



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 4B

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: February 24, 2020

Staff Contact: Gregg Berggren, Trails Coordinator

Agenda Title: For Discussion Only: Activities related to trail projects managed by the Open Space Division.

Staff Summary: See below

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 15 minutes

Capital to Tahoe Trail and Lincoln Bypass Trail

This project did not receive funding from the Recreational Trails Program for 2020. Muscle Powered is eager to find a way to construct the Lincoln Bypass portion in 2020-2021 by combining alternate sources of funding with volunteer labor. We are anticipating that the write-ups for the cultural and biological surveys will be submitted to the USFS very soon so they may begin their review.

Carson River Trail System, Phase 2 – Ranch Connections (SNPLMA)

This trail, with grades not to exceed 5%, will connect the 5th Street Trailhead with Silver Saddle Ranch, and then cross Carson River Road at Carson River Park and connect with Riverview Park. A well-attended open house was held on December 16, 2019 for interested residents to review the 90% trail design, ask questions, and offer comments. Attached is a copy of the information sheet that was distributed at the open house.

Prison Hill Recreation Area

Motorized (OHV) Area

Updates are posted periodically at www.carson.org/ohv, and a brochure explaining the project is provided for users at the staging area. An ‘interim’ map is being produced for posting at the staging area and online. Costs for this project are offset by funding from the Recreational Trails Program and the Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle Commission.

Mexican Dam – Mexican Ditch Inlet Safe Passage

Construction is underway and is expected to be completed before spring runoff. This project will be an important component in future connectivity for a loop trail around Prison Hill and for extension of the Aquatic Trail into Carson Valley. The cost of construction is partially offset by a \$25,000 grant from the Carson Water Subconservancy District.

5th Street Trailhead (Recreational Trails Program grant)

- A split-rail fence was placed in the middle of the parking area to discourage people from doing “donuts”, which was damaging the new surface.
- A Kiosk sign frame was installed, and panels will be applied soon.
- Re-seeding and mulching of closed roads, along with drainage improvements, is complete.



Abandoned roads, barely visible following scarification, reseeding, and vertical mulching.

Prison Hill Survey and Open House

As part of an effort to plan appropriate land uses and trail system connectivity on the Prison Hill Recreation Area, our Department asked for the community’s input via an online survey. The survey, which was conducted in July-August, 2019, received 190 responses and included questions about trailheads (including parking), access points, and thoughts about the area on the west side of Prison Hill near Koontz Lane designated as “Parks and Public Purpose”. Following the survey, two alternative concept designs for the Koontz Lane parcel were produced (a third alternative was discarded after concerns were expressed by Public Works about the proximity to the municipal water tank). A well-attended public open house was held on January 9, 2020, to present the concept designs, answer questions, and gain further resident input. Feedback from the survey and the open house will be used to guide future improvements, prioritize expenditures, help with development of a master plan for the Prison Hill Recreation Area, and when completed, the plan will be used as a means to seek funding for implementation. A PowerPoint is attached and will be presented to summarize the results of the survey and the open house.

Waterfall Trailhead Parking (also known as Kings Canyon Trailhead Parking Lot)

The concept design was presented to both the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) in October, 2019. Comments expressed by commission and committee members and the public were forwarded to Central Federal Lands (CFL) who is responsible for design of the parking lot because this is part of a Federal Land Access Program grant. CFL is working on updates and we expect to present a revised design to both PRC and OSAC in April, 2020.

Volunteer Hours for 2019 -- Open Space and Trails

Last year many dozens of residents and friends donated 2358 hours for Open Space and trails at a value of \$61,884.

Some of the organizations and projects included:

- ***Muscle Powered*** – Trail building, maintenance, planning, layout, and design on numerous trails including Ash-to-Kings, Creek, Capital-to-Tahoe, Eagle View Open Space, Wildhorse/Centennial, and Prison Hill. ‘Trash-Mob’ picked up over 1500 pounds of trash on Open Space and urban trails, and removed 600 pounds of weeds at Horse Creek Ranch.
- ***Boy Scouts*** – Trail building, trail signage/rehab/replacement, trailhead improvements, fire restoration, wildlife habitat improvements, and fixed the ‘C’ on C-Hill.
- ***Great Basin Institute, Tahoe Rim Trail Association, and Bike Smith*** – Trail building on the Eagle View Open Space connector.
- ***Wells Fargo and Kiwanis*** – ‘Adopt-a-Trail’ trash cleanup.

- ***Pine Nut Mountains Trails Association, NOHVCC, Carson High NJROTC, and some local rock crawlers*** – Trash and dump-site removal at the Prison Hill OHV area, and removal of an abandoned Jeep from Dead Truck Canyon.
- ***Parks, Recreation & Open Space Staff (volunteer), and individuals from the community*** – Trash pickup, weed removal, and interpretive programs.



Various volunteer projects and interpretive programs from 2019.

Information Sheet:

Carson River Trail System Phase II Project

What is the history of this project?

- **1996 – Carson River Master Plan.** Among the objectives of the Carson River Advisory Committee was the establishment of recreational goals for the Carson River area. The plan, which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors, created recommendations for trails and how they should be constructed.
- **2001 – Fee-title purchase of 61+ acres along Carson River Road.** Carson City and the Bureau of Land Management partner on a complex land acquisition project to prevent residential development on east side of the Prison Hill Recreation Area.
- **2006 – Unified Pathways Master Plan (UPMP).** A comprehensive plan for non-automobile travel routes around Carson City. The project trails were envisioned in the UPMP when it was adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
- **2006-2008 – Carson City’s Lands Bill.** At least 15 public meetings and workshops were held regarding the potential disposition and acquisitions of City and federal lands located within the Carson Range, Virginia Range, Carson River, and City environments, through Congress and the Federal Lands Bill process. The “Carson City Vital Community Act of 2008” bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate.
- **2008 – Creating a Community Vision: Silver Saddle Ranch and the Carson River.** With an assistance grant from the National Park Service, the Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch led a process to gather community-wide ideas and incorporate them into a comprehensive plan for Silver Saddle Ranch and adjacent areas. The report summarized the need for multi-use trails around Prison Hill and along the Carson River.
- **2009 – Creating a Community Vision: Silver Saddle Ranch and the Carson River.** The Board of Supervisors accepted the recommendations in the report regarding the planning vision for public recreation and open space opportunities on the Silver Saddle Ranch, Prison Hill Recreation Area and along the Carson River.
- **2010 – Old Buzzy’s Ranch (Jarrard fee-title purchase)** by Carson City Open Space. The purchase and sale agreement for 369 acres of agricultural land identified Carson City’s desire to construct a trail along the Carson River corridor.
- **2015 – Prison Hill Recreation Area and Silver Saddle Ranch were conveyed to Carson City from the Bureau of Land Management.**
- **2015 – Open Space Advisory Committee and Parks & Recreation Commission.** The formation of “working groups” consisting of committee members and several public meetings to identify a project for funding through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA).

- **2016 – Open Space Advisory Committee and Parks & Recreation Commission.** Recommended to the Board of Supervisors the submittal of a grant application to SNPLMA for the Carson River Trails Project.
- **2016 – Board of Supervisors.** Authorized submittal of the grant application.
- **2017 – Eagle Valley Trails Committee: Community Trail Inventory, Review, Evaluation and User Needs Assessment Report.** This comprehensive report was the result of a multi-year project by a volunteer community-based group that involved extensive public input. The report identifies the need for the project trails.
- **2017 – Board of Supervisors. Accepted a \$1.8 million funding award from SNPLMA.**
- **2019 – Through a competitive process, Lumos and Associates was selected as design consultant.**

What is SNPLMA and how is this project funded?

- **The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)** became law in October 1998. It allows the Bureau of Land Management to sell public land within a specific boundary around Las Vegas, Nevada. The revenue derived from land sales is split between the State of Nevada General Education Fund (5%), the Southern Nevada Water Authority (10%), and a special account available to the Secretary of the Interior for:
 - Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas
 - Capital Improvements
 - Conservation Initiatives
 - Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)
 - Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions
 - Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention
 - Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project
 - Lake Tahoe Restoration Projects
- This project is funded by a \$1.8 million dollar grant from SNPLMA and a small match from the Carson City Quality of Life Initiative.
- If Carson City had not applied for and received this grant then it is likely that another community in Nevada would have obtained the funds instead.

Where will this trail be located and what kind of trail will it be?

- One segment will extend along the east side of Prison Hill from near the 5th Street to Silver Saddle Ranch. A second segment will go through Silver Saddle Ranch. A third segment will cross Carson River Road at Carson River Park and continue north near the west side of the Carson River to connect with Riverview Park (see map).

- It will be a Multi-Use trail, which means it is intended for non-motorized use by pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. It will be 10 – 12 feet wide with a firm (but not paved) surface. It is being designed to AASHTO bicycle standards.

Have environmental considerations been addressed?

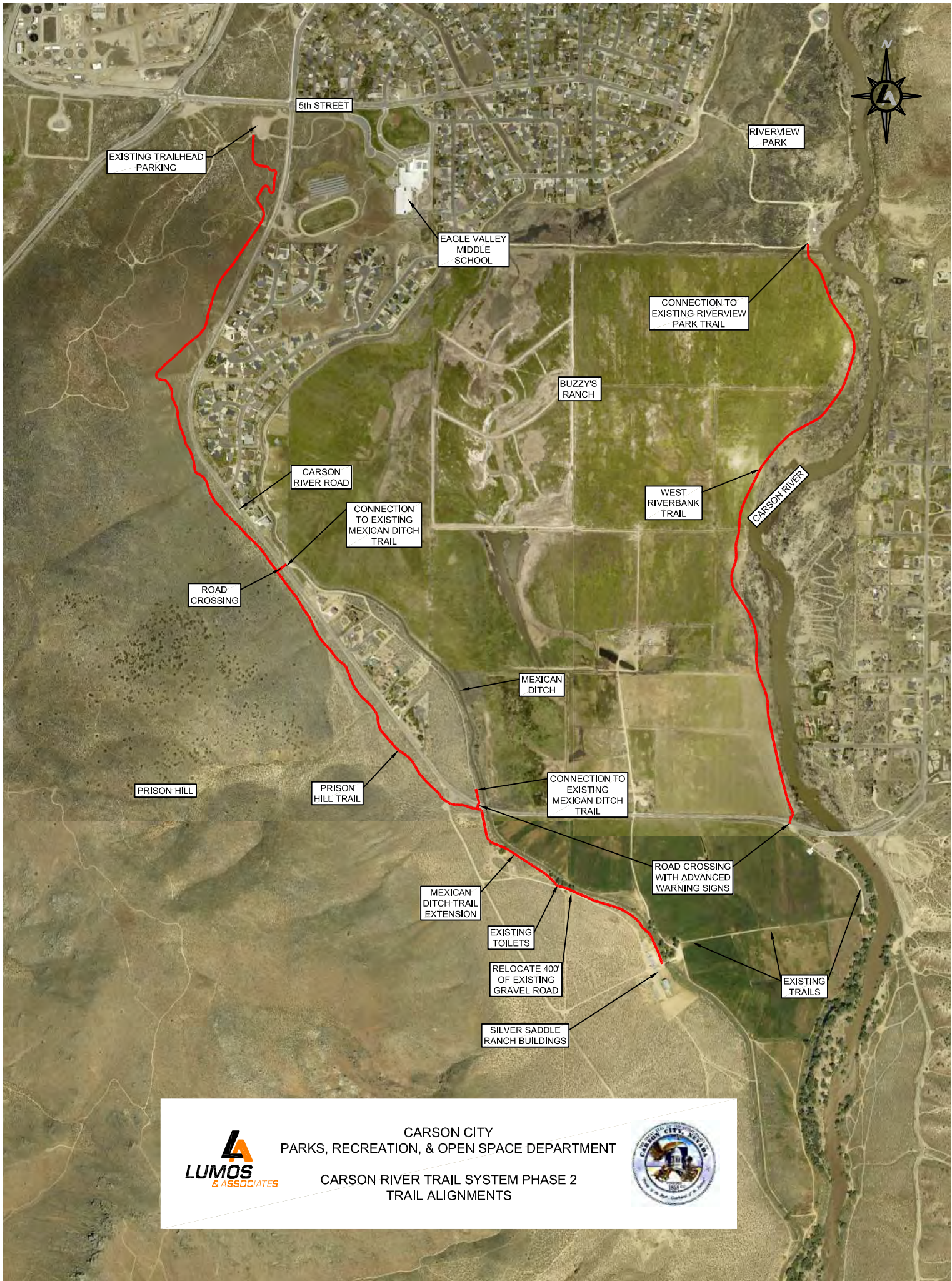
- Design components included environmental studies (wetland delineation as well as biological and botanical review), field visits and alignment review, geotechnical investigation and floodplain analysis. In addition, staff conducted bird surveys and have been working on a conservation plan for the grazing operations on the Old Buzzy's Ranch. Planning also considered buffer zones along the Carson River as recommended in the Carson River Master Plan.

Have public suggestions and concerns been addressed?

- All public input to date has been logged and reviewed. In some cases public suggestions have been reflected in the design. For example, relocating the proposed alignment further from private property near the river, minimizing cut and fill, eliminating crosswalk flashing lights from the design near homes, eliminating an option to take the trail underneath Lloyds Bridge and minimizing narrowing the footprint of the connection to the Mexican Ditch Trail.

Why build trails?

- **Increased property values.** Studies show that property values near trails increase and businesses near trails flourish (American Trails).
- **Physical health.** For every dollar spent on trails, there is a three dollar savings in healthcare costs. Cardiovascular benefits are seen across all trail user types (American Trails).
- **Mental health.** Many doctors are now prescribing walking and spending time outdoors as a way to combat depression, anxiety, and other health related issues (American Trails).
- **Trails connect people.** According to AARP, trails promote respect for diversity and promote inclusiveness. According to Psychology Today, loneliness and trail use are inversely related.
- **Safety.** Trails remove pedestrians and bicyclists from dangerous vehicular traffic.
- **Preservation of our cultural heritage.** Often, trails provide a connection to history, such as the Silver Saddle Ranch.
- **Community.** By building trails a community is investing in its future, its citizens, its economy, its well-being, and its culture.



EXISTING TRAILHEAD PARKING

5th STREET

RIVERVIEW PARK

EAGLE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

CONNECTION TO EXISTING RIVERVIEW PARK TRAIL

BUZZY'S RANCH

CARSON RIVER ROAD

CONNECTION TO EXISTING MEXICAN DITCH TRAIL

WEST RIVERBANK TRAIL

CARSON RIVER

ROAD CROSSING

MEXICAN DITCH

PRISON HILL

PRISON HILL TRAIL

CONNECTION TO EXISTING MEXICAN DITCH TRAIL

ROAD CROSSING WITH ADVANCED WARNING SIGNS

MEXICAN DITCH TRAIL EXTENSION

EXISTING TOILETS

RELOCATE 400' OF EXISTING GRAVEL ROAD

EXISTING TRAILS

SILVER SADDLE RANCH BUILDINGS



CARSON CITY
 PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE DEPARTMENT
 CARSON RIVER TRAIL SYSTEM PHASE 2
 TRAIL ALIGNMENTS



Information Sheet:

Prison Hill Recreation Area

What is the Prison Hill Recreation Area?

- The Prison Hill Recreation Area (PHRA) consists of about 2,500 acres in east Carson City. It was conveyed from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to Carson City in 2015 by an act of Congress. The terms of the conveyance stipulate how the land may be used. In general, Carson City is required to manage the PHRA as undeveloped Open Space. There is an exception in the conveyance which permits Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation on the south end of Prison Hill (about 960 acres).
- Prison Hill offers many miles of popular trails which are snow-free for most of the year. Trailheads and pedestrian access points are available on all sides of Prison Hill. The south end of Prison Hill provides opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users.
- The summit of Prison Hill stands at 5724' and affords sweeping views of Carson City, the surrounding valleys and mountains, and the Carson River. It lies on the boundary between motorized and non-motorized areas, and so is accessible to all users.
- The PHRA is managed by the Open Space Division within the Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department.

What is Open Space?

- Undeveloped lands protected in a primarily natural state with the intention of preserving our watershed, wildlife habitat, wetlands, scenic views, and to provide opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, running, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and fishing. Typically, the only physical facilities are trails, supported by parking lots, picnic areas, interpretive facilities, and restrooms.

What is the property on the west side of Prison Hill identified as "Parks and Public Purpose"?

- This parcel at the east end of Koontz Lane is about 116 acres and it was conveyed by the BLM to Carson City in the same lands bill as the rest of the Prison Hill Recreation Area. It is not managed under the direct purview of the Carson City Open Space Division.
- Examples of typical uses of properties designated as Parks and Public Purpose are historic monument sites, campgrounds, schools, fire houses, law enforcement facilities, municipal facilities, hospitals, parks, and fairgrounds.

- The Carson City Public Works Department maintains a large municipal water tank on the property, as well as pumping stations.
- There are two existing trailheads on the property that provide access to the PHRA trails; one is at the east end of Koontz Lane and the other is at the east end of Clearview Drive. These trailheads were originally constructed by the BLM.
- This property has been largely unmanaged, resulting in the proliferation of roads, of which there are currently about seven miles.

What about the BLM parcel?

- Approximately 27 acres between Carson City's Parks and Public Purpose property and Edmonds Drive is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management. There is a utility easement on the property, but a public recreational easement does not currently exist. There is also a possibility that the BLM may dispose of this property in the future.

What are some of the current plans and projects at the Prison Hill Recreation Area?

- 5th Street Trailhead and Trails. Funded by a grant from the Recreational Trails Program (Federal Highway Administration fuel tax), we improved the trailhead parking, fixed some drainage issues, added a vault toilet and covered picnic table, and created three short loop trails. This project is nearly complete.
- OHV Area. This area had been largely unmanaged when it was transferred to Carson City in 2015, resulting in a proliferation of trails, soil erosion, vegetation loss, wildlife habitat impacts, as well as noise, safety concerns, and user conflicts. With grants from the Recreational Trails Program and the Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle Commission, Carson City is in a multi-year phased project to make significant improvements. The goal is to provide sustainable high-quality recreational opportunities for a variety of users, while at the same time mitigating the earlier issues.
- Mexican Ditch Intake Crossing. A project is underway to improve the crossing of the Mexican Ditch intake at the Mexican Dam. The new 'bridge' will enable portage of small watercraft around the dam, and will provide a safe crossing for hikers, bicyclers, and horses. This project is funded by Carson City's Quality of Life Initiative and by a grant from the Carson Water Subconservancy District.
- Carson River Trails Phase II Project. Funded by a grant from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA), this project includes construction of a multi-use pathway along the east side of Prison Hill from the 5th Street trailhead to Silver Saddle Ranch. It is a segment of what is envisioned to be a future loop trail all the way around Prison Hill.
- Trails. Muscle Powered, a local volunteer organization, recently completed a beautiful realignment of the North Loop. More improvements and additions to the trail system are planned, while some canyons and slopes will be left pristine.



Carson City --
Parks and Public Purpose

Prison Hill Recreation Area
and Silver Saddle Ranch
(Approx.)

BLM

OHV Area
(Approx.)

- TH = Trailhead with parking
- A = Pedestrian access (no parking)
- VA = Vehicle access (no parking)

Prison Hill Recreation Area Survey and Open House



Gregg Berggren, Trails Coordinator

Location Map

■ Prison Hill:

- The Prison Hill Recreation Area is about 2500 acres and is managed as Open Space.
- An adjacent City parcel at the east end of Koontz Lane, about 116 acres, is designated as Parks and Public Purpose, and is not managed by the Open Space Division.

■ Public Access to Prison Hill:

- Five trailheads with parking.
- Five pedestrian access points with no parking.
- One OHV access point with no parking.



Focus of Survey and Open House: Public access and the Koontz Lane Parcel

- Koontz Parcel:
 - Parks and Public Purpose designation allows larger range of possible uses than Open Space.
 - Provides west-side access to PHRA.
 - PW has a utility access across the BLM parcel for municipal water tank and pumping stations.
 - Largely unmanaged.
 - Seven miles of roads.

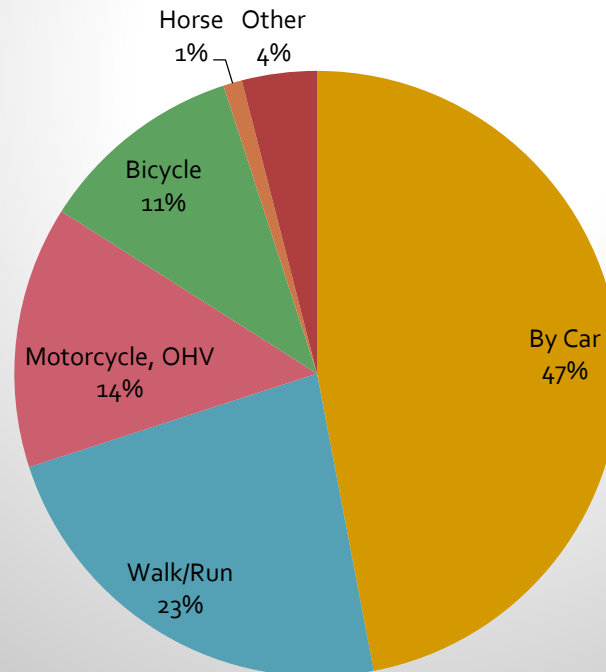


Survey Results



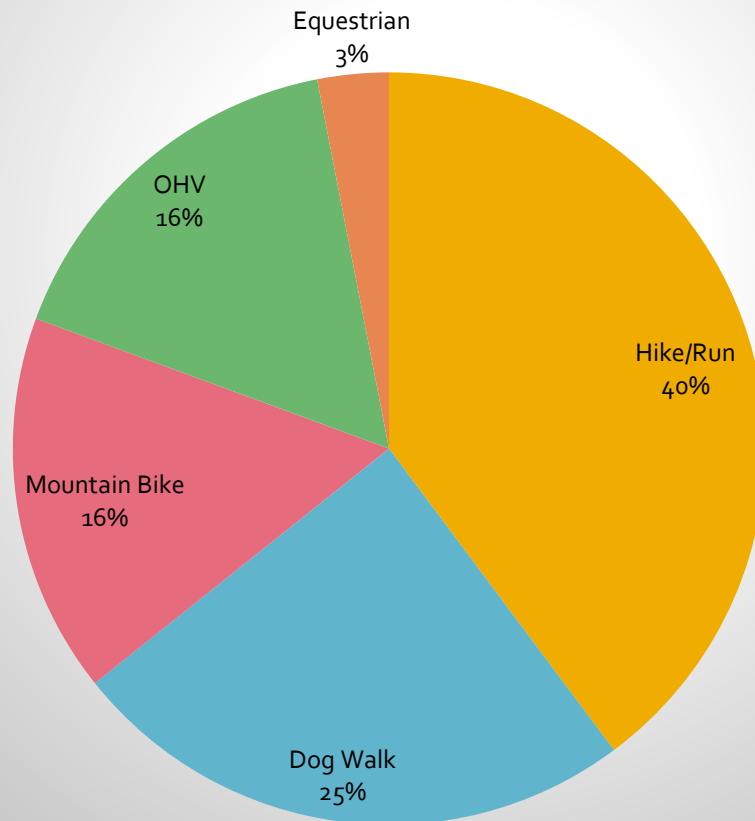
An online survey was conducted in July-August of 2019. There were 190 responses, and 99% of respondents reported that they recreate on Prison Hill at least monthly.

How respondents get to Prison Hill



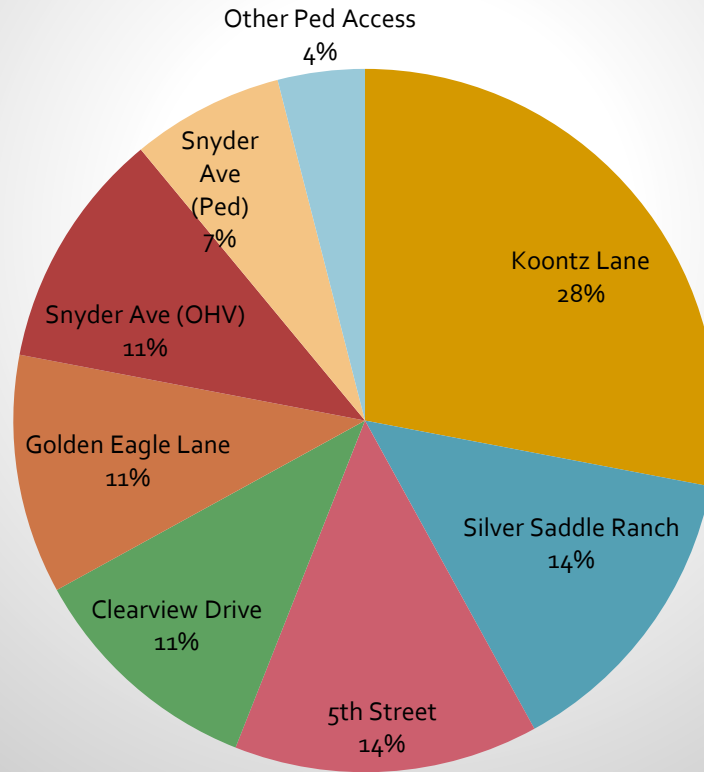
Survey Results

Activities that respondents participate in



Survey Results

Favorite trailheads and access points



Survey Results

Trailhead amenities:

In general, respondents didn't want to see a lot of amenities at the trailheads other than parking, signage, trash cans, mutt-mitt stations, and in some cases a restroom and picnic shelter.

A few respondents commented that they would like to have drinking water at trailheads.



Survey Results

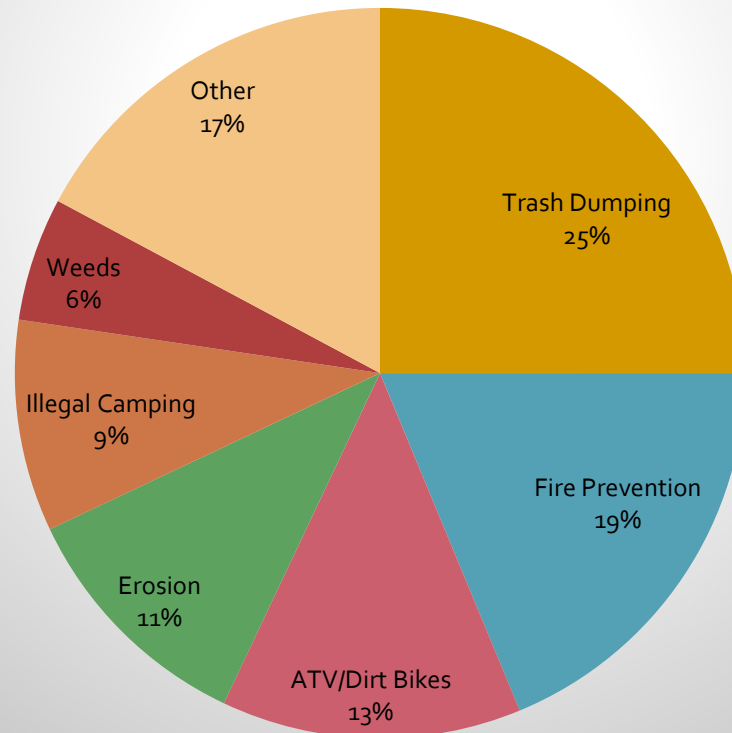


Questions pertaining to the Koontz Lane parcel:

- 68% of respondents feel it is important for Carson City to pursue permanent recreational access through the BLM parcels and make improvements to the road leading to the Koontz Lane trailhead.
- What level of vehicle access is acceptable?
 - 37% of respondents would prefer no motor vehicle access (other than roads leading to trailheads).
 - 25% would like to see limited vehicle access.
 - 35% would allow unlimited vehicle access to continue.
- 61% of respondents would like to see physical barriers to reduce unauthorized motorized uses.
- 64% of respondents would like the City to reduce the number of roads and then revegetate these areas.
- A few respondents commented that they would like a cross-walk across Edmonds Drive at Koontz Lane.

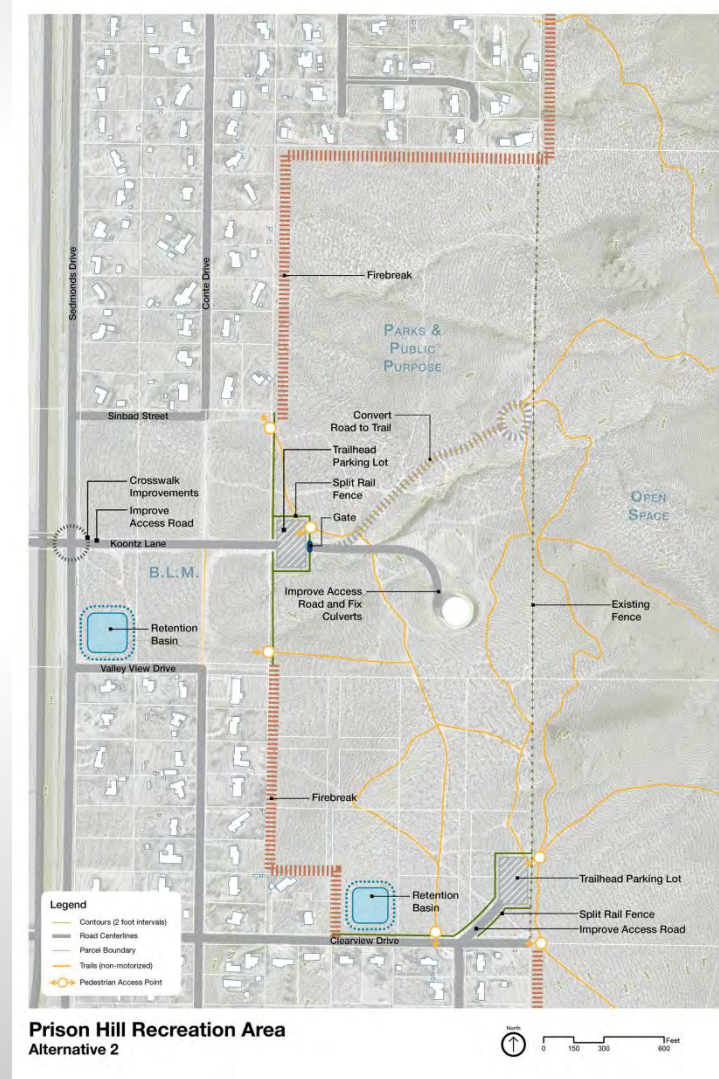
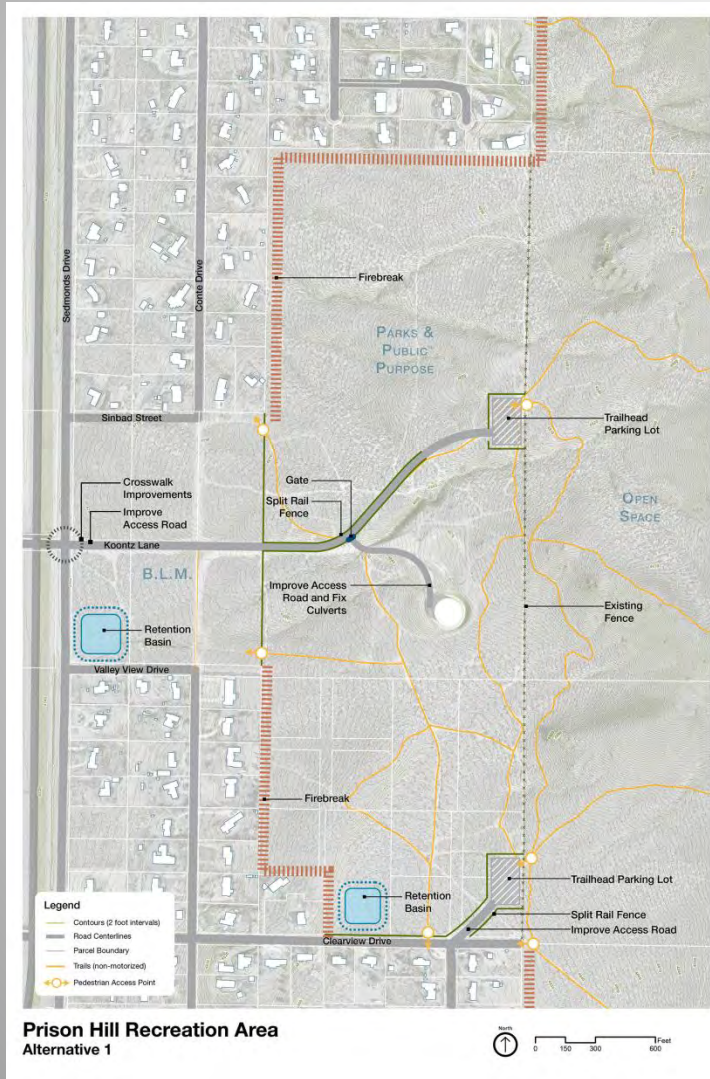
Survey Results

Biggest issues/concerns reported by respondents regarding the Koontz Lane parcel.



Open House

January 9, 2020; over 100 attendees



Summary of Open House Comments



Written or emailed comment

Frequency

Regarding Koontz Alternatives:

Prefer Alternative #1	21
Prefer Alternative #2	3
Need parking in both locations	1

Regarding Vehicle Usage on Koontz Parcel:

No motorized vehicles (other than trailheads)	10
Do not restrict motorized vehicles	2

Summary of Open House Comments



Written or emailed comment

Frequency

Other - Regarding Koontz Parcel:

Want restroom	7
Complementary of efforts overall	7
Retention basin needed / flooding an issue	6
Retain natural setting (minimal amenities)	2
Dog waste / need mutt-mitt stations	2
Fire a concern / need fire break	2
Plan for growth	1
Complementary of 5 th Street TH project	1
Post signs with Park Ranger / CCSO phone number	1
Need no smoking ordinance	1
More signs showing regulations	1
Remove fence barrier at Conte & Sinbad	1
Weeds a problem	1
Possible impact on taxes?	1
Emergency response station at each TH	1
Directional signage to trailheads	1

Questions or Comments?

