



# HOGBACKS OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AREA PLAN

CAÑON CITY, COLORADO





# HOGBACKS OPEN SPACE & RECREATION AREA PLAN

**Final Draft - 9 February 2012**

Prepared by Matrix Design Group  
for The City of Cañon City, Colorado

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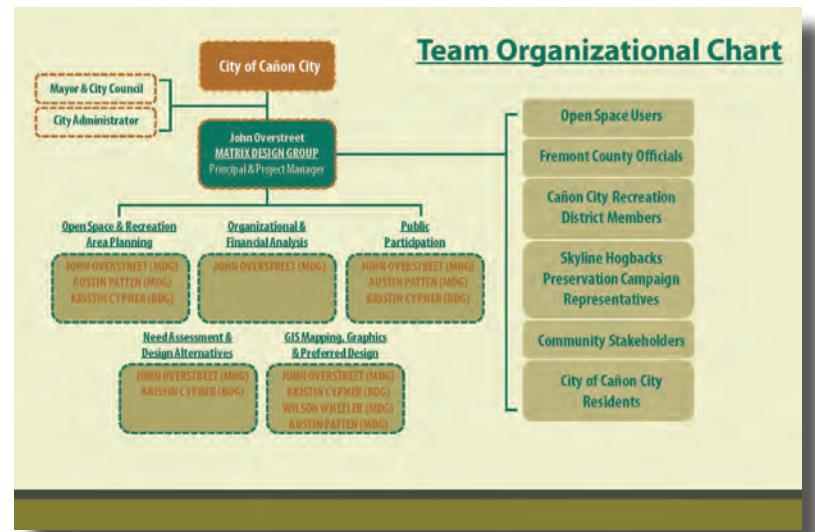
The Hogbacks Open Space is a unique and valuable resource

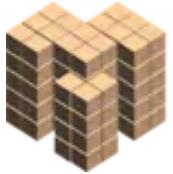
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# THE TEAM

In early 2011, the City of Cañon City solicited proposals from qualified consultants to prepare an Open Space, Recreation and Master Plan for the Hogbacks area.

The project team for the Cañon City Hogbacks Open Space & Recreation Area Plan has strengths in park planning and design, park master planning, public outreach and consensus-building, and project graphics and communication. Focused on the goal of creating a plan that is meaningful, achievable and inspirational, the team has worked with the Cañon City community to understand their resource and craft a document that will help the future planning, design and improvement of the Hogback Open Space.





## MATRIX DESIGN GROUP

### *Project Lead - Planning and Design*

Matrix Design Group, Inc. (Matrix) is an award-winning interdisciplinary firm providing professional engineering consulting, including program management and client representation, for both the private and public sectors. We facilitate the project development process by utilizing our broad base of services and experienced project managers, acting as partners with clients on projects as problem solvers, and matching the needs of each assignment with expert staff. Whether engaged on a small assignment focused on a single problem or leading a team of consultants on a large-scale, multi-faceted project, Matrix provides strategic, creative, and cost-effective development solutions.



**BRITINA**  
design group

## BRITINA DESIGN GROUP

### *Planning, Landscape Architecture & Public Outreach*

Britina Design Group, Inc. provides Landscape Architecture and Land Planning services for both public and private clients. We are supported by over 60 years of combined experience in land planning, landscape architecture, construction documentation and project administration. Our range of project experience includes urban design, streetscapes, residential communities, park and recreation facilities, commercial and business parks, and hotel and resort developments.

## In addition to our project team, the other Stakeholders are:

- Members of the Community of Cañon City
- City of Cañon City Council
- City of Cañon City Departments
  - *Planning*
  - *Public Works*
  - *Parks & Recreation*
  - *Water & Sewer*
- Cañon City Special Interest Group Representatives
  - *Cañon City Hogbacks Preservation Group*
  - *Cañonland Walkers and Hikers*
  - *GPPS - Garden Park Paleontology Society*
  - *School District RE-1*
  - *Local Chapter of National Audubon Society*
  - *Fremont County*
  - *Lower Arkansas Mountain Bicycling Association (LAMBDA)*
  - *Cañon City Geology Club*
  - *Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen*
  - *Cañon City Prison Representatives*

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# INTRODUCTION



**Hogbacks Open Space**  
A view into the existing Hogbacks Open Space area (City of Cañon City in the background)

The purpose of this planning effort is to develop a Master Plan for the Cañon City Hogback Open Space, an approximately 500 acre undeveloped area between Cañon City on the east and Highway 50 on the west that follows a north-south running hogback and the surrounding foothills. The Hogback area, designated as open space by Cañon City voters in 2008 in part due to the efforts of the Skyline Hogbacks Preservation Committee, no longer supports motorized uses, but is still available to a variety of users who want to enjoy its unique geological features and beauty.

## Project Purpose

The challenge of creating the Hogbacks Open Space & Master Plan was to provide an accessible and enjoyable experience for users while minimizing the environmental impacts that such uses have. To complete this effort, the City of Cañon City (“City”) retained Matrix Design Group and Britina Design Group (“The Project Team”) - both private consulting firms with expertise in parks master planning throughout Colorado and across the nation. The resulting Master Plan provides a comprehensive guide to the City that enhances recreational opportunities in an environmentally sustainable manner while working within established financial constraints.

The Hogback is home to a variety of uses, including the scenic Skyline Drive, an outdoor amphitheater, informal off-road vehicle trails, hiking trails, and the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility. The best formalized access to the area is primarily provided by Skyline Drive, which travels west to east from Highway 50 to Floral Avenue. Many other unofficial access points exist in places where the residential street grid collides with the open space area along the western edge of Cañon City.

## Project Approach

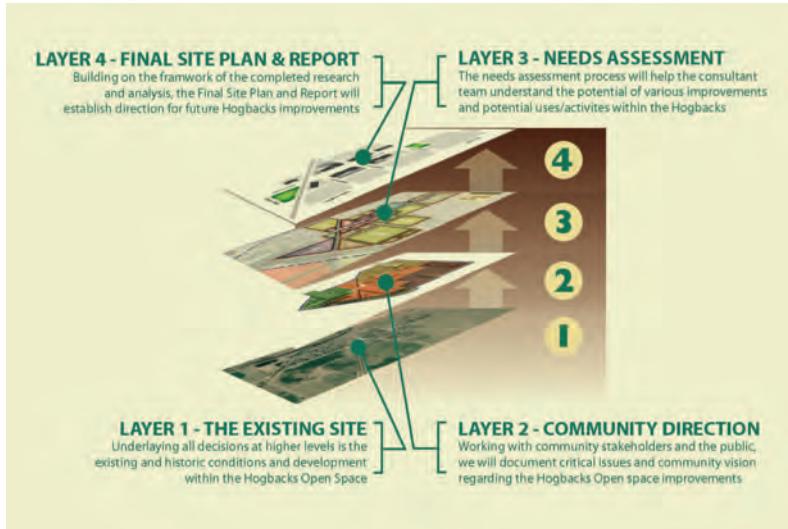
To complete this project, the consultant team’s approach involved comprehensive information gathering and analysis by means of multiple site visits, GIS data, site inventory and assessment, community and stakeholder engagement, community profile and market demand analysis, and programming analysis. The result of this approach is a final Master Plan that documents this process, including findings, analysis, and recommendations. This Master Plan is intended to provide recommendations and strategies in a phased manner to upgrade and manage the Hogback Open Space so that it may be used in a sustainable manner that enhances the quality of life for residents of Cañon City and promotes local tourism and economic development.



The natural geology of the Hogbacks Open Space has a subtle beauty and unique character

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## Project Overview

Banner graphics at the public and stakeholder open houses displayed information and timelines for the project





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The Hogbacks Open Space & Recreation Area Plan was designed to be completed within 4 phases, culminating in the final site plan and report

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# FINDINGS SUMMARY



## Landforms & Geology

Within the Hogbacks Open Space, the hogbacks, sowback and piggybacks are all clearly discernable

## Landforms & Geography

The Hogbacks is a unique geographical landform that provides a fascinating window into the culture, geology and paleontological history of Colorado and the Cañon City area. Within the Open Space, all elements of the Hogbacks landform – the Dakota Hogbacks, the smaller Sowback adjacent to the downtown, and the Piggybacks that rise in small ridges within the interior of the valley created by the Hogbacks and Sowbacks – are clearly visible and accessible.

From the top of the Hogbacks, a magnificent and sweeping view of downtown Cañon City and the surrounding landscape can be seen. Several stopping points and pull-offs from Skyline Drive highlight and showcase this view, which is both a resource for locals and a draw for visitors.

## Fossils

Within all layers of the Hogbacks are significant fossil resources, some of which have been removed and placed in private and public collections. As a sedimentary deposit, the Hogbacks features the fossil record of Colorado's past as an inland sea, and many ancient sea-life fossils can be found within the Sowbacks, Piggybacks and Hogbacks.

## Paleontology

The paleontological significance of the Hogbacks landform is world-renown. Many significant fossilized bone and dinosaur remains have been discovered in the Dakota Hogbacks formation – some of which are part of the nation's permanent collection in the Smithsonian Museum.

During the construction of Skyline Drive, excavation and digging for the roadway revealed a set of dinosaur footprints. Today, these footprints are interpreted as part of Skyline Drive – revealing not only an interesting historic feature, but also the rich history encased within the Hogbacks sedimentary layers.

## Cultural History

Paralleling the growth of Canon City, the Hogbacks has been an integral part of local history, culture and social activities. Beginning as an informal area to hike, camp and explore, the draw of the Hogbacks unique geology soon lead to the construction of Skyline Drive. With the completion of the drive over and through the Hogbacks, residents and visitors were able to tour the open space, experience the geology and natural landscape up-close, and chronicle the growth and development of Canon City from a birds-eye view.

## Inventory & Areas of Focus

- **Landforms & Geography**
- **Fossils**
- **Paleontology**
- **Cultural History**
- **Prison History**
- **Vegetation and Wildlife**
- **Erosion**
- **Drainage**
- **Skyline Drive**



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## **Prison History**

Clearly visible from Skyline Drive, the historic prison is an important part of the story of both Cañon City and the Hogbacks. Built from stone quarried from within the Hogbacks, the prison is a physical reminder of how growth and development of the town was tied to the physical landscape and availability of building materials.

## **Vegetation and Wildlife**

The Hogbacks is a unique and important area for plants and animals. Sheltered from winds, its vegetation is an important nesting place for birds and small mammals. Its unique geography also supports several endangered plant species.

For residents, wildlife and plant appreciation is one of the most important elements of the Hogbacks experience, and several local groups have worked to document the impacts of motorized use on the native plants and animals. Some of this research was used to help close the Hogbacks to motorized use.

## **Erosion**

After years of motorized use, the Hogbacks had lost a significant amount of its vegetative cover, increasing erosion and loss of topsoil within the area. After closing the Hogbacks to motorized vehicle use, some of the vegetative cover has come back, reducing erosion. However, erosion continues to have a significant impact on both the resource and the adjacent residents, who often experience sediment and soils blowing or draining into streets and properties near the Hogbacks.

## **Drainage**

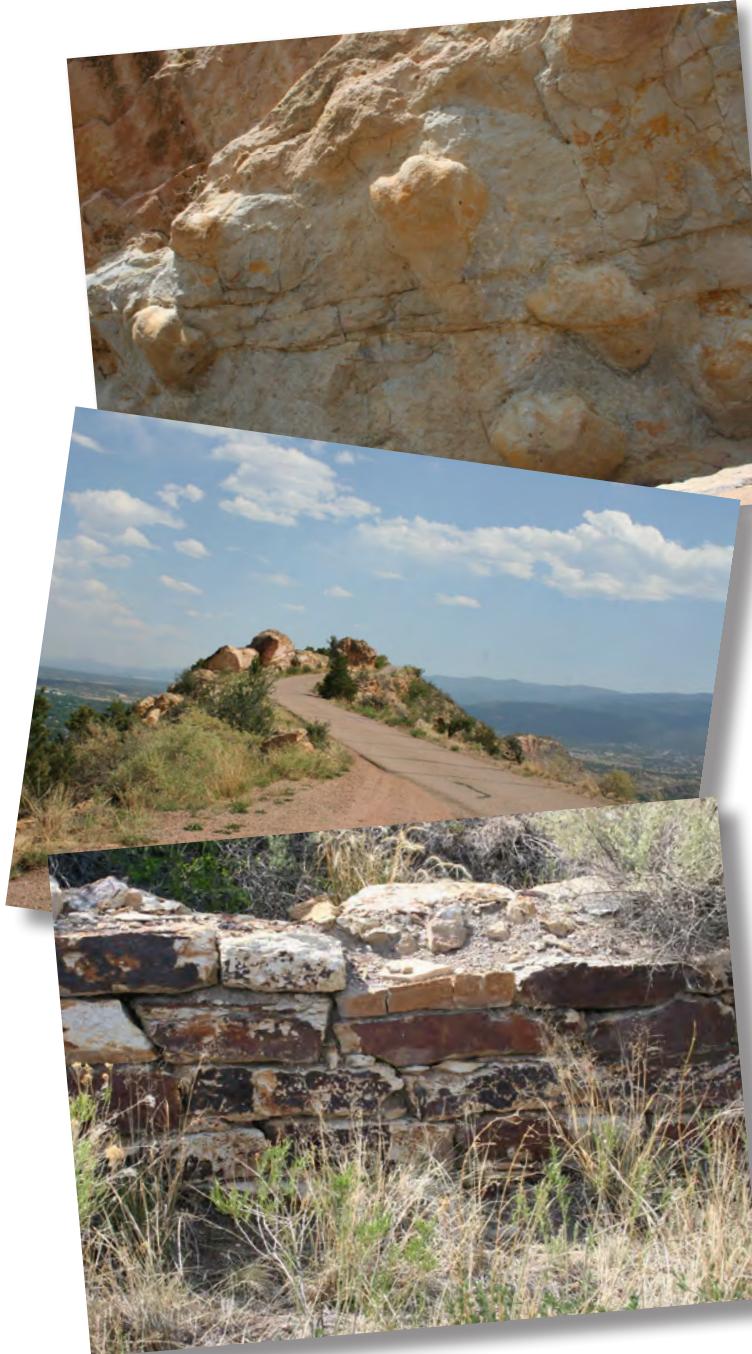
Due to both loss of vegetation and the natural steep slopes of the Hogbacks geography, a significant rainfall event in the area causes severe loss of topsoil and overtaxing of the drainage system installed at the base of the Sowback. Currently, there are several inlets installed along the edge of the Open Space, but soil erosion and sedimentation make the inlets difficult to effectively maintain. During a rainstorm, the inlets become non-functional, and the overflows cause water and sediments to drain into neighborhood streets and stormwater systems.

## **Skyline Drive**

Completed during the early years of Cañon City's development, Skyline Drive is an important historic resource, and part of the cultural history of the area. A one-way road, Skyline Drive is accessed from State Highway 50, where its entrance is marked by a historic stone archway. As it climbs to the top of the Hogback formation, Skyline Drive affords a sweeping view of the area, as well as a thrilling drive. Since its construction, Skyline Drive has been a popular tourist destination for those visiting the area, as well as a 'Sunday Drive' for locals.

Throughout the years, the alignment of Skyline Drive has evolved, and the 'Old Skyline Drive' is currently used as a trail that begins at the base of the Hogbacks and connects to the current Skyline Drive near the dinosaur footprint area.

The Hogbacks is a sensitive and unique resource, with a wealth of interesting and educational details, and a rich historic character



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# OPPORTUNITIES



## Entrance Arch

The historic entrance arch welcomes visitors into Skyline Drive and the Hogbacks Open Space from Highway 50

## **Preservation & Access**

The Hogback Open Space is located just west of downtown Cañon City, and can be accessed from various points along the eastern edge of the urban grid. This proximity to the City and Main Street provides an excellent opportunity for easy access between Cañon City and the Hogback area, especially with proper wayfinding.

Although the north-south running Hogback Open Space is large, only the southern portion is in close proximity to downtown. The Open Space continues north for a few miles, and its middle and northern portions lie adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Because of this geography, it is possible to encourage tourist traffic in the southern portion of the Open Space, while reserving the northern section mostly for locals.

### **3rd Street**

3rd Street, which runs perpendicular to Main, has the potential to provide a direct, linear link between the Hogback Open Space; the Santa Fe Depot rail station, which is the starting point for the Royal Gorge Route Railroad; and the Arkansas Riverwalk and associated parks. With a unified wayfinding system, 3rd Street can become an important corridor linking many of Cañon City's most important recreational opportunities for tourists and locals alike.

### **Educational Assets**

The Hogback Open Space is endowed with numerous assets that can be capitalized on by creating hiking trails and loops that explore the areas where these assets are located and demonstrate their presence to visitors by using interpretive signage, scenic overlooks, display stations, and other means. Loop hikes could be designed to emphasize the Hogback's unique geology, fossils, and even the history and folklore of the Cañon City area, including information about prison labor's role in the construction of Skyline Drive a century ago and also the outdoor amphitheater.



Popular with school groups and hikers/walkers, the Hogbacks provides a rich environment for learning and education

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# CONSTRAINTS



## Access & Legibility

There are currently no amenities, signage or interpretive elements at the Hogbacks trailheads and access points

Several important concerns shape future improvements within the Hogbacks Open Space area. They are:

- Lack of access
- Lack of interpretive elements
- Lack of facilities to support preferred uses
- Maintenance costs
- Prison 'No Access' zone
- Land ownership

## **Lack of Access/Connection/Visibility**

Although easily accessed informally on foot, the Hogbacks Open Space is not clearly connected or visible from the heart of downtown Canon City, or its major tourist destinations. Although Skyline Drive provides vehicular access into the resource, its one-way alignment limits the amount of traffic approaching the Hogbacks from the downtown.

In addition to limitations on vehicular traffic, the Hogbacks is also limited in the level of improvements for each trailhead access point. Although there are a number of neighborhood access points into the Hogbacks, they currently have few improvements or signage. Once inside the Hogbacks, the trails are also unimproved and would not be accessible for those with mobility difficulties.

## **Lack of Interpretive Elements**

As a cultural, natural, historic, geologic and paleontological resource, the Hogbacks has several rich and deep stories to tell. However, because much of the important interpretive theme elements within the Hogbacks are not obvious, there is community concern that those visiting the Open Space are not aware of those things that make it significant. Years of motorized use and unintentional destruction of the vegetation and soil support the case for needing to have a way to help visitors understand the landscape and its sensitivity and significance.

## **Lack of Facilities to Support Preferred Uses**

As a recreational, educational and cultural resource, the Hogbacks is an important and well-used resource for residents and visitors. Currently, school groups, hikers, bikers, walkers, runners, tourists and horseback riders all visit the Hogbacks to recreate, relax, learn and connect with the environment. However, there are few facilities within the Hogbacks that support its different users and their needs. A lack of bathrooms, trash receptacles, signage, parking, shelter, water and improved trails were all elements noted as needed to help support the user experience within the Hogbacks.

## **Maintenance Costs**

The City of Canon City has a limited budget (\$50,000) to maintain any installed improvements within the Hogbacks. In order to be sensitive to the budgets and personnel available to the City, any recommended improvements must be able to be maintained within the monies available.

## **Prison 'No Access' Zone**

In order to ensure the safety and security of the prison, there is an area around its perimeter in which access and potential improvements are restricted. In this 'no access' zone, trails, trailheads or any other elements that would encourage visitors to enter the area around the prison grounds are prohibited.

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## **Land Ownership**

Although physically contiguous, the Hogbacks formation is not currently under total ownership and jurisdiction of the City of Canon City. Bisecting the middle of the resource are two privately-owned parcels. Without ownership of the entire open space area, development of improvements and a connected trail system will require easements from those that own the privately owned land.

## **Environmental Damage**

The Hogback Open Space area was closed to all uses at the end of July 2008, (before it became officially designated as an 'open space' area), due in large part to the reaction by concerned citizens banding together to prevent the ongoing environmental damage occurring in the area. Dirtbiking and the use of other off-road vehicles had created such widespread devastation to the Hogback open space that the vegetation destroyed by these uses has yet to recover despite being protected from erosional uses for the past several years.

The existing environmental damage is exacerbated by significant erosion that occurs due to the lack of vegetation in some areas of the Hogback, and flooding in washout areas is fairly frequent. Additionally, the informal nature of past uses in the area and the lack of a management plan have resulted in a significant amount of broken bottles and other litter in the vicinity of many of the trails.

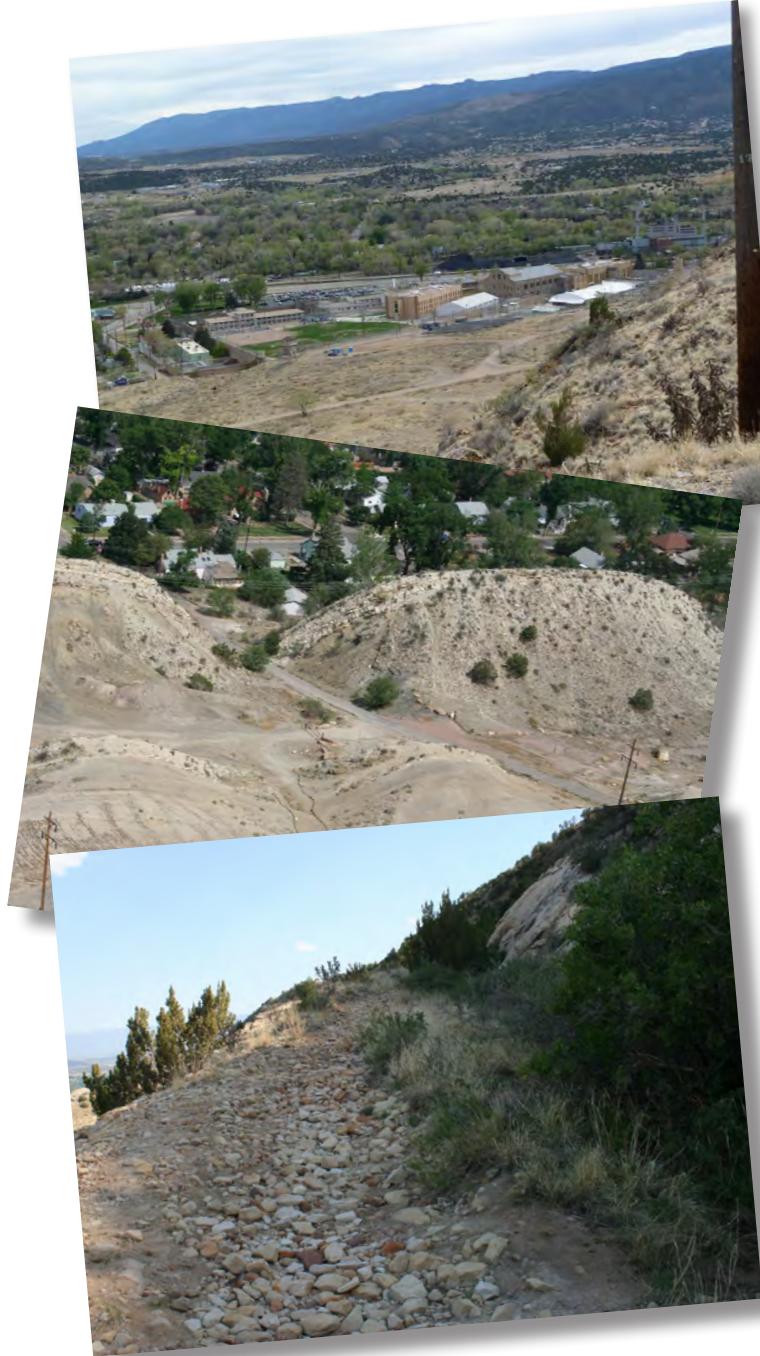
The scale, intensity, and variety of uses permitted at the Hogback Open Space must be carefully considered due to the sensitive natural environment in the area;

this issue is particularly important due to the past history of the Hogback and the general concern of many of the local residents.

## **Access and Management**

One of the major challenges facing the Hogback Open Space is trail management and erosion. Currently, access to the area is largely informal and is found along the western ends of numerous residential streets where there are gaps in the sowback adjacent to Cañon City. These access points range from the downtown area north to Foothills Drive and beyond, and each is a gateway for hikers, bikers, off-highway vehicles, and any other park users to use the area in an uncontrolled fashion. The erosion in the area that has resulted from the sprawling network of trails linking these access points exacerbates issues with stormwater flooding in the area, and diminishes the surrounding natural beauty of the resource.

Physical and environmental constraints  
create challenges for interpretation,  
rehabilitation and maintenance of the  
Hogbacks landscape



# STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- *Cañonland Walkers and Hikers*
- *GPPS - Garden Park Paleontology Society*
- *School District RE-1*
- *Local Chapter of National Audubon Society*
- *Fremont County*
- *Lower Arkansas Mountain Bicycling Association*
- *Cañon City Geology Club*
- *Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen*
- *Skyline Hogback Preservation Campaign*
- *Cañon City Prison Representatives*
- *Cañon City Residents and Neighborhood Groups*
- *Cañon City Council*

## Demographic Analysis

Cañon City is a community with a rich history, and a diverse and highly-engaged population. With a temperate climate and welcoming community, Cañon City has become a popular retirement choice within Colorado. The largest population group within the City (48%) is comprised of those over the age of 45.

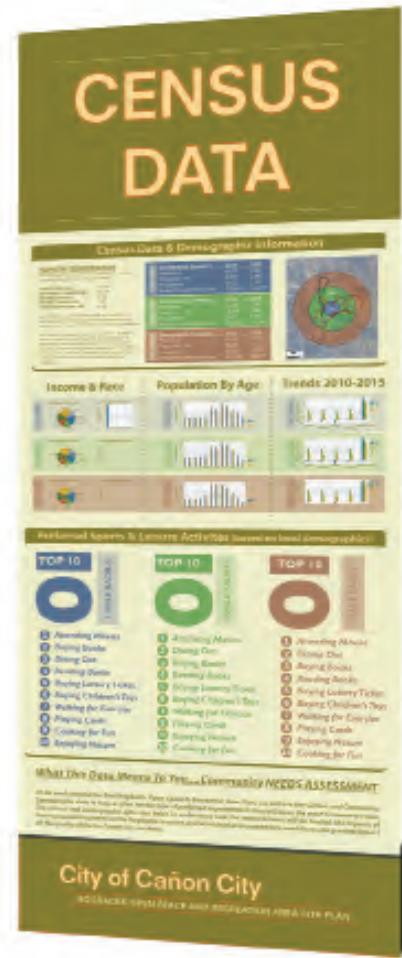
Census and demographic data provided information regarding population trends and preferred recreational activities within the Cañon City area

Economically, Cañon City's revenues are bolstered by its relationship to several well-known and frequented tourist attractions, including the Royal Gorge Bridge and Railway and the historic fossil digs that have produced a wealth of paleontological information and specimens. Cañon City's 'Dinosaur Depot' is a historic, hands-on museum that chronicles the history of fossil discovery within the area, and its relationship to the Hogbacks geological formation. Located along the highway leading into Cañon City, the Dinosaur Depot is another important tourist draw for the Cañon City community.

The 2010 Census data shows the following lifestyle groups represent the TOP 5 cultural segments within the Cañon City population:

- **MIDLIFE JUNCTION 53.6%**
- **RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES 11.7%**
- **RUSTBELT RETIREES 9.1%**
- **RUSTBELT TRADITIONS 7.4%**
- **RURAL RESORT DWELLERS 6.1%**

Each of these cultural segment groups are characterized by lifestyle and lifestage and share an experience such as being born in the same time period or a trait such as affluence. The Cañon City cultural groups are very similar - the Rural Resort Dwellers, Rustbelt Traditions, Rustbelt Retirees & Retirement Communities are all part of the 'Senior Styles' grouping (a diverse group of older retirees), and



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the Midlife Juntioners are part of the 'Traditional Living' group of hardworking, settled families whose children are reaching adulthood.

Although median household incomes in the area are projected to rise (2010 Census Data), the overall population numbers for Cañon City have been falling, and are projected to continue to decline by an average annual rate of -0.5% over the next five years. This reduction in population is in contrast to the average projected population growth in Colorado of 1.5% annually during the same five-year time period. As a tourist community, Cañon City will benefit from the overall population growth and its impact on tourism, which will bring additional visitors and visitor dollars into the community as the state population numbers rise.

## **Stakeholder Input**

Throughout the Hogbacks Open Space and Master Plan process, input from the public and stakeholders formed the foundation for initial visioning, recommended concepts and final plan refinement. Guided by a series of open houses and one-on-one stakeholder group meetings, the project team worked to develop and finalize a plan that would be both respectful and responsive to the people and elected officials of Cañon City.

### **Project Stakeholders**

In order to better envision and design the proposed Hogback Open Space &

Recreation Area Master Plan, the consultant team worked with a stakeholder group comprised of Cañon City staff, special interest groups, neighborhood community organizations, school representatives, public officials and community representatives. The stakeholder group acted as a focal point for discussion and consultation through the planning and design of the Hogback Open Space & Recreation Area. The stakeholders were responsible for the examination of materials prepared during the planning process, thoughtful dialogue about community values and their bearing on the Hogback Open Space & Recreation Area Plan, and the crafting of advice statements that provided decision-makers with their groups best collective thinking. The membership of the stakeholder group provided representation of the primary interests within both the project area and the community, ensuring consideration of all points of view during planning and design. The stakeholders provided direct feedback and information to the consultant team, helping to ensure the final Open Space and Master Plan represented a comprehensive community vision.

To begin the stakeholder process, the consultant team held a series of one-on-one meetings with each identified group during the afternoon of April 6th, and the morning and afternoon of April 8th. After the initial one-on-one meetings, the consultant team asked that each stakeholder group select a representative to participate in 2-3 additional stakeholder meetings held during subsequent project phases.

Beginning in March of 2011, the project team facilitated the following open houses and stakeholder outreach events:

## Open House #1 - April 2011

The goals of the first open house/stakeholder meetings were the following:

- Establish Critical Issues
- Solicit Feedback on the Site (map exercise)
- Collect Master Plan Visions and Ideas

### Establishing Critical Issues

Using a large-scale map of the project area, the consultant team asked meeting participants to write their comments regarding any potential issues, concerns or important points they had regarding the project.

### Soliciting Feedback on the Site

Meeting participants were asked to use the table map to identify any special areas, features or places within the project area they wanted to include in the project.

### Collecting Master Plan Visions & Ideas

In order to collect the preferred uses, activities and potential improvements for the Hogbacks Open Space, meeting participants were asked to imagine how they envision their idealized future of the Hogbacks.



### Meeting Handout - Open House #1

Meeting participants were given a handout to describe the project, the goals of the meeting, and the overall process for the Hogbacks Open Space & Recreation Area Master Plan.

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## Critical Issues

For the Critical Issues banner, meeting participants were asked to share their feelings regarding the Hogbacks Open Space & Recreation Area Plan, documenting any potential ISSUES, CONCERNs or IMPORTANT POINTS they wanted the project team to consider.

### Critical Issue Summary

- Old Skyline Drive
- Parking
- Level of Improvements (not 'too much')
- Maintenance
- Animal/Plant Species Protection
- Connections/Access
- Types of Preferred Uses

### Station #1 - Critical Issues

At the 'Critical Issues' station, meeting participants were asked to catalogue those issues that were most important to them



#### Station #2 - Map Comments

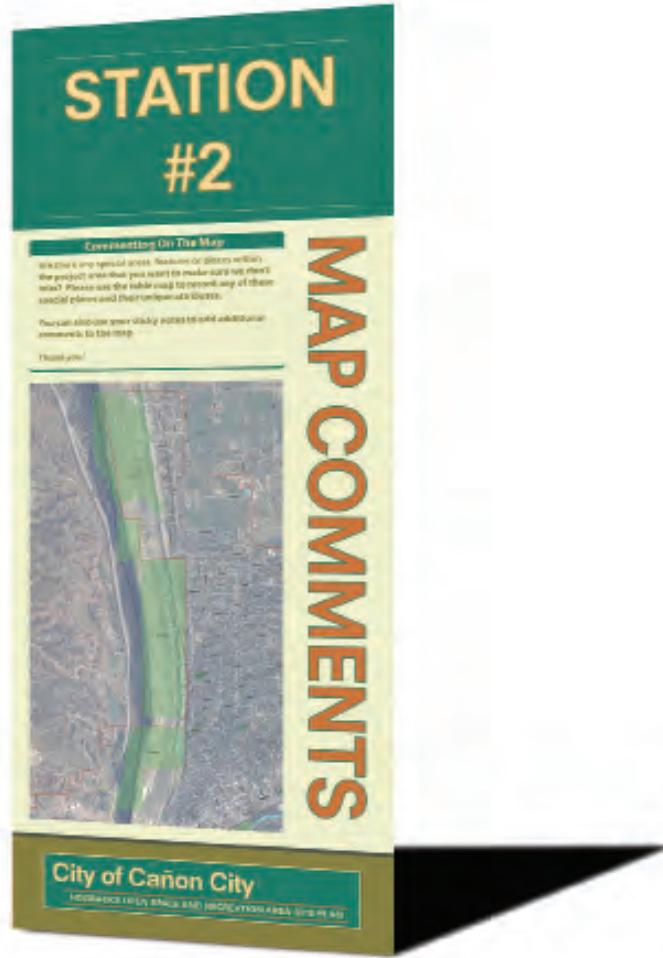
The 'Map Comments' station used a high-quality aerial of the project site to encourage meeting participants to locate sensitive areas or important locations within the Hogbacks

## Map Comments

The second open house banner station was used to help meeting participants record any special areas, features or places within the project area.

### Map Comments Summary

- Connect Trails (ampitheater, old quarry, old Skyline Drive)
- Areas with Important Fossil Deposits were Noted
- Areas of Paleontological History were Noted
- Good Mountain-Biking Areas were Noted
- Drainage Inlets were Noted
- Important Trailheads and Overlooks were Noted



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## Visions & Ideas

*What will the Hogbacks Open Space look like in your idealized future? What will people be doing there? How will it feel to be there? What types of visitors will you like to see?*

Using the provided sticky notes and markers, meeting participants were asked to describe the USES, ACTIVITIES, FEELINGS and potential improvements they would like to see in the Hogbacks Open Space area.

### Visions & Ideas Summary

- Centralized 'Main Use' Parking & Interpretation Area
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Connect to Royal Gorge, Riverwalk, Downtown
- Interpretive/Educational Displays
- Toilets and Water Fountain

**Station #1 - Visions & Ideas**  
 At the 'Visions & Ideas' station, meeting participants were asked to describe their idealized vision for the future Hogbacks Open Space & Recreation Area



## Individual Stakeholder Meetings

Prior to the public open house, the consultant team held a series of one-on-one stakeholder meetings with each identified stakeholder group. These meetings provided an opportunity for various groups to describe the impact of future plans for the hogbacks on their activities and attachments to the area.

## Audubon Society Stakeholder Meeting

### Concerns

Concerns from the Audubon Society generally focused on the use of the land in the area—its naturally open configuration presents few impediments to delineate where users can and cannot go. Dogs are off leash, mountain bikers have free reign, and unless there are impediments in place or people patrolling the area, erosion will continue.

### Ideas

Because of the concerns that were voiced, the Audubon Society had the position of generally restricting the area from dogs, horses and bikes in order to prevent environmental damage. As such, the Society was opposed to the idea of having mountain biking linkages to other areas and marketing the area as a regional resource to a variety of users.

## Cañonland Hikers Stakeholder Meeting

### Access

The Cañonland Hikers voiced the opinion in their stakeholder meeting that 5th and Fairview would be a good primary access point because it has a vacant lot that could be used for parking, and Washington Street or Greenway could be used as secondary access points.

### Ideas

The Hikers had numerous suggestions regarding the trail system in the Hogback Area: a trail to the old quarry as well as themed trails would be a great addition. Key trail themes could include geology, history, wildlife, and archeology. The group also favored signage at the main entry point, and signs highlighting the history and geology of the area. Finally, the group promoted the idea of connecting the hogback to other areas of the city more thoroughly.

### Implementation

The Cañonland Hikers had numerous ideas for implementation of some of their ideas presented, including phased improvements, prison labor, and fundraising through a foundation composed of a cross-section of the community.

## **City Council Meeting**

### Concerns

During a Cañon City Council meeting that the project team participated in, the Council voiced numerous challenges and concerns facing the project team in the development of a Master Plan for the Hogback area, including how to bring people into the area and promote it without degrading it, and how to improve and formalize the trails in the area, which has the potential to make the city liable for any problems or accidents. Additionally, there was concern voiced for the maintenance of any improvements and associated vandalism.

### Preferred Uses

The Cañon City Council expressed its desire to open the Hogback Area up to the entire community, although only for “soft uses” that exclude off-road vehicles. (There is another off-road park, Honor Farm, being designed in Pueblo). When the Hogback Open Space Area was closed previously, the Council received significant feedback and pressure in opposition to the closure; hence, the future of the area should be as inclusive as possible. Additionally, ideas for preferred improvements for the park included revegetation, picnic shelters, bear-proof trash cans, a gazebo, and interpretive signs.

### Tourism & Signage

At the meeting, the Council made the point that there are numerous historic and

geologic resources available in the Hogback Area that could be capitalized on using interpretive signage. Not only could such signage promote the area for a wider variety of visitors, (and therefore increase tourism dollars), but cross-promotion for other nearby resources such as the Royal Gorge could occur as well.

### Funding

At the meeting, the point was made that the Hogback Area is eligible for GOCO funds now that it has been declared an open space area, and that the Bureau of Land Management has an interpretive signage program and could help provide resources and materials in that regard. Finally, the State Historic Fund was mentioned as a potential funding source.

## **City Staff Meeting**

The City Staff Meeting attended by members of the Project Team provided the Team with information about the past history of the Hogback Area and some of the issues relating to its management. One of the issues discussed was the use of a portion of the Hogback Area for motorized use, which has been controversial in the past to the point where the issue was not addressed in the Fremont County Open Space Master Plan or the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. There are Cañon City residents on both sides of the debate, but the group that favors the ban of motorized vehicles is larger and more organized.

## Funding

According to City Staff members, in Cañon City, FTCT (Freemont County Tourism Council) spends the lodging tax and performs promotional efforts; the Hogback Area promotions could therefore be handled through them. Other sources of funding discussed in the meeting included Royal Gorge Bridge revenues, and the possibility of enabling additional funds through Stormwater improvements.

## Maintenance Issues

City Staff recognized that maintenance considerations are critical to any decisions on improvements. Any Master Plan needs to have a strategy for maintaining any improvements that are recommended.

## **Geology Meeting**

A meeting was held for stakeholders interested in discussing the geology of the area and providing their input so that the project team could better understand the geological and archeological assets of the Hogback. There are various types of fossils that can be found in different layers of rock in the Hogback area, and these were all discussed. Additionally, the parking lots and the Harding sandstone were mentioned as good locations for interpretative signage with information about the geology of the area.

## Protection of Resources

A final topic of conversation at the geology meeting was the protection of fossils and other assets in the Hogback. Local legislative action to protect the fossils was introduced as an idea, as well as having Cañon City annex land west to Highway 50 as measures to achieve this.

## **Hogbacks Preservation Group Meeting**

During the stakeholder meeting with the Hogbacks Preservation Group, the Group expressed optimism at the changes occurring in the Open Space Area, especially with regard to revegetation that is occurring across the scarred landscape now that motorized uses have been banned. There were, however, a few concerns about trash, noise, nuisance uses, and also about the fact that the paths and trails in the area are informal and were never designed—some paths are filling in, and it would improve the area greatly to plan a meaningful trail network in the Open Space Area.

One of the most notable ideas presented by the Historic Preservation Group during the meeting was to implement the Master Plan in phases so that marketing and momentum could be created for the project as it progressed.

### **School District Stakeholder Meeting**

During the meeting with the School District, the chief idea presented to the Project Team was to create an outdoor classroom to teach environmental education. Having a pavilion for shade and a water source to fill students' water bottles would help them maintain focus during hot weather.

The project team also learned that the Honor Society and other community service oriented extracurricular organizations could assist in the maintenance of the Open Space Area.

### **Lower Arkansas Mountain Biking Association Stakeholder Meeting**

The Lower Arkansas River Mountain Biking Association (LAMBDA) was recently formed when motorized use was banned in the Hogback Open Space Area for the purpose of representing the interests of a small but growing group of mountain bikers and other trail enthusiasts. The group wanted to ensure that it wasn't banned along with motorized uses.

LAMBDA discussed various possibilities for single-track trails within the Hogback Area during its stakeholder meeting. The point was made that there is a longer-term possibility of creating regional connections to the Gorge and the Lower Arkansas, especially if certain property included with the Open Space Area is acquired —

currently, there is a lack of continuity among city-owned parcels; private parcels divide the property.

### **Open House #2 - July 2011**

During the second Open House, the consultant team produced the following for review and comment:

- Review of Critical Issues
- Draft Trail Alignments and Interpretive Loops
- Interpretive Themes for Signage/Wayfinding
- Collected Demographic/ESRI Data

The goal of the second public open house was to present the background research gathered to date, as well as the preliminary trail alignments, proposed trailhead improvements, and potential themes for interpretive panels and displays.

The open house consisted of two steps: 1) review of the background information displayed (the summary of feedback to date, the ESRI data, and the preliminary project themes), and 2) providing feedback regarding the overall preliminary trail and trailhead improvements.

### Open House #2 Meeting Announcement



### Feedback from the First Open House

#### **(critical issues)**

- Access & Parking
- Trailheads & Trail Network
- Old Skyline Drive
- Geology
- Fossils & Dinosaurs
- Vegetation & Wildlife
- History & Culture
- Maintenance of Improvements
- Interpretive Displays & Signage
- Funding Improvements
- Connections to Other Areas
- Property Acquisitions



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#### Feedback from First Open House

In order to help meeting participants see the comments from the first public meeting, they were grouped into 'critical issue' categories, and organized on a banner display for review and comment.



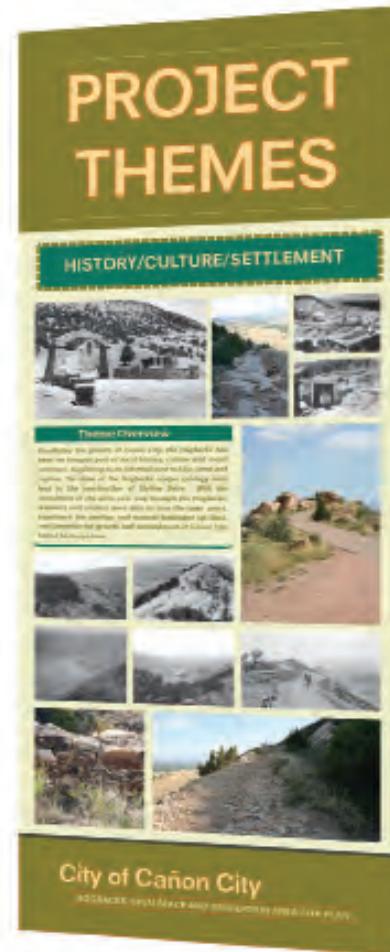
Cañon City from Skyline Drive - 1900

### History/Culture/Settlement

Paralleling the growth of Canon City, the Hogbacks has been an integral part of local history, culture and social activities. Beginning as an informal area to hike, camp and explore, the draw of the Hogbacks unique geology soon lead to the construction of Skyline Drive. With the completion of the drive over and through the Hogbacks, residents and visitors were able to tour the open space, experience the geology and natural landscape up-close, and chronicle the growth and development of Canon City from a birds-eye view.

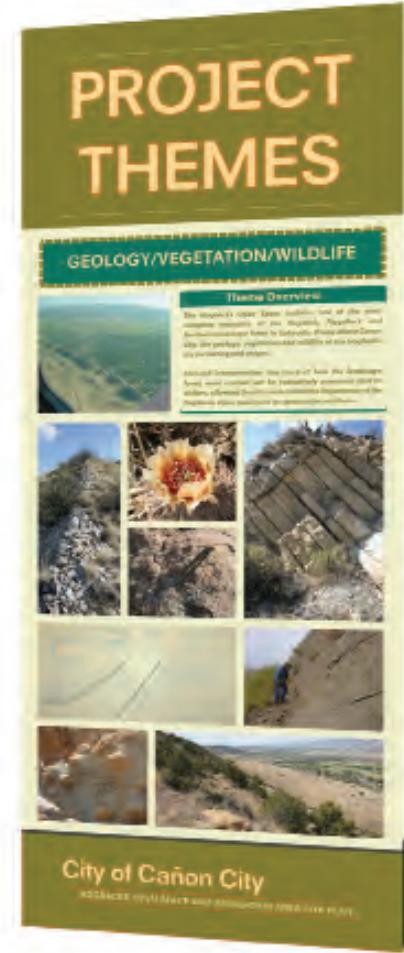
### Project Themes

Drawing from the rich history, resources and character of the Hogbacks, several options for interpretive themes were developed and presented during the second open house

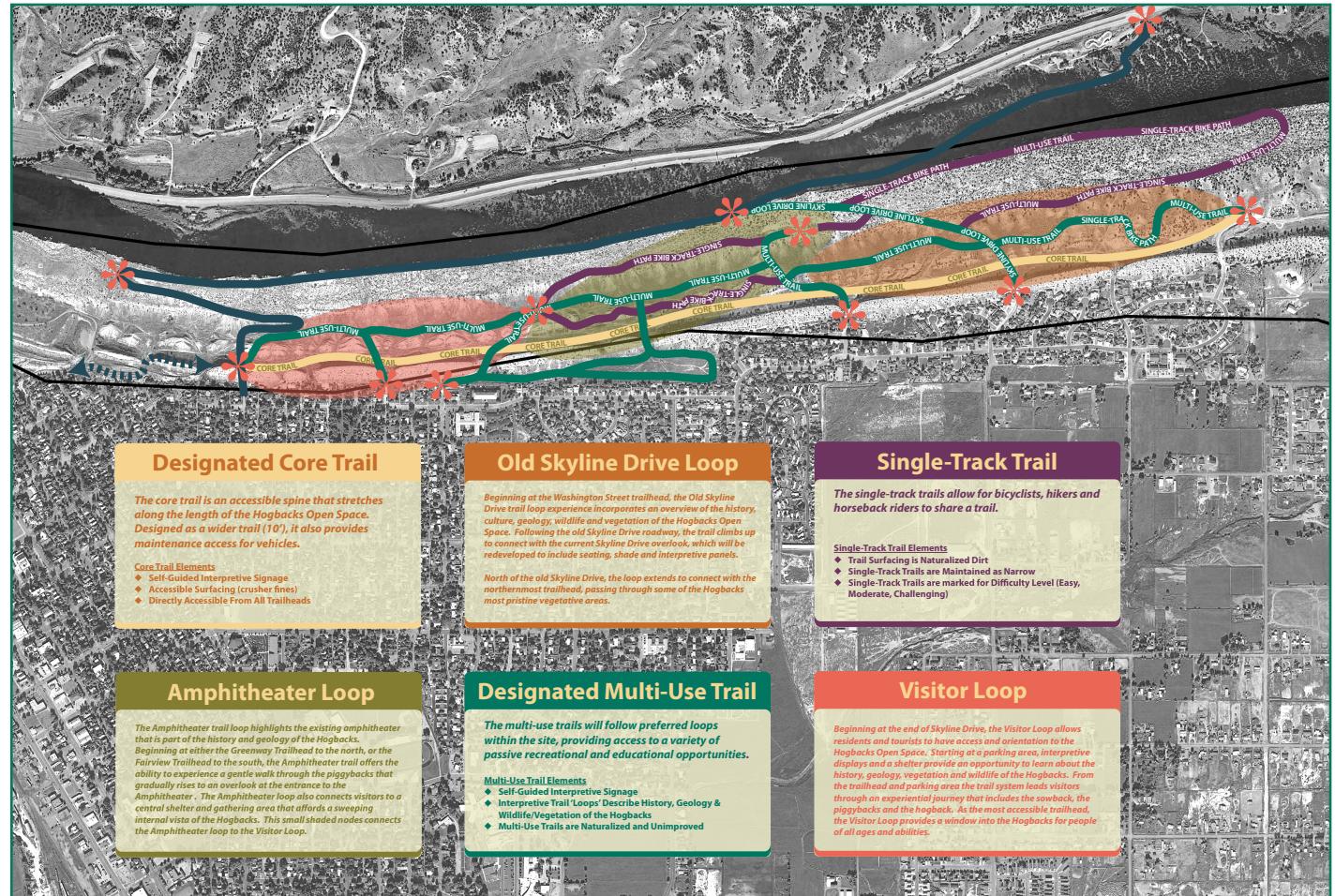


## Geology/Vegetation/Wildlife

The Hogbacks Open Space includes one of the most complete examples of the Hogback, PiggyBack and Sowback landscape forms in Colorado. Rising above Canon City, the geology, vegetation and wildlife of the Hogbacks are fascinating and unique. Through interpretation, the story of how the landscape forms were created can be evocatively communicated to visitors, allowing them to understand the importance of the Hogbacks Open Space and its spectacular attributes.



**Preliminary Trail Systems**  
During the second open house, preliminary trail loops and alignments were presented for comment and feedback



## Preliminary Trail Systems

### Core Trail

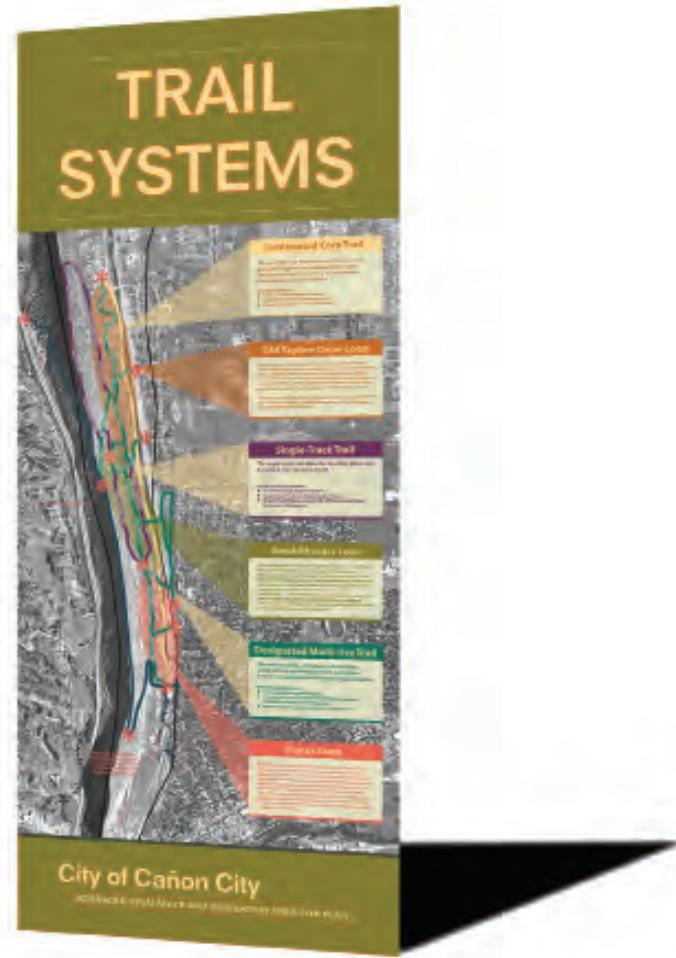
The core trail is an accessible spine that stretches along the length of the Hogbacks Open Space. Designed as a wider trail (10'), it also provides maintenance access for vehicles.

### Olde Skyline Drive Trail Loop

Beginning at the Washington Street trailhead, the Old Skyline Drive trail loop experience incorporates an overview of the history, culture, geology, wildlife and vegetation of the Hogbacks Open Space. Following the old Skyline Drive roadway, the trail climbs up to connect with the current Skyline Drive overlook, which will be redeveloped to include seating, shade and interpretive panels. North of the old Skyline Drive, the loop extends to connect with the northernmost trailhead, passing through some of the Hogbacks most pristine vegetative areas.

### Amphitheater Trail Loop

The Amphitheater trail loop highlights the existing amphitheater that is part of the history and geology of the Hogbacks. Beginning at either the Greenway Trailhead to the north, or the Fairview Trailhead to the south, the Amphitheater trail offers the ability to experience a gentle walk through the piggybacks that gradually rises to an overlook at the entrance to the Amphitheater .

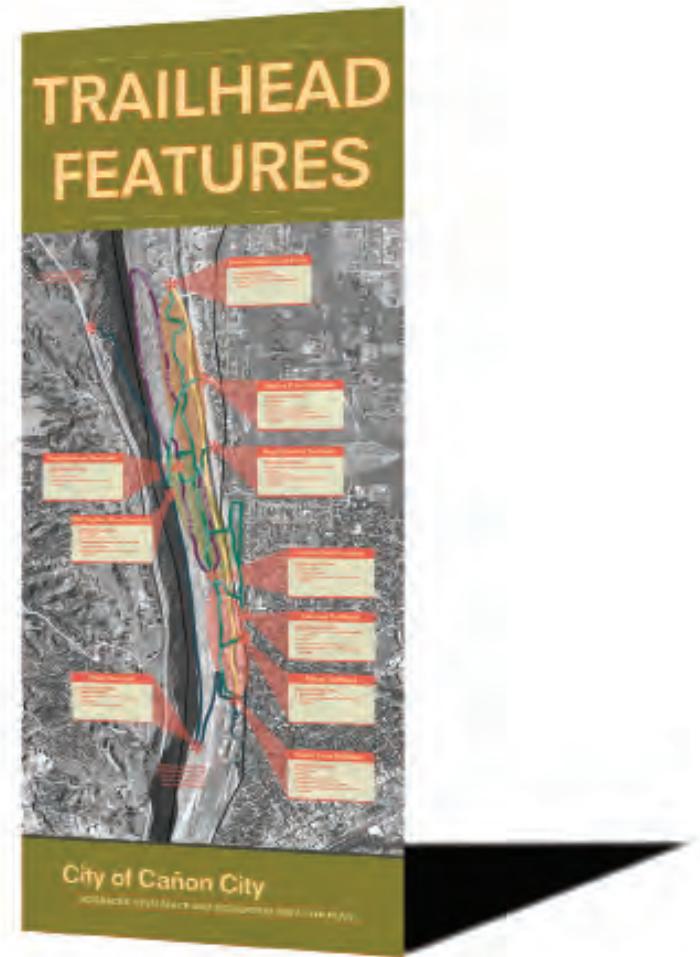


### Visitor Trail Loop

Beginning at the end of Skyline Drive, the Visitor Loop allows residents and tourists to have access and orientation to the Hogbacks Open Space. Starting at a parking area, interpretive displays and a shelter provide an opportunity to learn about the history, geology, vegetation and wildlife of the Hogbacks. From the trailhead and parking area the trail system leads visitors through an experiential journey that includes the sowback, the piggybacks and the hogback. As the most accessible trailhead, the Visitor Loop provides a window into the Hogbacks for people of all ages and abilities.

### Preliminary Trailhead Features

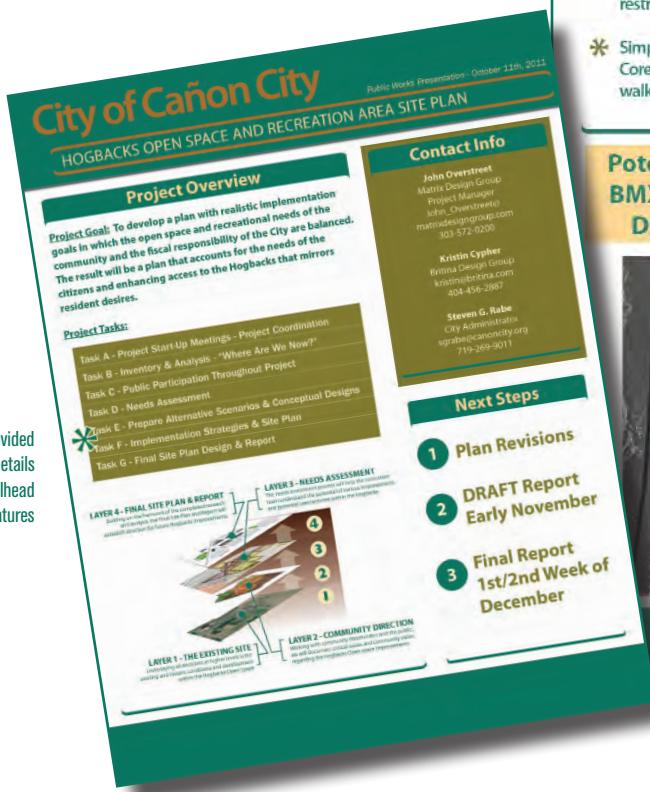
During the second public open house, the preliminary location and amenities for different trailheads were proposed and reviewed



## Open House #3 - October 2011

The goal of the final open house was to present the revised trail alignments, trailhead features and level of improvement, and graphic photos and illustrations of the look and feel of the trail and trailhead systems (including interpretive signage).

During the meeting, participants provided final feedback and direction, helping the consultant team to revise and solidify the vision and direction for the project.



The 3rd public open house handout provided an overview of the project, as well as details regarding the revised trail and trailhead features

### Revised Trails/Trailheads

- ★ Trail system was simplified and the number of trails reduced.
- ★ Interconnected trail loops offer different experiences of the Hogbacks.
- ★ Trailhead improvements were simplified and improvements like restrooms, shade structures, water fountains and parking lots were restricted to significant trailheads
- ★ Simplified trail system includes an accessible Core Trail and a single-track Multi-Use Trail for walking, biking and horseback riding

## TRAIL SYSTEMS

**Potential Location for Bike/ BMX Park South of Skyline Drive & North of Prison**

Map showing the potential location for a Bike/BMX Park, indicated by a red dashed line on a satellite map of the area. The map also shows the revised trail system with various colored lines (blue, red, yellow) and trailheads labeled.

## Final Trail Systems

### Core Trail

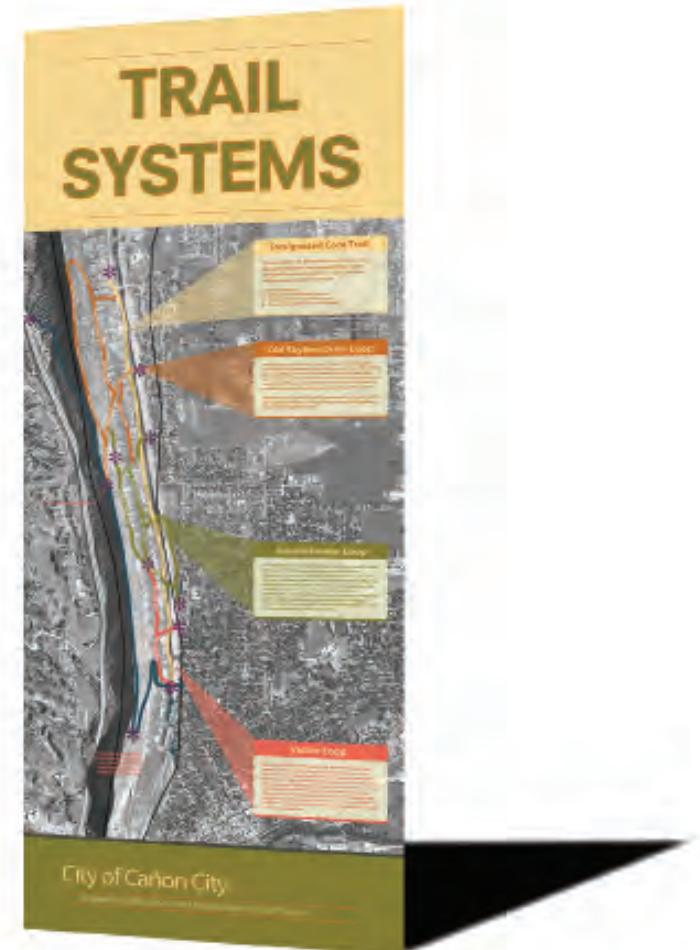
The core trail is an accessible spine that stretches along the length of the Hogbacks Open Space. Designed as a wider trail (10'), it also provides maintenance access for vehicles.

### Multi-Use Trail Loops

The multi-use trail loops are narrow, naturalized pathways that provide access and enjoyment of the Hogbacks varied resources and landscapes. Although these trails are unimproved and natural, they will need to be maintained to ensure that erosion or heavy bike use does not make them rutted or inaccessible for walkers, runners and hikers.

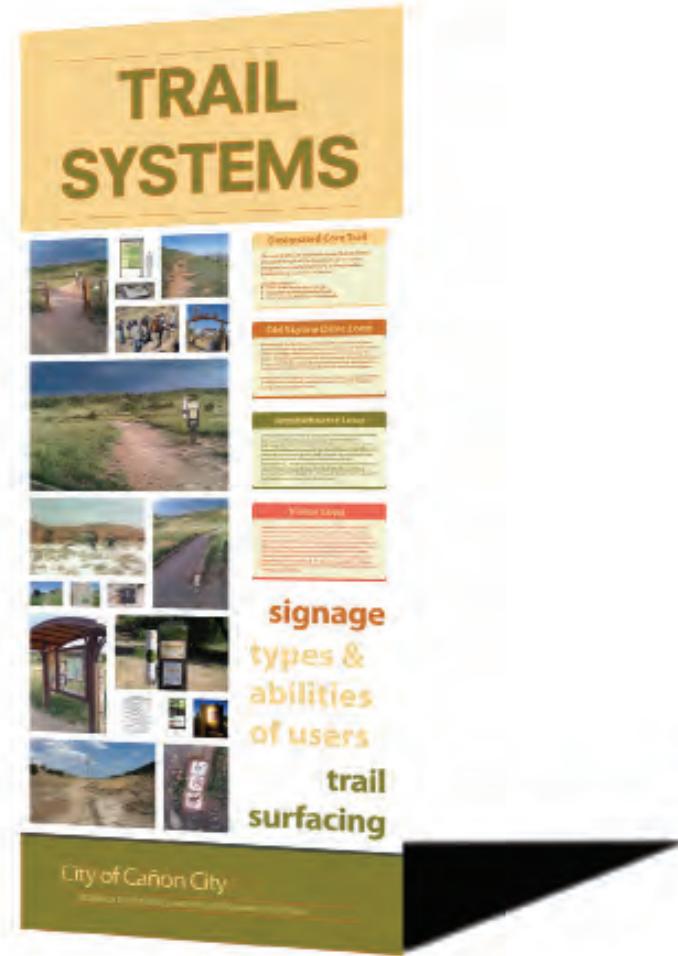
### 3rd Street Extension

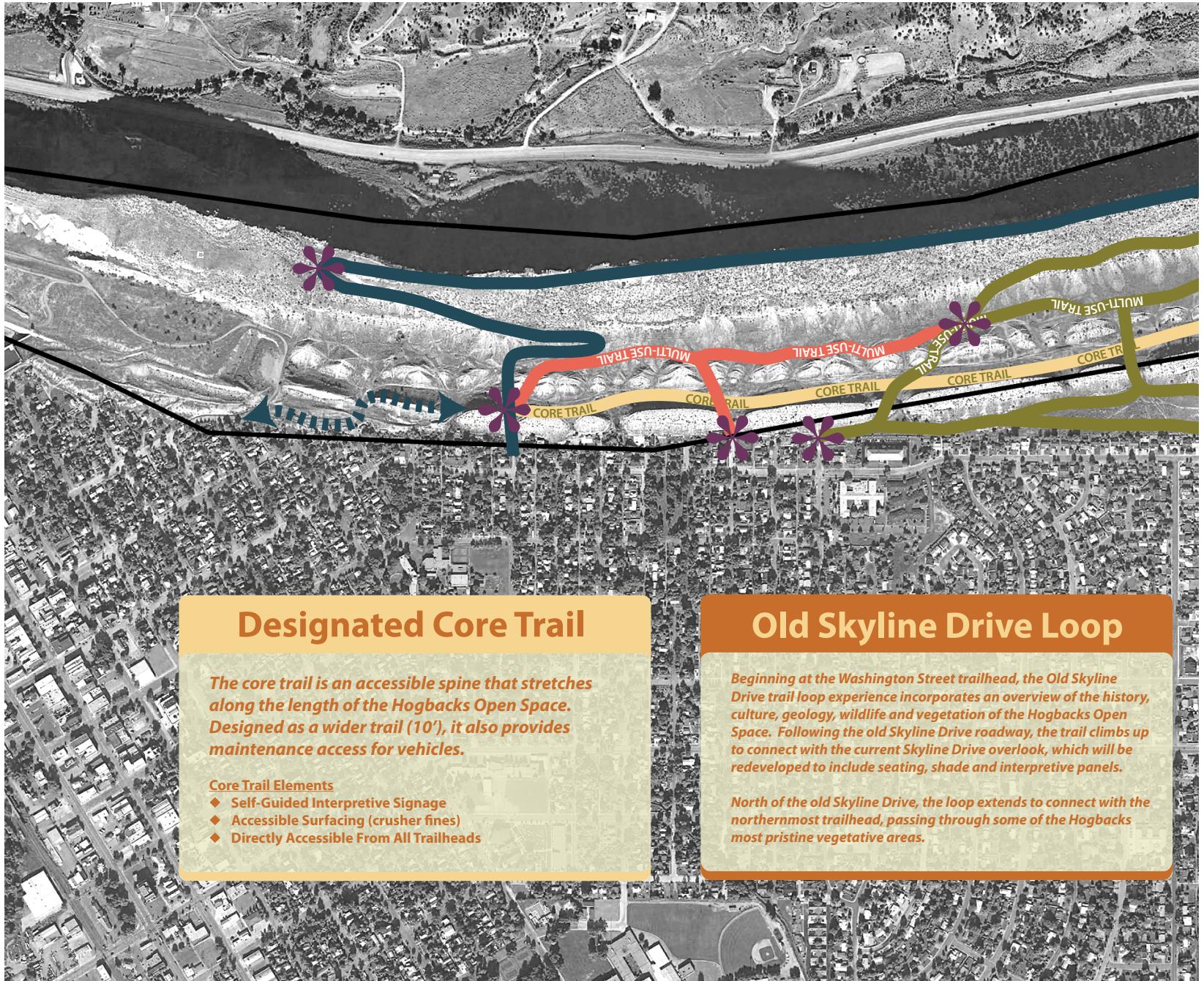
To help integrate the Hogback Open Space with many of Cañon City's recreational and tourism assets, including Main Street, the Sante Fe Depot rail station, the Arkansas Riverwalk, and nearby parks, an extension of 3rd Street and associated wayfinding is proposed as a long-term improvement. This extension would provide a direct, linear connection for locals and tourists alike to the Visitor Loop Trailhead, which is the most amenity rich and accessible entrance into the Hogback Area. The proposed extension of 3rd Street would serve as a highly visible and easily navigable eastern...“gateway”...into...the...Hogback...area...with...an...alignment...that...minimizes...the need for grading and doesn't encroach on the prison, private property, or the Open Space area to any large degree.



## Final Trail Systems - Critical Issues

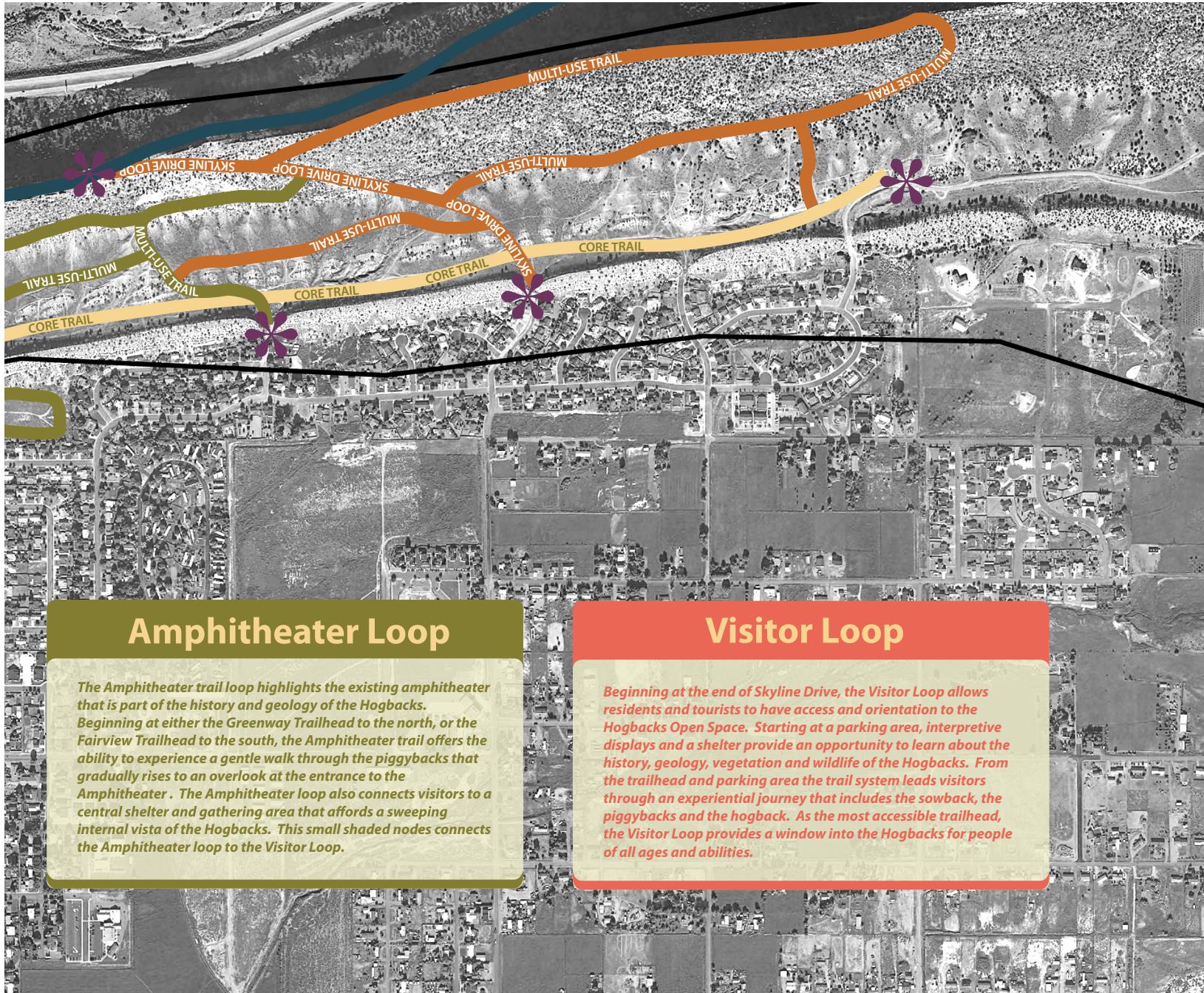
- Maintenance
- Erosion
- Revegetation of Currently Eroded Areas
- Drainage and Sediment Flows
- Level of Interpretation (minimal signage - only at trailheads)
- Accessibility





### Final Trail Systems

The final trail systems consist of the Core Trail and several Mult-Use Trail loops



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## Final Trailheads

The final trailhead improvements were based on the different needs between neighborhood-serving trailheads and trailheads that also supported visitor and educational group use.

### Old Skyline Drive Overlook

**OVERLOOK FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Area
- ✓ Shelter/Shade Structure
- ✓ Connection to Dinosaur Track Pull-Off
- ✓ Benches/Seating
- ✓ Interpretive Signage & Informational Displays

### Amphitheater Trailhead

**TRAILHEAD FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Area (on-street, existing parking)
- ✓ Behavior Expectation Signage
- ✓ Trash/Dog-Bag Station

### Horse Trailer Access Point

**TRAILHEAD FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Area for Horse Trailers

### Visitor Loop Trailhead

**TRAILHEAD FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Lot
- ✓ Shelter
- ✓ Restrooms (vault toilet)
- ✓ Benches/Seating/Picnic Tables
- ✓ Interpretive Signage & Informational Displays

### Skyline Drive Trailhead

**TRAILHEAD FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Area (on-street, existing parking)
- ✓ Behavior Expectation Signage
- ✓ Trash/Dog-Bag Station

### Prison Overlook

**OVERLOOK FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Pull-Off
- ✓ Interpretive Signage & Informational Displays
- ✓ Short Trail to View of Prison

### Fairview Trailhead

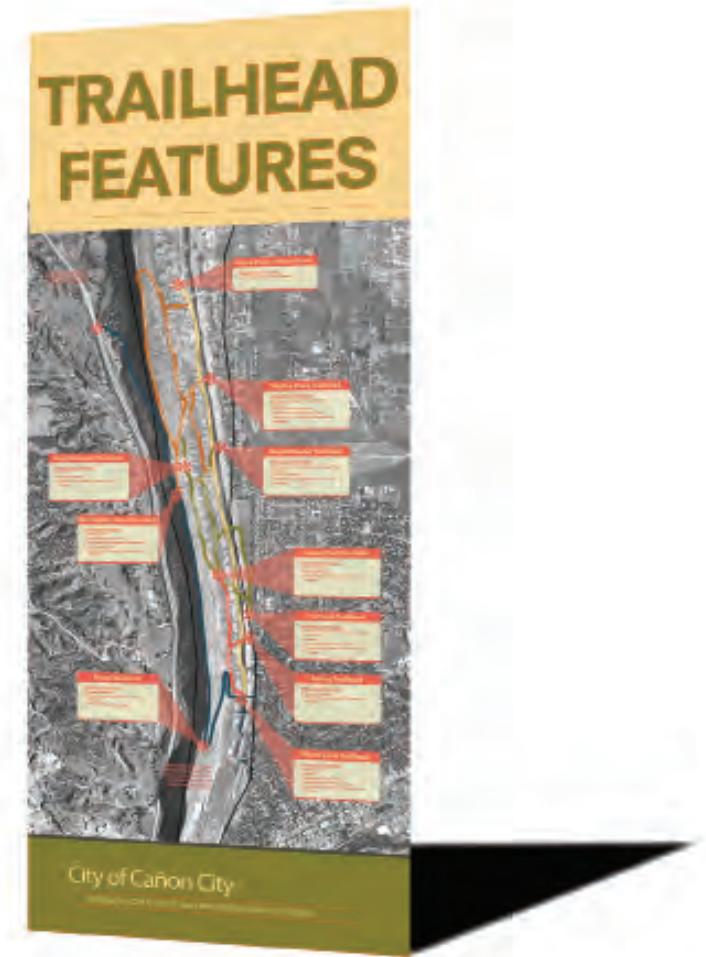
**TRAILHEAD FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Area (on-street, existing parking)
- ✓ Behavior Expectation Signage
- ✓ Trash/Dog-Bag Station

### Alison Trailhead

**TRAILHEAD FEATURES**

- ✓ Parking Area (on-street, existing parking)
- ✓ Behavior Expectation Signage
- ✓ Trash/Dog-Bag Station

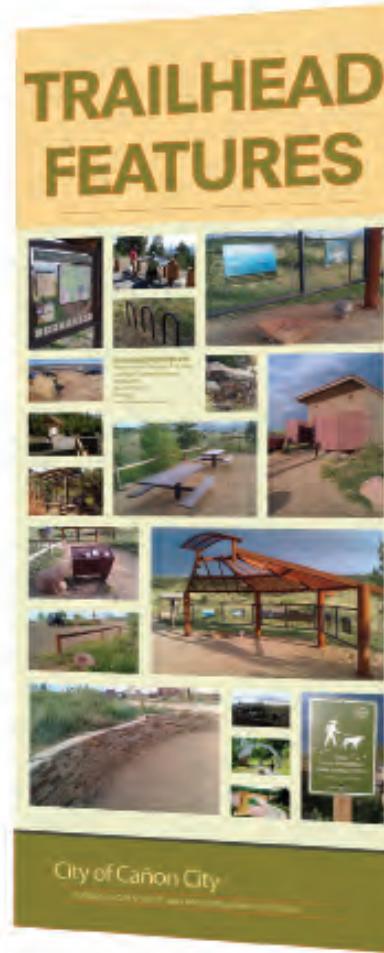


## Trailhead Improvements

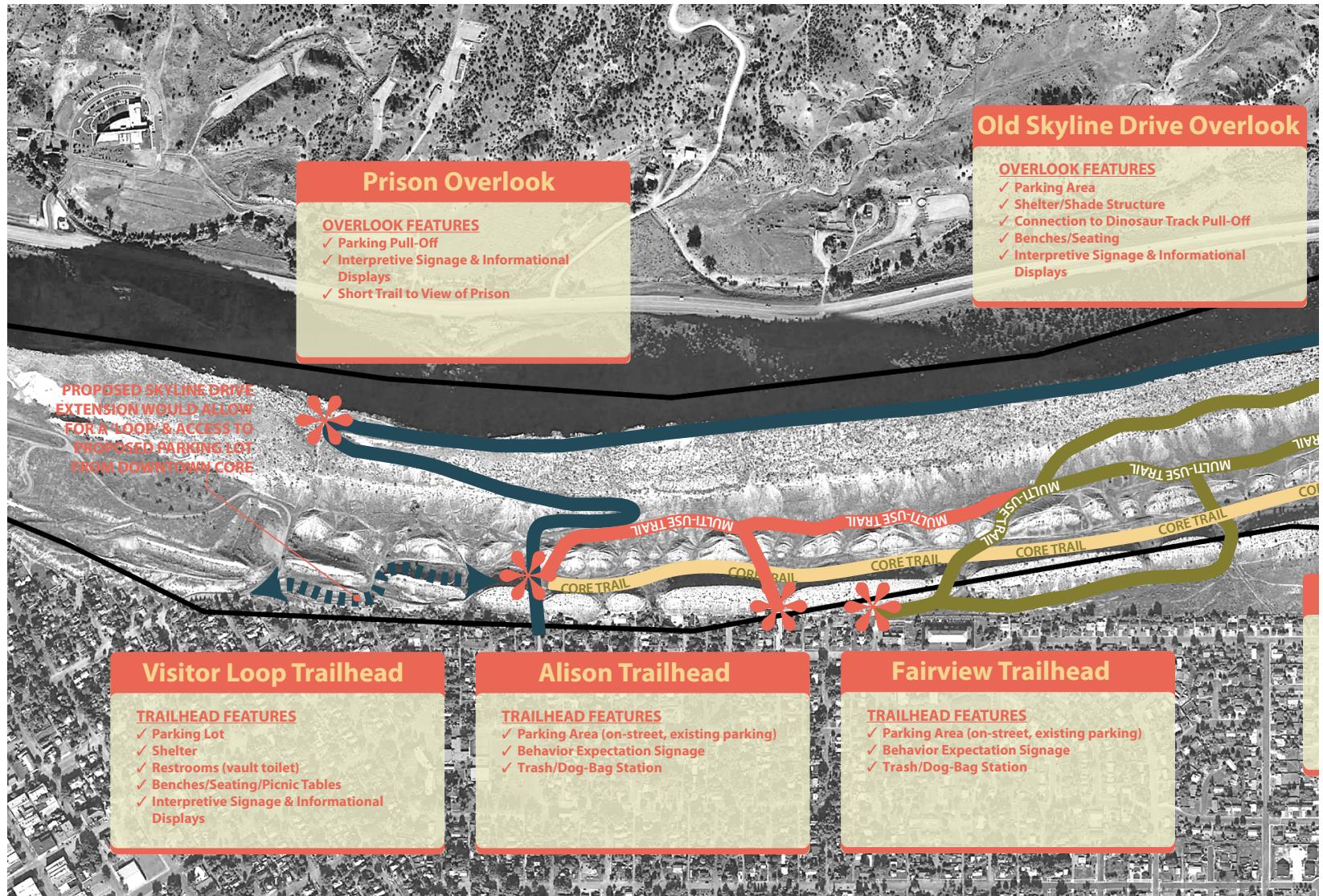
- Informational Displays & Signage
- Seating & Gathering Spaces
- Restrooms
- Shade/Shelter
- Parking
- Water Fountain/Spout

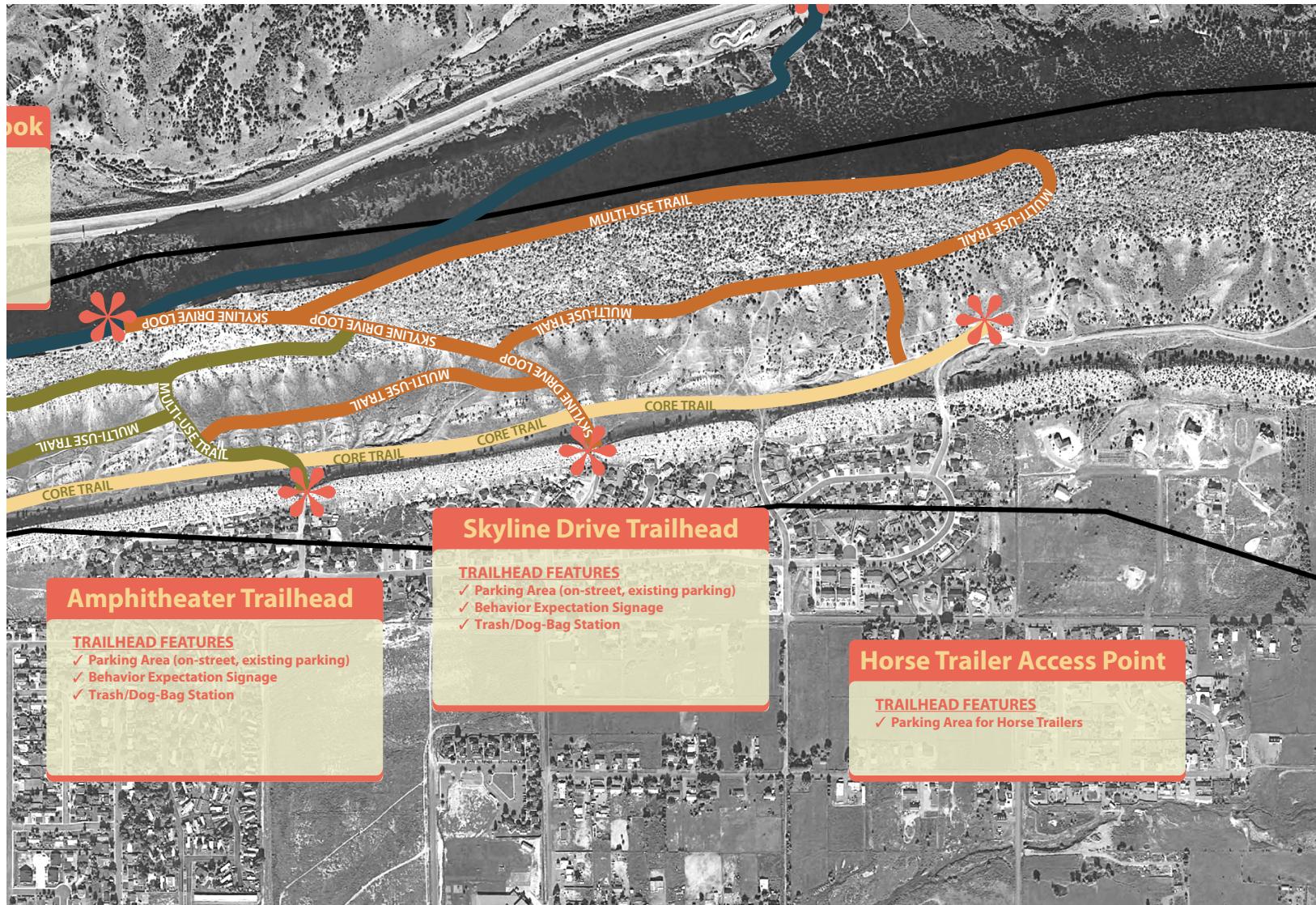


**TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENTS:**  
Informational Displays & Signage  
Seating & Gathering Spaces  
Restrooms  
Shade/Shelter  
Parking  
Water Fountain/Spout



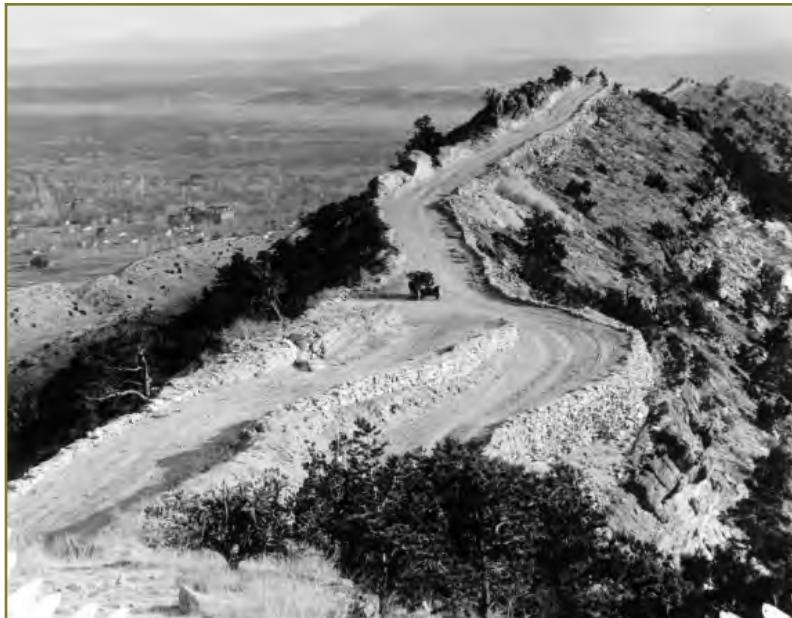
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# OPEN HOUSE THEMES



**Skyline Drive - 1923**  
Historic view of Skyline Drive  
(Hogbacks and Cañon City in the  
background)

## **Level of Improvements**

Those visiting the Hogbacks understand that it is a natural resource, and as such, its quality and sense of place would be impacted by the addition of too many structures or formal improvements. Throughout meetings with the public and stakeholders, the desire to ‘keep it simple’ was repeatedly expressed.

As the final plan for the Open Space was developed and refined, the level of recommended improvements was carefully adjusted to align with community and stakeholder concerns. The resulting plan provides the needed facilities and elements that highlight the resource and support its use, but not at the expense of devaluing or overshadowing the environment, or being too costly from a maintenance standpoint.

### **Neighborhood Trailhead Facilities**

Most neighbors visiting the Hogbacks access it on-foot, through one of the Sowback gaps that provide easy access into the area. Currently, these neighborhood access points are largely unimproved. Although the neighbors do not want large or formal improvements at these points, they did ask that signage regarding behavior expectations be installed, along with doggie bag stations and a trash can.

### **Trail Systems**

There are two proposed trail types within the Hogbacks Open Space. First, an accessible 'Core Trail' mirrors (roughly) the existing alignment of the access road that follows the base of the Sowback formation. Second, a system of 'Multi-Use Trails' allows walkers, bikers and horses to experience the different places and environments within the Hogbacks. Each tail system follows the rough alignments of existing trails, choosing certain pathways over others. With so many years of recreational use, there are many criss-crossing pathways throughout the Hogbacks, and the final trail alignment was more a process of picking the best of these trails,

and recommending that the other existing trails be revegetated and reverted back to natural vegetation.

### **Interpretive Themes and Uses**

Although many aspects and areas within the Hogbacks could be interpreted, there was consensus that the most important interpretive areas were those associated with Skyline Drive and its overlooks and parking areas. Not only will interpretive displays in these areas inform tourists about the history and resources of the Hogbacks, they may also be used by locals as needed. The principal historic themes agreed upon were 'History, Culture and Settlement' and 'Geology, Vegetation and Wildlife'.

### **Erosion and Revegetation**

The Cañon City community is very concerned about the loss of topsoil, erosion and drainage problems that currently affect the Hogbacks. The current drains at the base of the Sowback (between the Hogbacks and the neighborhood) are silted over and do not allow water to drain, which then causes large muddy water flows into the neighborhood during a storm event. Revegetation will help reduce topsoil loss, and future improvements to the storm drains may help improve their maintenance and function. Both revegetation and adjustments to the storm drainage system are high priorities for the Cañon City community.

# COST ESTIMATE



## **Cost Estimate**

In order to illustrate the phasing of proposed improvements within the Hogbacks, the cost estimate is organized by three levels: **Short Term Improvements, Medium Term Improvements, and Long Term Improvements.**

The total cost for all phases of improvement:  
**\$611,490**

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Long Term Improvements	Qty.	Description	Cost Ea.	Total	Parking, Vault Restroom, Shelter, Benches, and Informational Displays at Visitor Loop Trailhead	
Additional Parking, Signage and Interpretive Displays at the Highway 50 Entrance to Skyline Drive						
	8	Additional Parking Spaces			6	Parking Spaces
		Grading and Construction	\$3,500			Grading and Construction
		Management	\$1,000			Management
		Total	\$4,500	\$36,000		Total
Shaded Interpretive Panel Display, Bench Seating, and Parking at Old Skyline Drive Terminus Overlook					1	Shade Structure
	3	Parallel Parking Spaces				Production*
		Grading and Construction	\$3,500			20% Contingency for High End
		Management	\$750			Materials
		Total	\$4,250	\$12,750		Installation
	1	Interpretive Display				Management
		Design	\$450			Total
		Production	\$1,500		2	Benches
		20% Contingency for High End				Production
		Materials	\$300			50% Contingency for custom
		Mounting	\$250			bench & materials
		Management	\$200			Materials
		Total	\$2,700	\$2,700		Installation
	2	Benches				Management
		Production	\$1,000			Total
		50% Contingency for custom			1	Informational Display
		bench & materials	\$500			Design
		Installation	\$200			Production
		Management	\$100			20% Contingency for High End
		Total	\$1,800	\$3,600		Materials
Signage and Interpretive Displays at Hwy 50 Entrance						Mounting
	2	Small Signs				Management
		Design	\$300			Total
		Production	\$350			\$2,700
		Mounting	\$250			\$2,700
		Management	\$200			
		Total	\$1,100	\$2,200		
	1	Interpretive Display			Roadway Connection to 3rd Street (New	
		Design	\$450		Road to Make a Loop)	
		Production	\$1,500			Roadway Connection (1/2 mi
		20% Contingency for High End				@\$137/linear foot)
		Materials	\$300			\$225,000
		Mounting	\$250			Total
		Management	\$200			\$225,000
		Total	\$2,700	\$2,700		
					Total Long Term Improvements	\$330,650
					Note: The roadway extension estimate assumes a 40' wide grading effort and	
					24' wide paved section	





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