

CITY OF FORT COLLINS STRATEGIC TRAILS PLAN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

PHASE 1 | MARCH - JUNE 2024

OVERVIEW

This summary presents key constituent and community engagement strategies and results that took place from March through June 2024. This stage of outreach included a series of engagement opportunities that engaged approximately 1,826 Fort Collins constituents and community members at the time of this report.

The STP Project Management Team and planning consultants (the project team) utilized a variety of engagement tools to gather valuable feedback from the community regarding their experiences, challenges, opportunities, and values related to Fort Collins paved trails. The purpose of these conversations was to:

- Introduce the project and stimulate community-wide awareness of the planning effort
- Solicit candid feedback from a broad cross-section of the Fort Collins community
- Identify key themes, opportunities, local values, preferences, and needs related to paved trails in Fort Collins

This section is organized into four parts:

1. Summary of Phase 1 events and engagement opportunities
2. Methodology: event format or outreach strategy
3. Results Summary: key themes and takeaways from each engagement
4. Appendix: complete engagement results

PHASE 1 EVENTS

Date	Event	Location	Number of Attendees/ Respondents
3/4/24	Community Working Group Meeting # 1	215 N. Mason St.	13
4/1-6/1/24	Our City STP Webpage Hits	Virtual	2.3k Aware Visitors
4/1/24 – 5/1/2024	Online Interactive Map Commenting #1	Virtual	400
4/1 – 5/1/2024	Questionnaire (qualitative)	Virtual	947
4/1 – 4/30/2024	Meetings with various trail user group Executive Directors	Hybrid	4
4/15/24	Community-wide Public Meeting #1	Northside Atzlan Community Center	77
4/18/24	City Council Memorandum	Virtual	7
4/22/24	CSU Earth Day Pop-up Engagement	Lory Student Center	114
4/24/24	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting #1	Parks Dept. offices	9
4/28/24	Kids in the Park Pop-up Engagement	Twin Silo Park	
5/8/24	Power Trail and Harmony Underpass Open House	Kruse Elementary	200

Date	Event	Location	Number of Attendees/ Respondents
5/16/24	Disability Advisory Board Meeting #1	Virtual	12
5/20/24	Active Modes Advisory Board Meeting #1	281 North College	Sent Memo
5/20/24	Neighborhood Meeting #1 of 7: Skyview North and South	Skyview North Park	12
5/29/24 & 6/11/24	Community Working Group Meetings #2 & #3	215 N. Mason St.	16
6/10/24	Super Issues Board Meeting	Lincoln Center	15
TOTAL ENGAGED			1,826

RESULTS SUMMARY

Over a 12-week period from March through June, the project team engaged Fort Collins constituents and community members through a variety of methods including in-person and online engagement opportunities. Each engagement strategy, as well as a high-level summary of the key points and takeaways from each engagement event are provided below. Key themes that emerged consistently across all engagement opportunities are highlighted on the right side of each page below. For additional details, see the complete engagement results at the end of this document.

Community Working Group Meeting #1

To guide the direction and development of the STP, the STP project manager convened a Community Working Group (CWG) comprised of representatives from pertinent local organizations and City boards.

The first CWG meeting was held on March 4, 2024 at the Park Planning and Development office with representatives from the cycling community, CSU transportation, CSU Geospatial Centroid, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Chichas end Bicicleta, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, and the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization. A member of the Active Modes Advisory Board will be selected to participate on the CWG at the May 20th AMAB meeting. The CWG reviewed the STP project charter, community engagement plan, and identified project risks, opportunities, and draft project goals.

Emerging Theme

TRAILS FOR ALL. Everyone should have access to trail opportunities and the planning and design of trails should account for the great variation in abilities, cultural backgrounds, modes of movement, and diversity of the community.

- Utilize Safe Routes to School as a gap analysis that identifies routes that require students to be driven to school because they are not safe for walking or biking
- Emphasize that the Plan includes diverse user groups (e.g. equestrian, disability) and not just bikes, with priority projects that benefit both commuters and recreators
- Ensure that community outreach includes Spanish speakers and CSU student involvement
- Identify the best investment and make the choice easy for Council and/or grant funders rather than pitting projects against one another
- Ditches, a potential bike park that is also open to youths, and trail categories are likely challenges for planning
- Assess if the paved trail system is meeting the needs of the community and determine opportunities and challenges
- Develop a shared community vision for how the paved trail system can be maintained and expanded to address the current and future needs of an ever-changing and growing community
- Be transparent about guidelines, standards, and processes for trail funding, planning, design, and construction

- The majority of comment pins appear to be placed north of Drake Road.
- The Poudre River and Spring Creek Trails received a higher concentration of comments than other major paved trails maintained by Park Planning and Development. The Mason Trail also received a significant number of comments, although it is managed by the City's Transportation Department.
- Comments in the northeast quadrant of the City were strongly focused on identifying new connections in existing and planned neighborhoods north of Mulberry.
- Comments in the northwest quadrant of the City identified desired trails along canals and ditches, and underscored the importance of a trail or active transportation solution along the Overland Road corridor.
- In the southeast quadrant, comments were concentrated along Spring Creek Trail and identified the need for improvements and maintenance in many locations. Several commentors specifically identified the Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal corridor as a desirable trail location.
- Comments in the southeast quadrant were concentrated along the Power Trail and many identified the need for an east-west connection between the Power Trail and College Ave. corridor or Mason Trail. Harmony and Trilby Road were identified by participants as urgent needs for safe grade separated crossings and trail facilities along these corridors.
- To review all comments, visit the [interactive map at this link](#).



Online Questionnaire #1

The first community-wide online questionnaire launched on April 1 and collected responses through May 1, 2024. The questionnaire was structured to gauge community satisfaction, attitudes, and perceptions, identify barriers to trail use, understand mode type and frequency of use, and understand what factors may increase trail use. A total of 947 responses were collected. Full results are presented [here](#). Staff synthesized results and summarized key themes below.

Results

When asked to identify ways to better balance the needs of various types of trail users, the community responded with suggestions that have been broken out into seven different key themes.

1. New Amenity

- Investments in the addition of new amenities to the trail system could help curb some of the challenges experienced on the trails. Community members suggested the inclusion of more trees and benches on the trails to enhance the user experience with an emphasis on more lighting in certain areas throughout town. The most common amenity requested was increased signage to help communicate wayfinding, speed limits, and overall trail etiquette suggestions.

Sample response: "More signage/education about keeping right and passing on the left. Information about where drinking water and bathrooms are available."

2. Connectivity & Expansion

- With the increase in density and population growth, the desire for better connectivity and more trails appeared as a common response. Reasons for an expanded system included safer mobility access, missing neighborhood connections, and accommodating the overall increase in population and users on the trail system.

Sample response: "Continue to build more trails, more connectivity so users can disperse and access close to home, schools, and for commuting. Add more connected, peripheral trails that increase recreation access close to more neighborhoods around the city,

including soft-surface trails which can be used by those riding bikes, running, and more...”

3. Infrastructure Replacement/Improvement

- While many of the questionnaire responses expressed a desire for overall expansion of the trail system, there was also a clear focus on identifying and addressing existing areas of trail infrastructure in need of improvement, rehabilitation, or replacement. Many community members suggested replacing or improving intersections to reduce the interactions between trail users and vehicles. Many responses also indicated the addition of a painted center line, or dedicated lanes could help reduce user conflicts.

Sample response: “Create separate lanes on the paved trails for pedestrians and cyclists.”

4. Maintenance

- Overall maintenance and condition of the trail system was indicated as an opportunity for improvement to help with the overall usage of the trail system. Focusing on trash pickup and tree/plant care adjacent to the trails could help to address concerns with blind and tight corners. Many community members reported concerns with the upkeep of the overall trail surfaces leading to poor drainage, cracks in the concrete, and poor bridge transitions.

Sample response: “Clear foliage around blind curves to increase visibility...”

5. Multi-User Interactions

- With the increase in various user types on the trails, many residents expressed the desire for education for trail use etiquette with a significant focus on bike and pedestrian interactions. The convergence of different speeds of travel on the trail was a significant concern and many responses suggested a focus on speed as a way to alleviate potential points of conflict between different user types.

Sample response: “More education on trail etiquette. Too many people do not use audible signals with passing or take up the whole trail without paying attention to their surroundings.”

6. Trail Widening & Adjacent Soft Surfaces

- With the increase in density and the growth in population, many community members urged the inclusion of more adjacent soft surface trails, wider trail standards, and the widening of existing trails.

Sample response: “If the trails were a bit wider, it would be easier to pass and be passed. Additionally, having more dedicated gravel paths alongside the trails would help runners enjoy the trails, and to keep them clearer!”

7. E-Bikes/Micro Mobility Devices

- The use of E-Bikes and other micro mobility devices was mentioned as having a significant impact on the multi-use interaction on the trail system. While the initial feedback gathered by this questionnaire spoke to E-Bikes, a more focused survey will be taking place in partnership with the Active Modes Department to address how best to accommodate these new forms of micro mobility on the trail system.

Community Open House #1

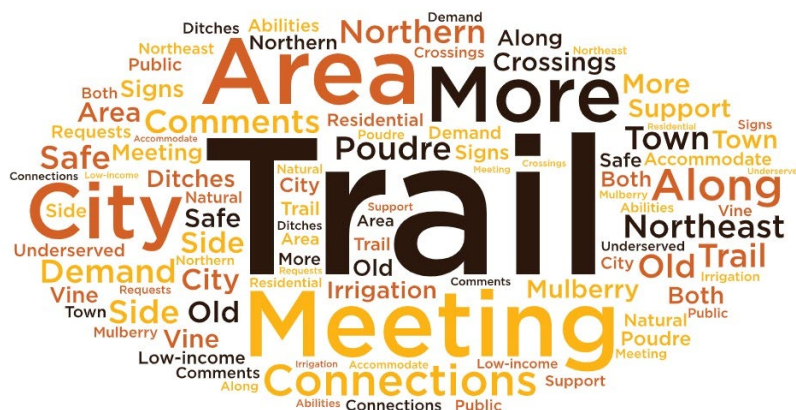
The first of four planned public events for the STP was held on April 15, 2024 to provide a formal in-person opportunity for the community to be introduced to the planning process and provide input on needs, preferences, challenges, and satisfaction with paved trails. The open house included multiple

informational posters with pertinent plan information and write-in questions, and a large 6x8ft. floor map that allowed attendees to use sticky notes and yarn to identify locations for new trails. Translated materials and Spanish interpretation services were also provided. Seventy-seven community members attended the open house.

- The meeting was held in the northern part of the City, therefore comments were representative of this area signifying a demand for more trails and connections on the northeast side of the City, including connections to Old Town, the Poudre Trail, and more safe crossings and trails along Mulberry at I-25 and Vine St.
- Support for trails along irrigation ditches



- Desire for trail signs in both Spanish and English
- Ensure that there are trails that can accommodate all abilities
- Provide trails in underserved and low-income residential areas as well as trails in natural areas
- Requests for engagement through a variety of methods, including open houses, emails, hybrid meetings, surveys, and public meetings



Pop-up Engagement

Throughout the spring, the project team capitalized on opportunities for “pop-up” table engagement at already-occurring events with interactive engagement activities to increase awareness of the planning process and solicit feedback and input on key concepts and ideas. Events included:

- Colorado State University Earth Day (4/22/24)
- Kids in the Park (4/28/24)
- Power Trail & Harmony Underpass Open House (5/8/24)

City Boards

The project team presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (4/24/24) and Disability Advisory (5/16/24) Board, at their regularly scheduled meetings in April and May. The presentation addressed the STP scope of work, goals, objectives, and discussed the overall future vision for paved trails.

Neighborhood Meeting #1: Skyview

The project team held its first neighborhood meeting in the Skyview neighborhoods on May 20, 2024. The on-site meeting was attended by residents of the area, Council Member Potyondy, and a representative from Fort Collins Natural Areas to discuss the potential for a connection from Skyview to the Fossil Creek Trail.

Outreach to Fort Collins Trail User Groups and Advocates

In April 2024, The City’s project manager met individually with the executive directors of several local trail user advocacy groups including Bike Fort Collins, Your Group Ride, Overland Mountain Bicycle Association, and the Wolfpack youth mountain-biking program. The meetings introduced the STP project, an invitation for each organization to involve their membership in the STP engagement opportunities and collaborate on future engagement events.



Emerging Theme

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS.

Priority connections for the community include schools, parks, Natural Areas, and linkages to *other* trails.

Emerging Theme

INTERCONNECTED NETWORK.

Trails are key component of the City’s system of facilities for active transportation and recreation and should be considered congruently with those facilities to provide a seamless and safe user experience.



Community Working Group Meetings #2 & #3

The Community Working Group met twice in late Spring to review preliminary analysis of opportunities and challenges to trail development, evaluate connectivity needs, known gaps, and potential new alignments. The CWG received an update on the results of community engagement and provided feedback on proposed trails through mapping activities. The May 29, 2024 meeting focused on proposed trails in the northern half of the City and the June 11, 2024 meeting focused on trails in the southern half.

Super Issue Meeting

On June 10th, 2024 the City held its second triannual Super Issue meeting that convenes all of the City's appointed boards and commissions in a single meeting for the purpose of in engaging in discussion of broader policy issues and matters not specifically identified in the

stated function of each board or commission. These "super issue" meetings provide an opportunity for boards and commissions to come together to learn about and discuss key topics or issues. The STP and Natural Areas Strategic Framework Plan combined forces to present each project as well as highlight the overlap between the two and coordination to support City Council's goal of achieving the 15-minute City. Superboard attendees briefly reviewed the proposed trails map and provided feedback.

PHASE 2 | JULY - NOVEMBER 2024

OVERVIEW

This summary presents key constituent and community engagement strategies and results that took place from June through November 2024. This stage of outreach included a series of engagement opportunities that engaged approximately 2,466 Fort Collins constituents and community members at the time of this report.

The STP Project Management Team and planning consultants (the project team) utilized a variety of engagement tools to gather valuable feedback from the community on the proposed trail maps, cross-agency opportunities for partnership and collaboration, and shared regional values related to paved trails. The purpose of these conversations was to:

- Continue to stimulate community-wide awareness of the planning effort
- Solicit specific feedback on the proposed trails map and future connections
- Generate regional collaboration, inspiration, and identify future opportunities for partnerships

This section is organized into four parts:

1. Summary of Phase 2 events and engagement opportunities
2. Methodology: event format or outreach strategy
3. Results Summary: key themes and takeaways from each engagement
4. Appendix: complete engagement results

PHASE 2 EVENTS

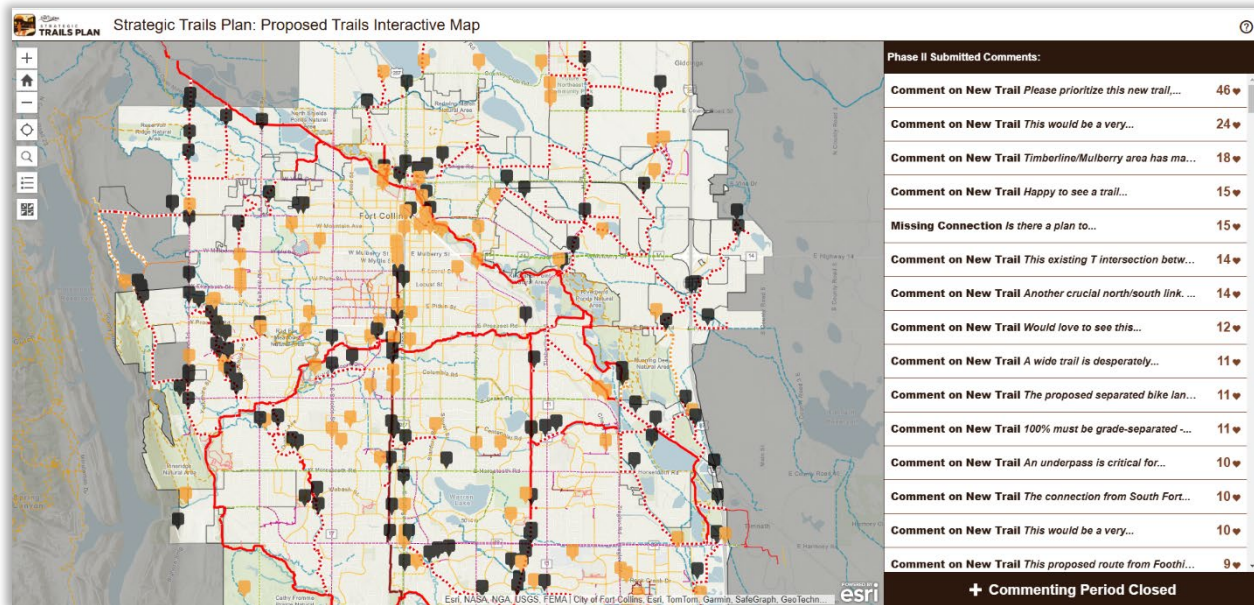
Date	Event	Location	Number of Attendees/ Respondents
6/1/24 – 11/25/2024	Our City STP Webpage Hits	Virtual	1.4k Aware Visitors
9/1/2024 – 10/1/2024	Which Wheels Go Where? Questionnaire	Virtual	1,478
6/26/24	Summer Bike to Work Day	Poudre River Trail at Lee Martinez Park	207
7/10/24	Land Conservation Stewardship Board	Nix Farm	7
7/19/2024 – 9/3/2024	Online Interactive Proposed Trails Map Review	Virtual	~500
7/22/2024	Climate Equity Committee	Virtual	10
7/27/24	Hickory Village Mobile Home Park Resource Fair	400 Hickory Street	46
8/13/2024	City Council Work Session	City Council Chambers	6
9/5/2024	Youth Advisory Board	215 N Mason St	9
9/11/2024	Senior Advisory Board	Senior Center	6
9/15/2024	Open Streets Fair	Shields St.	~14,000
9/26/2024	Northern Colorado Trails Summit	The Agave Room, Fort Collins	189
11/20/2024	Natural Resources Advisory Board	Hybrid	8

RESULTS SUMMARY

Each engagement strategy, as well as a high-level summary of the key points and takeaways from each engagement event are provided below. Key themes that emerged consistently across all engagement opportunities are highlighted on the right side of the page. For additional details, see the complete engagement results at the end of this document.

Online Interactive Map

From August 19 – September 3, 2024, an online interactive map presented proposed trails and collected community feedback on the proposed routes, missing connections, and other feedback through geo-located comments on the map. In total, 248 pins or comments were placed on the map with 177 replies to the comments and 712 “likes.”



Results

- Total number of unique comments: 248
 - Comment on New Trail: 156
 - Comment on Missing Connection: 92
- Total number of replies: 177
- Total number of votes/hearts/likes: 7121
- Top five most “liked” comments:
 - *“Please prioritize this new trail, and don’t wait to start work on it. This connection is so badly needed! This area is frequently forgotten by the city in other efforts and I’m so happy to see it here. Connecting the neighborhoods in the northeast will allow so many families to participate in what makes Fort Collins special.”* (Location: Country Club Road and Turnberry intersection;46 “likes” or votes)
 - *“This would be a very valuable new N/S trail connection to increase bike commuting for those on the west side of town to get around. It would be invaluable for those commuting to and from the Harmony Library, FRCC, and the new Montessori charter school at ‘Harmony/Shields. There aren’t many N/S bike trails on the west side of town.”* (Location: Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal east of Westbrooke Court;24 “likes” or votes)

Emerging Theme

COMPLEMENT ON-STREET INFRASTRUCTURE. Trails should complement, not replace on-street bicycle infrastructure

Emerging Theme

PROTECT PRIVACY. Homeowner concern for loss of privacy if trails are developed within irrigation ditch corridors and close to homes.

- *“Timberline/Mulberry area has many businesses but is dangerous to access by bike, even though it’s not physically far from downtown or the Poudre Trail. This trail connection to the Spring Creek Trail is important and timely.”* (Location: Timberline Road and Mulberry intersection; 18 “likes” or votes)
- *“Happy to see a trail along this canal and through the Foothills Campus.”* (Dixon Canal at north end of Maxwell Natural Area ; 15 “likes” or votes)
- *“Is there a plan to cross the railroad here? There is currently no safe way to cross the railroad between the Power Trail and SE Fort Collins.”* (Location: intersection of the Power Trail, Mail Creek Ditch, and Union Pacific Railroad ; 15 “likes” or votes)
- Comments demonstrated strong support for NE Fort Collins trails and a desire for the City to possibly explore interim solutions to improve active transportation in the near term while development continues.
- Demand for additional grade separated crossings of Union Pacific Railroad to access the Power Trail.
- Neighborhood tensions between residents who desire a paved trail along the Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal and those who prefer to see the trail remain natural surface.
- Concern along Overland Road corridor that trail infrastructure will replace existing bicycle infrastructure.

Emerging Theme

NEW TRAILS IN THE NORTHEAST. Strong support for investment in NE Fort Collins trails and interim facilities while future development processes unfold.

Emerging Theme

TRAIL SAFETY EDUCATION. Need for additional trail safety education regarding user behaviors/etiquette.

Northern Colorado Trails Summit

On Thursday, Sept. 26, the STP project team hosted the inaugural Northern Colorado Trails Summit. The event convened nearly 190 representatives from regional trail development agencies, partners, advocates, user groups, and supporters in celebration of the history and accomplishments of paved trail development in Northern Colorado.

The event featured an exhibition hall with local and regional trail projects, organizations, and initiatives where attendees could network, connect, learn, and inspire each other with the multitude of exciting trail-related projects taking place in Northern Colorado.

The Summit highlighted the outstanding regional trail system that our communities enjoy while looking to the future of paved trails through presentations from regional speakers, representing Great Outdoors Colorado, Cache La Poudre River National Heritage Area, and an inspirational keynote address by author and award-winning landscape

Emerging Theme

PARTNERSHIPS PRODUCE RESULTS. Collaborative trail development in Northern Colorado has resulted in the successful completion of numerous projects that connect Fort Collins to neighboring communities. The City should continue to leverage partnerships for a coordinated approach to network development.



architect, Chuck Flink. Attendees enjoyed an exceptional evening connecting, learning, and inspiring each other with the multitude of trail-related projects taking place in Northern Colorado.

Which Wheels Go Where? Questionnaire

The project team partnered with FC Moves to explore the use of human and lightweight electric powered micromobility devices on city facilities, such as, sidewalks, streets, bike lanes, and trails. FC Moves administered a questionnaire regarding the use of these devices to help gauge public attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Common themes from the questionnaire responses included:

Results

- Safety concerns due to speed differentials, yielding the right-of-way, pedestrian safety, and lack of knowledge on traffic rules and proper etiquette
- Focus on infrastructure and regulation including separate paths, clear rules and signage, and enforcement
- Accessibility and mobility for older adults and encouraged alternative transportation
- Suggestions for improvement focusing on speed limits, education and etiquette, and flexibility on rules

Pop-up Engagement

Throughout the summer and fall, the project team capitalized on opportunities for “pop-up” table engagement at already-occurring events with interactive engagement activities to increase awareness of the planning process and solicit feedback and input on key concepts and ideas. Events included:

- Summer Bike to Work Day (6/26/24)
- Open Streets Fair (9/15/2024)

City Boards

The project team presented to the Land Conservation Stewardship Board (7/10/24) Climate Equity Committee (7/22/24), Youth Advisory Board (9/5/2024), Senior Advisory Board (9/11/2024), and Natural Resources Advisory Board (11/20/2024) at their regularly scheduled meetings. The presentations addressed the STP scope of work, goals, objectives, and discussed the overall future vision for paved trails from the perspective of each board.

Results

Considerations and ideas for plan improvement:

General:

- Amenities, such as, more benches, shade structures and additional access to drinking water is needed.
- Better or increased wayfinding would help as would information at kiosks, including more trail map availability.
- The use of e-bikes has been very helpful for all types of people to go further, better manage hilly terrain, and haul cargo (& children)
- Trails do wonderfully at connecting to nature (natural areas + parks)

Safety:

- Promote lights at night for bikes, front and rear
- E-bikers and recreational road bikers need to understand their impact on others in terms of higher speeds and passing without an audible signal
- Promote dogs on leash
- Separation of trail users (bikes & pedestrians) would decrease conflict at high volume areas
- Prioritize maintenance practices (snow removal) near senior residential areas
- Be mindful of people who are hearing or sight impaired
- Some underpasses need better lighting
- Personal security on the trail is a concern

Hickory Village Mobile Home Park Resident Resource Fair

The project team attended the Hickory Village Mobile Home Park Resident Resource Fair on July 27th to increase awareness of the planning process and solicit feedback and input on key concepts and ideas from neighborhood residents. This event was a Spanish-first engagement effort.

Results

- 46 attendees
- Several students use the Hickory spur to the Poudre Trail to get to Lincoln Middle
- Some concern for feelings of security in Soft Gold Park at night and on the Poudre Trail at night in the underpasses
- Connecting the park to the Hickory spur will help further activate this park