

Application form



NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS GRANT APPLICATION - PLANNING

PROJECT BASICS

Title **Cucharas River Trail**

Type Construction Planning
 Maintenance Support

Phased project Yes No If yes, Phase # of

Brief summary

The Town of La Veta seeks a planning grant to design the Cucharas River Trail located on Town right-of-way. It will add 1.5 miles of non-motorized, multi-moda trail, connecting four open spaces, to the community based-system of parks, open space, and trails.

Grant request	\$ 33,750.00	Grant ratio ¹	75 %
Match	\$ 11,250.00	Match ratio	25 %
Total	\$ 45,000.00	Total	100 %

APPLICANT

Type Local County Federal Tribal
 Recreation and Metro Districts Non-Profit

Organization **Town of La Veta**

Postal address **P.O. Box 174**

City **La Veta** State **CO** ZIP Code **81055**

General email **heatherhillis@townoflaveta-co.gov** UEI # **LNJXBJ2M3DJ3**

Lead contact **Marilyn Russell** Title **President, La Veta Trails,. Inc.**

Telephone **(719) 890-4071** Email **russellm9999@gmail.com**

Project manager **Heather Hillis** Title **Town Clerk**

Telephone **(719) 742-3631** Email **heatherhillis@townoflaveta-co.gov**

PARTNER OR CO-SPONSOR

Organization **La Veta Trails, Inc.** N/A

Postal address **P.O. Box 202**

City **La Veta** State **CO** ZIP Code **81055**

Contact name **Marilyn Russell** Title **President**

Telephone **(719) 890-4071** Email **russellm9999@gmail.com**

¹ Grant ratio = grant request / total. Match ratio = match / total.

PROPERTY

Nearest town or city **La Veta** County **Huerfano**

Latitude/Longitude **37.5058° N, 105.0091° W** Congressional district **3**

Name of property owner **Town of La Veta**

Trail Corridor controlled by Fee simple Lease Easement

License ROW Other:

TRAIL

Uses Hiking, walking, running Biking Equestrian

E-bikes allowed? Yes No Snow sports (non-motorized) ADA Accessible

Other:

Estimate percentage by type (e.g.,) 50% hiking, etc.

Surface Natural Crusher fines Asphalt Concrete

Other:

Size of new trailhead (sq. ft.) Length of trail being planned **1.5 miles**

Length of new trail construction² **1.5 miles** Length of trail maintenance

Length of inter-connecting trail Length of trail reroute

Length of decommissioned trail Length of restored trail

Length of trail to be signed Length of trail grooming

Other:

Estimated amount of paid crew hours: Grant Match:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of the applicant entity, I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is true and correct.

Authorized Representative

Signature *Doug R. Brogach* Date *9/29/2023*

Name *Douglas R. Brogach* Title *Mayor*

² Length of trail – use miles, square feet, linear feet

Timeline

NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS GRANT APPLICATION



PROJECT DETAILS

Organization **Town of La Veta**

Project title **Cucharas River Trail**

TASK <small>Mobilization, staffing, construction or maintenance elements, planning phases, etc.</small>	Dates*	Dates	Dates	Dates	Dates	Dates	Dates
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5		
RFP Process	x						
Select Trail Design Contractor	x						
Signed Contract	x						
Planning Com. Meet.	x	x	x	x			
Host Public Meetings		x	x				
Conduct Public Survey		x	x				
Draft Plan				x			
Town Review Draft				x			
Approve Final Plan				x	x		
Town Adopt Plan					x		
Administrative Close-out					June 2025		

*The timeline is an estimate of your project completion. Remember the project must be completed within 2.5 years of the award date. Suggestion - use quarterly or multiple month time frames [Q2/XX; Jun-Sept XX]. Initial grant expiration date will be June 30th or December 31st, dependent upon assigned funding source.

Criteria Questions



NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS GRANT APPLICATION - PLANNING

Organization **Town of La Veta**

Project title **Cucharas River Trail**

1. PROJECT NEED

15 points

- A. Give a detailed description of the project, including information such as trail system improvements, trail development, amenities, and other recreation opportunities.

The Town and La Veta Trails (LVT) will build on its strong partnership to develop a design plan for the CRT that will add 1.5 miles and 12 acres of open space to La Veta's community-based system of parks, open space, and trails envisioned in the Town's master plan for parks, open space, and trails. The CRT and open spaces are located entirely on Town right-of-way. The design will add trailhead parking, riverfront open spaces, a crosswalk, trail and ecosystem interpretative signs, benches, picnic tables, and a bike/pedestrian bridge. The goal is to expand hiking, walking, and bicycling in La Veta to appeal to different ages, abilities, and users. The proposed route will assure connectivity to regional trails.

- B. Describe the project's urgency and why it is being pursued at this time.

Several interconnected trail and streetscape renewal projects make the CRT an urgent priority. There is a small window of opportunity to add value and cohesion to these projects, which are tied together by the trail system. The Town and LVT are collaborating with GOCO and CPW to fund the design and construction of the CRT with adjacent outdoor recreational amenities prioritized in the Town's master plan for parks, open space, and trails (POST). In a strategic meeting with GOCO and CPW, the CRT was identified as the first priority beginning with this planning grant. In addition, CDOT approved the Town's grants to add bike and pedestrian facilities on Main St. and construct the Southern Mountain Loop Trail (SML) on Oak St., which will serve as a major intersection with the CRT. The SML is a segment of the CO Front Range Trail on CO Highway 12 which is La Veta's Main St. Main St. renewal, SML construction, and CRT design timeframes create an opportunity to align the trails and facilities.

- C. Describe how issues such as existing trail system management, wildlife and natural resource conservation, new trail development, and long-term maintenance will be addressed during this process.

La Veta has a long tradition of volunteerism, citizen-led initiatives, and collaborative problem-solving that have improved the quality of life and addressed multiple community issues. Community engagement is a hallmark of how things get done, whether fighting a fire that came close to destroying the Town, reducing the risk of flooding following the fire, building a new playground, or restoring a neglected trail. Community needs and concerns will be addressed through public meetings and a planning committee, which will guide the planning process. Members will include the Project Manager, Lead Contact, CPW, Huerfano County, Scenic Highway of Legends, La Veta RE-2 School, Spanish Peaks Cycling, and Wheeled Sports. The committee will provide input on the design to support multi-model uses, including opportunities for all ages and abilities to use the trail.

2. COMMUNITY BENEFIT

15 points

- A. Describe the community that will benefit from project. Include relevant demographic and economic data.

La Veta is a rural community with a population of 873 residents. Since 2016, the population has grown at a faster rate than the county. People are drawn to the small-town character, pristine environment, the Spanish Peaks and mountain ranges, an excellent school system, historic business center, creative and ranching industries, and existing and future outdoor recreation amenities. Regional amenities include Lathrop State Park, San Isabel National Forest, Spanish Peaks Wilderness Area, Cuchara Mountain Park, and the Great Sand Dunes National Park.

In 2020, the median age in La Veta was 50 compared to 38 nationally. The largest age group is 65+ at 16% compared to 32% nationally. From 2010 to 2020, Huerfano County ranked 56 out of 60 Colorado counties for health outcomes. The primary factors contributing to poor health include physical inactivity and no access to exercise opportunities. The statewide percentage of people who report no leisure physical activity is 17.1% compared to 41.2% in Huerfano County.

- B. Outline any deficiencies or barriers to access this project would address or improve for the abovementioned community.

The CRT will provide a much-needed recreational and health amenity for people of all ages and abilities. Developing a system of parks, open space, and trails is one of the best strategies adopted by communities to promote the health of community members. Since 2015, the Town and LVT have worked in partnership to develop a community-based system of parks, open space, and parks. Participants in the POST master plan process recommended multi-generational recreational amenities so parents and grandparents can participate with their children and grandchildren. A multi-generational approach addresses easy access for people of all ages and abilities to get outdoors and experience nature close to home. Second, a community-based system is free, so money is not a barrier for people to experience the outdoors. Third, it provides safe facilities so people can walk or bike to work or for exercise, and students can walk or bike to school. Finally, because we will include a range of users in the design process, community members, particularly youth, will be more apt to use the trail because our process had considered their needs and interests.

- C. Estimate the number of people and/or types of user groups that will have access to recreational opportunities as a result of this project. Include methods for determining this estimate.

The CRT will be designed for foot users (hikers, walkers, and runners) and cyclists (mountain and gravel). The trail will be all-season, providing opportunities for cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing. In a 2017 survey of 200 residents, LVT found 75% walked or biked for exercise, recreation, errands, and commuting to work or school. Foot travelers walked or hiked an average of 2-4 miles a day three or more times a week, while cyclists biked 5-10 miles a day three or more times a week. In 2019, residents surveyed during the master plan process found:

- 88% would use a trail if one were built along the Scenic Highway of Legends.
- 85% prioritized a Cucharas River Trail and river access.
- 83% wanted a trail with wildlife viewing.
- 79% indicated there were not enough trails.
- 75% wanted more trail connectivity and looped trails.

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

10 points

- A. Give a detailed description of who will oversee the planning process. Include any pertinent information such as survey needs, facilitation processes and consultant information.

The CRT project builds upon a strong partnership between the Town and LVT to improve existing parks and trails and to add new outdoor recreation infrastructure. As the applicant, the Town will manage the CPW grant funds. Heather Hills, Town Clerk and Treasurer, will serve as the Project Manager and Marilyn Russell, LVT President, will serve as the Lead Contact. Heather will manage the funds for the CRT project as she does for the Main St. renewal project, the water treatment plant construction project, and the CDOT SML construction projects. She will oversee the RFP process for the CRT planning consultant, manage the contracting with the selected consultant, and manage the financial reporting to CPW. Both will co-facilitate the CRT planning committee.

As the Lead Contact, Marilyn will serve as the liaison with the CRT consultant to support the public engagement meetings and survey input, and address any needs or issues that arise. LVT will build on its community engagement experience to support the public input process.

The Town will contract with the CRT design consultant following an RFP process. The consultant will facilitate the community input processes, including the public meetings and survey data collection, and will develop the CRT design plan. The consultant will review the design plan with the Town Board and planning committee.

The Town Board of Trustees will approve the final design plan and the next steps with GOCO, CPW, and other funders in the fall 2024 to construct the trail in 2025.

- B. Outline any CPW State Trails funding received in the last five years and if the project(s) were completed on time, on budget and within scope. For applicants without prior State Trails funding, provide examples of similar grant funded projects. Include project title, year of award, grant amount, and grantor for each.

In 2019, LVT received a \$45,000 CPW planning grant to conduct a community input process for developing the La Veta Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan. The Town of La Veta, La Veta RE-2 School, and La Veta Trails were partners on the plan to identify priorities and create a vision for multi-generational outdoor recreation amenities. The Town Board adopted the master plan in October of 2021. Since then, the plan has served as a road map for ongoing community engagement toward implementing the priorities.

4. PLANNING

10 points

A. Discuss the planning process that identified this project as a priority.

A CRT has been a priority identified by the community for the past 20 years. The process for the POST master plan was community-driven. Two public meetings were held to obtain input from stakeholders. The first meeting was held in November 2019, and the second in February 2020. The meetings were publicized through email, social media, and press releases in the local newspaper. At the first public meeting, the master plan consultant introduced the project and gathered more information on what trail routes were used by the residents. Students from the Active Living Class also presented their recommendations from the Rural Active Living Assessment study, which included a river trail. During the second public meeting, the consultant presented concepts for trail connections and priority outdoor recreation amenities. Throughout the community input process, people were encouraged to provide feedback during the meetings and through email and phone calls directly with the consultants. In addition, a public opinion survey was conducted to gather community input on the current usage of La Veta's recreational amenities. The survey was available online and in hard copy at the Library and Town Hall. The survey response rate was 17%.

B. List all approved internal master or outdoor recreation plans and/or any external area, regional, or statewide plans this project supports and describe the benefit.

Town of La Veta Parks, Open Space, and Trail Master Plan, approved by the Town Board in 2021.

Town of La Veta Outdoor Recreation Initiative, an implementation plan for the design and construction of the CRT and adjacent amenities on the west side of the Town. The Town Board will adopt it in the Fall of 2023.

Town of La Veta Comprehensive Plan reviewed in 2023.

Southern Mountain Loop Planning and Evaluation Linkages Study, Final PEL Study Report. September 2020.

Huerfano County Trail Master Plan, 2011.

5. OUTCOME

10 points

- A. Describe the deliverables for the project and the anticipated timeline of the planning process and potential implementation.

Establish and convene a CRT planning committee to work with the consultant on the CRT design study with budget and design specifications. Completed by March 2024.

Conduct an RFP process, select and contract with a design consultant to facilitate the public planning process and develop the design plan. Completed by June 2024.

Conduct 2-3 public meetings to obtain input and feedback on the CRT design. Completed by December 2024.

Draft design plan completed and reviewed with the Town Board and planning committee. Completed by March 2025.

Town Board approved the design plan. Completed by June 2025.

Close out grant. Completed by June 2025.

- B. List (in bulleted form) and provide a brief description of each: Objectives, Tasks/Project Milestones, End product and/or deliverables.

Goal: Develop a CRT design plan.

Objective: Complete a public planning process considering input from diverse stakeholders and user groups.

TASKS:

- 1. Conduct an RFP process and hire a professional consultant to facilitate the public planning process and complete the design process.**
 - 2. Advertise and promote public meetings through social media, posters, email, and press releases.**
 - 3. Prepare agenda, materials, and handouts for 3-4 public meetings. Gather feedback and input from meetings.**
 - 4. Form the Planning Committee comprised of 10-15 stakeholders to meet 3-4 times over the grant period.**
 - 5. Develop a final design plan with construction details, permitting, budget, and phases, if needed.**
-

6. WILDLIFE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

15 points

- A. Describe how potential impacts to wildlife and natural resources will be evaluated (using 'Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind', mapping tools, etc.). Include any positive impacts this work will showcase.

The Town of La Veta sits at the base of the Spanish Peaks and north of the San Isabel National Forest. Wildlife is a big part of the community, so people are drawn to the area for hunting and wildlife viewing. The Town and LVT, with the consultant, will use the Colorado Guide to Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind, CODEX, and work closely with Spencer Gerk, CPW District Wildlife Manager to mitigate wildlife impact, if any. The planning committee will serve as a key forum for any wildlife issues to be discussed and resolved, if any. The design will show no disturbance to migration.

- B. Describe any wildlife and natural resources issues raised by CPW staff during the application consultation.

Spencer Gerk toured the proposed trail route with LVT over the summer of 2023. He suggested that one right-of-way seemed to be a habitat and would like to design the trail to minimize any potential impact. The open space he referred to is an unopened street in the Town. It is an existing right-of-way which the Town has dedicated for the trail, so will not open for vehicle traffic. Also, this 48,000 SF right-of-way is adjacent to a 5-acre privately owned wetlands that is posted "No Trespassing. For Flora and Fauna Only."

The Town of La Veta is approximately 1.3 square miles in area and surrounded by private land with the exception of the 200-acre Wahatoya State Wildlife Area adjacent to the Town on the east.

- C. Explain how potential wildlife and natural resource impacts will be avoided, minimized, and/or mitigated (trail realignment, seasonal closures (include dates), signage, gates, game cameras, etc.)

The Town and LVT will work closely with Spencer Gerk to identify habitat areas and the plan to avoid impacts on wildlife. Signage will be installed and seasonal closures will be placed if needed.

A prior wildlife impact review conducted two years ago by the then CPW District Wildlife Manager determined the CRT would have no impact on wildlife because the trail will be constructed on existing Town right-of-way.

7. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

15 points

- A. Describe efforts you will undertake to engage the public, especially the community served by the project (number of meetings held, public comments, citizen surveys, etc.) through this grant.

The Town will contract with a planning consultant to facilitate the public input process, compile the input, and create the design study. The planning consultant will facilitate 3-4 public meetings to elicit community comments, suggestions, ideas, and concerns. In addition, the planning consultant will administer a survey to obtain design input. The Town and LVT will help distribute the survey through the Library and the school.

- B. Include how stakeholders (public agencies, conservation/stewardship/recreational groups, community organizations, school, and/or local businesses) will be identified and involved in the planning process.

The Town and LVT will launch a proactive outreach strategy to obtain significant community involvement, including youth, older adults, families, user groups, businesses, visitors, and residents. The strategy will include social media, email, posters, and press releases. Outreach will engage the following:

The Town's 534 property owners with water and sewer taps.

Posting the project on the Town's website.

LVT email list of 630 volunteers, donors, and supporters.

The Town's Facebook page has 1,200 followers.

LVT Facebook page with 2,100 followers.

Notices of meetings placed in 1,200 mailboxes.

Notices posted in the World Journal newspaper, local calendars, posters, and the La Veta Public library and school online distribution.

- C. Describe how potential opposition to this plan or its implementation will be identified, addressed and managed.

The demand for this trail and additional outdoor recreational amenities is so great we do not anticipate significant opposition. The property owner who owns the 5-acre wetlands adjacent to the Garland Open Space Area has requested fencing to protect the wetlands from trespassing. The wetlands property is posted for "Flora and Fauna Only". The Town will honor this request.

The Town will handle instances of opposition by inviting them to share their concerns at the Town Board public or workshop meeting, public input meetings, and the online survey.

8. BUDGET AND FUNDING

10 points

- A. Describe the source of match for the project and when it will be secured. Include in-kind donations and partner contributions.

In 2020, LVT hosted a fundraising event that raised \$11,300 from the community for the Town to use as a match for this planning grant. These funds are earmarked in an account with the Town and are committed to the Cuchara River Trail planning grant.

- B. Describe any consequences if this funding application is unsuccessful (loss of partner funds, staff capacity, expiration of surveys, etc.).

As noted earlier, the Town is working with GOCO, CPW, Colorado Health Foundation, and other funders to implement collaborative funding for the CRT and the three adjacent recreation amenities (pump park, dog park, and sky park). The sequence of local fundraising and grant applications has been planned and approved by the Town Board. The individuals who donated to the CRT are expecting action.

Document checklist



NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS GRANT APPLICATION – PLANNING OR SUPPORT

PROJECT DETAILS

Organization **Town of La Veta**

Project title **Cucharas River Trail**

DOCUMENTS

PRE-APPLICATION - SEPTEMBER

Document	Source	Submission format
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Scope of work	Applicant's own	PDF
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Project map	Applicant's own	PDF

FULL APPLICATION - OCTOBER

Document	Source	Submission format
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Application form	CPW template	PDF
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. Timeline	CPW template	PDF
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5. Budget	CPW template	Unprotected Excel file
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6. Photographs & maps	Applicant's own	Merged PDF (5 pages max)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7. Letters of support	Various	Merged PDF (5 letters max)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8. Resolution	Applicant's own	Signed PDF

ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

9. Required match funding secured (including cash match funds)
-
10. Conservation/Youth Corps or other organization will be used on the project.
Name of organization:
-
11. Volunteers will be utilized on the project
Name of organization:
-