

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** April 5, 2016

**AGENDA ITEM NUMBER:** 3E

**STAFF:** Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator

**REQUEST:** **For Possible Action:** To authorize the Chairperson's signature on a letter of support to the Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Program for trails and other possible improvements within the vicinity of Silver Saddle Ranch and the old Buzzy's Ranch.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

Staff coordinated a couple meetings with the volunteer working group representing two members each from the Parks and Recreation Commission and Open Space Advisory Committee. The first meeting was held on December 8, 2015. A project summary, scoring matrix and a scoring sheet for each project was provided. The group focused on three regional areas which included: Silver Saddle Ranch / Buzzy's Ranch (Scored 60.30), the west side of Carson City (Scored 52.20), and the Prison Hill Recreation Area (Scored 51.48). Attached to your staff report are the results of the scoring matrix and the pros and cons.

The second meeting was held on March 7, 2016 to further discuss the highest ranked project, which was the Silver Saddle Ranch / old Buzzy's Ranch area. Trail improvements were identified as the easiest proposal to submit by the expedited deadline of April 29<sup>th</sup>. Further improvements at Silver Saddle Ranch and adjacent areas will be discussed during the development of a Site Master Plan, anticipated to begin in Summer 2016. Staff has hired a consultant to identify trail improvements and cost estimates for the project. Staff is requesting a letter of support from the Commission to include with the grant application.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** I move to authorize the Chairperson's signature on a letter of support to the Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Program for trails and other possible improvements within the vicinity of Silver Saddle Ranch and the old Buzzy's Ranch.

April 18, 2016

Jeff Wilbanks  
PTNA Program Manager  
BLM, Southern Nevada District Office  
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130

Re: Support for Carson City's project(s) in the Parks, Trails and Natural Areas Category

Dear Mr. Wilbanks, Partners Working Group and Executive Committee,

Please accept our letter of support for our Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department's grant nomination through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) for trails and other possible improvements in the Carson River Trail System. Our Committee and Commission are pleased to see progress being made toward the projects identified in Carson City's Unified Pathways Master Plan (UPMP) as well as the Design Charrette for the Silver Saddle Ranch and the Carson River.

In addition to being desired by many trail users, these trail connectivity and improvement project(s) provide multiple benefits such as improved access to outdoor recreational opportunities, improved access to explore our natural areas like the Carson River and our historic ranch (Silver Saddle Ranch), and providing options for alternative modes of transportation from the adjacent neighborhoods and a middle school.

We anticipate these are the first project(s) in a greater endeavor for improvements to and through Silver Saddle Ranch, the Prison Hill Recreation Area, and Carson River corridor.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

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Bruce Scott  
Chair, Open Space Advisory Committee

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Lee-Ann Keever  
Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission





## **Prison Hill Recreation Area**

### **Working Group Comments:**

#### **Pros:**

- 1- Improve public access through trailhead development
- 2- Interpretative opportunities for geological, environmental, natural resource protection
- 3- Create sustainable trail system
- 4- High public demand
- 5- Protect and separate OHV and non-motorized areas
- 6- May have OHV grant funding available
- 7- Unique mountain bike and urban trail system
- 8- Tie into Silver Saddle Ranch and Buzzy' s Ranch existing trails
- 9- Potential OHV education outreach

#### **Cons:**

- 1- Not as much public demand

#### **Staff Recommendations and Priorities:**

- 1- Is a key connector to other trails already planned or established





## Silver Saddle Ranch and Buzzy's Ranch

### Working Group Comments:

#### Pros:

- 1- Connectivity with trails for Carson River Park, Silver Saddle Ranch, Mexican Dam, Riverview Park, Morgan Mill Preserve, Vidler, Empire Ranch Trail, Mexican Ditch Trail, and Prison Hill Trails. This will help connect to the entire Carson City Trail System.
- 2- Preservation of historical ranch, presents unlimited preservation of Carson City historic ranching with continued agricultural use
- 3- The ability to expand and improve aquatic trail system to Silver Saddle Ranch and Buzzy's Ranch
- 4- Volunteer base in place to assist in upkeep
- 5- High public demand
- 6- Help complete Unified Pathways Master Plan
- 7- Called for in Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- 8- Population close to schools makes for easy educational opportunities, outdoor classroom and nature activities
- 9- Multiple use opportunities
- 10- No land ownership concerns or need for easements, rights of entry, and land purchases
- 11- Can reach a large diversity of ability and interest, broaden education, and interpretation opportunities
- 12- Economic, political, and city event destination
- 13- Establish Prison Hill and Silver Saddle Ranch into Aquatic Trail
- 14- Increase access to Buzzy's Ranch area

#### Cons:

- 1- Big project with a lot of planning and staff time
- 2- May be too costly depending on budget
- 3- Very complex likely to take multiple years or phases
- 4- Not shovel ready

#### Staff Recommendations and Priorities:

- 1- City required to meet ADA guidelines for accessibility to Silver Saddle Ranch
- 2- Critical infrastructure needs addressed to ensure historical structures are maintained and repaired
- 3- White house needs demolished, it may be considered a liability or hazard
- 4- Critical need for safe crossing at Carson River Road
- 5- This project area checks off a lot of boxes for the SNPLMA selection committee and will most likely result in a higher score



## WEST CARSON CITY

### SCORES

PTNA RANKING CRITERIA												AVERAGE
<b>Specific Elements Score each 1-5, use 5 to show element meets all criteria.</b>												
<b>DEMAND</b>												
REVIEW CRITERIA — Provides a new or improves an existing park, trail, or natural area to meet the demands and changing demographics of residents and visitors.												
The project serves communities of identified populations within communities that have been traditionally and historically underserved in the provision of parks, trails, and natural areas facilities and services.	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3.00
The project meets the needs of communities which have faced social/economic barriers that have limited their access or connectivity to healthy natural environments.	2	3	1	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2.70
The project is unique and/or significant to the region it is or will be established in.	3	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	2	3.70
The project address, remedies or improves public health and safety concern(s).	2	3	5	4	3	4	3	3	5	1		3.30
<b>TOTAL</b>												<b>12.70</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b>												
REVIEW CRITERIA — Protects or improves the integrity of resources (community, cultural, educational, environmental, historical, open space, and recreational) while addressing the quality of the human experience.												
The project enhances community, cultural, educational, environmental, historical, open space and recreational resources.	4	4	1	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	3.10
The project helps protect existing parks, trails, and natural areas, or other natural/cultural resources, particularly where urgent action is required.	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	1		3.00
The project utilizes a sustainable design, particularly with regard to the conservation of energy, water and materials.	3	3	1	2	2	3	4	5	4	4		3.10
The project protects and enhances the quality of the human experience by fostering an interaction with an increased understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.	5	4	1	2	3	2	4	5	4	2		3.20
<b>TOTAL</b>												<b>12.40</b>



## West Carson City

### Working Group Comments:

#### Pros:

- 1- Help update Unified Pathways Master Plan
- 2- Outstanding opportunities for connectivity with Tahoe Rim Trail, State Parks, USFS lands, and the Carson Valley Trail System
- 3- V&T provide important low elevation north to south connector which also connects with the Eagle Valley Children's Home and Carson Tahoe Hospital
- 4- Expand the City's mountain bike trail system
- 5- Greater connectivity for all trails
- 6- Formal parking areas would benefit public and keep people in desired areas
- 7- Low cost and low effort required
- 8- Simple scope and execution

#### Cons:

- 1- Limited potential for interpretive and education opportunities
- 2- Not as useful because of limited abilities
- 3- Limited .....
- 4- A lot of variables that would impact getting project approval: land ownership, access, and need for an easement

### Staff Recommendations and Priorities:

- 1-