



COMMISSIONERS:
CAMI BREMER (CHAIR)
CARRIE GEITNER (VICE -CHAIR)

COLORADO

HOLLY WILLIAMS
STAN VANDERWERF
LONGINOS GONZALEZ, JR.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

October 13, 2023

Kari Parsons
Senior Planner
El Paso County Planning and Community Development

Subject: Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows Sketch Plan (SKP233)

Kari;

The Department of Parks and Community Services has reviewed the development application for the Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows Sketch Plan and has the following comments on behalf of El Paso County Parks. Significant revisions are expected to the Sketch Plan based on comments provided by El Paso County Parks, Public Works, and Planning. The Sketch Plan will not be presented to the Park Advisory Board until a revised sketch plan is submitted.

This is a request for endorsement by Matrix Design Group on behalf of Murray Fountain LLC for the Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows Sketch Plan. The Rolling Meadows site is located on the north side of Bradley Road and ½ mile east of Marksheffel Road. The Bull Hill site is located south of Bradley Road and ½ mile east of Marksheffel Road.

Sketch Plan Background

The proposed Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows sketch plan is being submitted as a major amendment to the Rolling Hills Sketch Plan that was reviewed and approved by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners in 2006. However, the 2006 sketch plan is expired and the current sketch plan will not be considered as a major amendment. The 2006 sketch plan area totaled 2,003 acres and proposed 8,577 dwelling units with a mix of residential densities; 4 & 6 Dwelling Units (DU)/acre per acre single-family detached houses, 8 DU/acre townhomes, and 14 DU/acre apartments. The PUD also included 68 acres of commercial use, several school sites, 30 acres of neighborhood parks, 57 acres of community parks, and 258 acres of open space.

The proposed Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows sketch plan totals 1,520 acres and is proposes 5,440 attached and detached housing units. However, it does not clearly identify the location of different residential densities because single-family detached housing is shown as 1-10 DU/ace, and multi-family residential

areas are shown as 12-24 DU/acre. These wide ranges are not consistent with typical sketch plan applications. As submitted, the sketch plan lacks sufficient detail to evaluate different land uses, residential densities, circulation patterns, and considerations of proposed park locations, open spaces, and trail corridors.

El Paso County Master Plan

The El Paso County Master Plan (5/16/2021) is a comprehensive plan that guides growth in El Paso County. The plan uses “placetypes” to define future land use and development. The placetypes classify areas based on character, scale, form and function. Per the master plan, the area encompassing the Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows sketch plan are identified as being a suburban placetype which is primarily single-family detached housing with densities up to 5 DU/acre, and supporting multi-family, parks, commercial, and retail. The proposed Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows sketch plan outlines single-family detached housing greater than 5 DU/acre across 69% of the site. This density exceeds the maximum densities for a suburban placetype and would be more in-line with an urban placetype. Staff has concerns that this sketch plan is not following the El Paso County Master Plan and residential densities should be lowered accordingly.

Additionally, staff notes there is a lack of commercial zoned areas to support the residential zoned areas in the revised sketch plan. This is concerning because there is currently no commercial development along Bradley Road and the nearest regional commercial center is seven miles from the project site. One purpose of a PUD zone is to include a mix of uses. Without commercial areas, the development will generate additional trips outside the sketch plan area. The sketch plan proposes 5,440 dwelling units. At 2.5 people per dwelling unit this equates to 13,600 people taking trips outside the sketch plan area for daily necessities.

Recreational Trails

The El Paso County Parks Master Plan shows regional trails within the vicinity of the project. The proposed Curtis Road Bicycle Route follows Bradley Road east and west through the middle of the site. The proposed bicycle route will be accommodated within the public right-of-way in the future, so no easement requests are necessary at that location. However, the proposed Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Trail would be impacted by this project. The proposed Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Trail will run east and west along the south side of the Bull Hill project site. This proposed trail is a tier I primary regional trail that connects to a completed section of the trail in the Lorson Ranch subdivision. Long-term, this trail will connect the city of Fountain to neighborhoods east of Colorado Springs and Corral Bluffs Open Space.

The letter of intent mentions that the powerline easement is a potential trail corridor which may provide trail connections to adjoining neighborhoods. However, there are no trail corridors shown on the sketch plan drawings. Consistent with the Land Development Code (LDC) guidelines for sketch plan applications, staff requests that the applicant show all public trails, including County and non-county trails and bicycle routes on the sketch plan drawings. It would also be helpful to better understand how trail connectivity will be provided across major roadways such as Bradley Road and to adjoining subdivisions such as Lorson Ranch.



Parks staff notes that three future school sites are identified on the Sketch Plan. The applicant is encouraged to work with Widefield School District to centrally locate future schools and incorporate public trail connections.

County Parks requests trail easements where development projects impact proposed County trails. As it pertains to this application, there are no dedications required at this time. County Parks will be making easement requests on subsequent applications to provide a 25-foot public trail easement along the south side of the Bull Hill subdivision that allows for public access, as well as construction and maintenance by El Paso County of the Jimmy Camp Creek Primary Regional Trail.

Open Space

The El Paso County Parks Master Plan shows the Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creek candidate open space area intersects more than half of the site. A candidate open space area is a place identified as having significant natural resource values. Natural resource values for the Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creek areas include floodplain, riparian, and native shortgrass prairie vegetation. Preserving floodplains help to reduce sediment and pollution into the watershed. These areas can also serve as recreation. The applicant is proposing a dedication of open space that would exceed the 10% minimum requirement for PUD zoning by providing 221.1 acres (20.6%) of open space. The proposed open space is broken out into the following types:

Powerline easement: 76.5 acres, (35% of open space)

Parks: 12 acres, (5% of open space)

Floodplain: 133.6 acres (60% of open space)

Staff notes that the calculation of open space in the letter of intent is not correct. Per the LDC, the 10% PUD open space is calculated from the gross site area. The applicant subtracts 61.8 acres of school sites from the gross site area, and then calculates the 10% open space requirement. The open space calculations include school sites as part of the gross site area. The calculation should be $1,138.4 \text{ total acres} \times 10\% = 113.8 \text{ acres of open space}$.

The letter of intent states that open space provided will be cumulative across the whole site and that a minimum of 25% of the required open space acreage will be usable open space for the benefit of all residents as required by the LDC. Of the required 113.8 acres of open space, 25% would equate to 28.45 acres of usable open space. Currently the sketch plan is only showing 12 acres of park lands (5%). Most of the provided open space is along the powerline easement or floodplain (94%). The powerline easement, floodplains, and various detention/retention ponds are not considered usable. Portions of the powerline easement and floodplain may be considered usable if they are developed into trail corridors. Additionally, detention facilities can only account for up to 10% of open space dedications, or $113.8 \times 10\% = 11.38$ acres. County Parks is requesting the applicant provide a more detailed breakdown of open space tracts to better determine what is usable to ensure LDC requirements are being met.



Parks

The LDC states the standard for park land dedication shall be 4 acres of land per 1,000 projected residents and that the number of projected residents shall be based on 2.5 residents per dwelling unit. Given this formula, and the 5,440 dwelling units proposed, the Rolling Meadows / Bull Hill area would be home to 13,600 residents, which equates to 54.4 acres of park lands. **The proposed 12 acres of parks is 42.4 acres less than the standard park land dedication.** Parks staff strongly encourages the applicant to meet this requirement as development moves forward, starting with identifying conceptual open space areas in the sketch plan. The breakdown of required urban parks is as follows:

- a. Neighborhood park standard is 1.5 acres of park land per 1,000 projected residents or 0.00375 acres of park land for each dwelling unit. 5,440 dwelling units equates to 20.4 acres of neighborhood park lands.
- b. Community park standard is 2.5 acres of park land per 1,000 projected residents or 0.00625 acres of park land for each dwelling unit. 5,440 dwelling units equates to 34 acres of community park lands.

Per the LDC, the minimum size for a neighborhood park is 3 acres. Neighborhood parks should be located within ½-mile radius of the residential units they serve. The minimum size for a community park is 24 acres. Community parks should be located within a 1-mile radius of the residential communities they serve. Because the project site is bisected by Bradley Road, staff strongly encourages the applicant provide two community park locations. Supporting neighborhood parks should also be equally distributed throughout the sketch plan area.

The sketch plan amendment shows what appear to be neighborhood parks on the plan, but the size is not specified. The letter of intent states that the parks are pocket parks which are typically less than 1 acre in size. There does not appear to be any community parks of a minimum 24-acre size on the plan. This is a deficiency that should be addressed. Pocket parks are not intended to solely serve a community of 5,440 dwelling units.

The sketch plan area lies within a Candidate Regional Park area of the El Paso County Parks Master Plan. The area was developed by overlapping areas of high conservation values with high growth parts of the county that are underserved by regional parks. A mix of outdoor recreation opportunities is needed in this are of the County. The nearest regional park to the proposed sketch plan area would be Fountain Creek Regional Park, which is seven miles to the southeast.

Required park land dedication or El Paso County regional and urban park fees will be determined as phased development progresses. Potential fees in lieu of park land dedications for the proposed 5,440 dwelling units would be significant. El Paso County Parks is open to conversations with the applicant to provide credits against required regional park and urban park fees through various Park Lands Agreements (PLA).



Potential urban park land dedications would be for smaller community / neighborhood park sites. To qualify for an urban PLA, the park would have to meet the minimum size as outlined in the LDC for a neighborhood or community park. Park improvements would have to be of good quality, provide adequate recreational opportunities, and their costs must exceed the urban park fees for the filing in which the park is located.

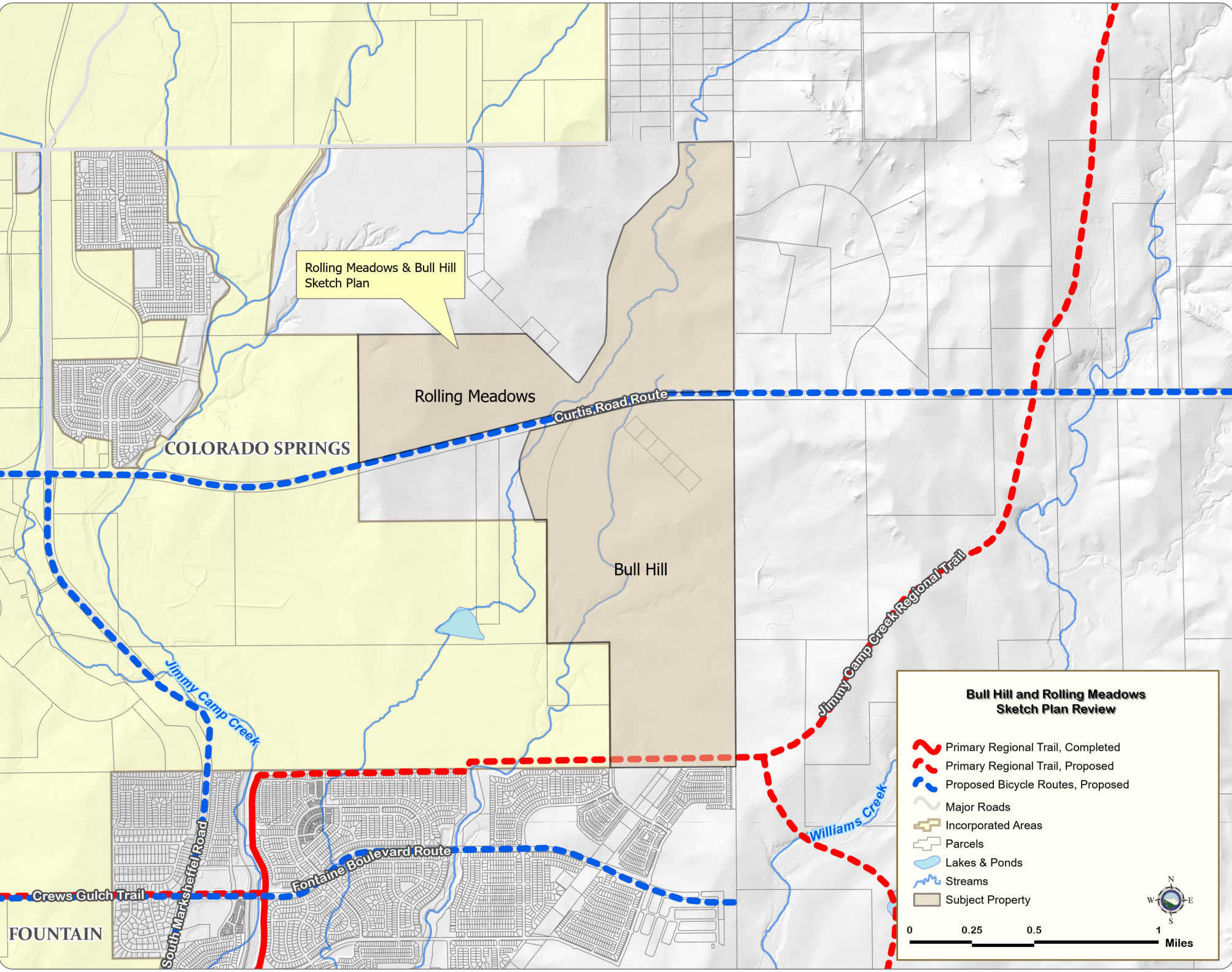
These comments are being provided administratively, and this sketch plan will not be presented to the El Paso County Park Advisory Board. We appreciate this opportunity to provide these comments and ask that the applicant reach out to our department to discuss these comments and potential regional and urban park dedication opportunities.

Sincerely,

Greg Stachon
Landscape Architect
El Paso County Parks and Community Services
GregStachon@elpasoco.com

Cc:
Todd Marts, El Paso County Parks and Community Services Director
Jason Meyer, El Paso County Parks Planning Manager





Rolling Meadows & Bull Hill Sketch Plan

Rolling Meadows

COLORADO SPRINGS

Curtis Road Route

Bull Hill

Jimmy Camp Creek

Williams Creek

FOUNTAIN

South Marksheffel Road

Fontaine Boulevard Route

Crews Gulch Trail

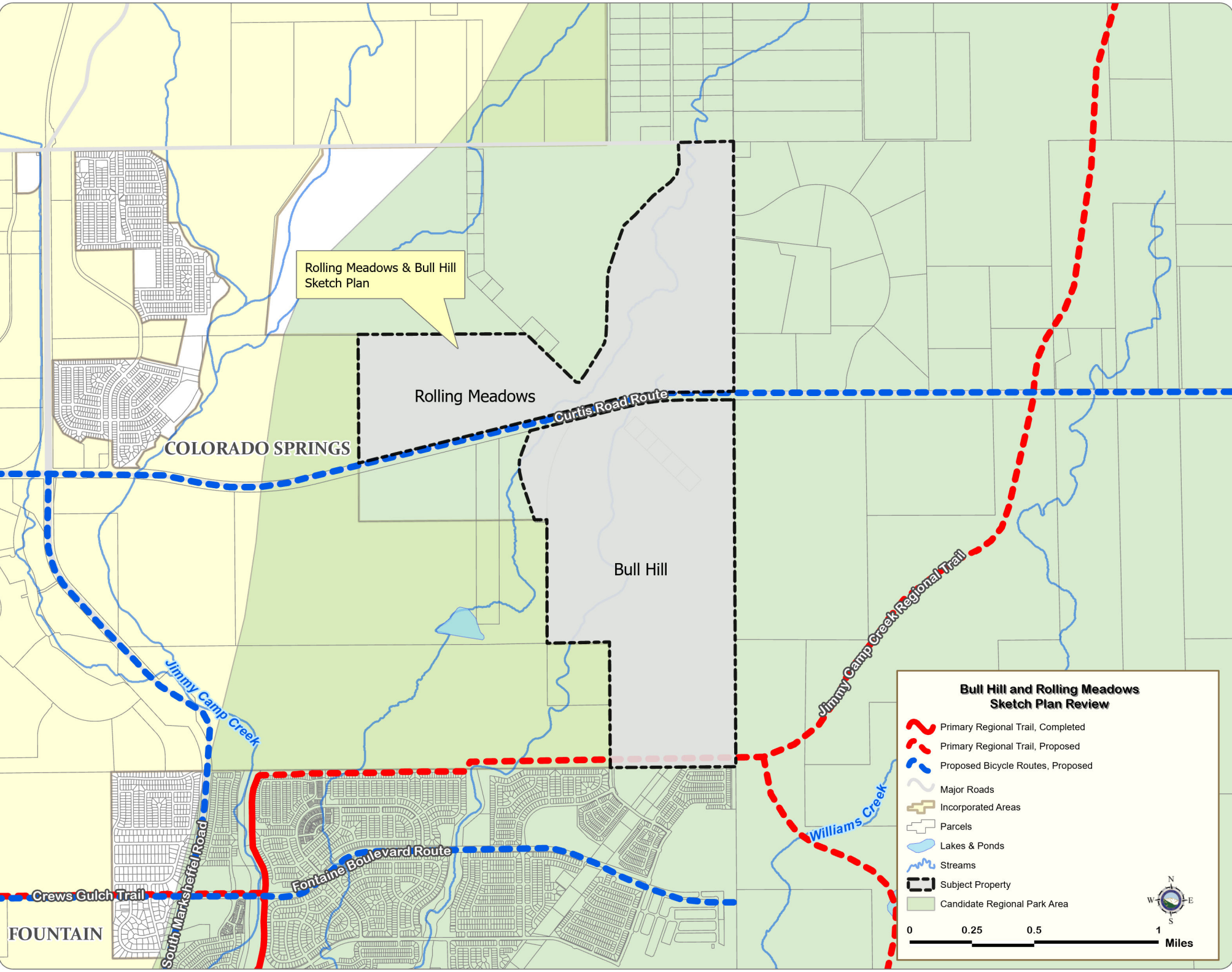
Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Trail

Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows Sketch Plan Review

- Primary Regional Trail, Completed
- Primary Regional Trail, Proposed
- Proposed Bicycle Routes, Proposed
- Major Roads
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams
- Subject Property

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

N
W E
S



Rolling Meadows & Bull Hill Sketch Plan

Rolling Meadows

Bull Hill

COLORADO SPRINGS

FOUNTAIN

Curtis Road Route

Jimmy Camp Creek

Williams Creek

Fontaine Boulevard Route

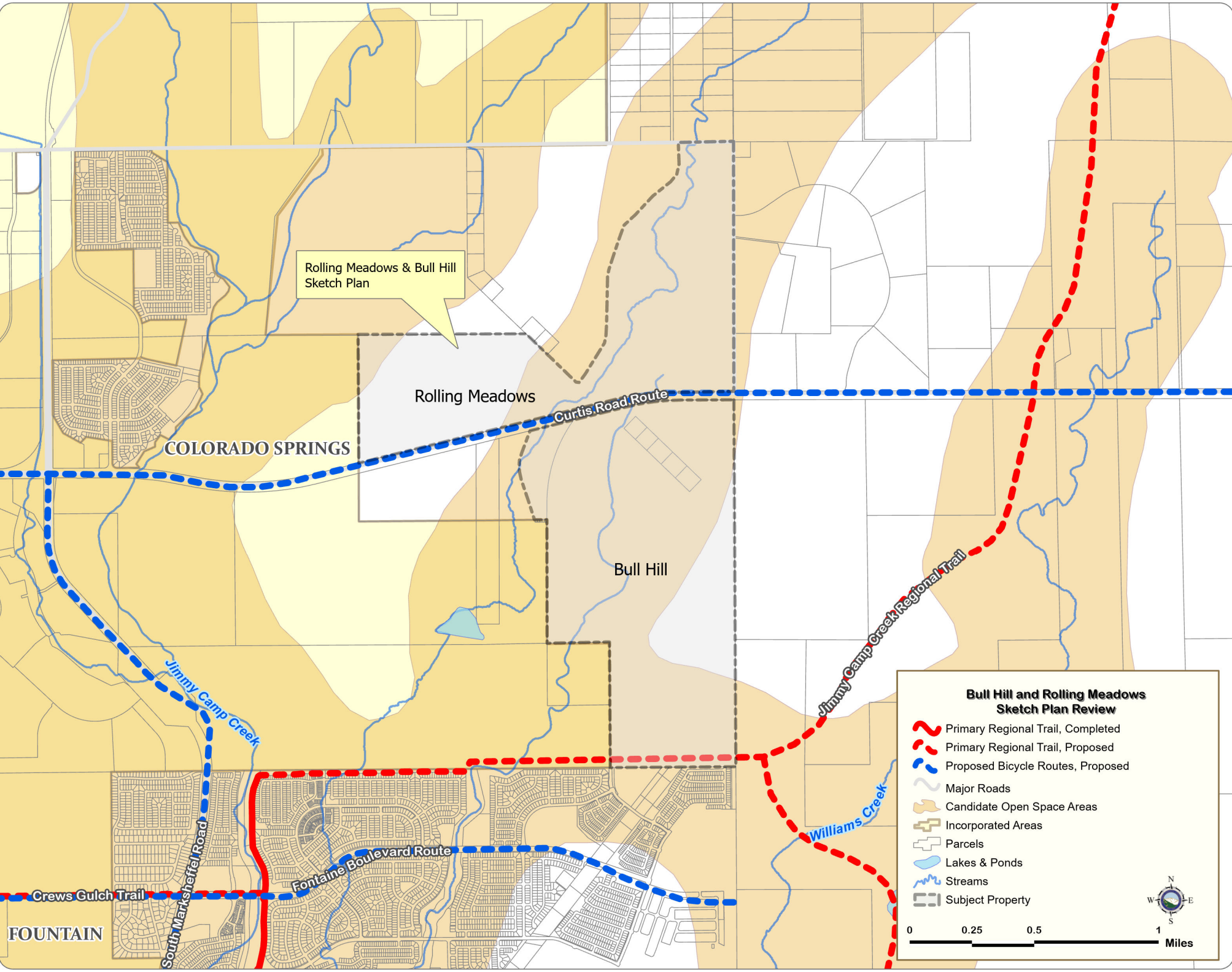
South Marksheffel Road

Crews Gulch Trail

Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows Sketch Plan Review

- Primary Regional Trail, Completed
- Primary Regional Trail, Proposed
- Proposed Bicycle Routes, Proposed
- Major Roads
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams
- Subject Property
- Candidate Regional Park Area

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Rolling Meadows & Bull Hill Sketch Plan

Rolling Meadows

Curtis Road Route

COLORADO SPRINGS

Bull Hill

Jimmy Camp Creek

Williams Creek

Crews Gulch Trail

Fontaine Boulevard Route

South Marksheffel Road

FOUNTAIN

Bull Hill and Rolling Meadows Sketch Plan Review

- Primary Regional Trail, Completed
- Primary Regional Trail, Proposed
- Proposed Bicycle Routes, Proposed
- Major Roads
- Candidate Open Space Areas
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams
- Subject Property

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles