Public information meeting - Carson City Rifle and Pistol Range
Wednesday, December 12, 2018, 5:30pm – 7:00pm – Sierra Room

PUBLIC COMMENT NOTES

Public comments are in black italics, city responses are in blue. Please note that these are not exact minutes and many comments are abbreviated, as the meeting was not formally recorded, since it was for information purposes only. There was not time to answer all questions at the meeting, so some responses have been added below for further information.

- 135 individuals signed in; 40+ individuals expressed interest in participating on a working group
- City staff representatives in attendance: Carson City Board of Supervisors Lori Bagwell and Brad Bonkowski, Sheriff Ken Furlong, City Manager Nancy Paulson, Public Works Deputy Director Curtis Horton, Public Works Operations Manager Rick Cooley, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Manager Dan Kastens
- Opening remarks provided by Supervisor Bagwell and Sheriff Ken Furlong.

City staff contacts regarding the rifle range:
Jennifer Budge, Parks and Recreation Director: 775.887.2262, jbudget@carson.org
David Navarro, Park Operations Superintendent: 775.887.2262, dnavarro@carson.org
Dan Kastens, Park Operations Manager: 775.887.2262, dkastens@carson.org

- Who has the authority to enforce issues at the range? They are difficult to identify and is suggested to not have a vest that anyone can be able to purchase at a store.
Carson City Park Rangers, Carson City Parks staff, Carson City Sheriff’s Office and Carson Rifle and Pistol Club Range Safety Officers (RSO) have authority at the range. Park Rangers and Sheriff’s Office both have identifying uniforms and City identification. Park staff has City identification and are usually driving a Carson City vehicle. Club members wear a vest and have a laminated club identification card that demonstrates they are a Range Safety Officer, as shown in the pictures below. All RSO’s are required to wear their vest and have their identification on them when acting in that capacity. Also, all approved RSO’s have their picture posted on the Club’s website at http://www.carsonrapc.org/rsos.html.
• How many members are in the Club and how many are residents of Carson City? Don’t want a California Club!
120 club members, with 64 members being Carson City residents, the other 54 are from Northern Nevada, and only 2 from outside the state.

• It is estimated that it will take four staff to cover hours and facility “as is”. Scheduling the Sheriff’s Office to patrol multiple times per day makes more sense. Volunteers not dependable, invest in more deputies to keep it safe. Charge for non-Carson City resident users to help pay for increased patrol costs. The Rifle & Pistol Club (Club) volunteers have been stepping up to keep the range open and free for everyone. The Club also has had lots of non-members volunteer to donate time as RSO’s as well. The club will continue to do what it can with its available resources to keep it open and free. The cost to add only one additional Sheriff Deputy is between $52,989.87 - $74,963.20 annually plus benefits.

• There are unintended consequences with closures to the range - desert shooting, trash, fire & environmental issues. Much greater impacts with the range closure. Need a dedicated area to shoot. The City’s goal is to get the facility back open and available seven days/week. It is intended for the reduced operating hours to be only temporary until a safety assessment is completed and a review of the recommendations is made. The City understands the importance of having a safe facility for the public to use and enjoy, which prevents desert shooting and is one of the many reasons why the range was built in the first place. The City has continued to work to improve the facility for the benefit of the community.

• “Shooter trash” - shooters not polluters, need to keep the range open to reduce this.

• History and barriers. Can baffles be used or other efforts to control rounds on range line? Possibly. The range safety assessment should provide recommendations regarding potential mitigation measures. All feasible improvements will be considered and evaluated.

• Doesn’t want a “supervised range” like Washoe County – self policing is working – provided an extended overhead cover example. Supervised ranges are common across the country and can be feasible; however, self-policing can also be effective tool as well. Unfortunately, not all users are comfortable with self-policing, as it can be intimidating in this setting. While most users are responsible and educated participants, unfortunately, not all are using the facility in the manner in which it was designed and not according to the posted rules and guidelines, creating additional opportunities for projectiles to leave the facility. This is demonstrated by the amount of bullet holes in the road signs and the overhead covers, in addition to participants, club, and staff observations witnessing misuse.
- **The range is open to Military and Police department – why? And not to the public – everyone needs to train – additional issues impacting Goni area due to the range closure.**

  The current operational hours are intended to only be temporary until a safety assessment can be completed. Currently, the entire facility is open and available to the public on Saturdays and Sundays. Other opportunities for the public to participate during the week require reservations for the shooting bays, but require insurance and an RSO on site. The Club is only able to provide RSO’s during the weekends at this time due to limited volunteer resources. Even the military and law enforcement users must make a reservation for weekday use, just like the general public. The reservation schedule is available [http://www.carsonrapc.org/reservations.html](http://www.carsonrapc.org/reservations.html).

- **There is a petition with over 1200 supporters to reopen range without restrictions. Can they relocate the construction debris area at the landfill so there is no conflict? Why are you working in that area now?**

  No, it is not economical to relocate the Construction Demolition (C&D) area, as the areas to the east and west are hard rock and would require a tremendous amount of blasting and earthmoving. Also the outside “shell” of the landfill is required to be C&D per the landfill plan/permit requirements. The landfill operation is very methodical and operating per permit requirements and in compliance with the landfill master plan. Also, this area needs to be filled to shore up the center of the landfill so that the fill can go higher. The landfill will continue to get wider and higher as it progresses.

- **Can the landfill “chip in” for some safety improvements to address the current issue?**

  The landfill and portions of the Parks and Recreation Department functions are funded through the City’s General Fund, which is authorized by the Board of Supervisors. Changes to the budget must be included during the City’s budget process. Until a range safety assessment is provided it is not yet known what mitigation measures may be recommended or the potential costs of the improvements.

- **A new development on Drako Way is too close to the range according to city code – how was this approved and where is the development in the approval process?**

  There is no codified separation requirement between the gun range and other uses. Carson City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section 8.12.010 deals with the discharge of firearms. While this code section does prohibit the discharge of any gun, rifle, pistol or other firearm (with the exception of shotguns, air rifles, and B-B guns) within 5,000 feet of any dwelling, building or other place of public resort within Carson City, there is a specific exemption in this same code section for the lawful discharge of a firearm at a licensed rifle range, gun club, etc. CCMC 8.12.010.3 states:

  "This section does not apply to peace officers or to persons shooting in any regularly established and lawfully authorized and licensed rifle range, gun club or shooting gallery or to any person lawfully discharging a firearm in protection of life or property."

  Therefore, with this specific exemption the development is not too close to the range.
The Board of Supervisors heard the request for the Zoning Map Amendment and Tentative Subdivision Map at their 12/20/18 meeting. At that meeting they introduced the ordinance for the zoning map amendment and approved the Tentative Subdivision Map. The Zoning Map Amendment will be considered for final approval on 1/3/19 at the Board of Supervisors meeting. The developer will have 4 years from the date of approval to record the first phase of the subdivision. Additional information regarding the project can be found at www.carson.org.

- How were bullets found – how long have they been there? Self-policing is working. Reports made to Park Rangers with vehicle descriptions. Should have studied this before acting and closing the range.

Bullets have been found by landfill employees, city contractors, members of the rifle and pistol club, including individuals that have NRA range technical team training to evaluate ranges. It is unknown as to how long the bullets have been there. The display board shown below was available at the meeting. The information was collected on a Sunday in November by the Rifle and Pistol Club and City Public Works employees when the landfill was closed, over a 4 hour period. These Individuals at the landfill heard the sound of projectiles overhead, and confirmed shooting was taking place at the Shooting Range at the same time. During this same time multiple spent bullets were found on the surface of ground in the locations shown.

In addition, a photo of the bullets collected recently at the south monitoring well was displayed:
• This meeting is premature – no verification of ricochet or mortar rounds.
   Please see documentation as described above.

• Process needs to be quick, put pressure on the assessment professionals.
   The City has been in regular contact with the NRA and NDOW. The NRA understands the urgency of the safety assessment, and the City will do everything possible to expedite the process.

• How are the RSO’s stopping ricochet bullets? RSO’s are appreciated, but doesn’t make sense?
   No, RSO’s cannot stop ricochet bullets, but they educate range users about proper target placement, and explaining why (ex. bullets impacting backstops as they are designed for) helps keep projectiles from leaving the range. There are signs at the range stating just this, and other safety practices, but not everyone reads these signs - and if they do sometimes people forget or just ignore them all together. It is the RSO’s role to educate users on proper use of the range to promote a safer shooting environment.

• The range is an asset to the community. Do not close it.
   The City’s goal is to have the facility open and available to the public seven days/week. It is hoped that this operational schedule will only be temporary. The City has no plans or intention on closing the range permanently.

• Weekend’s too busy. RSO’s not being effective and don’t do their job well.
   Please report any concerns regarding RSO’s to the Carson Rifle and Pistol Club at info@carsonrapc.org. If the Club is not responsive or does not address your concerns, then please contact Carson City Parks at 887.2262. Again, it is the City’s hope that the operational schedule is only temporary and the goal is to have the facility open seven days/week.

• What reviews have been done from a ballistics standpoint? – People are shooting from the surrounding hills, not just the range.
   The City has requested technical assistance from the NRA and the City’s funding partner, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), has requested an additional safety assessment by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). These organizations have technical experts in the field to thoroughly evaluate the range and the concerns. Park Ranger patrols have increased in the lands east of the landfill, as well as in Carson River Canyon/Brunswick Canyon Road. All shooting incidents in those outlining areas will be documented and reported.

• What investigation was done if any? What was done from a ballistics standpoint? RC Park area there is shooting. What about the V & T Special Plan Area (SPA)? What about the proposed development on Drako? There is language in the SPA that says “excluding the range” What are the conditions of approval on the development? Was there a ballistic expert that evaluated this before closing?
The City has received unverified reports of shooting coming from the east side of the landfill and has met on site with individuals identifying the possible area. Subsequently, Park Rangers have increased their patrols of this area and have been asked to report any evidence of shooting, with all active shooting to be reported to the Sheriff’s Office immediately. Shooting in this area is prohibited per the Carson City Municipal Code; however, since this land was acquired from BLM in 2015, there could be confusion from the public on where shooting is allowed. City staff has also spoken to members of the Pony Express Air Park to report any shooting activity in that area. Signage was also posted at the air park as well to educate and ensure consistent reporting practices.

This development is consistent with the V & T Specific Plan Area (SPA). Specifically, policy 1.5 of the SPA calls for a land use designation of Mixed-Use Commercial and/or Mixed-Use Residential upon the removal of the old landfill that has been identified on-site. In March 2018 the Board of Supervisors approved a Master Plan Amendment, consistent with Policy 1.5, changing the land use designation of the subject properties from Industrial to Mixed-Use Residential. The next step in the process is a zoning map amendment and tentative subdivision map which is addressed in the above response. There is no specific exemption in the SPA regarding the range. The conditions of approval as discussed at the 12/20/18 Board of Supervisors meeting can be found at www.carson.org. There is a condition of approval requiring a deed restriction be recorded for each property within the proposed development notifying new property owners of their proximity to the industrial properties, the landfill, the V&T railroad, the disc golf course, and the rifle and pistol range. The deed restriction is required to disclose that there may be noise, odors, dust, etc. associated with living in close proximity to these uses, that these uses may impact quality of life, and that it is the City’s intent to protect the aforementioned uses.

- **Blue line has made it safer.** This meeting is premature and should happen after the safety assessments are complete. Concerned about impacts in the Goni area. Other areas are a bigger issue than the reasons for closing the range. Some have commented on charging, but it would cost more to implement than what you would bring in.

- **Mandate of RSO’s – who is “covering” that liability for those RSO’s?**
  Currently the Carson Rifle and Pistol Club, a private, non-profit organization, is charged with operating the facility through a use agreement that is more than 20 years old. As a requirement of the agreement, the club must have liability insurance. The approved RSO’s are members of the club and covered under the insurance held by the Club.

- **How do we know that the bullets were not from people not shooting appropriately?**
  We can’t be certain and this is why the City is seeking professionals to evaluate the facility and why RSO’s are now present at the range during operating hours, so they can educate users and promote a safer shooting environment.
• Can we form another group with 1200 petition signers? This group could get trained as RSO’s and can we open it back up? The group could pay for RSO certifications and pitch in for insurance.

• Who is policing the RSOs? If the club isn’t, who is following up – can we call S.O. – what is wrong with self-policing? Who do we call if there is an issue with an RSO?

If there is an imminent safety issues at the range, please always call the Sheriff’s Office. Emergencies calls dial 911, other reports should go to Non-Emergency Dispatch at 887-COPS. The Club is responsible for operating and scheduling the RSOs and making sure their certifications and training are current. If there are concerns about an RSO, please report it to the Club. Email is info@carsonrapc.org. If the Club is not following up on addressing an issue, please contact Carson City Parks at 887.2262 and the City will follow up with the Club accordingly. City staff contacts are David Navarro, Park Operations Superintendent, Dan Kastens, Park Operations Manager, and Jennifer Budge, Parks and Recreation Director.

• Self-policing makes it so you don’t have to worry about the RSO and if they are effective.

• Why is it safer on the weekends with RSO?

The RSO’s educate range users about proper target placement, and explaining why (ex. bullets impacting backstops as they are designed for) helps keep projectiles from leaving the range. There are signs at the range stating just this, and other safety practices, but not everyone reads these signs - and if they do sometimes people forget or just ignore them all together. It is the RSO’s role to educate users on proper use of the range to promote a safer shooting environment. The landfill is closed on Sundays and holidays, so the range should be open and available to the public on those days at minimum.

• This is based on allegations and with no evidence.

The data collected is shown above and the City is seeking technical expertise through a safety assessment from the NRA and the NSSF.

• If the criteria to close was safety, what will be the criteria to reopen? The safety reports?

Yes. A safety report from a technical expert, like the ones that have been requested by the NRA and the NSSF will be needed to guide what happens next and what mitigation measures should be considered.

• There were no problems earlier – why now?

With the population growth of Carson City, the landfill has grown exponentially and participation at the range has increased significantly as well. The landfill will continue to grow wider and higher in compliance with the landfill master plan. The areas observing activity from errant bullets are now active areas in the landfill for Construction and Demolition and will continue to be active for the next 35 years, per the City’s landfill master plan.
• Why have the club operate the facility? Why not consider another approach like Douglas County?
Currently, the City has a use agreement for operation of the range with the Carson Rifle and Pistol Club, a non-profit organization. The agreement has been in place for over 20 years. The City has put the club on notice that the agreement is outdated and in need of discussion for possible reconsideration. The Board of Supervisor’s would be the governing body for any future agreements, amendments to the current agreement, or provide the Parks and Recreation Department direction on any other operational changes that should be considered. If you have suggestions on operational models that should be considered as an alternative, please pass the information to the Parks and Recreation Department.

• With the location of the range, you should expect some bullets to go the landfill.

• With millions of rounds that have been shot from the range and only the few bullets discovered, why is this being done now? Concerned about closing, the timing, and seems random without evidence.
Safety concerns reported by Carson City employees are taken seriously. With the additional information that was provided (see photo of display board above), this temporary operational measure was implemented. The City does not intend on closing the range, but is seeking technical assistance from professionals in the field to evaluate the situation. The decision to reduce the operational schedule and increase RSO’s was intended to still have the facility available to the public, while considering safety of the staff and the public using the landfill. This is also due to the fact that landfill was not previously as active in this area.

• Brass have been found at the RC Park – is that what is going into landfill? Many rounds have been found there.
The City has received unverified reports of shooting coming from the east side of the landfill and has met on site with individuals identifying the possible area. Subsequently, Park Rangers have increased their patrols of this area and have been asked to report any evidence of shooting, with all active shooting to be reported to the Sheriff’s Office immediately. Shooting in this area is prohibited per the Carson City Municipal Code. City staff has also spoken to members of the Pony Express Air Park to report any shooting activity in that area. Signage was also posted at the air park as well to educate and ensure consistent reporting practices.

• How long will this part of the landfill been an active work site? What will the change be as the landfill is further filled in? What will the elevation change be?
For not less than 35 + years. As the landfill is filled in, it will have greater exposure, for years the fill activity has been on the opposite side of the central fill from the rifle range. The max fill height of the landfill is 5165’, and this is approximately 165’ higher than the current high point in the middle of the landfill approximately 380’ above the deck at the rifle range.
• It is premature having this meeting until you have a safety assessment. Can the range be reoriented? The City will discuss this possibility with the technical team assigned to evaluate the range, but it is not likely that re-orientation is a viable option. Re-orienting the ranges toward the south would likely create conflicts with public recreation activities in the Carson River Canyon and reorientation to the north or west could possibly create conflicts with other uses. All possibilities to mitigate this issue will be considered if feasible.

• Was the landfill ever closed for safety incidents at the landfill itself or only from the range? Yes. The landfill has been closed several times for internal safety issues such as vehicle accidents, investigations, equipment rollover rescue operations, and on numerous occasions for firefighting operations, and severe weather issues.

• What is the timeframe for the studies? The NRA understands the urgency of this request and has indicated that they will make every effort to assign a Range Technical Team Advisor (RTTA) by the end of 2018. The City would like the assessment to be conducted as soon as possible, so possible mitigation measures can be discussed and implemented if feasible.

• Never problems before - self-policing is working. Closing the range during the week is not accommodating everyone, especially those that are “retired”. Where is the crime – where is the injury? Again, safety concerns reported by City staff are taken seriously. Since the landfill is closed on Sundays and holidays, every effort to have the range open and available on those days, at minimum, will be made. The Club only had enough RSO’s to accommodate the current operational schedule. Once the safety assessment is complete, all feasible efforts to increase the operational schedule will be made. While self-policing is an effective tool, it is does not always work and some participants are not comfortable with this approach. While most participants are educated and responsible users of the facility, some are not. This is evidenced by the many bullet holes in road signage and the overhead cover at the range, as well as Club, user and staff witness accounts of misuse.

• Concerns – with affordability if charging for the range – will reduce options for those of us with limited income and affordable children’s activities. This is a violation of rights and infringement since it was always free. Currently the range is open and available free of charge. The City does not pay the Club and the Club does not pay the City for the facility. The focus of the technical assistance will be on safety of the facility, not fees.

• Allowed a club to run the range – refer to agreement – no RSO site specific training provided– can shoot part of an authorized group, but not the “general public” even if trained. There have been no shooting
related incidents, but have heard ricochets there. No experts in field have been involved in this decision and the club has no authority.

The Club has operated the range with authorization through a written use agreement between the City and the Club that has been in effect for more than twenty years. The Club was the driving citizen force for the development of the facility, with the help of Carson City and NV Department of Wildlife. There has been Site Specific Training for RSO’s for more than 3 years, and that is offered by NRA Certified Chief Range Safety Officers and is available to interested members of the public. Yes experts in the field have been involved in this decision and have also pushed for the Range Assessment for more input and additional technical expertise.

The City has requested technical experts from the NRA and the NSSF to evaluate the range and the concerns outlined at the meeting. The temporary operational schedule was implemented based on the Club’s availability to provide RSO’s to encourage safe use of the facility as it was designed and considering the landfill schedule.

- There is not a “real safety issue” here, but one that has been done for convenience – projects around the range are the ones that are really shutting this down.

The City’s goal is to have the facility open and available seven days/week. This temporary operational schedule was not implemented because of the Disc Golf course, the Drako development, or any other projects. It was implemented due to safety concerns from errant bullets that have been observed by city staff, contractors, and the rifle and pistol club at the landfill. Technical experts from the NRA and the NSSF will evaluate the facility and the safety concerns, and recommend possible mitigation measures.

- Drako way project – what is the timeline? Examples of other city encroachment (Disc Golf Course, RC Park, landfill and V & T)

The Board of Supervisors heard the request for the Zoning Map Amendment and Tentative Subdivision Map at their 12/20/18 meeting. At that meeting they introduced the ordinance for the zoning map amendment and approved the Tentative Subdivision Map. The Zoning Map Amendment will be considered for final approval on 1/3/19 at the Board of Supervisors meeting. The developer will have 4 years from the date of approval to record the first phase of the subdivision.

- There is no ballistic evidence, we understand caution, but this is an overkill response – impacting businesses and not just the public.

- What/who is the working group?

The working group has not yet been established, but is an option the city is considering as we move forward. The intent is to help not only ensure a transparent process once the safety assessment report is complete, but with representation by stakeholders. We would like representatives from a variety of
interests to participate and help provide solutions so we can all work together to get the facility back open to its full operation. More than 40 people have expressed interest in participating on a working group.

- **Reserved bays have restrictions (insurance etc.,) why? Need to be able to reserve other times.**
  Outside of the current weekend hours, reservations for the shooting bays are required by all users (and they are required to provide their own RSO’s and Insurance). To view the reservation schedule go to [http://www.carsonrapc.org/reservations.html](http://www.carsonrapc.org/reservations.html) or email [info@carsonrapc.org](mailto:info@carsonrapc.org) to make a reservation.

- **Most users are competent and safely using the range. Rounds are coming from range and most likely from those misusing the range. Have observed “targets” too close and ricocheting into landfill – need to educate users to put targets so bullets impact the backstop. Club is trying to make it safer for people.**

  In an effort to help educate users, the City, with support from the Club received an NRA Foundation grant, which is fully funding new signage at the facility. The current signage is difficult to read and is often torn down or removed. Using the facility as it was designed (example putting targets so they impact the backstop and not on the hillside in between the range and the landfill) is critical and one way that will improve safety at the landfill and surrounding properties. These efforts from the Club and the City are intended to educate participants and keep the range users, as well as adjacent properties, safe. Samples of the new signage installed on December 27, 2018, funded by the NRA Foundation below.

- **No evidence that the rounds came from the range – education is needed for the public about target placement – is a good idea – look at Humboldt County as example - closing is premature – Good History.**

  RSO’s are educating users on target placement. The City appreciates information about other facilities and operational models that should be considered.

- **There is a misconception that you need to be a club member to shoot there.**

  The Carson Rifle and Pistol Range is open and available to the general public. Users do not need to be a member of the Carson Rifle and Pistol Club to use the facility.
• Concern with lack of data – heard full autos at Mill along Brunswick Canyon Road, range being blamed for other active shooting in the surrounding area.

Park Rangers have increased patrols in the Carson River Canyon/Brunswick Canyon Road area, as well as open space east of the landfill. Any shooting activity observed, including evidence of shooting, is being documented and reported. Shooting in those areas is prohibited per Carson City Municipal Code.