valley Trails system. This program would provide accessible information on how to access trails, current conditions, rules, trail type, and cell phone coverage. An example program that could be used as a framework is located here: <a href="https://www.tahoebike.org/where-to-ride/">https://www.tahoebike.org/where-to-ride/</a> . Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, CPW, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS.

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**Table 4. Proposed Projects for Primary Route Paved Trails**

Map Item#	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	<b>Emma Trail</b>	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Upgrade SH 82 trail underpass.</li> <li>■ Add a new trail section on Old Emma Road to replace the section close to the roadway.</li> <li>■ Add Roaring Fork River bridge connection to Two Rivers Road.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.1
2.	<b>Rio Grande Trail</b>	RFTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Widen and repave high-use sections.</li> <li>■ Study bridge connection to Crown Mountain Park.</li> <li>■ Study needed for additional equestrian improvements.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.1
3.	<b>Willits Lane Trail</b>	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.1

**Table 5. Proposed Projects for Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails**

Map Item #	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	<b>Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford Trails</b>	Blue Lake HOA Eagle Dakota HOA Crawford Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Seek public access to Eagle-Dakota trails.</li> <li>■ Accommodate planned school access.</li> <li>■ Provide a safe crossing of SH 82.</li> <li>■ Improve bikeshare facilities.</li> <li>■ Study public access for Blue Lake to Missouri Heights trail.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
2.	<b>Crown Mountain Park Trails</b>	CMPRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study trail bridge connection to Rio Grande Trail.</li> <li>■ Pave gravel trail on Valley Road.</li> </ul>	10.2
3.	<b>East Valley Road Trails</b>	Town of Basalt Willits PUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create paved or unpaved trail connections through residential areas off of East Valley Road to Willits.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
4.	<b>El Jebel Road Trail to SH 82 Underpass</b>	Eagle County CDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure long term maintenance of SH 82 tunnel.</li> <li>■ Modify SH 82 underpass for improved bicycle access.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2

Map Item #	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
5.	<b>Hooks Lane Trail</b>	Eagle County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improve bridge and trail connections.</li> <li>■ Resolve winter maintenance issues.</li> <li>■ Study new bridge connection.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
6.	<b>Orchard Plaza Trail</b>	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
7.	<b>Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails</b>	Shadowrock HOA Tree Farm Metro District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Add bikeshare improvements.</li> <li>■ Request trail connection to adjacent public lands.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
8.	<b>Southside Trail</b>	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
9.	<b>SH 82 Corridor</b>	Aspen Junction HOA CDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Upgrade existing unpaved SH 82 trails to paved trails.</li> <li>■ Close Two Rivers to Tree Farm trail gaps on the east side of SH 82.</li> <li>■ Complete Two Rivers trail to Basalt.</li> <li>■ Add Willits neighborhood trail connection.</li> <li>■ Add bikeshare improvements and transit connections.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.2
10.	<b>Valley Road Corridor</b>	Summit Vista HOA Aspen Skiing Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Close gaps in the existing trail network on the south and north side of Valley Road.</li> <li>■ Pave gravel trail on south side Valley Road.</li> <li>■ Request improved maintenance of existing trails.</li> <li>■ Seek public access connections through subdivisions to reach SH 82 crossing to Blue Lake.</li> <li>■ Improve SH 82 crossing.</li> <li>■ Install signs and safety improvements on Valley Road.</li> <li>■ Extend trail on Valley Road or widen road shoulders.</li> <li>■ Add bikeshare improvements.</li> <li>■ Create a trail on SH 82 Frontage Road or widen road shoulders.</li> </ul>	10.2

**Table 6. Proposed Projects for Singletrack Unpaved Trails**

Map Item #	Trail or Trail Network Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	<b>Basalt Mountain Trails</b>	USFS BLM CPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue improvements to existing trails.</li> <li>■ Study Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain connections with USFS, BLM, CPW.</li> <li>■ Study reopening of closed trail routes for horse and foot.</li> <li>■ Study potential new routes with USFS.</li> <li>■ Improve wayfinding signage.</li> <li>■ Improve equestrian facilities with USFS.</li> </ul>	10.3
2.	<b>Basalt State Wildlife Area</b>	CPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain connection.</li> <li>■ Study mountain bike seasonal use.</li> </ul>	10.3
3.	<b>Crown Mountain SRMA</b>	BLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue improvements to existing approved trails.</li> <li>■ Request BLM study trail use levels for wildlife impacts and enforce trail regulations.</li> <li>■ Study new trail routes with BLM.</li> <li>■ Improve equestrian facilities with BLM.</li> </ul>	10.3
4.	<b>Glassier Open Space</b>	Pitkin County - PCOST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Request PCOST study trail use levels for wildlife impacts and enforce trail regulations.</li> <li>■ Improve equestrian facilities with RFTA and PCOST.</li> </ul>	10.3
5.	<b>Stage Trail Cedar Drive to Toner Creek to Ruedi</b>	Private, Eagle County, CPW, USFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study historic route location and trail feasibility.</li> <li>■ Monitor historic right-of-way encroachments.</li> </ul>	10.3
	Located in Pitkin County			
6.	<b>Arbaney Kittle Trail</b>	PCOST BLM USFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study proposed new trail connection from Basalt with Eagle County, PCOST, BLM, USFS.</li> </ul>	10.3



**Table 7. Proposed Projects for Shared Roadways**

Map Item #	Road Name	Road Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	<b>Frying Pan Road</b>	Eagle County Pitkin County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adopt policy and study potential to widen shoulders wherever possible.</li> <li>■ Add safety signs.</li> <li>■ Identify restroom locations.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent shoulder/right pavement edge maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.4
2.	<b>Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road</b>	Eagle County CDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study potential to road widen and add shoulders or paved trail on Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road.</li> <li>■ Add safety signs.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent shoulder/right pavement edge maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.4
3.	<b>Upper Cattle Creek</b>	Eagle County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study potential to road widen and add shoulders and pave gravel sections.</li> <li>■ Add safety signs.</li> <li>■ Provide consistent shoulder/right pavement edge maintenance.</li> </ul>	10.4
4.	<b>Willits Lane</b>	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Add designated bike lanes on both sides of the road.</li> </ul>	10.4
5.	<b>Southside Drive</b>	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Add a designated bike lane on the westbound side of the road.</li> </ul>	10.4

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## 9. Plan Implementation



*Rio Grande Trail near Basalt High School. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

**Development of the existing trail segments in the Mid-Valley has primarily been the result of:**

- Construction facilitated by local, state or federal government.
- Construction as part of a land development to comply with the conditions of local government approval.
- Additionally, several trail projects in the Mid-Valley were initiated by local trail advocacy groups in partnership with private property owners, and local, state or federal government.

This Plan includes suggestions for existing trail segment improvements, including enhanced maintenance, as well as ideas for new trail connections throughout the Mid-Valley area. These suggestions were gathered from a variety of sources, including adopted community or infrastructure plans from Eagle County, Town of Basalt and RFTA, as well as from local trail advocacy groups, agencies, organizations and interested public as part of the public comment phase of this Plan.

**It is important to note that the majority of the recommended trail or roadway upgrades or suggested new projects described in the Plan are in the concept stage only. Inclusion in this Plan is not intended to imply Eagle County government's approval, but to capture current conceptual ideas and proposals regarding Mid-Valley trails and shared roadways that may or may not be investigated for further action by the lead proponents.**

Next steps in project investigations by project proponents would typically include, but are not limited to:

- Review of a project's compliance with the policies, regulations and management plans of the underlying jurisdiction or a private property owner or association.
- Environmental studies and review of potential impact.
- Private land right-of-way acquisition or permits to locate in a public right-of-way.
- Community Engagement.
- Constructability and budget feasibility studies.

**It is possible that some of the suggested projects that may have merit as new or improved trail connections or roadway expansions may not proceed past the planning and feasibility stage if the challenges outweigh potential benefit, impacts to sensitive lands, wildlife or neighborhoods are unavoidable or unmitigatable, or if the project otherwise cannot comply with government policies or regulatory requirements.**

## Compliance with Adopted Plans and Regulations

The Comprehensive Plans of the local governments of Town of Basalt, Eagle County, Garfield County and Pitkin County feature very similar policy and goal statements regarding consistent intergovernmental cooperation, land use, infrastructure, environmental stewardship and overall sustainability. Any project under or within Eagle County's jurisdiction or adjacent to Eagle County jurisdiction as identified through a local referral process, will be evaluated for compliance against applicable Eagle County policy documents and regulations including, without limitation:

1. [Eagle County Comprehensive Plan](#) (2005)
2. [Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan](#) (2018)
3. Eagle County Mid-Valley Trails Plan (2020)
4. [Eagle County Climate Action Plan \(2016\)](#)
5. [Eagle County Land Use Regulations \(ECLUR\)](#)

As an example, the following policies from the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan would be reviewed for compliance as part of a project's analysis:

### **Eagle County Comprehensive Plan:**

- **3.1.3 f.** - The community should be involved with County planning and decision-making processes.
- **3.5.2.a.** - Developed areas in Eagle County should be served by multiple modes of transportation.
- **3.5.2.b.** - Pedestrian paths should be safe, well-designed, well-maintained and appropriately networked within and between communities.
- **3.5.2.d.** - Bike paths should be safe, well-designed, well-maintained and appropriately connected within and between communities.
- **3.5.2.j.** - The management and distribution of recreation areas and facilities in Eagle County should be implemented in an environmentally conscious manner.
- **3.7.5.i** - Access to public lands and opportunities for public land recreation should be balanced with the need to preserve quality wildlife habitat.

**Mid-Valley Area Community Plan:**

- Accommodate appropriate public involvement and participation in local planning and decision making.
- Accommodate appropriate recreation opportunities and facilities.
- Promote appropriate and efficient vehicular and pedestrian connectivity.
- Promote energy efficient lifestyles.
- Promote understanding of natural systems and encourage stewardship of natural resources.
- Monitor and identify recreational uses appropriate to the area.
- Strive to protect and preserve the quality of wildlife habitat and the vitality of wildlife populations.
- Promote adequate long term management and accountability for open space and recreational use areas and facilities.

Similarly any project that is proposed in Eagle County that is adjacent to or impacts surrounding local and state jurisdictional lands will be referred to such agencies who will also review proposals against their own adopted plans and regulations.

**Environmental Studies and Potential Impact**

New paved and unpaved trail or roadway improvement implementation has the ability to further connect the community and meet the goals outlined in this Plan. However, any public new or substantially modified improvements, under Eagle County's jurisdiction require an environmental analysis by the trail proponent. Eagle County would also review, as a referral agent, potential environmental impacts of a proposed project located in another jurisdiction against 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan policies, as amended. During such analysis, multiple alignments may be investigated to determine the least environmentally impactful routes. Typical issues of concern are wildlife habitat, erosion, and water quality. In some cases, impacts can be mitigated and in some cases they cannot, which in turn would make the concept infeasible.

As part of the environmental studies for a potential trail project, applicants must utilize the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that includes CPW's most up-to-date wildlife mapping. The Colorado Conservation Data Explorer (CODEX) will launch in late 2020 and includes a set of tools to support conservation planning, environmental review, evaluation of conservation portfolios, and more. Users have the ability to upload project maps and run queries to determine which wildlife habitats a project interacts with during trail alignment planning. Eagle County and CPW support running all potential projects through CODEX during the feasibility stage. If the trail project moves forward, formal CPW consultations on each proposed project is required to ensure wildlife best management practices for the immediate area are included in final project implementation strategies. CPW staff will work with project proponents to both accommodate recreation and lessen potential impacts on Colorado's wildlife resources and wildlife habitats. The link for CODEX is <https://cnhp.colostate.edu/maps/codex/>.



## Right-of-Way Acquisition or Permits

Paved and unpaved trail development may require the acquisition of right-of-way from private and public property owners which requires consultation, agreements, and in some cases specific land use approvals or records to document granted easements. If the trail location requires private easements or fee simple land acquisition from a private property owner, an acceptable value would typically be negotiated by the trail proponent with the grantor or seller. If located in the public right-of-way, any jurisdiction, agency, or organization who plans to build and maintain the trail are required to obtain the necessary permits such as a special use permit from CDOT.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is the cornerstone of any new project. Under Eagle County's jurisdiction, the entity proposing to implement a new trail or roadway improvement must complete an authentic community engagement process that involves impacted jurisdictions, non-profits, and constituents. The community engagement process may look different depending on the size and scope of the project. Evidence must be provided demonstrating how community engagement was conducted and utilized in the development of the project.

## Constructability and Budget Feasibility Studies

The projects proposed in this Plan may or may not yet have been studied to determine the construction feasibility or the short and long term cost of project implementation. Constructability refers to identifying any obstacles or challenges prior to or as part of a construction design process. Additionally, multiple alignments may be investigated to find the most constructible, and least environmentally impactful location. Items reviewed as part of a budget feasibility study include what planning approvals or permits are required, the likelihood an environmental impact report would be needed, site assessment information, land or easement acquisition costs if necessary, a preliminary construction cost estimate and a life-cycle maintenance cost estimate. This information will help outline the amount of funding necessary in the short and long term, and if the project is feasible.

# 9.1 Partnerships for Trails and Shared Roadways

**The planning, construction and maintenance of the Mid-Valley trail and shared road network has and will continue to be successful because of the initiative and partnerships assembled by government agencies, citizen advocates, community organizations, developers and landowners in the interest of producing useful, sustainable and well-built projects.**

This section describes the multitude of entities that have and will continue to be involved in improving or appropriately expanding the trail and shared roadway network in the Mid-Valley Area. Also described in this section are the guiding policies and regulations that pertain to management, improvement or expansion of trails in Eagle County.

As this Plan details, miles of paved and unpaved trail, road shoulders and sidewalks exist, but there are gaps that must be closed to improve safety, extensions that can further improve connectivity and additional infrastructure that could enhance the trail and shared road experience.

The completion of the Rio Grande Trail in 2008 is a premier example of how collaboration by local governments, through the RFTA consortium in partnership with state agencies, led to the successful completion of the 42-mile continuous “rail-trail”. The Rio Grande Trail has transformed the Roaring Fork Valley’s transportation system and is now known nationwide as a top long-distance trail destination.

## Local and State Government

State and local governments provide routes for multiple types of non-motorized uses, often referred to as “multi-use trails”, for people walking, running, biking, riding horses, using adaptive mobility devices and e-bikes where permitted. Providing multi-use trails has become a very common and accepted responsibility of governance at the local, state and federal levels. Local and state governments fill several roles in the development and oversight of trail and shared roadway networks, including:

- Trails funding through discretionary or mandated sources such as the Eagle County-RFTA mass transportation sales tax
- Making or seeking grants
- Ensuring trail and roadway proposals are in compliance with local policies and regulations
- Obtaining and holding rights-of-way or easements
- Managing planning, construction and maintenance

Jurisdictional partnerships are common in regards to right-of-way needs, funding and long-term maintenance. It is also a function of governance to oversee the development and management of trail and shared infrastructure to ensure it is built and operated in accordance with applicable policies and regulations. Local entities have collaborated on many completed projects in the Mid-Valley area, also in partnerships with federal agencies and advocacy groups through planning, review, revision, funding, construction and management. Due to the overlapping and converging jurisdictions located within the Mid-Valley area, intergovernmental cooperation will continue to be standard protocol for future network improvements. Some trail or shared roadway project examples of local government collaboration in the last two decades includes:

- **Willits Lane Trail** - a cooperative effort between the Town of Basalt, MVTC and Eagle County.
- **El Jebel Road Trail** - the result of a construction and maintenance agreement between Eagle County and Crawford Properties.
- **Glassier Open Space** - physically located in Eagle County, the property was acquired through joint funding by Pitkin County, Eagle County and Great Outdoors Colorado and is now owned and managed by Pitkin County, while Eagle County holds the conservation easement. The Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (PCOST) program has since funded trail construction, a trailhead and a parking lot for Glassier Open Space improved access. RFTA and PCOST partnered on building an equestrian trail adjacent to the Rio Grande Trail from the Hooks Lane Trailhead to Glassier Open Space.

- **Singletrack Trail Improvements** - MVTC and PCOST have partnered with RFOV and RFMBA on several trail projects in the Mid-Valley area.
- **SH 82 and El Jebel Road** - pedestrian improvements made in the interface area of SH 82 and El Jebel Road were a joint project between CDOT and Eagle County. CDOT has incorporated significant pedestrian and bicycle improvements into SH 82 improvements over the last two decades.

In the Mid-Valley area, local and state jurisdictional partners that have an interest in provision of walking and bicycling infrastructure include:

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Eagle County                    | ■ PCOST                              |
| ■ Eagle County Open Space Program | ■ Garfield County                    |
| ■ Town of Basalt                  | ■ Crown Mountain Recreation District |
| ■ Basalt POST                     | ■ Mid-Valley Metropolitan District   |
| ■ RFTA                            | ■ CDOT                               |
| ■ Pitkin County                   | ■ CPW                                |

## 9.2 Performance Measures

There are a variety of different performance measure types and purposes. Performance measures can be used to assess the effectiveness of this Plan, how the trail system is functioning, or as a test to determine if or how a project should move towards implementation. Clear performance measures can inform decision-making and support efficient and effective program implementation. All performance measures should be linked to a Plan goal and help to bring the vision of the Plan to fruition.

Performance measures normally have a benchmark that the performance measure is measured against. The 2006 Mid-Valley Trails Plan which is fully replaced by this Plan, did not include performance measures. Therefore, the performance measure targets of this Plan establish the performance measure benchmarks for the future update in 2025.

Below are three performance measures frameworks for Plan Effectiveness, Project and Program Implementation, and System Function established with the adoption of the Plan. The tables describe the Plan goal for each metric, the target to achieve the metric, the measure used to evaluate, and the method of data collection.



*Emma area as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County*

**Plan Effectiveness:** The effectiveness of the Plan should be monitored and analyzed prior to an update to this Plan. Areas noted to be deficient should be focused on for improvement in the future updates.

**Table 8: Plan Effectiveness Performance Measurement Framework**

Plan Goal	Target	Measure	Method of Collection
Evaluate Land use Applications for Active Transportation and Recreation Needs	Increased review of Land Use Development Permits against Plan projects and programs by MVTC and Eagle County	Number of permits where trail or roadway improvements are recommended or required	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of trails and roadway improvements mentioned or included in land use development permit review or approvals.
Ensure Alignment with Community Values	Increase in community engagement	Number of community members who attend and participate in MVTC meetings and education events	MVTC to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of community members who attend and participate in MVTC meetings and educational events
Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Increase in the number of projects that have environmental or cost/benefit analysis prior to inclusion in the Plan to clarify challenges and solutions or the project or program is eliminated for future consideration.	Number of projects and programs with a completed Environmental Impact Report or cost/benefit analysis.	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of projects and programs with a Environmental Impact Report or cost/benefit analysis.
Collaborate Through Partnerships	Increase the number of projects that utilize collaboration and partnerships to achieve project goals.	Number of projects that are completed utilizing collaboration and partnerships	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of projects that demonstrate collaboration and partnerships
Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Increase Mid-Valley Trail System Buildout Program Analysis	Level of consensus between local, state and federal agencies, non-profit, advocacy, and constituent stakeholders on appropriate trail buildout.	Eagle County to coordinate a partnership effort to create and evaluate Mid-Valley Trail System Buildout Program



**Project and Program Implementation:** Implementation of projects and programs will be led by the jurisdiction, management agency or advocacy group whose interests or mandates the project will serve, as well as through a collaboration formed of supporting partners. When a proponent is interested in moving a project or program forward, the proposal should be analyzed against the project and program performance measure framework.

**Table 9: Project and Program Implementation Performance Measurement Framework**

Plan Goal	Target	Measure	Method of Collection
Implementation of Projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan's Goals such as does the project close a gap in the existing network, ensuring environmental sustainability, and improve roadways for shared use.	Increase in projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan's Goals	Number of projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan's Goals	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan's Goals.
Meet Design, Construction, and Accessibility Standards	Increase in projects wherein the design is in alignment with the "Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design" located in Appendix B of the Plan	Number of projects that meet the "Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design" located in Appendix B of the Plan	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of projects that meet the "Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design" located in Appendix B of the Plan
Consistently Maintain Infrastructure	Increase the number of plans and partnership agreements that provide consistent and enhanced maintenance of existing trails and shared roadways.	Number of maintenance plans and agreements established for existing trails and shared roadways	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of plans and agreements established for the existing trail networks and shared roadways
Support Transportation Climate Action Goals	Increase in the number of programs and infrastructure that advance Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals	Number of programs and infrastructure that demonstrate compliance with Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of programs and infrastructure that demonstrate compliance with Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals

**System Function:** The County does not monitor active transportation and recreational use. However, County Departments such as the Road and Bridge or Transportation Department, and partnering agencies should consider the creation and implementation of a monitoring program. A monitoring program that collects relevant information can help inform future plan goals, project and program needs, and help to accelerate implementation.

**Table 10: System Function Performance Measurement Framework**

Plan Goal	Target	Measure	Method of Collection
Provide a Comprehensive Network	The increase of people walking and biking to work, school or for fun.	Number of users utilizing the trail system	Eagle County to partner with other agencies and nonprofits to monitor usage
Improve Roadways and Trails For Shared Use	Reduction in serious or fatal injuries while walking and biking and the reduction of user conflict between bicyclist, hikers, and equestrians.	Number of incidents involving an injury, fatality or user conflict	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of incidents involving an injury, fatality or user conflicts
Encourage Economic Development	Increase facility improvements and programs such as wayfinding signage and improved maintenance to enhance visitor experience.	Number of projects and programs implemented that demonstrate economic development enhancement.	MVTC and Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of projects that demonstrated economic development enhancements
Support Singletrack For Multiple User Groups	Increase implementation of single track connections to surrounding public lands.	Number of single track connections completed.	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of singletrack connections.
Close Paved Trail Network Gaps	Increase the implementation of paved trail gap closures with a priority on location where safety is an issue.	Number of projects that close gaps in the paved trail network	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of paved trail projects that close a gap in the network

### Local Government Citizen Committee: The Mid-Valley Trails Committee (MVTC)

Following the passage of a new Mass Transportation Sales Tax in 1995, this citizen-volunteer Committee was established in 1998 to advise the Eagle County Commissioners on recommended use of the 10% of the tax proceeds that must be directed to bike paths.

The MVTC fiscally operates as a subcommittee of RFTA following a tax increase in 2000 for transit and trails approved by the voters in the Roaring Fork Valley portion of Eagle County. The MVTC annually provides the RFTA Board of Directors with their budget recommendations for financial contributions to trail projects using the tax proceeds collected in Eagle County.

The MVTC Mission Statement is to *“Conceive, develop, enhance and promote safe and attractive public trails in the Roaring Fork Valley portion of Eagle County.”* Roles and responsibilities of the MVTC include:

- MVTC provides constituent input and leadership for the collective effort to further upgrade, improve and expand the trails and shared roadways in the Mid-Valley area of Eagle County.
- MVTC has been successful at facilitating communication and building partnerships between entities and agencies to help plan and complete projects, obtaining easements from private property owners, seeking additional grant funding and working to ensure long-term maintenance for constructed trails.
- MVTC provides referral comments for land use applications under consideration by Eagle County.
- MVTC works with a part-time staff person whose position is funded by a portion of the mass-transportation sales tax revenues managed by RFTA and an additional contribution from Eagle County. The MVTC staff person assists with administrative functions, including proper and transparent public notice of meetings and project implementation in the interest of moving projects forward to completion.

### Federal Government Land Management Agencies

In the Mid-Valley area, the USFS manages lands on Basalt Mountain and in the Frying Pan River Valley. The BLM manages lands adjacent to Basalt Mountain and the recreation area known as the Crown Special Resource Management Area (SRMA) at the base of Mt. Sopris, and located in Eagle County, Garfield County and Pitkin County.

The surrounding federal lands are locally acknowledged to be a dominant reason why people have chosen to live and stay in the Roaring Fork Valley. The options for recreation are extensive and generally no-cost due to the “open to all” philosophy of federal public lands. Local residents have a particular sense of ownership and interest in the recreation options available on these lands, and land managers must balance those interests with serving the broader public ownership as well as acting as stewards of forest and rangeland health, wildlife and water resources.

On public lands, coordination and approval by the management agency having jurisdiction is required prior to construction of any new or enhanced trail project that may be proposed by a local government or interest group. In the last ten years, both the USFS and BLM have updated the resource and travel management plans specific to this region, including agency lands in the Roaring

Fork Mid-Valley area. Generally, the plans support continued or enhanced recreation, while closing or limiting activities in certain areas for a range of reasons usually related to wildlife, vegetation or maintenance issues.

### United States Forest Service (USFS):

In 2011, the USFS adopted the White River National Forest Travel Management Plan (TMP) for the 2.3 million acre White River National Forest (WRNF) to provide policy direction for management of roads, trails and other routes throughout the WRNF Forest and for the five separate Ranger Districts. The Mid-Valley Area falls within the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District. The [2011 WRNF TMP](#) and [TMP map](#) identify permitted uses, seasonal status and other management strategies for all approved “system” routes.

The TMP also identified routes to be decommissioned and rehabilitated due to natural resource or maintenance issues. In the comments submitted for this Plan’s “Referral” review process, the USFS District Ranger<sup>6</sup> provided input that any potential requests “To construct a new trail or bring an old trail back into the system requires an environmental analysis, as required by the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA).”



*USFS and RFMBA work crews on the Red Table Trail. Photo: Mike Pritchard*

The USFS response continues with further clarification and guidance for any proponent of a new trail concept on USFS lands, such as on Basalt Mountain: “The trails mentioned in the plan that would connect the valley floor to the Basalt Mountain area would also require this analysis, and extensive public outreach work, if they were to be pursued. The outcomes of any of these NEPA analyses do not always result in approval of the proposed projects. Any trails shown on the current WRNF Visitor Map are system trails, and maintenance, upkeep, etc. does not require similar analysis”.

### Bureau of Land Management (BLM):

The BLM manages the Mid-Valley BLM lands through its Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) located in Silt, Colorado, as a portion of the 3.7 million acre Northwest Colorado District. In 2015, the [Colorado River Valley Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan](#) and the recreation-specific [Appendix F](#) were approved for administration of the 567,000 acres managed by the CRVFO management that includes the BLM lands on the Crown and Basalt Mountain. Subsequently, the BLM adopted the [Crown Special Recreation Management Area Travel Resource Management Plan](#)

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix G



[Implementation](#) (and as amended in 2019) to define specific strategies to manage human uses on the Crown lands. To expand the permitted uses of the Crown currently approved by these management plans, the BLM is required to initiate federal regulatory reviews and public outreach processes similar to the USFS.

## Trails and Multi-Modal Transportation Organizations



***RFMBA work day on Buckhorn Traverse. Photo: Michael Pritchard***

The Roaring Fork Valley has a well-established trails and transportation advocacy community who successfully partner with local, state and federal land managers, as well as private property owners, to improve or expand local recreation and transportation facilities and programs.

Active non-profit, advocacy and local government volunteer organizations interested in Mid-Valley area trails currently include:

- [Basalt Parks, Open Space and Trails Committee](#)
- [Mid-Valley Trails Committee](#)
- [Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board](#)
- [Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers](#)

- [Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association](#)
- [Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council](#)
- [Roaring Fork Conservancy](#)
- [WE-cycle Bikeshare Program](#)

These partnerships result in developing, enhancing and maintaining the widespread trail and multi-modal transportation network between Aspen and Glenwood Springs. For example:

- RFOV, RFMBA and RFVHC partnered with the BLM, USFS, RFTA, MVTC and Pitkin County to build, reroute, sign and repair many miles of unpaved singletrack trails over the last decade, or advocated for new amenities such as additional parking and trailheads to access the BLM Crown SRMA.
- On the valley floor, WE-cycle bike share program serves the Town of Basalt (located in both Pitkin County and Eagle County) and unincorporated Eagle County area of El Jebel with 90 bikes and 25 stations to provide the community with a fast, convenient and healthy mode of transportation to and from local neighborhoods to commercial and community centers and the SH 82 transit corridor. The success of the bike-share program depends on a well-connected and safe trail and shared roadway network that users can confidently navigate to and from their destinations.

Several of these local recreation or transportation advocacy groups received operational and project support from the property tax or sales tax funds administered by MVTC, RFTA, POST or PCOST for projects in the Mid-Valley Area. For example, the MVTC sales tax proceeds helped fund the Vasten, Lower Buckhorn Reroute and Buckhorn Traverse trail projects implemented on the Crown SRMA over the last five years. Eagle County, Pitkin County and the Town of Basalt are financial sponsors of the WE-cycle program for the Basalt-El Jebel area.

## Private Land Development

Trail construction may also be accomplished through a land use approval granted by a local government to a private property development. Eagle County and Town of Basalt work with land use applicants to identify what pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be warranted by the development's scope and scale and in compliance with the adopted comprehensive plans for the regulating jurisdiction. Conditions of development approval may include a trail, sidewalk or roadway improvement contribution to the community. Pertinent regulations will apply, such as standards for site design and construction.



*New construction in Willits in Basalt with East Valley Trail in foreground.  
Photo: Eagle County*

Trail or roadway improvements contributed by an approved land use development generally involve these actions or features:

- On private lands, public trails are typically located within “easements” dedicated to the public and of adequate dimension to accommodate the trail and associated maintenance needs and drainage features.
- Easements are established during the platting or other land use approval process and are defined as available for public use.
- Trail segments constructed across private lands are usually limited to the development property, although in some instances negotiation results in an off-site extension to tie into an existing trail system.
- Utilities and drainage improvements often share space with a designated trail easement, particularly in urbanizing areas.
- Maintenance of a development trail may be arranged with the public jurisdiction if the trail becomes a component of a larger system, or it may remain as a responsibility of the homeowner, business or property owner association.

## 9.3 Funding Sources

Potential funding sources for trail projects in the Mid-Valley area include:

- **Special Use or District Tax Funds:** This category of funds must be allocated to a certain type of use or area such as the 10% share of the transportation tax administered by RFTA and the MVTC. The MVTC has granted funds to various projects to support design, construction, grant matching, maintenance, environmental studies and easements.

Due to the transportation mandate, RFTA may be a source for additional funding for future capital-intensive trail or roadway enhancement projects in the Mid-Valley above and beyond the 10% administered by the MVTC. Eligible examples could include construction of secondary-route trails that contribute to RFTA’s Rio Grande Trail functionality as a primary route. In 2019, the 10% managed by MVTC totaled approximately \$59,000, with a portion of that annual sum funding the MVTC staff position. The remainder of the MVTC 10% share of the annual tax proceeds may not fully fund completion of a paved trail project, but can be accrued over a period of years to amount to a more sizable contribution to either fully fund or match funds from other sources.

Open Space and Trails tax funds also exist as a potential source for Mid-Valley trails either through the PCOST and Trails property tax fund or the Town of Basalt’s POST Parks, Open Space and Trails sales tax fund. Generally, the Pitkin County fund is intended for projects located in Pitkin County but some exceptions have been made, such as Glassier Open Space and trails, located in Eagle County, when the benefits to the larger ecosystem and community are deemed exceptional.

- **Capital Improvement Program Funds (CIP):** Local governments typically allocate a varying portion of revenues to capital (infrastructure) needs in the governed jurisdiction, such as road projects to widen shoulders to improve safety, construct a building or install a new trail bridge. Eagle County and Town of Basalt each manage a CIP Fund, and Special Districts will typically have a CIP as well. CIP funds are typically prioritized in five-year increments, but are reviewed and revised annually as needed.



- **General Funds:** Local governments may opt to fund an urgent or strongly-supported project with General (operating) funds or Reserve (savings) funds to accelerate priority project completion.
- **Planning and Construction Program Funds:** CDOT and federal agencies typically require substantial lead time to build a project into an annual or long-range budget, but do have agency mandates to partner where possible. Safety, transportation and recreation are common priorities for these agencies.
- **Grants:** State, federal, local and foundation grants are annually available for trail projects. In Colorado, Great Outdoors Colorado Grants (GOCO) and the State Trails Program provide funding to trail projects statewide. These grants require matching funds from the project applicant. The MVTC has been a source of funding for the local match to these popular state grant programs for several successfully completed projects. The grant application process typically includes questions regarding trails master planning, need, urgency and public support. The adopted update of this Plan, in addition to other related plans currently in place, will serve to enhance the competitiveness of future Mid-Valley trail project grants.



*View of Crown SRMA Mt. Sopris from Eagle County. Photo: Eagle County*



## 10. Inventory of Existing Trails and Shared Roadways with Proposed Projects



*The Rio Grande Trail in Eagle County. Photo: Eagle County*

The following section provides an overview of the existing trails and shared roadways inventory in the Mid-Valley area. Each trail and shared roadway description also includes recommendations or suggestions for improvements or additions that were gathered from adopted planning documents for the Mid-Valley or contributed during the referral agency and public input process for this Plan. If several comments were received through the input process about certain existing or proposed projects, the comments were summarized or provided verbatim to provide background for consideration during the study phase of a project. If few comments were received on proposed projects, the referral or public input comments were not summarized or quoted, but generally incorporated into the “Proposed Projects and Implementation Consideration” section. All referral and public comments can be found in Appendix G.

## Types of Routes:

There are **five types of paved and unpaved non-motorized routes in the Mid-Valley area**. A summary description and examples are listed below in Table 6. The five route types are also described in detail in the respective subsection further along in this section of the Plan.

**Table 11. Overview of Trail Types**

Type of Route	Description	Example
<b>Primary Route Paved Trails</b>	Serves as a main arterial route. Typically 10 to 12 feet wide.	Rio Grande Trail
<b>Secondary Route Paved Trails</b>	Serves as a collector route. Typically 8 feet wide.	El Jebel Road Trail
<b>Secondary Route Unpaved Trails</b>	Serves as a collector route on the valley floor. Local examples range from 3 to 8 feet wide.	Aspen Junction Trail near Original Road
<b>Singletrack Unpaved Trails</b>	Most often found on public lands and used for recreation. Typically 2 to 4 feet wide.	Buckhorn Traverse in the BLM Crown SRMA
<b>Shared Paved Roadways</b>	Local roads that are most popular for shared use by vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. Presence and width of shoulders varies throughout the inventory.	Upper Cattle Creek Road from El Jebel to Missouri Heights

The following provides more details on the trail types and how each is described in this Plan:

- **Definition of Trail:** For the purposes of this Plan, the word “trail” is used to describe both paved and unpaved routes that exist or are planned for use by people walking, biking, and riding horses.
- **Sidewalks:** Sidewalks that are wider than the typical four to six-foot standard and create connected systems are only incorporated by reference into the trail networks described in this section. The Plan does not specifically call out or map sidewalks of less than eight feet wide that may occur adjacent to streets in commercial or residential subdivisions.
- **Surfaces:** Paved refers to a non-permeable surface such as asphalt or concrete and is found throughout the most populous portions of the Mid-Valley including the Town of Basalt incorporated areas and valley floor neighborhoods of unincorporated Eagle County. Unpaved may refer to a variety of soft-surfaces such as gravel or finely-crushed rock, called crusher fines, sand or natural surface dirt trails. The term “singletrack” was chosen as the common term for this Plan to describe trails that are always unpaved, generally less than three feet wide and used for area hiking, running, mountain biking and horseback riding.



- **Four-Season or Seasonal Use:** Most paved trails in the Mid-Valley are functionally four-season to allow for year-round transportation and recreation. Four-season trails cleared of snow and ice are especially important to support safe travel by mobility-impaired users and children, but also essential for avoiding the hazards inherent to people walking and biking when sharing roads during winter driving conditions.
- **Winter Operations:** Some segments of the paved and unpaved Mid-Valley trails are used by Nordic enthusiasts during the winter season. For example, PCOST grooms portions of the Rio Grande Trail for this use as does Crown Mountain Park when snow coverage conditions allow. RFTA provides a compacted area for walking or skiing on the portion of the Rio Grande Trail in Eagle County that remains open through the winter.

### Types of Trail and Shared Roadway Users:

In the Mid-Valley, there is an impressive range of activities to choose from in relationship to the trail network: walking, running, biking, horseback riding, dog-walking, in-line skating, skateboarding, hiking, fishing and boating access, and using power driven mobility devices such as wheelchairs or scooters.

Generally, user types can be grouped into four categories based on the type of use, why they chose that type of use and where they prefer to do it:

The **“Recreational”** user primarily includes walking or bicycling by children, families or adults out for social or exercise reasons. Recreational users in the Mid-Valley includes local residents as well as visitors that want to enjoy some exercise and exploration. In general, recreational users prefer trails that have some separation from the street, or low traffic volume streets and singletrack trails. As seen in the photo at left, the Rio Grande Trail attracts a variety of types of recreational users, in addition to the other types of users as described below.

The **“Trainer”** category defines bicyclists, hikers or runners training for a high-level of fitness or competition who generally prefer to travel faster and longer distances than the



*Rio Grande Trail at Hooks Spur Road. Photo: Eagle County*

recreational bicyclist, walker or runner. Trainers on “road bikes” tend to prefer roads over shared-use paved trails because of permitted higher speeds and fewer intersections that require stopping. Once

in motion, trainers like to keep up their momentum. The Rio Grande Trail functions well for the Trainer's needs due to its relatively straight alignment that allows consistent speeds, but does have a posted speed limit of 20 mph to manage possible conflicts between the Trainer type of user and other slower speed or less skilled users.

The **"Commuter"** or **"Utility"** user walks or bicycles to work or school on a trail or road. This category is usually local residents and they prefer the most direct route with the least stops and delays. Low volume streets or trails are ideal, but a higher traffic volume road may be part of their route if it aids connectivity or the road is more direct than a trail. Utility trips include trips to the store, library, bank, etc. The benefits of commuting by foot or bicycle include financial savings, wellness and supporting environmental sustainability.

The **"Equestrian"** trail user has different needs or preferences than other user types due to their mode of transport being uniquely different. For safety reasons as well as enjoyment level, horseback riders generally prefer not to mix with vehicular traffic, especially avoiding busy roads. Horses and bicycles, or horses and pedestrians with pets are sometimes not compatible. Paved trails are generally not preferred by horseback riders, also for safety reasons, but bridle paths or "soft trails" can be constructed within the corridors to allow shared use. The use and enjoyment of horses is a large part of the region's history and present-day lifestyles and this Plan advocates accommodating that use where compatible with the more common types of users listed above.



*Basalt Mountain. Photo: Eagle County*



## 10.1 Primary Route Paved Trails

**Primary Route paved trails serve as arterial or main routes with significant use by people walking, bicycling and horseback riding.** In the Mid-Valley area there are three significant routes that transport users for multi-mile distances, enabling efficient commuting to work or school, utility trips such as shopping, or recreating for healthy, outdoor exercise. The primary route paved trails in the Mid-Valley are typically 10 to 12 feet wide and surfaced with asphalt or concrete.

**Table 12. Existing Primary Route Paved Trails**

Map Item #	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Location
1.	Emma Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
2.	Rio Grande Trail	RFTA	Eagle County
3.	Willits Lane Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt

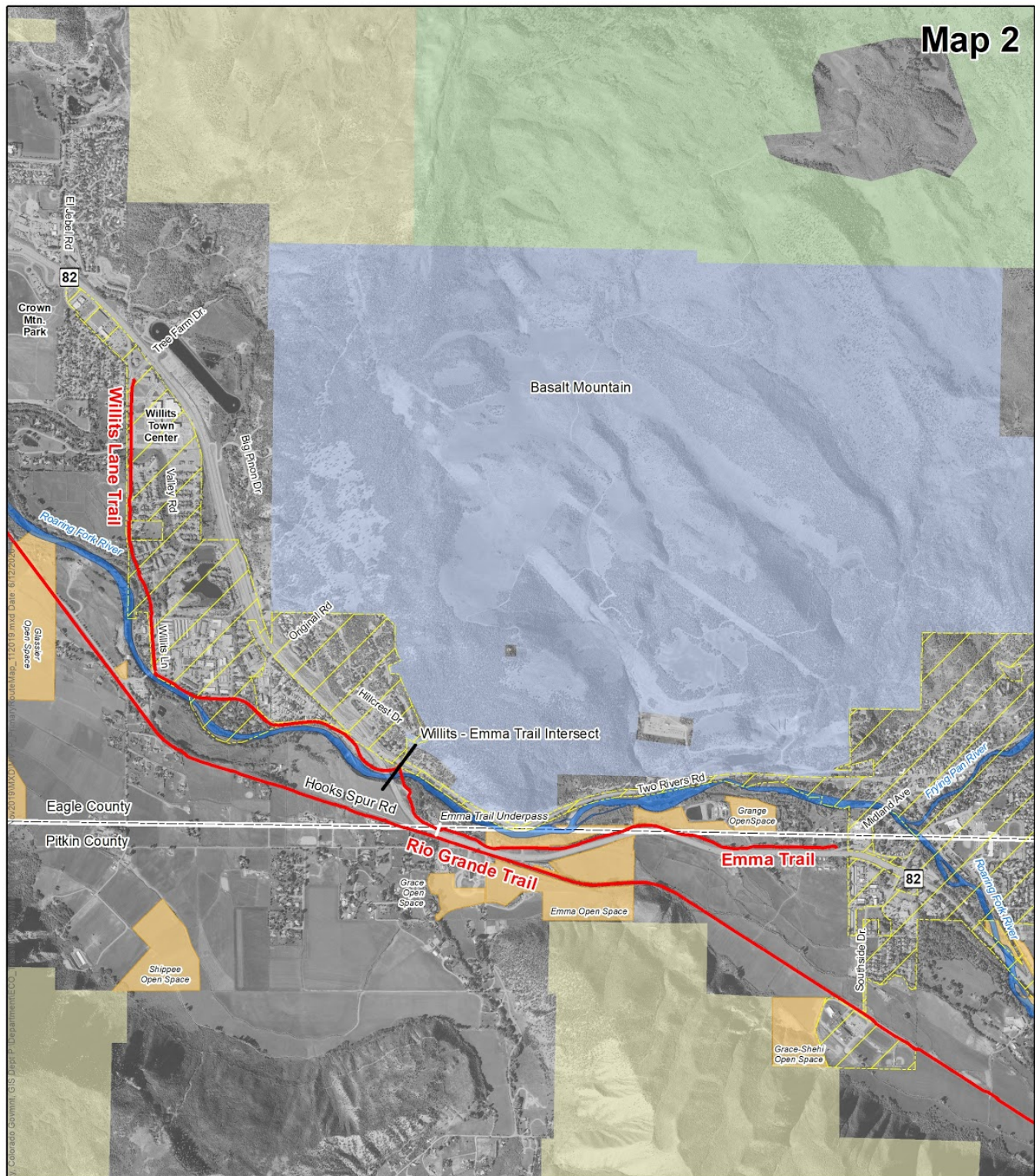
**As of the adoption of this Plan on September 3, 2020, new primary route paved trails are not proposed or envisioned in the Mid-Valley area;** however, some enhancements are recommended. Secondary route paved trails are the focus for additions or upgrades. The completion of the Rio Grande Trail through the Mid-Valley in 2008 very successfully addressed the demand and need for a large-scale primary route paved trail running the length of the Roaring Fork Valley for walking, bicycling and horseback riding and connecting all the communities in the valley.

Where existing primary route paved trails are located within a road right-of-way, they are typically detached and separated from the road surface. Separation by grade, distance or physical barriers are desirable for increased safety. Where space allows, a soft surface trail may parallel a primary hard surface trails for use by runners or horseback riders, such as the crushed gravel trail alongside the Rio Grande Trail in Emma from Hooks Lane Trailhead to Glassier Open Space, and for trail-user passing opportunities in more densely populated areas.

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Map 2

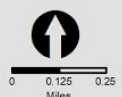


## Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Primary Route Paved Trails

- Primary Route Paved Trail
- Town of Basalt
- County Boundary

### Public Lands

- BLM
- State of CO
- U.S. Forest Service
- Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space



## 1. Emma Trail

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt and unincorporated Eagle County and Pitkin County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Town of Basalt

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The 1.9-mile long Emma Trail serves as the primary route paved trail to connect “Old Town” and East Basalt to West Basalt and unincorporated El Jebel.
- In Eagle County, the 10-foot trail begins at the intersection of Willits Lane and SH 82, traveling southeast and over the Roaring Fork River on a trail bridge that was repurposed from a portion of a railroad trestle bridge originally located over Maroon Creek in Aspen. After crossing the Roaring Fork, the Emma trail utilizes Old Emma Road, a 22-foot wide asphalt surface that travels on the north side of SH 82 providing vehicular access to a limited number of private properties along its route before ending at the intersection of Emma East Road and Midland Avenue in Pitkin County.
- An existing SH 82 trail underpass near Emma Spur road provides direct connection from the Emma Trail to the Rio Grande Trail. Town of Basalt, RFTA and PCOST prior planning efforts identified this tunnel as insufficient and in need of upgrading due drainage, width, overhead clearance and internal visibility (i.e. darkness) issues.



*The Emma Trail crossing the Roaring Fork River. Photo: Eagle County*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** Town of Basalt and MVTC support consistent maintenance of the Emma Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.



2. **Maintenance and Safety:** The Basalt POST Plan, 2020 Basalt Master Plan public input, Basalt POST Plan, and the RFTA Bike-Ped-Transit Plan support drainage, lighting, surfacing and dimensional upgrades to the Emma SH 82 trail underpass to improve user-friendliness and safety.
3. **Paved Trail Replacement:** Town of Basalt POST recommends reconstruction of a section of the Emma Trail to move it away from Emma Road in the area east of the Basalt Sanitation Plant as part of any future development approvals.
4. **New Bridge Connection:** Town of Basalt POST also recommends a new pedestrian-bicycle bridge over the Roaring Fork from the Emma Trail, in the same vicinity as the new recommended trail section above, to connect with the proposed Two Rivers Road Trail.



*Emma Trail, looking toward East Basalt with an osprey nest and PCOST webcam on pole above. SH 82 is located to the right.  
Photo: Eagle County.*

## 2. Rio Grande Trail

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County.

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

RFTA owns and manages the 3.2 mile portion of the Rio Grande Trail located in Eagle County. Three jurisdictions own and maintain the full 42-mile corridor length:

1. RFTA owns 33.4 miles and maintains 21 miles.
2. Pitkin County maintains 19 miles, including the 5 miles of the corridor Pitkin County owns outright from Woody Creek to the trail's end in Aspen at the U.S. Post Office, and the approximately 14 miles it holds through easements from Emma to Woody Creek.
3. City of Glenwood Springs owns and maintains 2 miles.



*The Rio Grande Trail in Eagle County heading north towards the Garfield County line.  
Photo: Eagle County*

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The Rio Grande Trail is the central spine of the Roaring Fork Valley trail network.
- Completed in 2008, this 42-mile continuous trail follows an historic railroad grade linking Glenwood Springs to Carbondale, Basalt and Aspen. The rail corridor was purchased by a consortium of local and state agencies in 1997.
- The trail is generally 10-feet wide throughout its length.
- The majority of the route is paved, with the exception of the 4.2 mile crusher-fines section located in Pitkin County through the Roaring Fork Gorge area between Woody Creek and Aspen.
- The Rio Grande Trail is enjoyed by user groups of all levels and modes including walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding for recreation or commuting.
- A crushed gravel trail was constructed by PCOST and RFTA alongside the Rio Grande Trail through the Emma-Hooks Spur area to accommodate horseback riding as well as foot and bicycle travel in the trail corridor. This separated trail is considered a safer surface for riders and their horses as well as provides separation from faster trails users.

- The length of the Rio Grande trail within Pitkin County has a gravel shoulder available to equestrians.
- Due to the popularity of the trail with a wide range of users and related traffic volumes, as well the potential for impacts on adjacent landowners and area wildlife, pets are required to be leashed at all times and may be prohibited from certain sections of the trail, according to RFTA's [RFTA Rules and Regulations for Trail Use<sup>7</sup>](#).
- The Rio Grande Trail is currently "railbanked" through federal laws that allow for use as a trail with possible reversion to railroad use at some time in the future if there is an exceptional demand and need for rail service.
- The Rio Grande Trail Rock Bottom Ranch to Catherine Store segment located in Eagle and Garfield Counties is seasonally closed for wildlife habitat needs from November 30 through April 30. A detour route using local roads is seasonally marked by RFTA and follows the SH 82 Frontage Road, Valley Road, various roads through the Willits area and reconnects with the Rio Grande Trail near Hooks Lane Bridge.
- As winter conditions allow, RFTA uses a snowmobile to compact snow from Emma Road to Rock Bottom Ranch in Eagle County to enable a range of uses including cross-country skiing, walking and "fat" biking. RFTA uses this same method of "compaction grooming" on the Catherine Store to Snowmass Drive section of the Rio Grande Trail in adjacent Garfield County.



*Gravel equestrian trail located alongside the Rio Grande Trail with Hooks Spur Road to the right. Photo: Eagle County*



*RFTA compacts snow on the Eagle County section of the Rio Grande Trail for walking, skiing and snowbiking. Photo: RFTA.*

## **PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC, Town of Basalt and Basalt POST support RFTA's continued efforts to consistently perform routine maintenance of the Rio Grande Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, wayfinding additions, inspections and snow removal.

<sup>7</sup> The RFTA corridor map is included in Appendix C of this plan, or at [RFTA Rio Grande Trail Map](#).



2. **Maintenance:** MVTC, Town of Basalt and public input supports RFTA's work to widen Mid-Valley Rio Grande Trail areas of substandard trail width, upgrade pavement quality and expand trailheads and parking areas. According to input during the the RFTA Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Access Plan and pedestrian access study as well as the draft RFTA Recreational Trails Plan 2018 Update, there are Rio Grande Trail sections where surface conditions could be improved due to aging asphalt, drainage and tree root cracking or heaving, and other areas where the trail popularity and shared uses warrant widening.
3. **New Bridge Connection:** The Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan, RFTA Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Access Plan and Basalt POST Plan each include recommendations for a bridge connection from the Rio Grande Trail to Crown Mountain Park crossing the Roaring Fork River. This suggested project is described in detail in Section 10.2.
4. **Equestrian Improvements:** RFVHC plans to continue working with RFTA and PCOST to evaluate the potential for increased or improved equestrian use of the Rio-Grande Trail in the Mid-Valley and the entire length of the corridor, with additional trailhead parking and provision of added or wider soft-tracks for equestrian use.



*The Rio Grande Trail in Pitkin County near Basalt High School. Photo: Eagle County*

### 3. Willits Lane Trail

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt in Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Town of Basalt

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- This 2-mile trail is located within the right-of-way of Willits Lane and travels along the eastern edge of the Willits Planned Unit Development (PUD) and several other developments, terminating at the intersection of SH 82, Willits Lane and Two Rivers Road intersection where it converges with the Emma Trail.
- Portions of this trail are 10-foot wide concrete, other sections are 8-foot wide asphalt, with the entire trail in good condition and well-maintained.
- Standard and raised “speed-table” crosswalks are provided at various locations along the route.
- This trail provides connection to Hook Spur Trail, the Rio Grande Trail and Emma Trail, and also to trails within the Willits Town Center and Sopris Meadows PUD’s.

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** Town of Basalt, Basalt POST and MVTC support consistent maintenance of the Willits Lane Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, wayfinding additions, inspections and snow removal.



*The Willits Lane Trail parallel to Willits Lane in Basalt. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

## 10.2 Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails

**In the Mid-Valley, several secondary route paved trails exist and act as collectors** to allow people to travel between neighborhoods, shopping areas, parks and schools, and to connect with primary trail, roadway and transit corridors. These trails have relatively high use by people walking, biking, and running and occasional equestrian use depending on location.

Mid-Valley secondary route paved trails are typically less than eight feet in width, surfaced with asphalt or concrete. Where existing secondary route paved trails are located within a road right-of-way, they are usually grade separated from the vehicle lanes of the roadway by a curb and gutter system or a strip of native or landscaped ground.

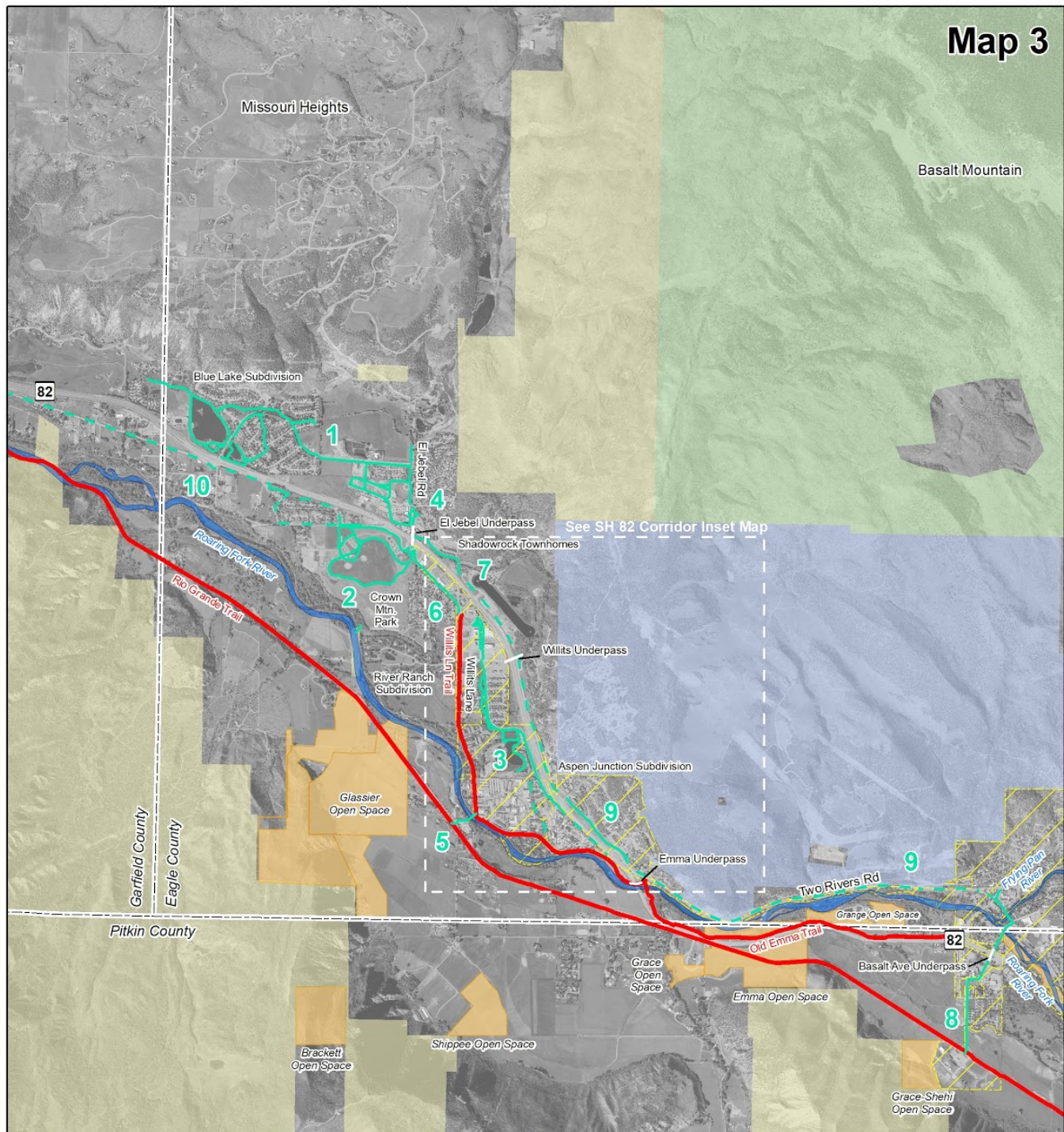
**There are very few secondary route unpaved trails located on the valley floor.** Typically, unpaved secondary routes are eight feet or less in width and surfaced with compacted gravel or crusher fines on a compacted base or subgrade, or may be a native dirt surface. Constructed where heavy use is not anticipated, secondary route unpaved trails can provide important connections for people walking and off-road bicycling throughout the system. An example of a secondary route unpaved trail is the Aspen Junction Trail generally located between Original Road and Hillcrest Drive on the north of SH 82.

**Table 13. Existing Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails**

Map Item #	Trail Name (listed in alphabetical order)	Trail Owner	Location
1.	Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford Trails	Blue Lake HOA Eagle Dakota HOA Crawford Properties	Eagle County Garfield County
2.	Crown Mountain Park Trails	CMPRD	Eagle County
3.	East Valley Road-Willits-Sopris Meadows Trails	Town of Basalt Willits PUD	Town of Basalt
4.	El Jebel Road Trail to SH 82 Underpass	Eagle County CDOT	Eagle County
5.	Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail	Eagle County	Eagle County
6.	Orchard Plaza Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
7.	Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails	Shadowrock HOA Tree Farm Metro District	Eagle County
8.	Southside Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
9.	SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD	Aspen Junction HOA CDOT	Town of Basalt Eagle County
10.	Valley Road Corridor: Sopris View-Summit Vista to Catherine Store Road	Summit Vista HOA Aspen Skiing Company	Eagle County Garfield County



Map 3



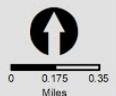
## Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Secondary Route Paved Trails

- Secondary Route Paved Trail
- - - Proposed Secondary Route Paved Trail
- Primary Route Paved Trail
- Town of Basalt

### Public Lands

- BLM
- U.S. Forest Service
- State of CO
- Eagle County/ Pitkin County Open Space

- 1 Blue Lake - Eagle Dakota - Crawford Trails
- 2 Crown Mountain Park Trails
- 3 East Valley Road - Willits - Sopris Meadow Trails
- 4 El Jebel Road Trails to SH 82 Underpass
- 5 Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail
- 6 Orchard Plaza Trail
- 7 Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails
- 8 Southside Trail
- 9 SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD
- 10 Valley Road Corridor: Sopris View-Summit Vista to Catherine Store Rd





## 1. Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford



*Paved and well-maintained trails in Blue Lake provide access to the community's parks, open space and transit stops.  
Photo: Eagle County*

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota HOA's and Crawford Properties.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Approximately 2.8 miles of paved asphalt or concrete trails are located within and link the neighborhoods of Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota and Crawford Properties.
- The asphalt trail along JW Drive, owned and maintained by Blue Lake HOA, functions as a major collector trail to connect Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota to the El Jebel Trail and all associated commercial and recreational activity centers.
- Trail surfaces are in good condition and well maintained by their respective owners.
- The trails located within the public road right-of-way in these three areas are dedicated for public use, and available to subdivision residents as well as non-residents.
- A portion of the Eagle-Dakota subdivision is located in adjacent Garfield County.



**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports consistent maintenance of the Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford trail networks monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Expand Trail Connections:** MVTC recommends working with Eagle-Dakota Homeowner Association to secure public access from the Blue Lake lakeside trail to the Eagle-Dakota subdivision trail, which could possibly tie into the Cerise Ranch trail system in Garfield County.
3. **Safety:** RFSD encourages that safe road crossings and pedestrian/bike-friendly connections be considered in the El Jebel area in consideration of a planned future school in the Blue Lake neighborhood. The RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan also points out safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing SH 82 from Valley Road to the Blue Lake entrance. Potential improvements need to be evaluated.
4. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports trail resurfacing and improvements along JW Drive to encourage increased bike and pedestrian usage from Blue Lake to El Jebel. WE-cycle also recommends a permanent WE-cycle station in conjunction with an enhanced bus stop in El Jebel.
5. **New Singletrack Trail:** RFMBA proposes a singletrack trail connection to Missouri Heights through Blue Lake Open Space open space located adjacent to Deer Run Road to connect with Sunrise Lane, the majority of which is a private road, in Missouri Heights. Blue Lake Homeowner Association, private property owners and Eagle County coordination would be required for this project suggested by RFMBA.



*Sledding at Blue Lake. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

## 2. Crown Mountain Park Trails

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District (CMPRD) maintains all trails and sidewalks associated with the community park and El Jebel Community Center. Eagle County is the underlying landowner of Crown Mountain Park and leases to CMPRD.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Approximately 2 miles of paved, gravel or unpaved trails are located within this community park that was formerly a portion of a USFS tree nursery and administrative site.
- The USFS transferred 132 acres of the 202-acre property to Eagle County in 1994 for public uses.
- The trail network within Crown Mountain Park provides walking, dog-walking, running and casual bicycling opportunities as well as access to park amenities such as soccer fields and a playground.
- The majority of park trails are paved and in good condition, and are configured as routes on the perimeter of the park with spur trails to connect to activity areas such as the playground, parking or restrooms.
- When snow cover allows, portions of the park system may be groomed for Nordic skiing.
- The Eagle County El Jebel Community Center is located in the northeast corner of the property.



*Crown Mountain Park Trail. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

- Paved or gravel trail and sidewalk routes extend from the property to connect with Orchard Plaza (City Market) and Willits, the SH 82 underpass, and apartments and subdivisions along Valley Road.
- The USFS retained 70 acres of the original property and provides public Roaring Fork River access via Crown Mountain Park through a 40-acre parcel of riparian area and wetlands that is planned to be permanently preserved. Primitive trails exist through this area.

- The remaining 30 USFS acres are located adjacent to the western boundary of the park with frontage on Valley Road. A river access parking lot and primitive trails are currently located on this parcel, that may eventually be developed for employee housing and other uses. In 2019, the WRNF Supervisor announced that the USFS will undertake a planning effort at a future time to determine what the most appropriate uses are for the upland and riverside parcels and public input will be requested at that time.
- Dogs are permitted off-leash at the park if under voice-control.

Previously proposed major trail improvements for Crown Mountain Park:

- The concept of a bicycle-pedestrian bridge connection from the Rio Grande Trail to Crown Mountain Park is included in several planning documents adopted for the Mid-Valley area in the last decade or longer, including the 2015 RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Access Plan, 2020 Basalt Master Plan Community Outreach, 2013 Basalt Area Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2006 version of the Mid-Valley Trails Plan.
- In these documents, the recommendations or comments related to the trail bridge connection cite the need for a more direct link from the El Jebel population area to the Rio Grande Trail, and improved connection from the trail corridor to the busy activity center of Crown Mountain Park. Enhanced access to the BLM Crown singletrack trailheads located along the Rio Grande Trail is also noted.
- The RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan includes a conceptual review of the components and cost of the project, but otherwise a comprehensive study of feasibility and required regulatory compliance has not been undertaken as of 2020 and there is not currently a lead proponent for the bridge concept project.
- Implementation challenges for the project include potential impacts on sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitat bordering the river. The Roaring Fork River corridor adjacent to Crown Mountain Park features extensive wetlands of varying widths alongside the river channel.
- At this time, there is no approved route for the bridge concept on either side of the river. Lands bordering Crown Mountain Park and the Rio Grande River are currently owned by the USFS (see following map), private property owners including the Saltonstall Conservation Easement parcel held by Pitkin County (who commented that bridge infrastructure would not be permitted), and a very narrow area of BLM land.



*View of Crown Mountain Park Photo: Eagle County*



- The USFS, as the primary east riverbank landowner, would be required to review a trail bridge proposal in accordance with federal environmental and public process regulations, and possibly the BLM depending on location.
- Eagle County engineering and environmental policies and regulations would also apply to a potential bridge crossing project.



*Crown Mountain Park and surrounding properties including USFS wetlands and river access parcels.*

### **Referral and Public Comment:**

Referral and public comments regarding trails at Crown Mountain Park are outlined below.

### **Referral:**

- CMPRD is in favor of the trail bridge concept to create a safer trail connection to the park that could also reduce vehicle traffic by encouraging trips via the Rio Grande Trail to the park from El Jebel, Carbondale, Basalt, and other neighborhoods and schools. The park hosts 300,000 visits annually as the most heavily used park in the Roaring Fork Valley.
- Crawford Properties supports the bridge connection as an improvement that could serve El Jebel and the Mid-Valley community.



- Hooks Spur Neighborhood Collaborative (HSNC) opposes the bridge plan due to the anticipated impacts on the neighboring land owners, wildlife habitat and non-compliance with an existing conservation easement and the environmental stewardship protection policies of the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Remove the trail bridge proposal from the plan.
- Right-of-way will not be provided by local landowners.
- This is a unique area of undisturbed wetlands and riparian area along the Roaring Fork River.
- Pristine river corridor habitat will be severely damaged and impacted.
- Wildlife will be irreparably harmed.
- The significant wildlife diversity of the area will be impacted.
- Neighbors will be heavily impacted by additional traffic, noise and change in area character.
- The area is already heavily impacted by larger than expected increase in recreational traffic due to the Glassier Open Space trails.
- For additional suggestions for improvements to Crown Mountain Park trails, see Section 10.2.10 for public comments recommending improvements to the existing gravel trail alongside Valley Road.

#### **PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.



*Crown Mountain Park Photo: Eagle County*

**1. New Bridge Connection:** If community leaders choose to further explore the trail bridge project feasibility, a broad consortium including private property owners, HSNC, USFS, BLM, CPW, Eagle County, Pitkin County, RFTA, CMPRD and Town of Basalt would be essential participants in the feasibility review. NEPA review and compliance with adopted community plans and regulations would also likely be required by the USFS. If the project is determined to be infeasible, community leaders should consider alternatives to improve connections between the Rio Grande Trail and Crown Mountain Park. If a new option is identified, this Plan should be amended to reflect that new information.

### 3. East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris Meadows Trails

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt in Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Town of Basalt and homeowners or property owners associations in this residential-commercial corridor share responsibility for maintenance.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

This trail network includes several trail segments in the East Valley Road to Willits corridor in West Basalt:

- The 4,500-foot long East Valley Road Trail is the central route in this network traveling adjacent to East Valley Road from Original Road to the Willits commercial and residential area.
- The trail provides access to the Mid-Valley Center, Willits Town Center, Willits Recreation Park and the residential neighborhoods of Lakeside Townhomes, Valley Pines Condominiums and the Sopris Meadows PUD with each area having a paved trail or sidewalk network that links to the East Valley Road trail.
- The trail network consists of a mix of asphalt and concrete surfaces and is in good condition throughout.
- Across from and south of the end of the East Valley Road Trail at the Original Road-SH 82 intersection, an unpaved trail is constructed in the SH 82 right-of-way adjacent to the Aspen Skiing Company employee “tiny home” project and the Aspen Basalt Mobile Home Park and connects to Willits Lane. Upgrading this trail to a paved trail would enhance safety and connectivity from the East Valley Road Trail network to Willits Lane. See Section 10.2.9 for the detailed SH 82 corridor description and recommended trail improvements.
- WE-cycle has bike-share stations located at Aspen Basalt Campground, Mid-Valley Medical Center and Lakeside Townhomes.



*Sopris Meadows PUD trail. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support consistent maintenance of the East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris Trails monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **New Trail Connections:** Town of Basalt recommends one or more trail connections from Willits Lane through the East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris residential and commercial areas to access the Original Road-SH 82 intersection. Connections can be achieved by formalizing social trails currently in use, such as the unpaved trail that currently follows the irrigation ditch adjacent to the Willits Bend PUD and Mid-Valley Center, providing access to the Original Road signalized intersection. Appropriate surfacing, either as paved or unpaved trails, would likely be determined by the Town of Basalt with the property owners.



*East Valley Road Trail in the Town of Basalt. Photo: Eagle County*



## 4. El Jebel Trail to SH 82 Underpass

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Eagle County owns the El Jebel Road Trail. Through agreement, Crawford Properties maintains the full length of the El Jebel Trail. CDOT owns and maintains the box culvert underpass. Crawford Properties contributes in-kind cleaning services to augment the maintenance by CDOT.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The 2,100 foot El Jebel Road Trail is a collector from several adjacent neighborhoods and provides access to parks and the SH 82 corridor, ending at the El Jebel Road SH 82 underpass.
- The 12-foot wide box culvert equipped with ADA ramps provides pedestrian passage under SH 82 just east of the main El Jebel intersection.
- Sidewalks connect the SH 82 underpass to the El Jebel Community Center, Orchard Plaza (City Market) and CMPRD trails to the south.
- Both trail and underpass facilities are in good condition.



*SH 82 Underpass at El Jebel Road. Photo: Eagle County*



**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support consistent maintenance of the El Jebel Trail and underpass monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports ensuring long-term maintenance of the underpass by CDOT in the event Crawford Properties is unable to contribute in-kind services in perpetuity.
3. **Trail Improvements:** WE-cycle supports future modifications to the SH 82 underpass to encourage more bike commuting, such as an expanded turn radius on the access ramps on either side of the tunnel.



***El Jebel Road Trail. Photo: Eagle County***

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## 5. Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Eagle County

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- This approximately 750-foot long stretch of trail consists of a 3-foot sidewalk on the south (upstream) side of the Hooks Lane bridge, and adjacent sections of gravel shoulder and asphalt trail. The Hooks Lane Trail is important as the connecting corridor from the Willits Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail, and the only current connection to the Rio Grande Trail between West Basalt and Catherine Store Bridge.
- Town of Basalt, MVTC and RFTA have identified this area as a weak link for clear navigation and safe circulation for walking and bicycling from Basalt to the Rio Grande Trail, and recommend further study to resolve the pedestrian, bicyclists and vehicular safety issues related to poor sight distance and lack of a connected route separated from the road.
- The MVTC, PCOST and RFTA invested funds to improve the Rio Grande and Glassier Open Space trailheads and parking that are located in this area, expanding the parking to accommodate truck and horse trailers to facilitate easier access to the Glassier Open Space trails.
- Eagle County Road and Bridge is working to resolve winter maintenance issues in this area due to lack of appropriate equipment to clear the sidewalk. Resolution may include collaboration with the Town of Basalt, or other service providers.



*Hooks Lane Bridge in unincorporated Eagle County. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support consistent maintenance of the Hooks Trail monthly and seasonally, particularly prior to resolution of current connectivity issues. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Eagle County support defined responsibility and implementation of snow removal on Hooks Spur Bridge for people walking. Collaboration between Eagle County and the Town of Basalt should be pursued.
3. **Safety Improvements:** Public comments recommend that Eagle County remove the existing bridge sidewalk, address the double blind corner safety, improve signage and include adjacent landowners in the planning process.
4. **New Bridge Connection:** The MVTC suggests study of a possible pedestrian-bicycle bridge parallel to Hooks Lane bridge may resolve safety and circulation and wayfinding issues for non-motorized and motorized traffic through the area, with further study of regulatory compliance, constructability and neighborhood impacts required.



*Hooks Lane blind corner just west of Hooks Lane Bridge. Photo: Eagle County*



## 6. Orchard Plaza Trail



*Orchard Plaza Trail behind City Market. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt in Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**  
Town of Basalt

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The approximately 2,000 long, 10-foot wide concrete trail that travels along the southern boundary of the City Market parcel is in good condition and well maintained.

- The trail supports access to and from nearby residential neighborhoods, multiple commercial centers, the Willits Road Trail, the El Jebel Community Center, the SH 82 underpass and trails in Crown Mountain Park.

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support continued, consistent maintenance of the Orchard Plaza Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections, and snow removal.

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## 7. Shadowrock and Tree Farm Trails

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Shadowrock HOA maintains trails in the Shadowrock subdivision. The Tree Farm Metropolitan District will be responsible for the trail construction and maintenance in the Tree Farm PUD.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Shadowrock Townhomes completed an 8-foot side concrete trail adjacent to the townhouse development.
- The Tree Farm PUD approved in 2018 will include asphalt and concrete trail routes, and are shown in detail on the approved development plans.
- Tree Farm trails and sidewalks would connect internal destinations and provide access from the PUD to the SH 82 Willits Town Center underpass.
- Tree Farm trails are also anticipated to eventually connect west through the Shadowrock development, improving access to the El Jebel Town Center.



*Exiting the SH 82 underpass from Tree Farm-Shadowrock to Willits Commercial area. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports continued, consistent maintenance of the Shadowrock Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports eventual provision of bike-share stations at this location. WE-cycle is not currently able to serve the Shadowrock and Tree Farm area due to lack of trail connectivity, pending construction of the completion of the Tree Farm PUD infrastructure.
3. **New Singletrack Trail:** MVTC supports investigation of a potential trail easement with Shadowrock HOA, Tree Farm PUD, Eagle County, BLM, CPW and USFS to allow access to singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain, or at minimum as a short “neighborhood trail” to the low hilltop located on BLM land immediately east of Shadowrock.

## 8. Southside Trail

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt in Pitkin County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Town of Basalt

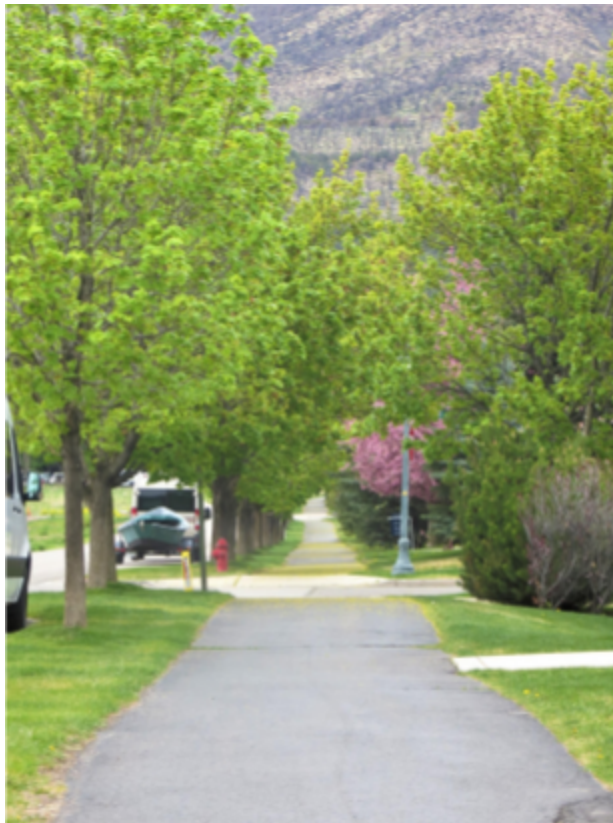
**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- This trail follows local roads Basalt Avenue and Southside Drive, with a crossing under SH 82, to connect Old Town Basalt to Basalt High School.
- Heavily used by students during the school year, the route consists of sidewalks on Basalt Avenue and Fiou Lane, and transitions to an 8-foot wide asphalt section on the east side of Southside Drive, crossing each road at well-marked intersections.

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** The Town of Basalt and MVTC support consistent maintenance of the Basalt Avenue to Southside Trail route monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.



*Southside Drive Trail looking towards Basalt Mountain. Photo: Eagle County*

## 9. SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt within Eagle County and unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** The “Aspen Junction Trail” is owned by the Aspen Junction Homeowners Association. The “CDOT Trail” is an informal, unpaved trail located in the SH 82 right-of-way between Original Road and Willits Lane.

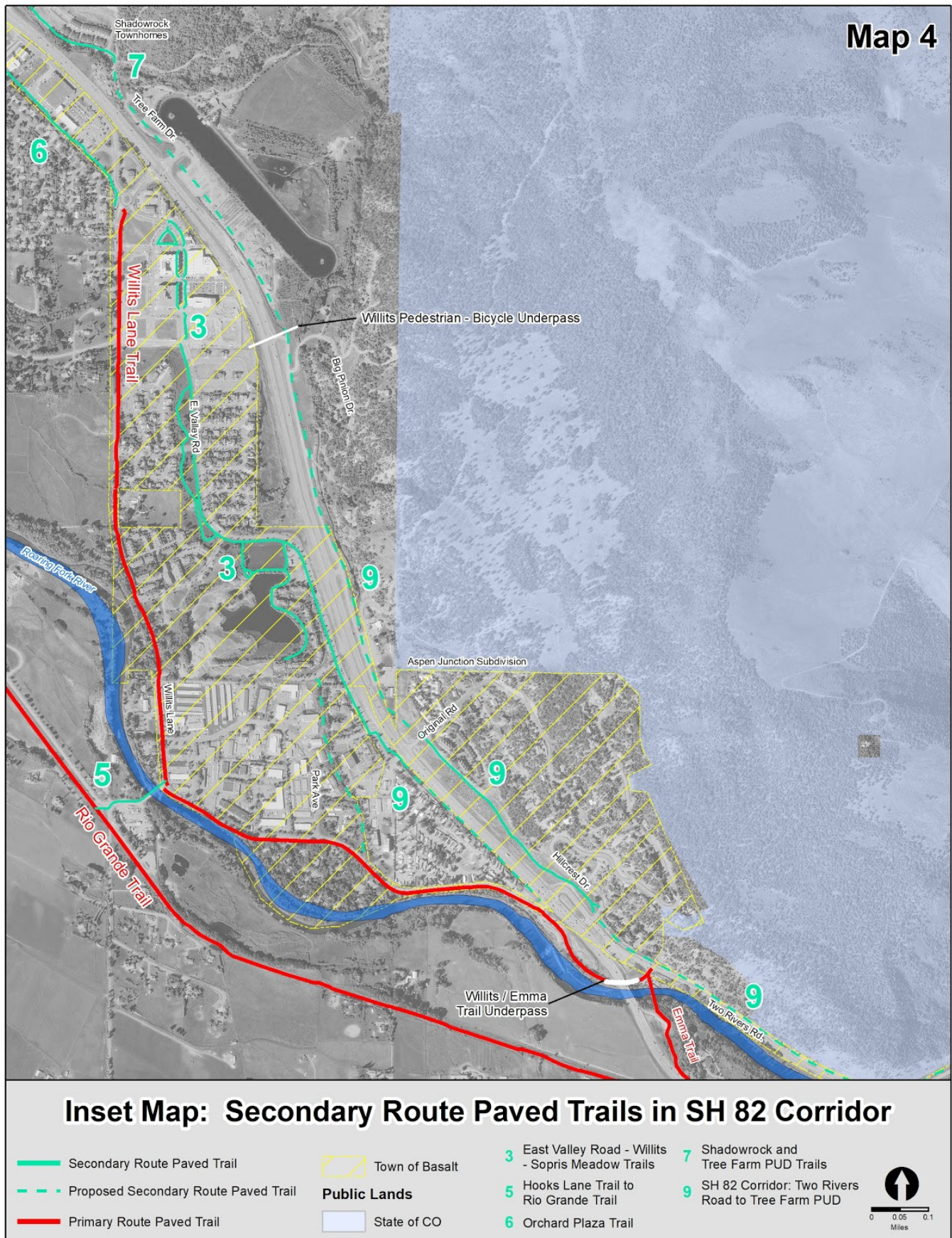
**TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The approximately 500-foot wide SH 82 transportation zone between Two Rivers Road in Basalt to the Willits Lane-Tree Farm Drive signalized intersection is identified in Mid-Valley community planning efforts, including the Town of Basalt 2020 Master Plan, Mid-Valley Community Area Plan and Basalt POST Plan, as requiring improved and additional facilities to serve people walking, bicycling and using transit stations in the busy highway corridor.
- Two unpaved trails exist in or adjacent to the SH 82 right of way, the Aspen Junction Trail and the CDOT Trail, but are considered deficient due to lack of year-round maintenance and lack of paved surfacing that would enable a wider range of users to safely use the trails.
- There is a significant gap in trail connectivity between Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm Drive on the east side of SH 82.
- The following descriptions and map depict the current status of infrastructure in three subareas of the corridor and summarize potential improvements:
  1. Aspen Junction Trail
  2. SH 82 CDOT Trail
  3. Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD Proposed Trail



*SH 82 North Frontage Road right-of-way is a potential connector to link Two Rivers Road to the Tree Farm PUD. Photo: Eagle County*







## Aspen Junction Trail:



*Aspen Junction Trail south access, from Original Road. SH 82 is located to the left. Photo: Eagle County*

- The 2,300-foot Aspen Junction Trail is a natural surface trail generally located between Original Road and Hillcrest Drive on the north side of and parallel to SH 82. Some gravel has been placed on the northern end but the trail surface is primarily compacted dirt.

- This trail serves as a connector route between the two residential neighborhoods in that area as well as a pedestrian access route to the RFTA SH 82 north-bound "Sagewood" transit stop and the signalized intersection crossing of SH 82 at Original Road.

- According to the MVTC, this trail is not well-maintained. The trail has narrowed over the years due to encroaching vegetation. Users report that seasonally, the trail can be muddy and difficult to use.



*Aspen Junction Trail north access, SH 82 to the right. Photos: Eagle County*

- RFTA plans to relocate the Sagewood transit stop nearer to the Original Road and SH 82 signalized intersection to encourage transit passengers to cross SH 82 at that location for their safety. Other modifications will be incorporated into the stop relocation to improve passenger accessibility and transit vehicle access.
- WE-cycle has bike-share stations located at Aspen Basalt Campground, Mid-Valley Medical Center and Lakeside Townhomes. Due to concerns about the safety of the SH 82 highway crossing and transit stations near Original Road, there is not a bike-share station on the east side of SH 82 near the Aspen Junction neighborhood.

**SH 82 CDOT Trail:**

- The 1,900-foot “CDOT Trail” located on the west side of SH 82 across from the Aspen Junction area is an unpaved trail located in the highway right-of-way between the edge of the road pavement and the fenceline of the adjacent Aspen Basalt Mobile Home Park and the Aspen Skiing Company’s “tiny home” employee housing property.
- The trail is used most often by people walking between Willits Lane Trail and the Original Road intersection.
- The trail is not maintained in any season and varies in width and levelness. The surfacing is gravel or compacted dirt.



*The unpaved “CDOT trail” on the west side of the CDOT SH 82 right-of-way, looking south from Original Road intersection.  
Photo: Eagle County*

**Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD Trail Connection:**

*Unpaved trail on the west side of the CDOT SH 82 right-of-way, looking north from the Willits Lane intersection towards Original Road. Photo: Eagle County*

- To improve walking, bicycling and transit connectivity within the Mid-Valley SH 82 corridor, adopted Basalt and Eagle County plans call for completion of a trail connection on the east side of the SH 82 corridor between Two Rivers Road and the Tree Farm PUD. Improvement of the Aspen Junction Trail (described above) and utilizing the SH 82 Frontage Road on the east side of the highway would be key components of this connectivity goal.
- At the north terminus of the SH 82 frontage road, it may be necessary to request right-of-way from adjacent private properties to complete the connection to the Tree Farm PUD if CDOT will not permit construction of the trail within the SH 82 primary right of way.
- For a direct and scenic connection between SH 82 and Old Town Basalt, the Town of Basalt’s “Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan”, envisions construction of a 10-foot wide trail between the Frying Pan River and Two Rivers Road, ending at the Two Rivers Road/SH 82 intersection.
- Additional trail connections recommended by Town of Basalt and MVTC between Willits Lane and Original Road, such as the Willits Bend ditch trail described in Section 10.2.3 would also contribute to overall improved safety and connectivity in the vicinity of this section of the SH 82 corridor.

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt urge consistent maintenance of the Aspen Junction and SH 82 CDOT trails monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Improve Existing Paved Trail:** Aspen Junction Trail - Town of Basalt and MVTC recommend working with Aspen Junction, CDOT and RFTA to upgrade the trail to widen, level and pave the trail to create a route that would be available to a wider range of users from Two Rivers Road, improve access to RFTA transit stops, and encourage full connection to the Tree Farm PUD.
3. **Improve Existing Paved Trail:** SH 82 CDOT Trail - Town of Basalt and MVTC recommend working with CDOT, RFTA and Eagle County to upgrade the trail to widen, level and pave the trail to create a safe and usable connection from Willits Lane to Original Road.
4. **New Paved Trail Connection:** Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD Trail Connection - Town of Basalt and MVTC recommend working with private property owners, CDOT and Eagle County to construct a trail route on the east side of the SH 82 corridor to connect the Two Rivers Road intersection (and future Two Rivers Trail to Old Town Basalt) to the Tree Farm PUD.
5. **New Paved Trail Connection:** Two Rivers Road Trail - Town of Basalt "Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan" includes a recommendation for construction of a 10-foot paved trail located between the Roaring Fork River and Two Rivers Road and ending at the SH 82 intersection.
6. **New Paved Trail Connection:** Willits Lane to Original Road trails - MVTC and Town of Basalt recommend one or more trail connections from Willits Lane through the East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris residential and commercial areas to access the Original Road-SH 82 intersection, working with HOA's and other private property owners.<sup>8</sup>
7. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports upgrades to the Aspen Junction unpaved trail segment as well as all connectivity improvements in this area, and requests inclusion in the planning process.



*Short segments of paved sidewalks and unpaved "social" trails connect to transit stops in the SH 82 corridor area. Photo: Eagle County*

<sup>8</sup> See Section 10.2.3.



## 10. Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road Corridors

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County and Garfield County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** There is a mix of trail type, ownership and management in the Valley Road Corridor by a variety of entities including Crown Mountain Park, the Sopris View Apartments, and the Summit Vista, Parkside and Valley View residential subdivisions. The Valley Road is a right-of-way owned and managed by Eagle County. The SH 82 Frontage Road is owned and maintained by CDOT.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

From the SH 82 intersection and heading west, Valley Road and the SH 82 Frontage Road serve as essential transportation routes to and from local neighborhoods, Crown Mountain Park and the commercial districts of El Jebel and Willits. These corridors are also important routes for walking and biking, particularly when a two-mile section of the Rio Grande Trail is closed seasonally for wildlife habitat needs and trail traffic is re-routed to local roads. The walking and bicycling facilities that exist along these corridors vary in width and surfacing, are not fully connected and some are not consistently maintained.

**Valley Road Corridor:**

**Existing Trails on the North Side of Valley Road:** The following list describes the existing trail segments and missing lengths along the north side of Valley Road, west of the SH 82-Valley Road- El Jebel Road intersection, ending at the Valley Road-SH82-JW Drive intersection:

- 540 feet of 6-foot wide paved trail crosses the frontage of Sopris View Apartments. The trail segment was built with the project in the Valley Road public right-of-way for public use and is maintained by the current apartment project owner, the Aspen Skiing Company. MVTC reports that this trail section is not consistently maintained in the winter or kept clear of snow.



*Trail on frontage of Sopris View Apartments on Valley Road. Photos: Eagle County and Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

- There is no trail or sidewalk located on the Summit Vista Subdivision's frontage on Valley Road, on its east and west borders with Valley Road. A 10-foot wide paved trail exists parallel to Summit Drive within Summit Vista subdivision and is located inside the public right-of-way. The trail ends in the Summit Vista Open Space located adjacent to SH 82.

- A 600-foot gap in sidewalk or trail exists on the Valley Road Frontage of the Parkside Subdivision and in front of two residential parcels not affiliated with the neighboring subdivisions.



*The frontage of Parkside Subdivision on Valley Road. Photo: Eagle County*

- 450 feet of 8-foot wide paved trail crosses the frontage of the Valley View Subdivision.

- No additional sections of trail or sidewalk are constructed west of Valley View Subdivision on the north side of Valley Road.

#### **Crown Mountain Park Trails on Valley Road:**

- On the north side of Valley Road, CMPRD owns and maintains the combination paved and gravel trail running the length of Crown Mountain Park that is parallel to Valley Road (see photo at right) and connects to the SH 82 intersection and sidewalks leading to the El Jebel Community Center.

- The paved trail transitions to a gravel trail at the park entrance and travels west to the boundary of the park to turn south and merge with a paved trail.
- The trail does not extend past the park's west boundary.
- The USFS owns the property adjacent to the park's west boundary. No trail or sidewalk route exists along the USFS frontage on Valley Road.
- There are no striped crosswalks or raised "table" crossings on Valley Road from residential areas on the north side of Valley Road to Crown Mountain Park.

#### **Potential Future Trail Connections on Valley Road:**

- A vacant property owned by Crawford Properties is located immediately east of and adjacent to Sopris View apartments. Future development of the vacant parcel could result in provision of another section of paved trail along the parcel frontage.
- Adjacent to the west boundary of Summit Vista subdivision, residential units are proposed as the "Fields Subdivision", on the north side of Valley Road. The Subdivision Sketch Plan Approval in 2018 included a condition of approval to "Construct and maintain a 10' paved sidewalk/trail along Valley Road to Valley Court", resulting in 1,000 feet of added trail route.



*Gravel trail alongside Valley Road on Crown Mtn Park property starting at the main entrance, heading west, and ending at the park boundary Photo: Eagle County*

- Additionally, the proposed Fields Subdivision, if approved, will include a dedicated easement to the public along the northside of the property line adjacent to SH 82 to allow for a possible future connection to the existing paved trail on the north boundary of the adjacent Summit Vista subdivision. This proposal would enable a future trail connection to the intersection of Valley Road, SH 82 and JW Drive and a link with the community of Blue Lake on the opposite side of SH 82, if CDOT and adjacent private property owners participate.
- If connection to the Summit Vista trail is not possible, construction of a trail in the Valley Road right-of-way from the Fields Subdivision to SH 82 may be possible. Further study is required to determine if sufficient unimproved right-of-way exists on Valley Road to accommodate the width of a paved trail, or if it will be necessary to seek additional property from adjacent private property owners.

### **SH 82 Frontage Road Corridor:**

- The 2.5 mile two-lane SH 82 Frontage Road connects Valley Road to Catherine Store Road in Garfield County and was the original SH 82 roadway until the mid-1990's when it was rebuilt as a four-lane highway immediately to the east. The road also serves as a walking and bicycling route for local residents, neighborhoods and as part of the detour route for the Rio Grande Trail during the annual winter wildlife closure from the Catherine Store bridge in Garfield County to Rock Bottom Ranch preserve and farm in Eagle County.



*SH 82 Frontage Road between Valley Road in Eagle County and Catherine Store Road in Garfield County. Photo: Eagle County*

- 2.2 miles of the road is located in Garfield County and .3 miles in Eagle County.
- The MVTC and Mid-Valley Area Community Plan encourages improved safety and connectivity on the Frontage Road with development of a paved trail route separated from the roadway.
- This recommended trail route should be a minimum of 8-feet wide for two-way travel, with 10-feet wide preferred.
- Alternatively, widened road shoulders may be an option to a separated trail if physical space is constrained and additional right-of-way and funding can't be secured. Potential for widening the road shoulders should be studied in conjunction with the trail feasibility.



- Garfield County and CDOT would be key partners as most of the work is outside of Eagle County's jurisdiction. Ownership and maintenance of a new trail alignment would be determined through the planning and permitting process. Typically, CDOT does not own trail alignments, with some exceptions, such as the Glenwood Canyon Trail; however, CDOT is a frequent partner for multi-use trails located in state highway right-of-ways in the interest of overall road safety and supporting multi-modal travel.

### **Referral and Public Comment:**

Referral and public comments regarding trail use in the Valley Road corridor are outlined below.

#### **Referral:**

- WE-cycle strongly supports improvements to the Valley Road corridor and requests involvement in the process. Existing Valley Road trails are a vital link between the highly-used Sopris View WE-cycle station to both the El Jebel Up and Down Valley WE-cycle stations adjacent to the RFTA bus stops.
- Summit Vista Homeowners Association does not support granting an easement to allow public use of their existing paved trail through their open space parcel and connecting to the proposed Fields Subdivision.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Provide paved sidewalks along Valley Road where no facilities exist to accommodate users of all abilities who are currently sharing the narrow roadway with vehicular traffic.
- The trail segments on the north side of Valley Road are difficult to use during winter conditions.
- Provide a sidewalk wide enough for 2-way pedestrian traffic on the USFS side Valley Road where the land is generally more level.
- The trail parallel to Valley Road in Crown Mountain Park should be surfaced with pavement rather than the existing gravel. It is heavily used and becomes icy in winter and impassable mud in the spring.
- Add speed bumps to Valley Road to slow traffic that is typically heading to Crown Mountain Park.
- Improve the signage for access to Crown Mountain Park to include a clear "Entrance" sign with arrows. Confusion about the park entrance results in people driving using the Valley Road shoulder as parking for events and impacting bicycling and walking on Valley Road.

### **PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports improved maintenance of the Sopris View Apartments, Parkside Subdivision and Valley View Subdivision Valley Road frontage trails monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.

2. **New Paved Trail Connections:** Public comment supports completing existing trail and sidewalk gaps on Valley Road with additional paved sections on both the north and south side of Valley Road. This requires collaboration between Eagle County, USFS, CMPRD, private property owners and subdivision HOA's.
3. **New Paved Trail Connections:** Subject to Summit Vista collaboration and approval, MVTC supports use of the Summit Vista trail as a public route to allow connection to the proposed Fields subdivision, if approved, or another land use project, which would facilitate a subsequent connection to the SH 82 and JW Drive intersection and the trails network in Blue Lake PUD.
4. **New Paved Trail Connections:** MVTC, Mid-Valley Area Community Plan and public comment support improvements to SH 82 Frontage Road for separated paved trail or expanded roads shoulders as a trail alternative. A partnership of Eagle County, Garfield County and CDOT is required to study and construct, with support from MVTC, private property owners and other agencies.
5. **Improved Existing Unpaved Trail:** Public comment recommends the existing gravel trail on Crown Mountain Park that travels alongside the south side of Valley Road be paved for improved, year-round usability.
6. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports upgrades to the Valley Road corridor that supports trail and transit-stop connectivity, and requests inclusion in the planning process.
7. **Sign and Safety Improvements:** To support non-motorized users and reduced impacts to the Valley Road neighborhood, public comments recommend additional wayfinding signage for people driving related to Crown Mountain Park and speed controls such as bumps or tables. Crosswalk improvements do not exist and would enhance safety.



*El Jebel overlook as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County*

## 10.3 Singletrack Unpaved Trails



*Mountain biking the Buckhorn Traverse trail on the BLM's Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard*

The most popular active recreation pursuits in the United States include hiking, running, walking and mountain biking and are also some of the common activities enjoyed by Roaring Fork Valley residents during their leisure time. Horseback riding has a long history in Colorado, for both utility and pleasure, and many residents of the Roaring Fork Valley own and ride horses for recreation.

Encouraging and facilitating these healthy pastimes is an extensive unpaved, natural-surface, singletrack trail network located in relative close proximity to the population centers on the

Roaring Fork River valley floor, Missouri Heights and up the Frying Pan River valley. The majority of the unpaved Mid-Valley singletrack trails described in this section are located on USFS and BLM public lands, or on Eagle County and Pitkin County public open space properties.

In the Mid-Valley, singletrack trails are typically one to four-foot wide unpaved trails that were purpose-built for people to walk, bike and horseback ride. This type of trail may also be incidentally created through years of casual "social use" or originated as wildlife "game" trails. Unpaved singletrack trails are also referred to as "soft-surface", "soft-track", "natural surface" or "dirt trails." The term "singletrack" was chosen for use in this Plan and refers to a trail that is generally available to all of the uses listed above unless otherwise managed for separation of uses due to resource or safety management issues.

Common in Roaring Fork Valley rural areas and on lands managed by the USFS or BLM, singletrack trails also exist in developed areas where they serve as shortcuts linking established trails or destinations. Many singletrack trail segments on public lands have use restrictions and some have seasonal closures to protect wildlife habitat.

The Mid-Valley unpaved trail network described here also includes many miles of unpaved road, often referred to as "doubletrack." These roads serve to link trails or serve as a route, providing many miles of recreation opportunity for bicycle, foot and horse travel. Doubletrack routes may or may not be open to motorized travel, depending on the management designations by the landowner, County open space programs, or CPW, BLM or USFS land management plans.

The following section describes the singletrack trail networks that exist in the Mid-Valley area and also lists recommendations from local organizations for improvements or additions to the singletrack



networks. *It is important to note that many of the proposals have not yet been studied thoroughly, reviewed, or approved by the appropriate decision making authorities, including land owners, federal, state or county agencies. This Plan captures the concepts, but more research and approvals are necessary prior to implementation, with some projects moving forward while others may not due to unmitigable compliance or feasibility issues.*

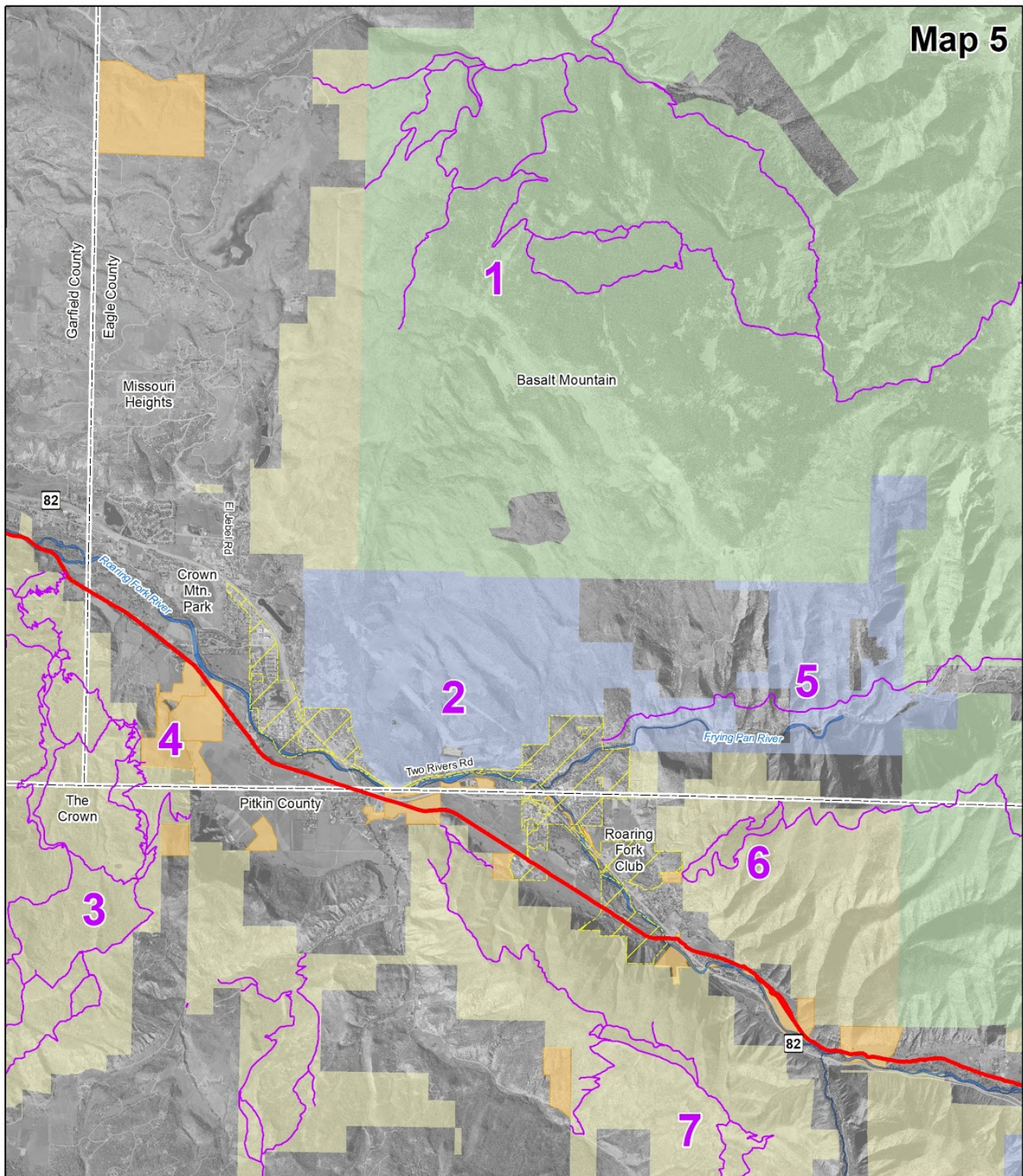
**Note:** Two proposed singletrack projects (unpaved trails of less than eight feet wide) were suggested through the public input phase of this Plan - by RFMBA at Blue Lake in the El Jebel area, and by the MVTC and Town of Basalt in the SH 82-East Valley Road area. See Section 10.2 Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails for descriptions of these suggested trails. They have not been included in this Section 10.3 Singletrack Trails due to their location in more densely populated areas and stated proposed purpose to serve as neighborhood connector trails, rather than as recreation-focused singletrack trails through public land or rural areas.

**Table 14. Existing Singletrack Unpaved Trails**

Map Item #	Trail or Trail Network Name	Trail Owner - Land Manager	Location
1.	Basalt Mountain Trails	USFS BLM CPW	Eagle County
2.	Basalt State Wildlife Area	CPW	Eagle County
3.	Crown Mountain SRMA	BLM	Eagle, Pitkin, Garfield Counties
4.	Glassier Open Space	Pitkin County - PCOST	Eagle County
5.	Stage Trail Cedar Drive to Toner Creek	Private, Eagle County, CPW, USFS	Eagle County
Located in Pitkin County			
6.	Arbaney Kittle Trail	PCOST BLM USFS	Pitkin County

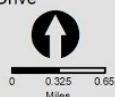
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Map 5



## Mid Valley Trails Plan 2020: Singletrack Networks

- |                           |   |                              |  |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Singletrack Unpaved Trail | <b>Public Lands</b>                     | 1 Basalt Mountain Trails     | 5 Stage Trail Cedar Drive to Toner Creek |
| Rio Grande Trail          | BLM                                     | 2 Basalt State Wildlife Area | 6 Arbaney Kittle Trail                   |
| Town of Basalt            | State of CO                             | 3 Crown Mountain SRMA        | 7 Light Hill Trails                      |
|                           | Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space |                              |  |





## 1. Basalt Mountain Trails

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** BLM, USFS and CPW



*Basalt Mountain Trail after the Lake Christine Fire. Photo: Mike Pritchard*

### **TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Located entirely in Eagle County, this extensive singletrack, doubletrack and road network is located on both BLM and USFS lands above in elevation and north of the Town of Basalt and east of the Missouri Heights area above El Jebel.

- Trails are primarily accessed via an improved trailhead off of Upper Cattle Creek Road.

- The Basalt Mountain network also links to the Red Table-Ruedi Reservoir singletrack and doubletrack network, also located in Eagle County, north and east of Basalt.

- The area is enjoyed by hikers, runners, bikers and equestrians, as well as motorized users and hunters. The USFS worked with a regional motorized group including motorcycles and OHV's, to create a Basalt to Gypsum trail network that is partially complete and also available to all other users.

### **Existing Trail Network:**

The following list describes the majority of routes available for public use on Basalt Mountain:

- |                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Basalt Mountain Road and Trail | 10.5 miles |
| 2. Blue Creek Trail               | 2 miles    |
| 3. Cattle Creek Trail             | 9 miles    |
| 4. Mill Creek Rim Trail           | 1 mile     |
| 5. Red Table Road and Trail       | 18 miles   |
| 6. Ruedi Overlook                 | 6.5 miles  |
| 7. Taylor Creek Spur Trail        | .7 miles   |
| 8. Taylor Creek Road              | 8 miles    |



### Annual Wildlife Closures:

Basalt Mountain trails are closed to mountain biking November 23 through May 22, and open to foot and horse travel year-round for wildlife winter habitat needs.

### 2018 Lake Christine Fire:

- The area suffered severe damage, on USFS, BLM and CPW lands in addition to private property during the 2018 wildfire designated as the “Lake Christine Fire” that burned over 12,000 acres after igniting at the Basalt State Wildlife Area and moving to the northern and western flanks of the mountain.
- The BLM, USFS and CPW have since developed and implemented a fire rehabilitation plan for the area that included clearing and reseeding selected areas in collaboration with local volunteer groups and local government agencies.
- USFS recreation staff (see Appendix F stakeholder discussion notes) reports that the agency has completed their rehabilitation work on Basalt Mountain and appropriated federal funds have been spent.
- USFS recreation staff does not foresee additional trail network additions at this time with the exception of trail reroutes related to logging taking place on Basalt Mountain in 2020. RFMBA is collaborating with the USFS on the reroute project.



*Basalt Mountain Road. Photo: Mike Pritchard*

### Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding the Basalt Mountain trail network are outlined below.

#### Referral:

- BLM noted that the emphasis for management of BLM lands on Basalt Mountain is protecting wildlife and draft Plan text provided during the referral period was in potential conflict with the 2015 Approved Resource Management Plan decision involving protecting wildlife habitat on Basalt Mountain. BLM does not intend to expand trail routes on Basalt Mountain due to the wildlife priority area designation. A surface-disturbing action or activity, such as a trail, or

use may be considered if BLM, in consultation with CPW, determines that the proposed action or activity would not impair wildlife habitat values. Wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM.

- The USFS Aspen-Sopris District Ranger, in response to the draft Plan text provided during the referral period regarding reopening former trails proposed by local interest groups, provided comment that any potential requests “To construct a new trail or bring an old trail back into the

system requires an environmental analysis, as required by the [National Environmental Policy Act](#).” Further stating that, “The trails mentioned in the Plan that would connect the valley floor to the Basalt Mountain area would also require this analysis, and extensive public outreach work, if they were to be pursued. The outcomes of any of these NEPA analyses do not always result in approval of the proposed projects. Any trails shown on the current WRNF Visitor Map are system trails, and maintenance, upkeep, etc. does not require similar analysis.”

- Town of Basalt, MVTC and RFMBA support the Town of Basalt POST, 2020 Basalt Master Plan and Mid-Valley Area Community Plan recommendations for a Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain trail connection inclusion in this Plan. New trails are proposed, though route locations are not yet determined, from El Jebel and Old Town Basalt on the valley floor to the middle levels and forested top of Basalt Mountain. The goal is to enable hiking, biking and equestrian access to surrounding public land without relying on a vehicle to get there, as well as to provide close-to-home recreation.



**Wildlife Closure Information Sign at Basalt Mountain Road gate in early May, 2020**  
Photo: Eagle County

Collaboration is required with private property owners and owner associations, BLM, USFS and CPW to identify and study appropriate routes that might allow this connection to travel from the valley floor in El Jebel and downtown Basalt to access established trails higher up on Basalt Mountain. On BLM and USFS lands, NEPA review and a public input process will be required for any new trail proposals. Per BLM, wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM.

- MVTC suggests a possible trailhead and connector trail from the Shadowrock neighborhood to allow access to existing singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain, as part of the “Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain” trail concept, or at minimum as a short “neighborhood trail” to the low hilltop located on BLM land immediately east of Shadowrock. This concept requires approval by Shadowrock HOA, adjacent private property owners, BLM, USFS and CPW. This proposed connection is also noted in Section 10.2 Secondary Route Paved Trails.
- RFVHC is interested in working with the USFS and other groups to clear and rehabilitate an old route that follows the North Fork of Cattle Creek to connect to Red Table Road (east of trail #1913). They recommend both this trail and a former section of FT #1909 that traveled closer and parallel to Upper Cattle Creek that has been decommissioned (closed) be restored as alternatives to Basalt Mountain trails that are heavily used by either mechanized (mountain bikes) or motorized users. Per RFVHC, both the North Fork route and the closed #1909 section have truck and horse trailer parking available. A related project RFVHC is interested in pursuing in the Basalt Mountain/Missouri Heights area is the “Missouri Heights Trail” starting at BLM Sutey Ranch in

Garfield County near Carbondale to Spring Park Reservoir in Eagle County at the base of Basalt Mountain. This involves crossing several private properties located in Garfield and Eagle Counties. RVHC also recommends improved management of singletrack trail uses to protect sensitive ecosystems, wildlife habitat and quality of the trail user experience. Specific recommendations include enforcement of closures and permitted use, implementation of trail patrols, and installation of improved wayfinding, educational, regulatory and shared-use etiquette signage.

- HSNC supports access to trails close to communities, but is concerned that wildlife will be impacted by a Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain trail connection. Citing the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan 3.7.5: "Other forms of recreation can create other negative impacts. The mere presence of humans, vehicles and domestic animals in areas frequented by wildlife can have negative psychological effects, causing stress in animals as they must alter their instinctual travel routes and feeding patterns. Stress increases susceptibility to disease and can reduce reproduction rates." HSNC asks that CPW or other agencies conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of additional recreational use on Basalt Mountain wildlife prior to any approval of additional trails.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Easy access to trails on Basalt Mountain from El Jebel or Basalt may be desirable but the County must take wildlife into consideration. More research is needed on impact before projects can be approved.
- Enforce wildlife closures.
- Remove trails built in critical wildlife habitat.
- Adhere to Eagle County wildlife habitat protection policies and regulations.

#### **PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Improve Existing Trail:** RFMBA is scheduled to work with USFS per an approved WRNF Environmental Assessment to reroute a portion of the Basalt Mountain Trail due to logging activities on the existing route to become the Mill Creek Overlook Trail.
2. **Improve Existing Trails:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support local collaboration with USFS and BLM for continued rehabilitation and restoration of fire or logged trail corridors on Basalt Mountain.
3. **Wayfinding:** Town of Basalt, RFVHC and public comment recommend additional directional signs on Basalt Mountain. Additional directional signs are recommended as well as etiquette and education signs for shared use by hikers, bikers and horseback riders.
4. **Equestrian Improvements:** RFVHC will continue to collaborate with counties, BLM and USFS to plan and include equestrian parking in future improvements, to accommodate truck and trailer ingress, and loading and egress movements that safely allow access for all users of the Basalt Mountain trailhead. Equestrian parking specifications are provided in Appendix B.
5. **New Trail Connections:** Town of Basalt POST, 2020 Basalt Master Plan and 2018 Mid-Valley Area Community Plan each include recommendation for a Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain trail connection. Collaboration is required with BLM, USFS, CPW and private property owners to identify if appropriate routes are possible that might allow a connection to travel from the valley floor in El



Jebel and downtown Basalt to access established trails higher up on Basalt Mountain via foot, horse and biking singletrack while maintaining resource management plan protections for wildlife. A [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA) review and public process will be required for new trails on BLM and USFS lands. Wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM.

6. **New Trail Connections:** RFMBA supports future additional trail improvements and expansions in the Basalt Mountain management area if resource management criteria can be suitably addressed. A NEPA review and public process will be required for new trails on BLM and USFS lands.
7. **New Trail Connections:** Partners interested in reopening trails that have been closed by the USFS on Basalt Mountain are encouraged to discuss proposals with the USFS for specific guidance. RFVHC supports reactivation of certain decommissioned routes on Basalt Mountain, for example, an older trail parallel to existing trail #1909, and members of MVTC have suggested possible reinstatement of other trails (e.g. #1913) in the area. Per the USFS comments, any requests for reopening decommissioned trails will require a federal government NEPA review process.



*Basalt Mountain Road access to singletrack trails. Photo: Eagle County*

## 2. Basalt State Wildlife Area

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** CPW

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The 2,577-acre Basalt State Wildlife Area (BSWA) is located generally north of and adjacent to the Town of Basalt on the southern flank of Basalt Mountain.
- According to CPW, the BSWA is primarily managed for wildlife needs and related human activities such as hunting and fishing, and is divided into the Lake Christine and Toner Creek management units.
- A firearms shooting range, a small reservoir (Lake Christine), picnic area and hay fields are also located on the property.
- A formal trail network is not designated or signed. Some trails connect to routes higher up on Basalt Mountain on USFS property. The historic Stage Road route is located in the Toner unit of the BSWA.
- Doubletrack road and singletrack social trails are open to hikers and equestrians. All routes that are closed to motor vehicles are also closed to mountain biking.



*Interpretive signs at Lake Christine in the Basalt State Wildlife Area. Photo: Eagle County*

**Annual Wildlife Closures:**

The area is fully closed to human use December 1 to April 15 for wildlife winter habitat.

**2018 Lake Christine Fire:**

The BSWA suffered severe damage, as well as adjacent BLM, USFS and private property during the 2018 “Lake Christine” fire that burned over 12,000 acres after igniting at the shooting range at the BSWA and moving to the northern and western flanks of the mountain.

**Referral and Public Comment:**

Referral comments regarding trail use within the BSWA are outlined below. No public comment was received for this area.

**Referral:**

- Town of Basalt would like to collaborate with CPW to create an appropriate route through the BSWA property to access the upper reaches of Basalt Mountain.
- RFMBA requests that summer season wildlife surveys be performed to determine if reinstated access for mountain biking during the season of lowest use by wildlife may be appropriate.
- RFVHC recommends the current travel management policies regarding use of the property be maintained and no new trails be constructed on the BSWA property to connect the Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain.
- As previously noted in Section 10.3.1. above regarding Basalt Mountain Trails, BLM and USFS have conveyed that wildlife habitat is a management priority for Basalt Mountain and a NEPA analysis including an extensive public process would be required for new trails proposed. This would apply to any new trails linking to Basalt Mountain from the BSWA through USFS or BLM lands.

**POTENTIAL PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **New Trails Connections:** Town of Basalt is coordinating with CPW to determine if appropriate routes are possible to connect with the upper reaches of Basalt Mountain, with minimal impact on the wildlife habitat area. As noted in Section 9 Plan Implementation, any proposal should be evaluated according to the policies, goals and regulations of the Town of Basalt and Eagle County regarding preservation of wildlife and sensitive lands, in addition to the requirements of CPW.
2. **Trail Management:** RFMBA suggests that seasonal wildlife surveys be performed to determine if reinstated access for mountain biking during the season of lowest use by wildlife may be appropriate.

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### 3. Crown Special Recreation Management Area

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County, Garfield and Pitkin Counties

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** BLM

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Located at the base of Mt. Sopris in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties, the BLM lands known as the “Crown” features an extensive singletrack trail and doubletrack road network.
- Access to the eastern side of the Crown located in Eagle and Garfield Counties is from the Rio Grande Trail between Carbondale and Basalt via the Glassier Open Space trails or Buckhorn trail.
- The western side of the Crown is located in Pitkin County and accessed from Prince Creek road off and Highway 133 in the Crystal River Valley.



*Mountain bike riding on Lower Buckhorn on the Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard*

**BLM Management of the Crown SRMA:**

- Activities on the Crown are guided by the BLM's [Crown Special Recreation Management Area Trails Resource Management Plan Implementation](#) (SRMA Plan) approved in 2019. The “Record of Decision” approving the SRMA Plan states that one purpose of the plan is to “improve the experience of public land users in the area and address multiple issues documented in the Environmental Assessment.”
- The SRMA Plan is a supporting document to the overarching [Colorado River Valley Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan](#) (RMP) approved in 2015 for BLM lands in Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin, Mesa and Routt Counties.
- The SRMA Plan includes the following best management practices (BMP's) pertaining to recreation management of the Crown. According to BLM staff, BMP's are not management decisions but are developed to aid analysis, identify opportunities for stakeholder collaboration, and help guide implementation actions to stay in alignment with RMP and SRMS goals and objectives.
  - Reroute trails that create resource damage and trespass on private property.
  - Install mountain bike cattle guards when existing or proposed routes cross fence lines.
  - Construct approximately 12-15 miles of new single-track mountain bike trails to create loop trails, link existing trails, reduce the amount of biking on roads and create trail connections to new access points.

- Downhill bikes are primarily intended for high speed descent. Downhill biking trails would not be constructed.
- With stakeholder involvement, apply adaptive management (e.g. Limits of Acceptable Change) which focuses on cycle of designing - implementing - monitoring - evaluating - adjusting implementation actions to respond to future recreation issues and the results of monitoring.
- If future monitoring indicates that social RSC's are not being achieved, visitor health and safety issues exist, resource damage is occurring or user conflicts need to be addressed, the CRVFO may implement additional visitor use restrictions for private and commercial use.
- In referral agency comments provided for this Plan, BLM management staff stated, "For BLM lands in the Roaring Fork Valley, the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the Red Hill SRMA are the areas where recreation infrastructure will likely be developed/improved to meet future recreation demand," referencing the guidance provided by 2019 SRMA and 2015 RMP.
- BLM staff is interested in continuing to work with partners to refine all aspects of the Crown trail networks and the auxiliary facilities (trailheads, parking areas, campsites, wayfinding, etc.).
- The SRMA Plan defines trail mileage management actions for the SRMA as follows, and further clarified by BLM during this Plan process. BLM staff also provided further clarification that mileages for each type of use listed below may be approximated but total, cumulative mileage will be limited to the maximum permitted by the SRMA Plan:
  - "19.21 miles of designated routes (most is two track<sup>9</sup>) would be undesignated and rehabilitated to the extent necessary;
  - 11.85 miles of new mountain bike single-track trail would be designated and constructed;
  - 10.02 miles of designated mountain bike trail (all is two track) would have its designation changed to Foot/Horse Trail;
  - 14.7 miles of designated mountain bike trail would have its designation changed to administrative use only to accommodate permitted grazing activities.



*The Vasten Trail in the Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard*

<sup>9</sup> The BLM term "two track" refers to unpaved roadways on public lands, and is synonymous with the term "Double Track" that is used throughout this Plan.

- These routes would have gates placed as necessary to restrict mechanized and motorized traffic. Some of these routes overlap with the proposed Foot/Horse trails as shown on the accompanying map.<sup>10</sup> In this case, gates would be accompanied by foot/horse passage structures to be identified with the aid of the RFVHC.
- A winter closure as described in the 2015 CRVFO Approved RMP will be in effect for all motorized and mechanized travel from December 1 through April 15 outside of mechanized routes in the Prince Creek corridor. Horses would be allowed to use any trail designated for their use as well as off trail travel during this winter closure.
- Timeframes. Trail construction would be anticipated to begin in the spring/summer of 2019 and could continue for several years as funding and volunteer labor become available.”

**Annual Wildlife Closures:** Trails in the Crown SRMA are closed to motorized and mechanized travel from December 1 to April 15 to protect wintering big game species, except trails along paralleling Prince Creek Road (BLM routes #8320, #8320E, and #8325D) remain open. Foot and horse travel is open year round.

#### **The Crown SRMA in Eagle County:**

- BLM collaborated with local partners including RFMBA, RFVHC, RFOV, RFTA, Pitkin County (as owners and managers of the Glassier Open Space parcel adjacent to the Crown) to implement some of the work described above within Eagle County.
- The following trails are located on BLM lands on the Crown on the Eagle County-Roaring Fork Valley side, via the Buckhorn or Glassier Open Space trailheads along the Rio Grande Trail between Hooks Lane Bridge near Basalt and Catherine Bridge near Carbondale:
  1. Buckhorn 4 miles
  2. Buckhorn Traverse 4.4 miles
  3. Vasten 6.1 miles
- The Pitkin County Glassier Open Space that is located in Eagle County and immediately adjacent to the eastern flank of the Crown, augments the access to the BLM Crown SRMA with two trails constructed in partnership with RFMBA, MVTC, RFTA and BLM:
  1. Glassier Trail 2 miles
  2. Glassier Equestrian Trail 1.5 miles

#### **The Crown SRMA in Pitkin County:**

- RFMBA and PCOST collaborated with BLM to improve existing trails or develop new trails and add a trailhead along Prince Creek Road in 2017-2018. The PCOST trail routes adjacent to Prince Creek Road now serve as the primary access to and from BLM routes on the Crown. MVTC has been a funding partner for trail planning and construction costs.
- As a low-service level road, Pitkin County closes the upper 3.36 miles of Prince Creek Road on or around December 1st and reopens the road on or around April 15th.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1 (page 29) of the [Crown Special Recreation Management Area Travel Resource Management Plan Implementation](#).



- The following trails are accessed from the Pitkin County-Prince Creek Road portal in the Crystal River Valley:

1. Christmas Tree	.5 miles
2. Dinkle Lake	1.3 miles
3. Father of Ginormous	2.4 miles
4. Highline	.8 miles
5. Innie	3.8 miles
6. Lower Monte Carlo	2 miles
7. Monte Carlo	1.1 miles
8. Next Jen	2.9 miles
9. North Porcupine	2.7 miles
10. Outie	2.5 miles
11. Prince Creek	1.8 miles
12. Skullbucket	1.1 miles
13. South Porcupine	1.2 miles

### Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding the Crown SRMA trail network are outlined below.

### Referral:

- RFMBA commented that “following up on a 2019 BLM decision to close 44 miles of routes to mechanized use (through rehabilitation, or re-categorized for foot and horse only, or administrative use only), RFMBA will continue a partnership with BLM to study and designate new routes design for mountain bike experience. Anticipated routes include the Crown Royale concept trail that will connect the top of the Crown SRMA to the Rio Grande Trail.”

- HSNL is concerned about a significant decrease in wildlife activity since the increase in human activity on the Crown and Glassier Open Space, with the understanding that studies have not yet been performed to verify the impacts. HSNL met with officials to express concern. HSNL understands the need for recreation on open space and public lands but urges cost/benefit review of increased traffic on the Crown and irreversible impacts on wildlife. Additionally Eagle County should apply the recommendations of the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan regarding preservation of wildlife and habitat.



Mountain biking on Buckhorn Trail on the Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard

- RFVHC is interested in collaborating with Pitkin or Eagle County and BLM to improve equestrian parking access to the Crown at the Divide lot off of Prince Creek Road. Per BLM Plan comments: “RFVHC and BLM have discussed improvements to “The Divide” parking area at the top of West Sopris Creek Road and Prince Creek to better accommodate truck and horse trailer parking. No BLM funding is currently budgeted, but the project is included in the BLM’s “out-year” recreation planning.” RFVHC states their concerns regarding wildlife impacts due to heavy trail use on the Crown and requests that land managers consider limitations and monitoring of trail use levels in the interest of reducing or eliminating impacts on the Crown’s wildlife and habitat. RFVHC also requests education and enforcement about existing closures, ecosystems, restrictions on dogs and shared-trail etiquette.

**Public Comment:**

- Singletrack trails constructed on the Crown and Glassier Open Space properties have significantly increased recreation traffic on those public lands and in the Hooks Spur area.
- Expanded recreation use of the area has displaced and disturbed wildlife to a significant extent.
- Increased recreational use can result in conflicts with the historic use of the area for cattle grazing.
- Existing trails have exceeded their carrying capacity.
- Recreation impacts and capacity need to be monitored and better managed.
- A metrics methodology needs to be developed to measure and amend use levels based on impacts.
- Dog restrictions are not enforced and frequently violated.
- Seasonal closures are not enforced and frequently violated.
- New or expanded trails should not be permitted.



*RFVHC members riding from the Crown towards Mt. Sopris. Photo: Holly McClain*

**POTENTIAL PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Improve Existing Trails:** Following review and approval by the BLM per the Crown SRMA, RLVHC is working with BLM and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps in 2020 to create the "Crown Jewel Horse Trail" a 12+ mile designated horse and hiking trail that would connect Glassier Open Space in Eagle County to the Divide parking lot in Pitkin County using or improving existing routes on the Crown.
2. **New Trail Connection:** Following review and approval by the BLM per the Crown SRMA, RLVHC began construction in late summer 2019 on the Undie Trail, located in Pitkin County-Prince Creek area. Construction will continue in 2020 to construct the 5-mile long trail in 2020 with accelerated completion dependent on available funding.
3. **Manage, Monitor and Mitigate Trail Development and Use:** HSNC, RLVHC and public comment request that BLM and Eagle County consider limitations on adding more trail mileage or expanding the network in the interest of preserving wildlife habitat and reducing impacts to adjacent neighbors, and adhere to federal, state and local policies and regulations regarding balanced and appropriate development of trails and preservation of wildlife habitat, sensitive lands and neighborhood character. Education and enforcement about existing closures, ecosystems, dogs restrictions, shared use etiquette and development of an impact monitoring methodology is requested.
4. **New Trail Connections:** Subject to BLM review and approval, RLVHC recommends a segment of climbing trail to avoid conflicts on the two-way portion of the Monte Carlo trail as well as an easement or land acquisition to enable a merger of the Prince Creek and Monte Carlo trails (located in Pitkin County) to create a continuous singletrack route that helps bicyclists avoid interface with vehicles on a section of Pitkin County's Prince Creek Road.
5. **New Trail Connections:** RLVHC also seeks to continue a partnership with BLM to study and designate new routes designed for mountain bike experience. Anticipated routes include the Crown Royale concept trail that would connect the top of the Crown SRMA to the Rio Grande Trail (located in Eagle County) and subject to review by RFTA and Eagle County as potential referral agencies.
6. **Equestrian Improvements:** RLVHC will continue to collaborate with counties and BLM to plan and include equestrian parking in future improvements, to accommodate truck and trailer ingress, and loading and egress movements that safely allow access for all users of the Crown area. Equestrian parking specifications are provided in Appendix B.



## 4. Glassier Open Space

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Pitkin County owns and manages the Glassier Open Space property.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The 282-acre Glassier Open Space property is comprised of two historic ranches located on Hooks Spur Road.
- The ranch properties were purchased through a partnership effort by Pitkin County, Eagle County, Town of Basalt, MVTC and Great Outdoors Colorado.
- The open space property is located in Eagle County and Eagle County holds the conservation easement.
- Eagle County would participate as a referral agency in the updates to the current Glassier Open Space Management Plan.
- According to PCOST, “the property contains significant and relatively natural habitat for plants and wildlife, scenic open space, agriculture and opportunities for recreation. The property is adjacent to undeveloped BLM acreage, contributing to contiguous, expansive portions of undisturbed habitat for numerous species. Together with the BLM land and other private conservation easements in the area, the property contributes to a large, natural scenic landscape characteristic of western Colorado, and is important to the agricultural heritage and viability of the region.”
- Several agricultural easements are in place on the property, encouraging the continuation of crop and livestock growing in the Hooks Spur-Emma area of the Mid-Valley.
- Ranch roads connecting to recently constructed trails crossing the Glassier Open Space property can be accessed from the Rio Grande Trail on foot, bicycle or horseback. Parking for all trail users, including equestrians, is available at a Rio Grande Trail trailhead near Hooks Lane bridge.
- 3.5 miles of trail on Glassier Open Space provide foot, bicycle and equestrian trail connection to the BLM Crown, including:
  - The 2-mile Glassier Trail open to foot and bicycle travel
  - The 1.5-mile Glassier Equestrian Trail dedicated to equestrian use only, and purpose-built to help reduce potential conflicts between bikes, hikers and horses.



*Glassier Open Space Trailhead. Photo: Eagle County*

- RFMBA, RFOV, MVTC, RFVHC, and BLM collaborated with PCOST to develop the Glassier trail system and parking areas, and continue to participate to maintain and improve the trail network.

#### **Annual Wildlife Closures and Pet Control:**

- Glassier Open Space is closed to all human recreation use from December 1 through May 15 for wildlife winter habitat.
- Dogs are prohibited from the Glassier Open Space property at all times to prevent wildlife and livestock conflicts.

#### **Referral and Public Comment:**

Referral and public comments regarding the Glassier Open Space trail network are outlined below.

#### **Referral:**

- Pitkin County plans to update the Glassier Open Space Management Plan in late summer, 2020. The process will include opportunities for public comment. See the [Glassier Open Space Management Plan](#) for the current 2015 version. Go to [the PCOST Project List](#) for information on the update and notification process.
- HSNC is concerned about a significant decrease in local wildlife activity since the increase in human activity on Glassier Open Space and the Crown and urges additional study to evaluate irreversible impacts, cost/benefit, and ensure the recommendations of Eagle County 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan regarding preservation of wildlife and habitat are being considered.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Singletrack trails constructed on the Crown and Glassier Open Space properties have significantly increased recreation traffic on those public lands and in the Hooks Spur area.
- The purchase of the Glassier Open Space has benefited people and impacted wildlife.
- Recreation impacts and capacity need to be monitored and better managed.
- Dogs restrictions are not enforced and frequently violated.
- Seasonal closures are not enforced and frequently violated.



*The Glassier Equestrian Trail is open to foot and horse travel. Photo: Eagle County*

- Glassier Open Space is a conduit for wildlife to travel from the Crown to the Roaring Fork River.

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Equestrian Improvements:** RFVHC requests that the equestrian parking at the Glassier Trailhead parking area be specifically delineated, or alternately, etiquette education signs be posted to alert non-equestrian trailhead users that trucks with trailers will require backing and turning space to exit the lot, and to park accordingly.
2. **Manage, Monitor and Mitigate Trail Development and Use:** HSNC, RFVHC and interested public request that Glassier Open Space PCOST property managers and adjacent BLM land managers place limitations and conduct monitoring of trail use levels in the interest of reducing or eliminating impacts on Hooks Spur and Crown area wildlife habitat and the local residents. Additionally, they request that they adhere to federal, state and local policies and regulations regarding balanced and appropriate development of trails and preservation of wildlife habitat, sensitive lands and neighborhood character. Education and enforcement about existing closures, ecosystems, dogs restrictions, shared use etiquette is also requested.



*Glassier Ranch Roads provide access to the singletracks Trail network. Photo: Eagle County*



## 5. Stage Road: Basalt to Toner Creek to Ruedi Reservoir

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt in Eagle County and Unincorporated Eagle County

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Eagle County has historic ownership of this right-of-way but it is not formally managed or maintained. The route passes through private property, CPW and USFS lands.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The Stage Road is a historic transportation route that connected the Town of Basalt to Ruedi Reservoir and points further east.
- The old road platform is generally located a hundred feet above and parallel to the existing Frying Pan Road on the east side of the valley, winding in and out of numerous drainages. Use of this route ceased when Frying Pan Road was constructed near the river.
- Per the Eagle County Surveyor<sup>11</sup> the public right-of-way for Stage Road was not officially abandoned as a public route by Eagle County after construction of Frying Pan Road.
- Approximately 50% of the route length is located on public land, passing through the “Toner Unit” of the Basalt State Wildlife Area and USFS lands.
- Where the route passes through private property, in a number of locations residences have been built in very close proximity to the historic right-of-way as it travels through private property. Two subdivision plats in the 7 Castles area document and reserve the road as a public right-of-way with provisions.
- Portions of the historic road route are lightly used for biking and hiking as an informal trail, primarily between Cedar Drive in the Town of Basalt and the Toner Creek drainage approximately three miles to the east.

**Referral and Public Comment:**

Referral comments regarding the Stage Road Trail are outlined below. No public comment was received for this area.

- Per MVTC, at the May, 2017 public meeting that kicked-off this Plan’s revision process, several private property owners along the historic Stage Road route attended and shared their objections to potential restoration of the route as a public trail.
- MVTC supports restoration of the historic right-of-way and is interested in working with property owners along the route to review concerns and methods for mitigating those concerns.
- If restored, RFVHC prefers the route be designated as open to foot and horse only to maintain the historic uses and minimize potential impacts to wildlife and private property owners along the route.

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<sup>11</sup> as of 2019

- If restored, RFMBA advocates for the historic road to be open to bicycle use to allow for a 38-mile out-and-back trail experience and avoidance of bicycling on the narrow and often shoulderless Frying Pan Road. RFMBA has offered to coordinate volunteers and staff to assist with maintenance of the public route.

### PROPOSED PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Feasibility Studies:** Partners such as MVTC, RFMBA, RFVHC and Town of Basalt that are interested in restoring the Stage Road could collaborate with private property owners, USFS and CPW to perform studies of the road platform condition, land development status, encroachments, viability for restoration, mitigation methods, county, state and federal land use policy and regulatory reviews regarding natural resources, wildlife and required public review processes, as well as other actions and studies that may be determined as necessary to restore the public road route as a navigable, non-motorized trail.
2. **Preserve Historic Public Right of Way:** Eagle County land use applications and building permits will continue to be monitored to determine if the property includes the historic Stage Road as a means of ensuring the public right-of-way route remains free of structures and other encumbrances.
3. **Wayfinding and Interpretation:** If the route restoration project is implemented, Eagle County Historical Society suggests incorporating interpretive signs that explain the history of the Stage Road.



*Ruedi Shores Subdivision. Photo: Eagle County*

## 6. Arbaney Kittle Trail

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Pitkin County



*Horseback riders on the Arbaney Kittle trail. Photo: RFVHC*

**TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** PCOST owns and maintains the trailhead and lower trail portion; BLM manages approximately 3 miles of the route and USFS maintains the upper reaches of the trail network.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Located in Pitkin County, this popular 17.6 mile trail network located southwest of the Town of Basalt starts at a PCOST trailhead in the Holland Hills neighborhood off SH 82, travels up through BLM lands and into USFS lands and a ridge top running southeast of Basalt and overlooking the Frying Pan Valley.

- The primary trail is a fairly steep climb to the ridge.

**Annual Wildlife Closures:** The trail is open to foot and horse year-round. Bikes are prohibited on the USFS portion of the network from November 23 through May 22 for wildlife habitat needs.

**Referral and Public Comment:**

Referral comments regarding the Arbaney Kittle Trail are outlined below. No public comment was received for this area.

**Referral:**

- Town of Basalt is interested in creating an unpaved connecting trail from central Basalt to the BLM portion of the Arbaney Kittle trail. A new route may be possible if a short easement across private land can be secured through properties located in both the Eagle County and the Pitkin County areas of Basalt. An in-town trailhead, wayfinding improvements and a sustainable, “kid-friendly” route are components of this recommended improvement for the community and is supported in the Town’s adopted 2020 Master Plan and 2013 POST Plan.
- In the interest of avoiding vegetation removal and wildlife habitat disturbance, RFVHC requests that no new trails be constructed to connect from the Town of Basalt to the Arbaney Kittle Trail and that existing paved routes, such as the Basalt-Old Snowmass paved trail, be used to reach the existing PCOST trailhead.



- BLM provided comment that “the Arbaney-Kittle area is identified in the 2015 BLM Approved Resource Management Plan as a wildlife priority area - a stipulation that prohibits surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities on priority wildlife habitat areas such as expanding the existing trail system.” This would apply to any trail work proposed on BLM lands. BLM also noted that “A surface-disturbing activity, (such as a trail) or use may be considered, if BLM in consultation with CPW, determines that the proposed action/activity would not impair wildlife habitat values.”

### **PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **New Trail Connection:** A partnership effort including private property owners, county government, interested organizations and federal and state agencies will be required to implement the Town of Basalt’s concept for an unpaved trail from central Basalt to the BLM portion of the Arbaney Kittle trail. As detailed in Section 9 - Plan Implementation, standard procedure for any new local government project would involve an overall review of a project’s compliance with the policies, regulations and management plans of the underlying jurisdictions of Town of Basalt, Eagle County and Pitkin County, as well as required NEPA reviews by the BLM and USFS if federal lands are involved.



*Arbaney Kittle Trailhead is accessed from the Holland Hills neighborhood south of Basalt. Photo: Eagle County*

## 10.4 Shared Roadways

**The roadways described in this section are the most popular and commonly used routes used for bicycling** in the Mid-Valley area of Eagle County. All roadways in Eagle County are generally open and legally available to people walking and bicycling, with the exception of state highways or other roads where non-motorized use is specifically prohibited.

These shared roadways share several common characteristics:

- Bicycling along these routes typically involves riding on the paved road shoulder, which is a shared space, as people driving are permitted to use shoulders to pull-off of the traveled way in the event of an accident or a need to temporarily park.
- On certain roads, the shoulders are not striped, such as Upper Cattle Creek Road, and bicyclists share the vehicle lane, staying as far to the right as possible.
- Speed limits on popular Mid-Valley shared roadways generally range from 25 to 35 miles per hour (mph).
- Separation between people bicycling and driving is often minimal on these shared routes, and awareness and safety are critical issues.
- Few designated bike lanes or signed bike routes exist on Mid-Valley roadways and are primarily located in the Town of Basalt incorporated area.
- See Appendix B for additional definition of bike lanes, routes and shoulders.

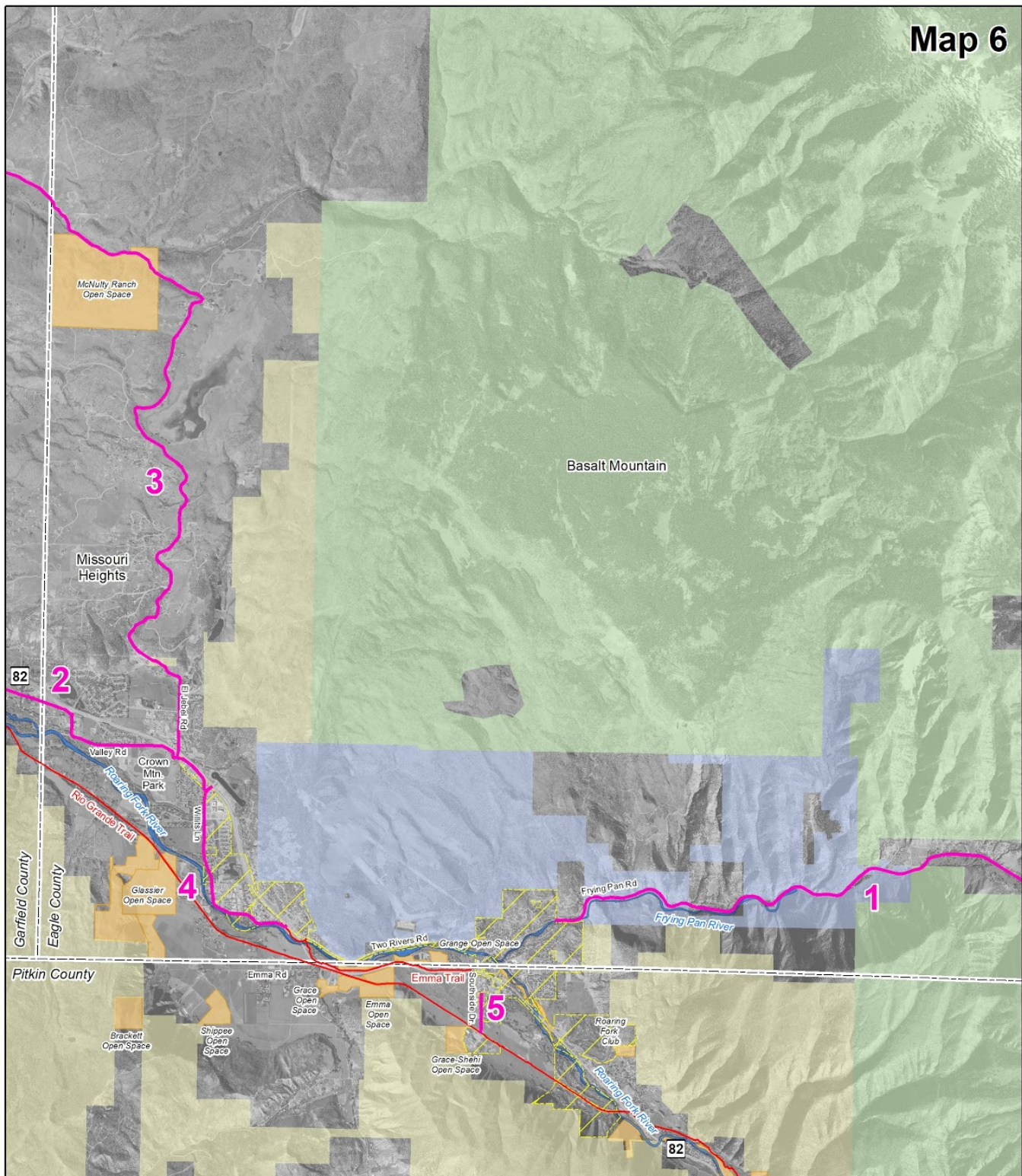
The following routes are described in this section, including suggestions for improving user safety and experience that were contributed through the Plan process.

**Table 15. Existing Shared Roadways**

Map Item #	Road Name	Road Owner	Location
1.	Frying Pan Road	Eagle County Pitkin County	Eagle County and Pitkin County - Frying Pan River Valley
2.	Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road	Eagle County CDOT	Eagle County - El Jebel
3.	Upper Cattle Creek	Eagle County	Eagle County - Missouri Heights
4.	Willits Lane	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
5.	Southside Drive	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt



Map 6



## Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Shared Roadway Routes

- |                           |   |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Shared Roadway Route      | <b>Public Lands</b>                     | 1 Frying Pan Road         | 4 Willits Lane    |
| Primary Route Paved Trail | BLM                                     | 2 Valley Road to SH 82    | 5 Southside Drive |
| Town of Basalt            | U.S. Forest Service                     | 3 Frontage Road           |                   |
|                           | State of CO                             | 3 Upper Cattle Creek Road |                   |
|                           | Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space |                           |                   |





## 1. Frying Pan Road

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County and Pitkin County

**OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Eagle County owns and maintains 19.5 miles of Frying Pan Road right-of-way from Basalt town limits to just east of Freeman Drive in the Ruedi Shores subdivision that is located at the west end of Ruedi Reservoir.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The Eagle County portion of the road is asphalt paved and travels northeast as a scenic route that parallels the Frying Pan River to Ruedi Reservoir.
- After leaving Eagle County and entering Pitkin County, the paved road travels above the north shore of Ruedi Reservoir, eventually transitioning to an unpaved USFS high-clearance route over Hagerman Pass into Lake County.
- At and beyond Ruedi Reservoir, the scenic route provides access to several wilderness trailheads and all terrain vehicle options.



*Frying Pan Road. Photo: Eagle County*

- The paved portion of Frying Pan Road is generally a narrow two-lane road with no shoulders with many curves and areas of limited sight distance.
- Portions of the road are in close proximity to adjacent cliffs and rockfall areas. Rockfall debris occasionally impacts the roadway and traffic flow.
- During the summer, the road is busy with people fishing, sight-seers, vehicles pulling boats or campers, local commuters and, increasingly, people bicycling who share the two travel lanes with people driving.
- Safety is a concern for all users sharing this roadway due to the narrow road, curves, limited sight distance, speed, traffic volume and vehicle type. The current speed limit is 35 mph.
- 4.8 miles was resurfaced by Eagle County Road and Bridge in 2019. Due to road platform width constraints, the adjacent river bank and wetlands, the road pavement width remained the same.

- The asphalt is not striped for a shoulder due to limited space, but an edge stripe was installed to visually emphasize the edge of pavement. The adjacent shoulder is gravel.
- As right-of-way owner, Eagle County, through its Road and Bridge and Engineering Departments, would have authority over any modifications, expansions or enhancements of the Frying Pan Road. Eagle County must adhere to policies and regulations regarding engineering standards, environmental impacts, neighborhood and other impacts in addition to considering potential project benefits for improved bicyclist, pedestrian and motor vehicle driver safety.

**Referral and Public Comment:**

Public comments regarding Frying Pan Road are outlined below. No referral comments were received for this roadway.

**Public Comment:**

- Frying Pan Road improvements are needed for bicycling. Kids aren't using the road as they have different needs for safety, as novice or vulnerable riders.
- Safety signs would be a good first step.
- More pull-outs are needed on the uphill (north) side of the road for bicyclists to get out of traffic and take a break.
- Restrooms needed for bicyclists and people fishing.
- Seek data from bicycling event organizers and advocacy organizations about Frying Pan Road use to better understand necessary improvements.
- Consistently maintain the roadway including after storm events to ensure safe road sharing for all users. Bicyclists can stay to the far right side if the road edge is free of debris.



*Frying Pan Road. Photo: Eagle County*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Development of a Corridor Management Plan:** The popularity and types of users within the Frying Pan Valley including Frying Pan Road continues to grow and diversify. To protect this area, increase safety for all user types, and support the corridor's continued use for sustainable recreation, it is necessary to formally organize and address the impacts of user activity on the area's unique natural and recreational resources through the development of a Frying Pan Valley Corridor Management Plan. A corridor management plan would engage all jurisdictions operating in the Frying Pan Valley, evaluate shared challenges, coordinate planning and construction projects and monitor impacts to ensure overall community and environmental needs are met. Part of investigating the creation of a corridor management plan would include collaboration with multiple stakeholders and leveraging funding sources. Funding sources could be obtained through grants or partnerships with local, state and federal agencies or non-profits. A corridor management plan should address safety, transportation, environmental, recreation, scenic, and economic needs in a coordinated manner.
2. **Capital Improvement Planning:** MVTC supports adopting a policy to widen the road platform where possible to increase road or shoulder width where 2 to 3-foot shoulders are acceptable, 4 feet or wider is preferred. Include Frying Pan Road in County CIP as a standing item for improvements.
3. **Feasibility Studies:** MVTC requests an update to the Eagle County Engineering Department study<sup>12</sup> to identify potential locations for road-widening and constraints or opportunities. Include analysis of potential locations for a grade or horizontally separated trail platform and potential pull-outs on the westbound (uphill) side of the road to improve the ability for bicyclists and vehicles to safely pull off the road as needed.
4. **Sign and Safety Improvements:** MVTC and RFVRPC request additional road-sharing and safety signage such as: 3-foot separation required between vehicle and bicyclist, Watch for Bicyclists, Road Narrows, Bicyclists Next 13 Miles, Share the Road, Ride Single File, etc.
5. **Amenities:** RFVRPC supports identifying appropriate locations for future restroom improvements and collaboration with partners to install restrooms to reduce impact on the river corridor.
6. **Maintenance:** MVTC recommends evaluating Eagle and Pitkin County shoulder maintenance schedule (sweeping) to determine if additional attention is required to improve three-season shared-road season.



*Sample bicycling safety road sign in Garfield County.  
Photo: Eagle County*

<sup>12</sup> Approx. 2009



## 2. Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County and Garfield County

**ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Eagle County owns and maintains the Valley Road right-of-way. CDOT owns and maintains the SH 82 Frontage Road.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Valley Road is a 1.5-mile paved road route that begins at the main El Jebel intersection with SH 82 and travels west past Crown Mountain Park and a number of subdivisions before turning east to tie back into SH 82.
- SH 82 Frontage Road's south end is in Eagle County and ties into Valley Road near the Eagle-Garfield County line, providing a route to Catherine Store Road, the Rio Grande Trail and Carbondale.
- Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road each currently lack shoulders. People walking and biking are in close proximity to people driving.
- The current speed limit is 25 mph.
- See Secondary Route Paved Trails Section 10.2.10 for related information on Valley Road and SH 82 suggested trail improvements.



*SH 82 Frontage Road between Valley Road and Catherine Store Road. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Improvements:** MVTC supports adoption of a policy to widen the Valley Road platform where possible to increase road or shoulder width where 2 to 3-foot shoulders are acceptable, 4 feet or wider is preferred. Adding Valley Road to Eagle County Capital Improvements list is also recommended.
2. **Road Studies:** MVTC requests Eagle County review of the potential for trail construction in the Valley Road right-of-way in addition to road improvements.
3. **Road Studies:** In partnership with Garfield County, MVTC to study potential locations for SH 82 road-widening as well as potential locations for a grade or horizontally separated trail platform from Valley Road in El Jebel to Catherine Store.<sup>13</sup>
4. **Safety Signs:** MVTC to study with Eagle County Engineering where to appropriately install additional road-sharing and safety signage such as: 3-foot separation required between vehicle and bicyclist, Watch for Bicyclists, Road Narrows, Bicyclists Next 13 Miles, Share the Road, Ride Single File, etc.
5. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Eagle County Road and Bridge to evaluate the road sweeping schedule (sweeping) to determine if additional attention is required to improve three-season shared-road season. Bicyclists can stay to the right side if the road edge is free of debris.



*Valley Road near the USFS Fishing Access entry, to the right. Photo: Eagle County*

<sup>13</sup> See Section 10.2 Secondary Route Paved Trails.

### 3. El Jebel Road to Upper Cattle Creek Road

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated Eagle County

**ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**

Eagle County owns and maintains these road rights-of-way. The BLM and USFS own and maintain unpaved Basalt Mountain Road.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- El Jebel Road begins on the valley floor at the intersection with SH 82 and in 2/3 of a mile, the road becomes Upper Cattle Creek Road just as it begins the climb north out of El Jebel towards Missouri Heights.
- The Upper Cattle Creek Road paved section lacks delineated shoulders, forcing people walking and bicycling to travel in close proximity to people driving.
- This bicycling route is becoming more popular due to the scenery and rolling hills combined with steep climbs, with options to create loop rides as well as connections to the valley floor paved routes.
- Upper Cattle Creek is paved for approximately 5.5 miles with pavement ending near Spring Park Reservoir. The road remains unpaved for the remainder of its length and eventually enters Garfield County to intersect with paved Cattle Creek Road.
- Vehicular traffic on Upper Cattle Creek Road is steadily increasing as Missouri Heights properties are developed and also due to increased use of the route to access the Cottonwood Pass Road to shop in Gypsum (Costco) and access the Interstate 70 corridor.
- Unpaved Basalt Mountain Road ties into Upper Cattle Creek Road north of the reservoir and provides access into national forest, parking areas and singletrack trail network accessing the middle and upper Basalt Mountain area.



*Unpaved Upper Cattle Creek Road near Spring Park Reservoir. Bicyclist is traveling southwest to El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County*



- Upper Cattle Creek Road to Fender Lane, an Eagle County paved road, provides an additional bicycling route option and connects with Garfield County Road 103, also known as Upper Catherine Store Road, and several other paved road bicycling options on Missouri Heights.
- The current speed limits on these combined roadways range from 25 mph at the El Jebel Road roundabout to 30 mph to 35 mph up to Missouri Heights and 35 mph the remainder of the route.

**Referral and Public Comment:**

Public comments regarding Upper Cattle Creek Road are outlined below. No referral comments were received for this roadway.

**Public Comment:**

- Usage by pedestrians and bikes of Upper Cattle Creek Road from El Jebel to Fender Lane and Garfield County is increasing at a high rate, with bicyclists comprising the majority of non-motorized users.
- Create a paved bike/pedestrian lane on each side of Upper Cattle Creek Road as a priority action.
- Pave Upper Cattle Creek Road to the Garfield County line for improved bicyclist and vehicular safety and to diffuse bicycling use of Fender Lane.



*Paved Upper Cattle Creek Road in Missouri Heights looking towards El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County.*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Studies:** In response to public comment and supported by MVTC and adopted plans, identify potential locations for road-widening and shoulder striping to alleviate safety conflict areas on Upper Cattle Creek Road and incorporate study findings into Eagle County CIP planning. Other suggested improvements for further study include designated bicycling and walking lanes and paving Upper Cattle Creek Road to the Garfield County boundary line to accommodate growing vehicle and bicyclist traffic volumes.
2. **Safety Signs:** In response to public comment, provide additional road-sharing and safety signage such as: 3-foot separation required between vehicle and bicyclist, Watch for Bicyclists, Road Narrows, Bicyclists Next 13 Miles, Share the Road, Ride Single File, etc.
3. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports evaluating Eagle County shoulder maintenance schedule (sweeping) to determine if additional attention is required to improve three-season shared-road season. Bicyclists can stay to the right side if the road edge is free of debris.



*Spring Park Reservoir in Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County.*

## 4. Willits Lane

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt and Unincorporated Eagle County

**ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:** Town of Basalt

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Willits Lane is an approximately 2.5-mile primary road route that serves the north and west areas of Basalt as well as adjacent unincorporated Eagle County.
- Town of Basalt has identified the need for a designated bike lane on Willits Lane to accommodate the increase in bike traffic during seasonal closures of the Rio Grande Trail as well as the year-round tendency for the majority of road bicyclists to not use the Willits Lane Trail.
- Willits Lane Trail includes stop signs at intersections and also serves people walking, dog-walkers and less-skilled bicyclists, which may discourage desired travel efficiency for some higher-speed cyclists.
- With added bicycle use of Willits Lane and lack of adequate on-street facilities, roadway levels of service and safety may be reduced for all users.
- As right-of-way owner, the Town of Basalt has authority over any modifications, expansions or enhancements of Willits Lane.



*Willits Lane in Basalt. Photo: Eagle County*

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Improvements:** Town of Basalt recommends construction of on-street bike lanes the length of Willits Lane and is the lead on design studies and the public engagement process.



## 5. Southside Drive



*Southside Drive, looking towards Basalt High School.  
Photo: Eagle County*

**LOCATION:** Town of Basalt and unincorporated Pitkin County

**ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:**  
Town of Basalt

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

■ Southside Drive provides a bicycling connection route from Old Town Basalt and East Basalt to the Rio Grande Trail trailhead at the Basalt High School. This route also includes Fiou Lane and Basalt Avenue and the underpass at SH 82.

■ The secondary route paved trail is located primarily on the east side of these roads, as a route for bicyclists, walkers and other non-motorized users.

- Faster bicyclists frequently use the road shoulder or traffic lane to avoid conflicts with slower-speed users on the trail or trail-driveway intersections. For this reason, Town of Basalt staff and POST have identified the need for an uphill bicycle lane to be added on the west side of Southside Drive, on the opposite side from the existing paved trail to accommodate faster speed bicyclists that do not use the trail.
- Town of Basalt has been steadily adding wayfinding signage to direct bicyclists to and from the town center to the primary Rio Grande Trail route, using Southside Drive.
- This roadway is located outside of Eagle County in Pitkin County. Comment during the Plan process regarding the extent of recreation and travel by residents and visitors resulted in the inclusion of certain commonly used facilities, such as Southside Drive, located outside of Eagle County's boundary but within close proximity.

**PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:**

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Improvements:** Town of Basalt recommends construction of an on-street bike lane the length of westbound Southside Drive and is the lead for design studies and the public engagement process.

## 11. Project Implementation and Next Steps

### Project Implementation:

There are essentially two methods through which projects and programs will be implemented:

1. Initiated by a public or advocacy entity: Local government, management agencies or advocacy groups, with support from the MVTC act as the general coordinating agency to facilitate collaboration and investigation between all appropriate parties. Effort may include design coordination, public outreach, environmental analysis, grant application submission, construction management, and long-term maintenance agreements.
2. Initiated by private land development, either voluntarily or as part of an approved development project: The specific requirement for trails shall be determined by the approving jurisdiction based on the criteria in their land use regulations and linked to the scale of the development and its associated impacts. Either a trail easement or trail easement and construction may be required as part of a development approval.

### Next Steps:

The Plan is the result of a three-year process to update the 2006 Mid-Valley Trails Plan and is the culmination of an extended effort involving many participants, with valuable input gained through the referral and public comment process. The comment process provided essential information and input creating a comprehensive and balanced Plan. The Plan documents the vision created by multiple agencies, nonprofits, and community members. Desiring to connect a well-maintained network of paved and unpaved trails and shared roadways is at the heart of the Mid-Valley trail users.

Moving forward, the Plan should be utilized as part of the referral review process for land use applications within the Roaring Fork Valley. All the work completed to date and incorporated into the Plan positions the Mid-Valley area to plan and create trails, shared roadway networks, and supportive programs that directly contribute to community health, economic vitality, inclusive accessibility and environmental sustainability.

Recognizing the Plan is a snapshot in time documenting the inventory of existing trails, proposed projects and programs as well as the desires of the community members engaged in the process of developing the Plan; an update is expected to occur in 2025. Part of the update should examine at what point the Mid-Valley Trail System is at buildout to ensure a balance of recreation and environmental preservation. There are a finite amount of natural resources within the Mid-Valley and analysis is needed if future trail expansion is proposed beyond what is outlined in the Plan.

The Plan is a living document and significant changes within the Mid-Valley may necessitate an update sooner than 2025. It is up to RFVRPC and the MVTC to make the determination that changes within the Mid-Valley require a thoughtful and intentional update to the Plan.