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MEMORANDUM

To: New Mexico Department of Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources
From: Jean Crowther, Project Manager, Alta Planning + Design
Date: May 17, 2018
Re: Rio Grande Trail Commission Update

Overview

At the March 2018 meeting of the Rio Grande Trail Commission (RGTC), the consultant team of the Rio Grande Trail Master Plan provided a summary of:

1. highlights of all master plan outreach to-date,
2. preliminary examples of trail facility types,
3. examples of new route alternatives the team has identified,
4. the approach to determining a draft preferred alignment; and
5. a recommendation to establish a nonprofit that will serve a key role in trail development fundraising and trail oversight.

This memo offers an interim update on consultant work, related to new draft materials that will be shared in advance of the June 12th RGTC meeting. The consultant team has continued ongoing outreach to stakeholders and engagement of Work Group members to influence draft materials. The team is developing:

1) Draft preferred alignment

The consultant team is developing an online map for Commission members to view the draft preferred alignment across the full length of the state. We are also preparing formatted (PDF) maps of the draft preferred route in each county. Once the Commission has provided feedback and given guidance on the preferred route, the team's next step will be to add greater detail to each segment related to access points, recommended trail type, and planning-level cost estimates.

2) Design guidance

Design guidance begins with a spectrum of the different types of trails that will exist on the Rio Grande Trail – from an urban segment to a backcountry trail. The consultant team is developing design guidance for each type of trail in the spectrum. The document is being developed as a common reference book for a variety of partners along the trail corridor – state parks, regional planning agencies, irrigation districts, federal land managers, local governments, and more – all of whom will be involved in designing/building individual segments of the Rio Grande Trail. Key land owner and/or implementation partners will be asked to provide feedback on the full guidelines. The Users and Design & Management Work Groups have provided guidance and will review the full draft.

3) Recommendation for trail oversight

In March, the RGTC reviewed a memo, *Creation of a Rio Grande Trail Non-Profit*, that recommended the establishment of a Rio Grande Trail non-profit to play a leading role in the state's efforts to create the Rio Grande Trail. Based on feedback at that meeting, the consultant team was given the go-ahead to further develop this concept as part of the *Rio Grande Trail Master Plan's* management and maintenance recommendations. The full draft chapter of management guidance will be shared for RGTC review prior to the June 12th meeting. The Users and Design & Management Work Groups have provided guidance and will review a full draft.

4) Project Schedule

The project team will incorporate feedback from the RGTC, work groups, and other stakeholders during the month of June. Feedback at this stage is important. The next step will be to finalize the routing/recommendations to-date and develop an implementation strategy (funding, agency coordination, etc). The team will work with the Communications and Interagency Work Groups to more broadly share the draft plan's concepts through online public outreach and informational meetings in August.