

Public Comments on Trailhead Capacity:

As avid, multi-modal users of Larimer County Open Spaces, my wife and I both appreciate the incredible resource we have in the county, as well as the growing issue of trailhead capacity. Capacity issues have been more noticeable in recent months specifically in the upper lot of Horsetooth Mountain Park (HTMP). This is an issue not only for limited parking, but also increased road hazards and traffic from people parking on the shoulder of adjacent roads in neighbourhoods.

Hopefully, signage and enforcement can help with any issues of illegal parking, which seems to be mostly an issue of parking capacity.

Still, the decision to allow walk and bike-in users free access is sensible and was overdue, as it helps with parking issues. I urge the county to continue this policy to incentivize more sustainable usage. My observation is seeing more mountain bikers riding along 38E than in the past. Prior to this, it was easier for mt. bikers, runners, and nearby neighbourhood residents to drive up to the park.

My understanding is that the County owns additional land to the Southwest of HTMP, near Redstone Canyon. Expanding HTMP to incorporate this land, and possibly building an additional parking lot, would be a very welcome addition to county residents. Recalling that construction and maintenance of the HTMP paved parking lot was expensive (relative to maintenance of the park itself), I would urge a cost-sensitive approach, with examples including a dirt parking lot (similar to Bluesky), limited facilities, and/or limited seasonal maintenance (plowing), if budgetary constraints were prohibitive for building a new lot. As for new trail construction, I would urge seeking partnerships with local mt. bike clubs with established trail-design experience (e.g. Overland Mtb.) and additional groups such as the Fort Collins Trail Runners (FCTR), and other interested hiking and equestrian groups, who may provide voluntary efforts to help reduce costs and/or expedite trail construction.

Finally, I will submit that user conflict on the trails itself does not currently seem to be as much of an issue as parking capacity, but it will be in the future with growing population and usage trends. Building additional trails now, especially to a popular destination such as Horsetooth Mountain summit, will have the benefit of spreading out users across the park.

Thank you for your consideration,

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