

# Rainbow Falls

## MASTER PLAN

PRELIMINARY



Prepared for  
EL PASO COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT

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# Project Introduction

The Rainbow Falls Trails Master Plan was undertaken to accomplish two primary objectives. The first goal was to enhance the Fountain Creek corridor around Rainbow Falls by improving trail and vehicular access, providing amenities such as picnic sites and a trailhead; and addressing safety and environmental concerns throughout the area. The second goal was to improve the Fall's relationship and connection to the surrounding trail network, specifically the Ute Indian Trail and Ute Pass Trail system which is planned to connect Manitou Springs and Woodland Park.



*Existing erosion and accessibility problems*

The planning process was conducted through a collaborative process with the Rainbow Falls-Ute Indian Trail Steering Committee. The committee consisted of the staff and leadership of the El Paso County Parks Department, El Paso County Parks Advisory Board, M.E.C.A (Manitou Environmental Citizens Action Group), Manitou Springs City Council and CDOT.



*Existing trail to Rainbow Falls*

This document was created to serve as a preliminary report to generate discussion about the possibility of enhancing the Rainbow Falls area as a recreational amenity within the framework of the regional trail network. Ongoing discussions with landowners and other stakeholders will be a critical component to the successful realization of this document's goals.

# Preliminary Analysis: Rainbow Falls

A preliminary study of the Rainbow Falls area was conducted to determine all possible trail connections, opportunities, assets and liabilities in the area.

Potential trail alignments were classified into three cost brackets (average, above average and high cost) which correspond to the level of engineering required to construct them. Potential trailhead, picnic and stream crossing opportunities were also designated as a baseline for discussion with the Steering Committee. The initial mapping also illustrates the extent of CDOT right-of-way and environmental (erosion) concern areas.



*Preliminary site analysis of Rainbow Falls area*

# Preliminary Analysis: Regional Trail Connectivity

A preliminary study of the potential connections from Rainbow Falls to the Ute Indian Trail was conducted to identify feasible trail alignments, potential landowner partnerships, easement needs and regional trail circulation patterns. This preliminary study identified three potential trail links based upon topographic suitability, existing informal trails and historic landmarks present in the area.

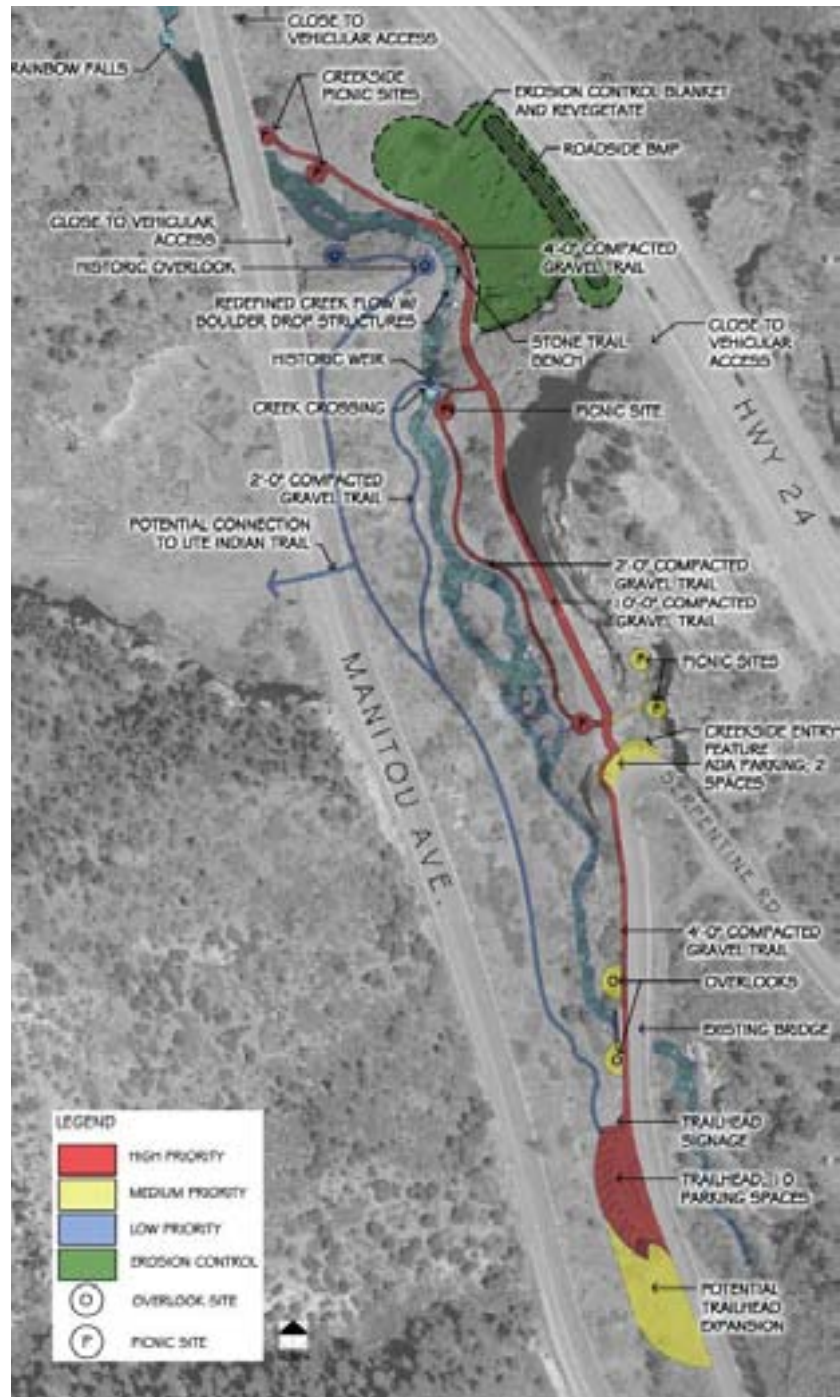


*3-Dimensional study of potential regional trail links to Ute Indian Trail*

# Rainbow Falls: Priority Plan

After discussing the findings of the initial study of the fall's area with the Steering Committee, a second meeting was conducted to determine study area priorities. Further discussion from that meeting led to the creation of a final plan that assigned priority levels to the various proposed elements of the project. The creation of an accessible trail from Serpentine Road to the immediate falls area was deemed the highest priority of the project. Secondary priorities involved improving trailhead parking and providing picnic and creek viewing opportunities. Last, improved access to the historic overlook would provide additional creek and falls viewing opportunities.

Many key actions are required for any of the stated priorities to move forward as projects. A general list of actions are noted in the following pages.



*Rainbow Falls Priority Plan*

# Rainbow Falls: High Priority Elements

## High Priority Project Elements

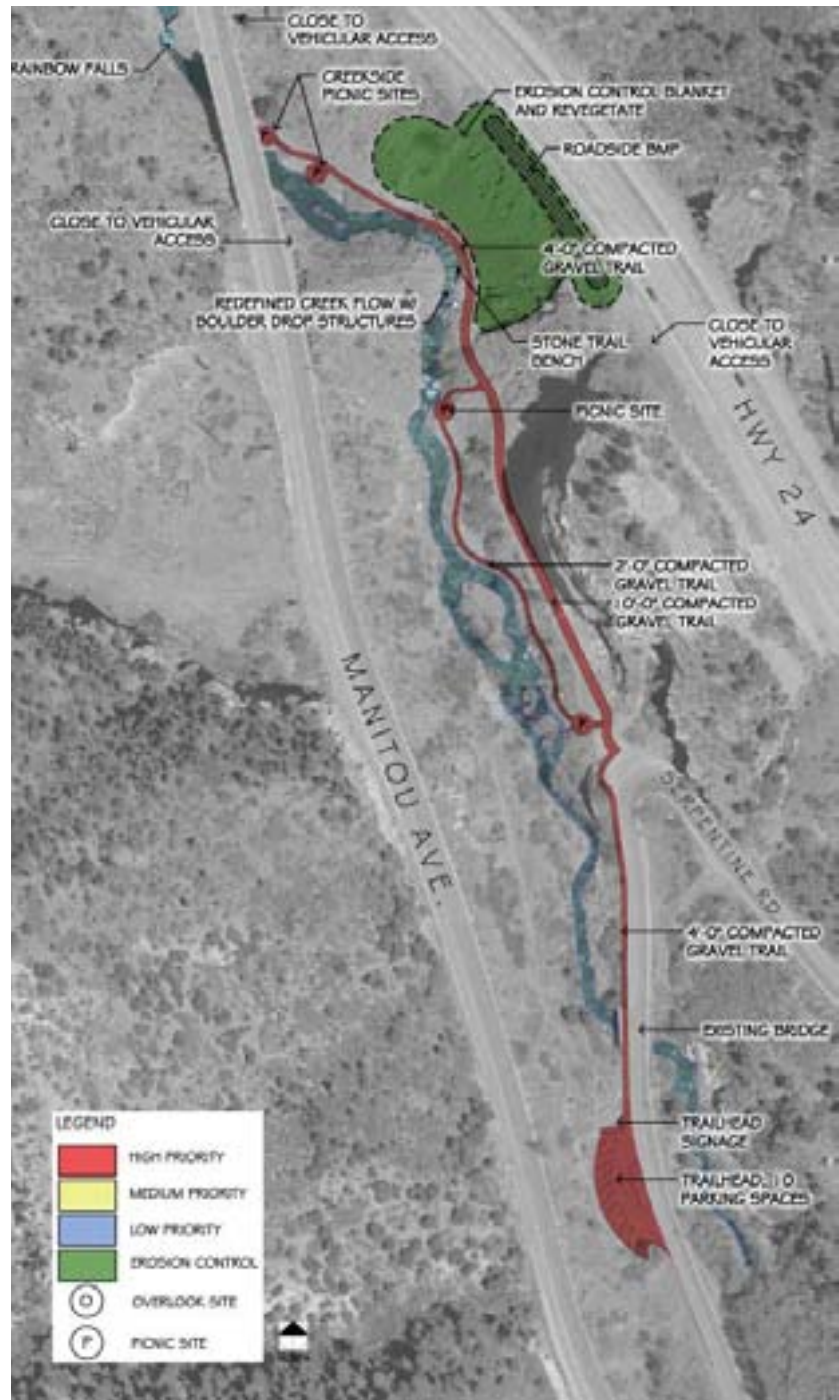
- General "clean-up" of existing trailhead parking
- Proposed Trailhead sign
- Proposed trail from parking to future entryway
- Stabilize existing trail
- Revegetate eroding slope
- Redefine/stabilize slope with stone trail bench and boulder drop structures
- Proposed picnic and creekside destination at historic fishing hole
- Proposed lower creekside loop trail

## Key Actions Required

- Resolve land ownership issues
- Coordination with landowners, El Paso County Parks Dept, CDOT, Army Corp. of Engineers and City of Manitou Springs
- Follow required planning process of submittals and approvals for El Paso County Planning Dept. or Manitou Springs Planning Dept. as applicable



*ADA Trailhead/entry feature  
photo-sketch*



*High Priority Trail Elements*

# Rainbow Falls: Medium Priority Elements

## Medium Priority Elements

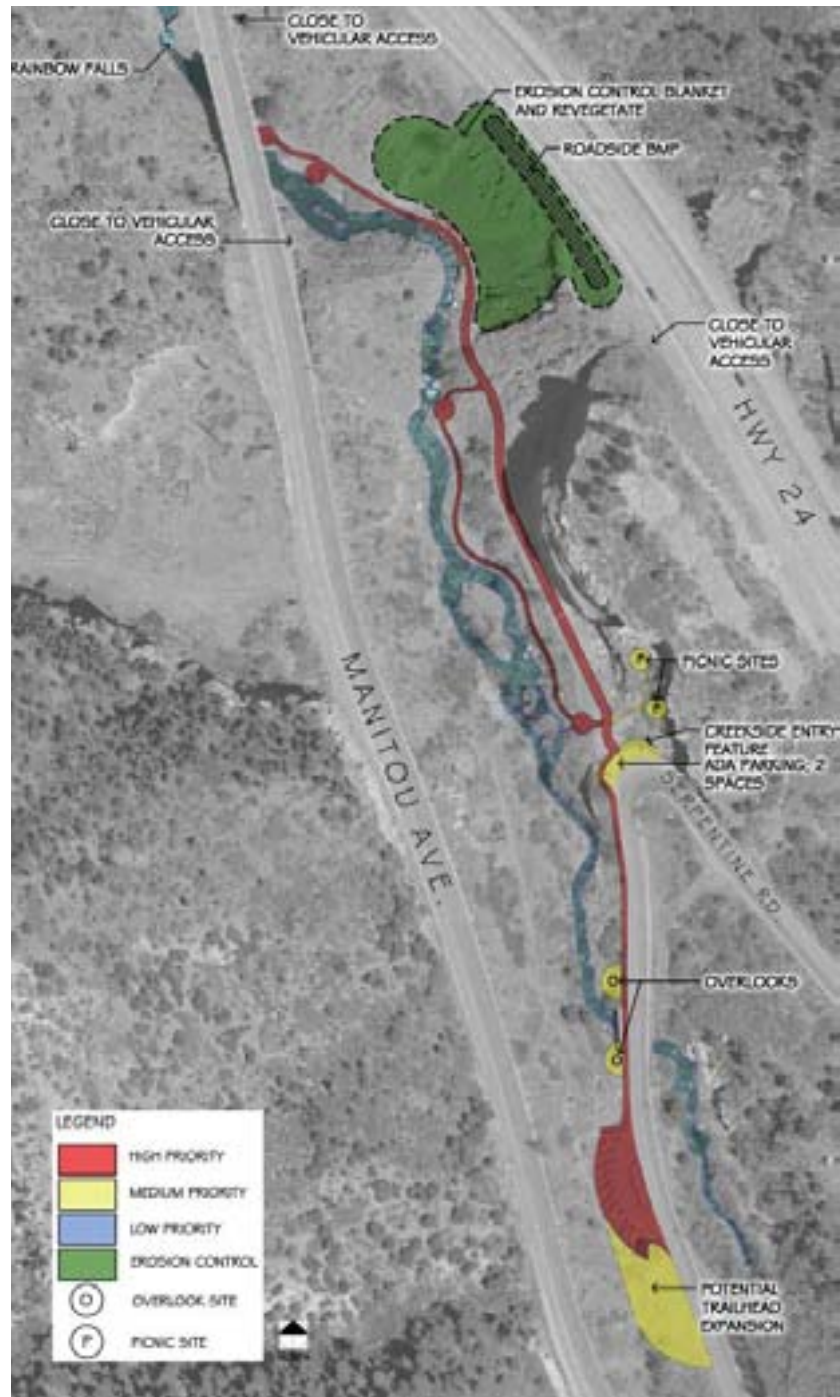
- Proposed parking lot improvements and expansion
- Proposed ADA trailhead and creekside entry feature
- Proposed creek/trailside overlooks
- Proposed picnic sites at creekside entry feature

## Key Actions Required

- Resolve land ownership issues
- Coordination with landowners, El Paso County Parks Dept., CDOT, Army Corp of Engineers and Manitou Springs Planning Dept.



*ADA Trailhead/entry feature  
photo-sketch*



*Medium Priority Trail Elements*

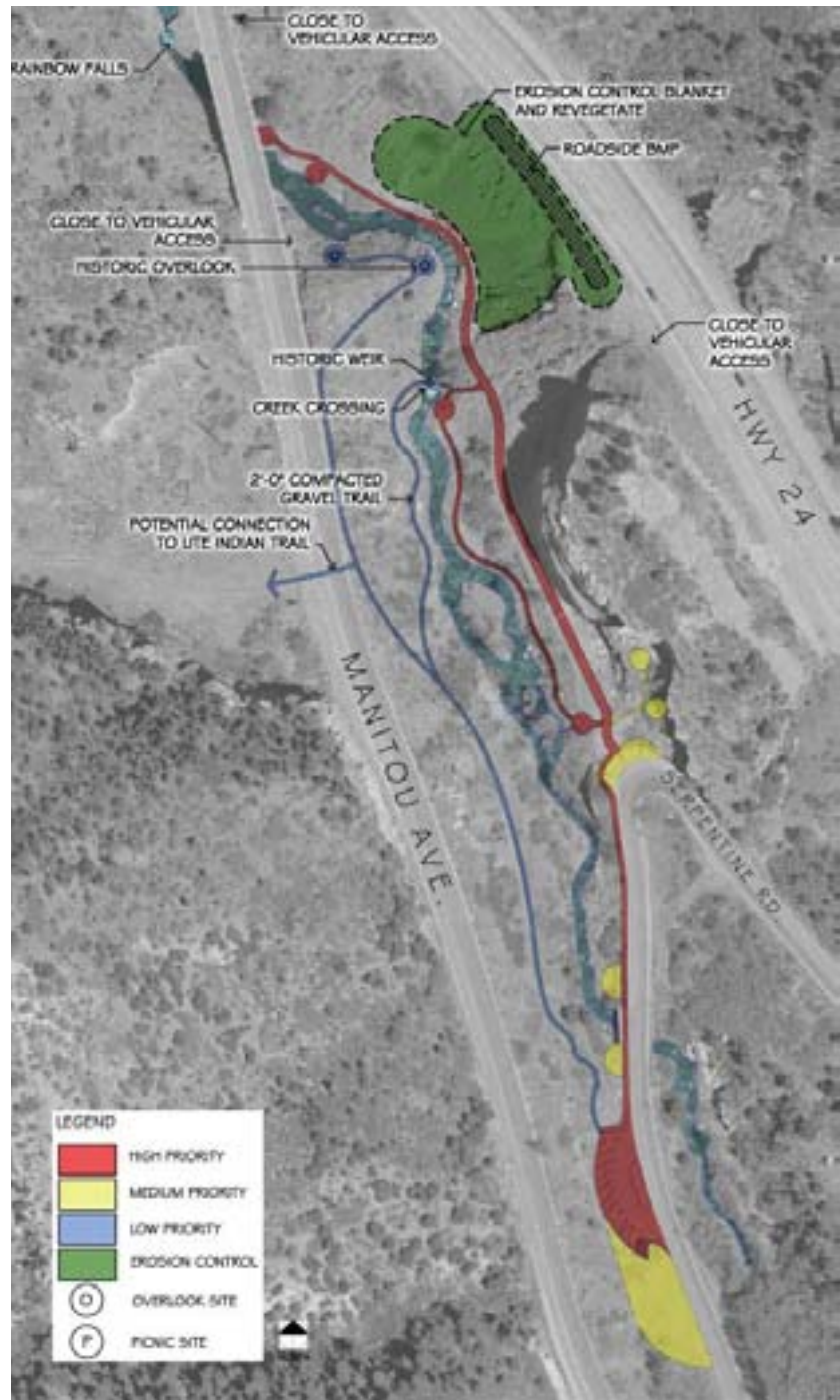
# Rainbow Falls: Low Priority Elements

## Low Priority Elements

- Proposed west-side creek trail to historic overlook
- Loop trail connecting to lower creek-side trail
- Pedestrian bridge at historic weir
- Proposed Manitou Ave. crosswalk to Ute Indian Trail connection

## Key Actions Required

- Resolve land ownership issues
- Coordination with landowners, El Paso County Parks Dept., CDOT, Army Corp of Engineers and Manitou Springs Planning Dept.

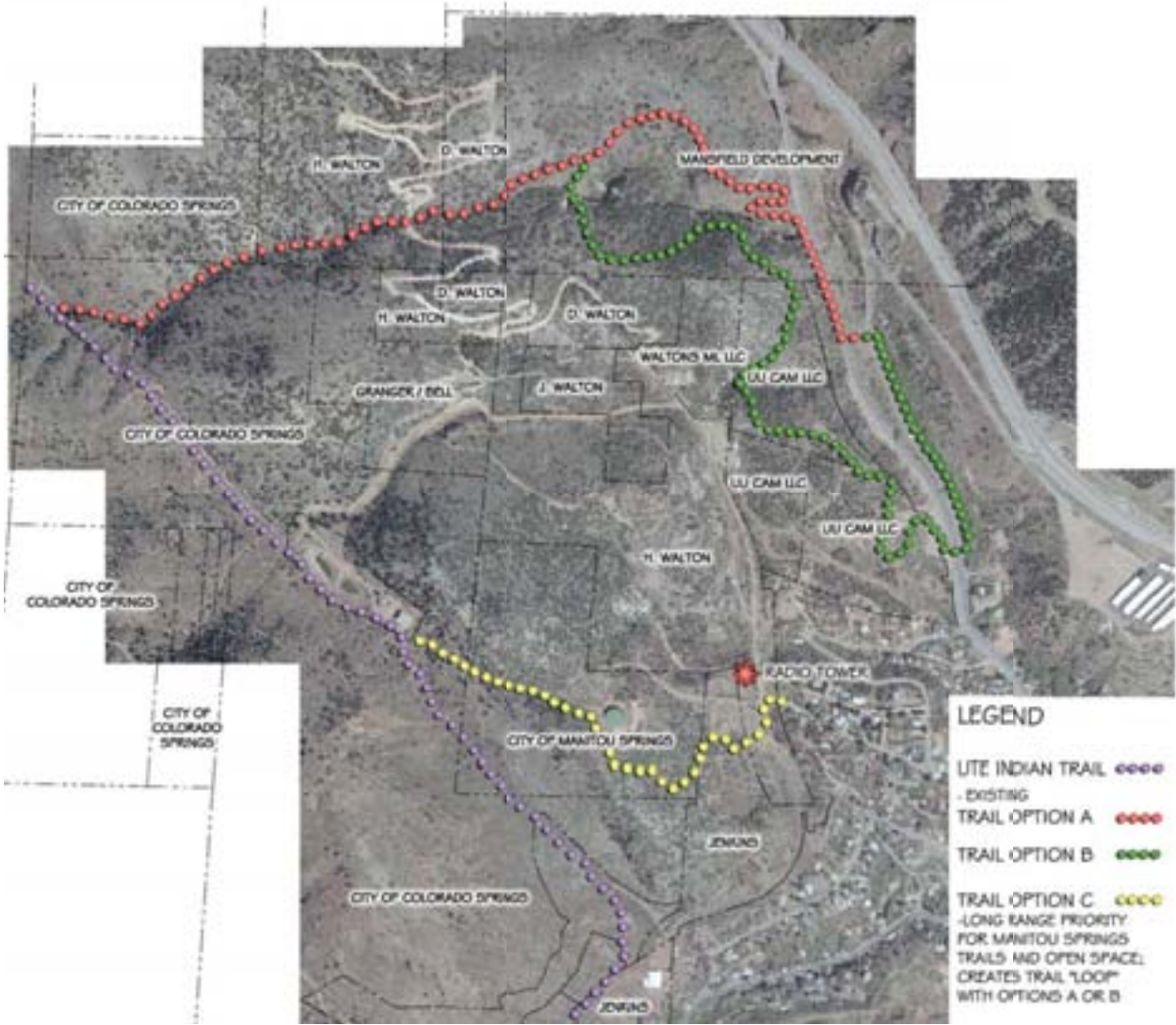


*Roadside trail to historic overlook  
photo-sketch*

*Low Priority Trail Elements*

# Rainbow Falls: Ute Indian Trail Connectivity

Based upon further analysis of the three preliminary regional trail connection options and conversations with private landowners, the City of Manitou, and Colorado Springs Utilities the original Rainbow Falls Regional Trail study was refined.



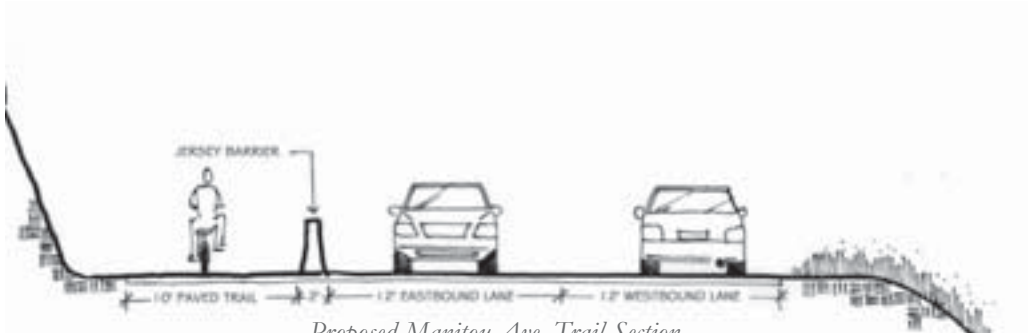
Potential Trail Corridors from Rainbow Falls to Ute Indian Trail

# Rainbow Falls: Access to Ute Indian Trail

Three potential trail corridors exist which have the ability to connect Rainbow Falls to the Ute Indian Trail. Resolving landowner agreements and coordinating with CDOT will be necessary steps in the construction of all three potential trail corridors.



Potential Trail Connections from Rainbow Falls to Ute Indian Trail



Proposed Manitou Ave. Trail Section