



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: September 3, 2019

DATE: August 20, 2019
TO: Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
FROM: Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner
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THROUGH: Eric Crump, Operations Division Director
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SUBJECT: Review, discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for approval of the 2019 Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

SUMMARY

Washoe County, through its Community Services Department, has been working with Wood Rogers, Inc., to develop a comprehensive parks master plan for Washoe County. The plan, founded on extensive stakeholder engagement and community outreach, presents a vision to guide future park acquisition, operations and maintenance. It details current challenges and opportunities both in specific planning areas and in the county at large. It also identifies short, medium and long-term priorities and proposes strategies to see those priorities realized.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities

PREVIOUS ACTION

July 2, 2019 – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission held a workshop to provide feedback to Wood Rodgers and Washoe County staff on the draft Parks Master Plan to be incorporated into the final version.

June 4, 2019 – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission voted to schedule a Parks Master Plan workshop on July 2, 2019.

November 29, 2018 – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission provided feedback and guidance for the master plan.

BACKGROUND

Every ten to twenty years, Washoe County prepares a new parks master plan to guide the Regional Parks and Open Space (Parks) program as the region transforms and priorities change. In 1962, the master plan focused on acquiring open space and developing regional parks. In 1988, the most important identified priority was to provide park

connectivity through the development of a network of trails. In 1998, the focus once again shifted to hone in on the creation of sports complexes and the development of regional parks. It also broadened the priorities of the program to include open space acquisition and natural resource management. The 2019 Parks Master Plan continues to focus on existing priorities (development of regional parks and trails, open space acquisition, and natural resource management), but also identifies some of the biggest challenges, including current funding/staffing levels and a growing population with increasing demands, as well as strategies for overcoming challenges and fulfilling goals.

This master plan was largely informed by data gathered through stakeholder and community outreach meetings that were held between February and September of 2018, as well as an online survey conducted between April and May of 2018. Through that process, Wood Rodgers staff was able to determine what parks facilities in Washoe County are most frequently used, how far community members are willing to travel for recreation, and where the community would like the county to utilize resources. The data collected through this process as well as an analysis of national park metrics and trends were compiled and used to inform the 2019 Parks Master Plan.

Compatibility with Open Space and Natural Resource Management Plan

In addition to priorities related to regional park and trail development, this master plan also identifies goals related to the acquisition of open space with high natural resource values and the integration of recreation goals with cultural and natural resource management. This plan does not supersede Washoe County's 2008 Open Space and Natural Resource Management Plan, but rather seeks to complement the plan by identifying strategies and actions to meet multiple priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that, after thorough review and discussion, the Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Commission recommend approval of the 2019 Parks Master Plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the commissioners agree with the staff recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to recommend to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners approval of the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan.”