

**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
and
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2015

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3C

STAFF: Roger Moellendorf, Parks & Recreation Director
Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator
Richard Wilkinson, Senior Natural Resource Specialist
Vern Krahn, Park Planner

REQUEST: For discussion only to identify potential projects for grant funding through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act – Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas grant program.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas category focuses on projects that connect people with the outdoors, fostering an interaction with and increased understanding and appreciation of the natural environment. Project nominations will describe how the project will connect people with the outdoors and should consider (1) methods by which the park, trail, or natural area will be accessed by the public (e.g., proximity to public transportation, or walking distance to public facilities such as schools, hospitals, or libraries); (2) how the project will provide connectivity to community facilities; and (3) how the project will create a more unified and comprehensive system of recreation opportunities.

Projects that provide opportunities for underserved communities are high priority. For the purposes of this category, underserved community is defined as follows: Communities or identified populations in communities that have been traditionally underserved in the provisions of parks, trails, and natural areas facilities and services. This includes communities who have faced social or economic barriers that have limited their access or connection to healthy natural environments.

The nominating entity must demonstrate the commitment to be responsible for the future operations and maintenance costs, ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the project into the future.

In preparation for the discussion, some ideas were announced at the previous meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee. Staff also met briefly to brainstorm ideas for potential projects. The most highly rated projects, some of which may be combined, were:

- Freeway Multi-Use Path – Connectivity including a bridge to the Pete Livermore Sports Complex
- Kings Canyon / Waterfall Trailhead – May be combined with the Ash Canyon Trailhead
- Mexican Ditch Trail – Safe street crossing to the Prison Hill Recreation Area and/or Silver Saddle Ranch
- Mountain Street Trailhead – Acquire a trail easement and connect with trails in the Longview Subdivision
- Prison Hill Recreation Area – Trailhead improvements on Koontz Lane and the motorized-use area (if permissible); trail connectivity and sustainability
- Silver Saddle Ranch – Accessibility and structure improvements; historic preservation; trail connectivity
- The old Buzzy's Ranch – Loop trail from the Mexican Ditch Trail, along Carson River Road, along the Carson River, and across a bridge back to Riverview Park
- V&T Trail – West side and/or east side of Carson City

Additional projects were:

- Ambrose Carson River Natural Area – trail connectivity and sustainability
- Aquatic Trail – Trailhead facilities at Mile 0, located on Sierra Vista Lane
- Ash Canyon Trailhead – May be combined with the Kings Canyon / Waterfall Trailhead
- Carson River Canyon – May include the V&T Trail; identify day-use areas and trails; designate over-night areas (if desired); historic preservation; and rehabilitation
- JohnD Winters Centennial Park – sports fields, concession stand, restrooms, nature trail and wetlands education, trail connectivity to upper Centennial Park
- “Skills” park for mountain bike use

Also, attached for your review is Chapter 11 of the Unified Pathways Master Plan – Implementation.

The above lists are not all-encompassing. Members are welcome to share ideas for potential projects.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: This agenda item is for informational purposes only. No formal action can be taken at this time.

Due to its limited resources, it is important for the City to carefully manage all existing and potential resources for the development and maintenance of pathways. The following section addresses priorities, partnerships and potential funding sources.

11.1 PRIORITIES

11.1.1 PRIORITY 1: INCREASING PATHWAY CONNECTIVITY—COMPLETING THE MISSING LINKS

The overarching goal of the UPMP is to link Carson City's neighborhoods to destinations such as schools, employment centers, shopping, parks, and surrounding open space. Therefore, the first priority of this plan is to provide the means for everyone in Carson City to access major destinations. This plan recommends that the City focus its efforts on constructing in-town linkages and linkages from existing neighborhoods to recreation areas located outside of the City's developed areas. Pathways leading to Mills Park and the Carson City High School should be given a high priority, as should pathways connecting from the central core area to WNCC.

Within this overall priority are seven specific objectives for implementation by 2015:

First Tier Connectivity Projects

1. Completion of the V&T trail north to the Carson-Tahoe Regional Healthcare facility with continuation to Lakeview Drive. This trail segment will provide an almost continuous north/south trail on the west side of Eagle Valley.
2. Connecting a trail from the Moffat Open Space Property north to the Carson River. This segment will provide a significant north/south trail on the east side of the Eagle Valley from Silver Saddle Ranch to the Empire Ranch Golf Course.
3. Develop an east/west connection from the Carson River to the Downtown and Kings Canyon.

A recommended east-west connection follows the route of E. 5th Street from Carson Street to its eastern terminus at Marsh Road. Carson River Road and the Mexican Ditch Trail provide access to the Carson River and Deer Run Road on the east side of the Carson River. Bike lanes already exist on E. 5th Street from Nevada Street to Saliman Road. Bike lanes are proposed from Saliman Road to its eastern terminus at Marsh Road. Generally, sidewalks exist from Carson Street to Saliman Road and from Carson River Road to Marsh Road, but do not exist between Saliman Road and Carson River Road.

E. 5th Street/King Street/Kings Canyon Road: Kings Canyon Road from Ormsby Boulevard to the west end is designated as a bike route, but not currently signed. King Street from Ormsby Boulevard to Nevada Street has existing bicycle lanes. Nevada Street from King Street to 5th Street is a designated bicycle route, but not currently signed. East 5th Street from Nevada Street to Saliman Road has existing bicycle lanes and sidewalks. East 5th Street from Saliman Road to Carson River Road has no sidewalk or bicycle facilities. Sidewalks exist from Carson River Road to Marsh Road on East 5th Street. Bicycle lanes are proposed on East 5th Street from Saliman Road to Marsh Road.

4. Access to the north and east side of the Carson River can also be developed along the Deer Run Road alignment to Williams Street (US 50). A multi-use path generally exists along Williams Street (US 50) from Deer Run Road to Roop Street, except for the section from Saliman Road to Lompa Lane. A proposed trail along Washington Street will provide access to the Downtown area. Generally, sidewalks exist along Roop Street.

5. Extend the Linear Park Path from Governors Field west to US 395 (Carson Street) and north to the new capital complex.
6. In the future, develop a multi-use path adjacent to the south portion of the Carson City Freeway. With the existing multi-use path along the northern portion of the Freeway, this segment will provide a critical north/south connection through the center of Eagle Valley.
7. In the future, develop a crossing of Carson City Freeway, near Valley View Drive and Edmonds Drive, for non-automobile use. The Freeway will block a number of traditional routes to recreation and open space areas from the neighborhoods of south Carson City. These projects will maintain historic access corresponding to the routes of the California and Overland Trail and the Pony Express Trail.

Second Tier Connectivity Projects

Linkages to WNCC can be provided by the development of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities on access routes to the campus. These pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities are in place on some of the access routes. Bicycle lanes exist on College Parkway from Lompa Lane to the campus. Generally, there are sidewalks on College Parkway from Lompa Lane to the campus. On the western side of the campus there is a shared-use path from the intersection of Ash Canyon Road and Longview Way south of the campus to the intersection of Murphy Drive and Van Patten Avenue north of the campus. A link between this shared-use path and the campus needs to be developed. Other access routes to WNCC are as follows:

- Bicycle route on Combs Canyon Road from Numaga Pass Road to Ormsby Boulevard, but no signs present
- Bicycle route on Ash Canyon Road from Ormsby Boulevard to Longview Way, but no signs present
- Bicycle route on Kings Canyon Road from Longview Way to Ormsby Boulevard, but no signs present
- Existing bicycle lanes on King Street from Ormsby Boulevard to Nevada Street
- Existing bicycle lanes on Longview Way from Ash Canyon Road to Bedford Way
- Existing bicycle lanes on Winnie Lane from Ormsby Boulevard to Carson Street
- Bicycle lanes are proposed on Ormsby Boulevard from Combs Canyon Road to Winnie Lane
- Bicycle lanes are proposed on Longview Way from Bedford Way to Kings Canyon Road
- A shared-use trail is proposed from the intersection of Ormsby Boulevard and Ash Canyon Road to the intersection of Ormsby Boulevard to Winnie Lane

Linkages to Carson City High School and Mills Park will be discussed together. The linkages can be provided by the development of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities on access routes to the campus. These pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities are in place on some of the access routes. Generally, the areas around both locations have sidewalks, except for Williams Street (US 50) from Saliman Road to Lompa Lane due to Carson City Freeway construction and E. 5th Street from Saliman Road to Carson River Road. Access to Carson City High School and Mills Park are detailed as follows:

- Bicycle route on Robinson Street from Roop Street to Saliman Road, but no signs present
- Bicycle route on Washington Street from Mountain Street to Roop Street, but no signs present
- Bicycle route on Long Street from Mountain Street to Roop Street, but no signs present
- Existing bicycle lanes on Saliman Road from Long Street to Koontz Lane
- Existing bicycle lanes on East 5th Street from Nevada Street to Saliman Road
- Existing bicycle lanes on Roop Street from Colorado Street to East 5th Street
- Bicycle lanes are proposed on East 5th Street from Saliman Road to Marsh Road
- Bicycle lanes are proposed on Roop Street from East 5th Street to College Parkway
- Bicycle lanes are proposed on Long Street from Roop Street to Saliman Road
- A shared-use path on Williams Street (US 50) from Roop Street to Deer Run Road except for Saliman Road to Lompa Lane due to Carson City Freeway construction

Linkages to all Elementary schools can be provided by the development of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities along “suggested or safe routes to school” within a radius buffer area complying with school district policy around each school. Bike lanes or routes exist near all the schools except Mark Twain Elementary School and Empire Elementary School. Linkages are recommended to Mark Twain Elementary School and Empire Elementary School as follows:

- Mark Twain Elementary School -
 - Marian Avenue from Long Street to Rolling Hills Drive
 - Lindsay Lane from Joshua Drive to Carriage Crest Drive
 - Carriage Crest Drive from Camille Drive to Wind Ridge Drive
- Empire Elementary School -
 - Gordonia Drive from Airport Road to Monte Rosa Drive
 - Stanton Drive from Monte Rosa Drive to Woodside Drive
 - Monte Rosa Drive from Desatoya Drive to Woodside Drive
 - La Loma Drive from Desatoya Drive to Selby Street

11.1.2 PRIORITY 2: ACCESS TO CARSON RIVER FOR GREATER RANGE OF USERS

The Carson River is a unique attribute in Carson City. It is one of the few areas in the City that offers a natural water feature. All of the City’s residents should be able to enjoy this amenity; therefore, this plan recommends two first-tier trail projects. Several Aquatic Trail improvements are also given 1st tier ranking due to the potential of the Aquatic Trail to become a unique regional resource, the potential economic benefits, and the availability of funding/development partnerships.

First Tier Carson River Projects

1. Trail Improvements
 - Development of a trail system along the northern reach of the river in conjunction with the V&T Railroad Reconstruction Project (V&TRR). This area is currently designated as a ‘study area,’ but the alignment should be determined reasonably soon in order to take advantage of funding opportunities associated with the V&T RR project¹.
 - Where appropriate and practical, provide a concrete or other all-weather surface pathway along portions of the Carson River Trail that are accessible from Riverview Park (via a loop trail) to provide access for user groups of all ability levels².
2. Aquatic Trail Improvements
 - Improvements to the existing Morgan Mill Road River Access Area
 - Carson River signage, in-stream hazard reduction and public outreach/safety education.
 - Upgrades to existing access areas
 - River cleanup

Second Tier Carson River Projects

1. Non-motorized bridge crossing from the Empire Ranch Trail (near the southern end of the Empire Ranch Golf Course) to the Ambrose/Carson River Natural Area.

11.1.3 PRIORITY 3: COMMUTER BIKEWAYS

As the population of Carson City continues to grow, additional traffic will need to be accommodated within the City. One of the ways to alleviate much of Carson City’s traffic is to provide bikeways as an alternative means of transportation. The City must focus its efforts on creating on-street bikeways and other pathways that connect across the City. Bikeways

1 Generally, these pathways are “recreational” in use, but “transportation-related” pathways should be identified when the V&T rail line route is defined.

2 It should be noted that per the Carson River Master Plan it is intended that the Carson River have a trail on only one side in order to protect riparian habitat areas from public access.

connecting throughout the City can be used by commuters and will offer the City a viable alternative mode of transportation. Some of the major bikeways that the City should prioritize include creating bikeways along Carson Street once traffic is re-routed to the new freeway, Curry Street, and Koontz Lane.

First Tier Commuter Link Projects

1. **Carson Street bikeways/sidewalks generally from north of Arrowhead Drive southerly to Old Clear Creek Road.** Currently, no bikeways or multi-use paths exist along Carson Street in this segment.
2. **Curry Street/Mountain Streets bikeways/sidewalks from East 5th Street generally to US 50.** Sidewalks only exist in the Downtown area from about 7th Street to 10th Street (There is construction in progress between East 5th Street to 7th Street). A bike route exists (not signed) from 10th Street to Lake Glen Drive.
3. **Koontz Lane bikeways/sidewalks from Curry Street to Edmonds Drive.** Koontz Lane has bikeways from Curry Street to Silver Sage Drive and has proposed bikeways from Silver Sage Drive to Edmonds Drive. Sidewalks exist from Curry Street to Center Drive only.

Second Tier Commuter Link Projects

Tier 2 projects that provide additional commuter links are shown in Appendix 13.4. Information provided in the table includes a north to south or east to west orientation, functional classification (arterial or collector), end points, and existing and proposed bicycle facilities from the UPMP.

The results of the neighborhood survey were tabulated by combining the “very important” and “important” responses corresponding to “Off Street Walking/Bike Paths” and “On Street Lanes” categories for each neighborhood. These results, as shown in Appendix 13.4, can be considered in the prioritization process.

11.1.4 PRIORITY 4: CARSON CITY LOOP TRAIL

During many of the public meetings and workshops, residents expressed a desire to create a loop trail around Carson City. This plan recommends creating two separate Carson City loop trails, one that skirts the outside of the City’s developed areas and one that takes advantage of the open lands surrounding the City.

First Tier Loop Trail Projects

The Tier 1 project for this priority would be the inner loop trail around Carson City. The inner loop trail will consist of on-road and off-road facilities and would be considered a transportation element. Further analysis of the inner loop will be conducted once the specific route has been determined.

11.2 WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Carson City has the opportunity to work with a variety of agencies to complete its pathways system. The UPMP is intended to show trails in the entire Carson City region. Not only does the plan show trails in the City’s developed areas, but it also shows trails in outer-lying areas in public lands managed by the BLM, USFS, surrounding counties, or the State of Nevada. By creating partnerships and utilizing local, regional, county, state, and federal money, the number of pathways that the City can construct will be greatly improved. The City must look into the options of applying for grants, donations, and creating special improvement districts in order to construct proposed pathway alignments.

For trails on land on which the City does not have jurisdiction (federal, state, adjacent counties, Washoe Tribe Land), the Plan is intended to reflect proposals, or wishes of the City with regard to pathway connectivity and continuity of uses between Carson City and the respective agency, as well as the potential sharing of maintenance, signage, and management. Of course, Carson City recognizes that the actual uses of those trails and decisions about changes in uses or alignment are the purview of the respective agencies. The City encourages these agencies to consider the designations on the UPMP

as input to the decision-making process of each agency. The City stands ready to provide planning and coordinating efforts with these agencies and to cooperate in resolving inconsistencies and in making adjustments to the UPMP that are beneficial to the overall system.

11.2.1 NEVADA DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

Nevada Division of State Parks lands are located primarily on the northern side (Washoe Lake State Park) and the western side (Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park) of Carson City. These lands have great potential for connecting Carson City with the Tahoe Rim Trail and other regional trails.

11.2.2 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management has stewardship over vast areas of land on the north and eastern portions of Carson City. This land represents a significant recreation resource to Carson City residents and visitors. Significant areas are used by equestrian and OHV users. The BLM has had challenges effectively managing such a large land area close to the city. Many areas are scarred by heavy use. By partnering with the BLM, Carson City and many user groups have the potential to improve the planning effectiveness and stewardship of the trails, and thus increase the enjoyment of the extensive trail system.

11.2.3 UNITED STATE FOREST SERVICE, CARSON RANGER DISTRICT

The Carson Ranger District recently compiled a landscape analysis and strategy for the Clear Creek/Kings Canyon area, which is directly adjacent to Carson City. Within this study are several recommendations for trailhead locations, non-motorized trail, and motorized trail locations. Many of the recommendations within this document indicate the desire to create a partnership between the Carson Ranger District and Carson City in order to implement the proposed trails. The City would encourage and support a future landscape analysis and strategy for the remaining west side canyons.

The Carson Ranger District is currently in the process of creating a recreational analysis of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. This study will be used to designate both motorized and non-motorized trails. Completion of this analysis will lead to further partnership possibilities between the Carson Ranger District and Carson City.

11.2.4 NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Nevada Department of Transportation is an important pathway partner on several counts:

- ❏ Implementation of the multi-use path sections included in the design of the northern portion of the Carson City Freeway
- ❏ Implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on City's street and freeway grade separations
- ❏ The design and implementation of pathways in conjunction with existing NDOT roadways, such as Highway 50
- ❏ Implementation of the Linear Park's multi-use path through the freeway corridor near East 5th street
- ❏ Currently, Carson City and NDOT have an agreement not to construct a multi-use path within the right-of-way as a part of Phase 2 (southern leg) of the Carson City Freeway. After construction begins on Phase 2A and 2B of the freeway, the City will pursue planning and construction of a multi-use path adjacent to the freeway.

11.2.5 USER GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS

Carson City is fortunate to have several active user groups that focus on the use of pathways. In addition, many communities have been able to marshal volunteers to provide invaluable help in many aspects of pathways development: construction, clean-up, courtesy patrols, etc.

11.2.6 WASHOE TRIBE

Some of the potential pathway linkages cross tribal lands that are located near “C” Hill (the Carson Colony), the Stewart Colony (near the Edmonds Sports Complex), and individually held lands in the Pine Nut Mountains southeast of the city. The Tribe has indicated that they are doing their own strategic land planning, including evaluating lands that have potential for development. The Tribe has indicated concerns about respecting cultural resources on and off Tribal lands. At the same time, they have expressed an interest in working with the City to develop pathways that will help connect the Tribal communities. There is also a potential to work with the Tribe to identify historic Tribal migratory paths through Eagle Valley to Lake Tahoe and incorporate them into the pathway system (with interpretive signage).

11.2.6 THE TAHOE RIM TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association has been an active partner with Carson City with regard to the Sierra Front Recreation Coalition and other trail projects.

11.2.7 PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS

A number of segments of the trails are, or are proposed to be, on private property. The map is for long-range planning purposes. The trail alignments shown do not imply existing legal access rights or exact final locations. It will be important for the City to work closely with property owners in exploring opportunities for trail access and alignments that will be beneficial to the public and the property owner. Property owners will likely have concerns about land value, liability, security, maintenance, respect for property rights, and conflicts between public and private uses. Direct communication and a willingness to see concerns from both sides of the table will go far to reach successful, amicable conclusions.

11.2.8 CARSON AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CAMPO)

The UPMP will serve as the “umbrella” document for guiding the development of Carson City’s sidewalks, bike lanes, and trail system. The portions of the UPMP that relate primarily to transportation ³ will be exported to and refined in the bicycle and pedestrian elements of the Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO). A key purpose of the CAMPO elements is to identify transportation related facilities that can be candidates for funding through federal highway funds.

11.2.9 BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (BIA)

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has indicated interest in being a planning partner with Carson City on the Unified Pathways Master Plan. Their lands are critical in planning for connectivity to Douglas County and the Pinenut Mountains.

11.3 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR PATHWAYS

There are several potential funding sources for pathways projects in Carson City. Brief descriptions are provided below. More extensive information about several of the programs (noted with an asterix) can be found in the Appendix.

11.3.1 CITY GENERAL FUND ALLOCATIONS

Traditional requests from the City’s General Fund are justified by the extremely high and broad public support for pathways as evidenced in the public opinion survey.

11.3.2 QUESTION 18

The Quality of Life Initiative included provision for funding of trails projects. However, there are numerous competing priorities for Q18 funding that have significant fiscal demands and few options for funding.

³ Largely sidewalks and bike lanes, although many portion of the trail system will also qualify as transportation facilities.

11.3.3 QUESTION 1*

The Nevada Conservation and Resource Protection (Question 1) Grant Program is designed to provide funding to protect, preserve, and obtain the benefits of the natural resources of Nevada. The program publicly funds conservation programs through the issuance of bonds.

Project criteria include the ability to conserve and protect natural resources, enhance recreational opportunities, increase public access to lands and waters, and achieve goals identified in adopted open space plans. Recreational trails qualify.

11.3.4 NEVADA RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM*

The Nevada RTP provides funding for motorized, non-motorized, and diversified (shared use) recreational trails projects that are open to the public and use acceptable trail design standards. Eligible projects include:

- o Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- o Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages
- o Purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment
- o Construction of new recreational trails
- o Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property
- o Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection

The program provides grants for projects. Planning is eligible only if it is part of an on-the-ground trail project. Grants range from \$4,000 to \$100,000 and are available to organizations, cities, and county governments.

11.3.5 NEVADA COMMISSION ON TOURISM

They provide grants for trailhead amenities, brochures, and trails programs.

11.3.6 GRANTS TO NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS*

There are a number of smaller grants available from a range of organizations such as Kodak American Greenways Grants, REI grants, and the Conservation Alliance. These grants are typically available primarily to citizens and non-government organizations (NGO's).

The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout America, including mapping; eco-logical assessments; surveying; conferences and design activities; developing brochures, interpretative displays, audio-visual productions or public opinion surveys; and/or building footbridges; planning bike paths; or other creative projects. The maximum grant is \$2,500.

The REI (Recreational Equipment, Inc.) grant is to support grassroots efforts to protect public lands, rivers, and trails for muscle-powered outdoor recreation. Grants fall between \$1,000 and \$50,000. One recipient was The Phoenix Parks and Conservation Foundation. REI's support will go toward their work on a new trail, revegetating damaged areas, and completing signage for the barrier-free interpretive trail.

The Conservation Alliance is a non-profit organization of outdoor businesses who support grassroots citizen-action groups and their efforts to protect wild and natural areas where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. Projects focus primarily on direct citizen action and advocacy for recreation, including rivers, trails, and wild lands. Grants are typically between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

11.3.7 FHWA TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Transportation-related trail projects qualify for federal funding in conjunction with highway construction and transportation enhancements (SAFTEA LU). They include most of the sidewalks and on-street bikeways as well as many of the off-street paved (and potentially unpaved) trails.

11.3.8 MEMORIALS

Some communities have had success in providing memorial opportunities to fund individual amenities, such as benches and small garden areas along trails, as well as individual trails. The memorial, usually identified in accordance with Parks & Recreation Department policy, can be for any purpose or limited to specific achievement criteria.

11.3.9 ADOPT-A-TRAIL MATCHING FUNDS

An adopt-a-trail program might provide the opportunity for a volunteer/advocacy group to sponsor a section of a pathway. They could assist in pathway construction or provide pathway maintenance/trash pick-up responsibilities.