



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: **May 4, 2021**

DATE: April 30, 2021

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: Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve a proposal from the property owners of APN 154-011-07 to relocate the beginning of the Brown's Creek Trail, primarily located on their property, to a new alignment [at no cost to the County and at the approximate value of \$27,400]. (Commission District 2.) (For Possible Action.)

SUMMARY

The parcel on which the beginning of Brown's Creek Trail is located (APN 154-011-07) was recently sold from St. James's Village, Inc. to Robert and Victoria Loop. The Loops are requesting a relocation of the trail to the eastern portion of their property to better coincide with their future development plans. If approved, a portion of the trail would be relocated and sustainably built, and the existing trail would be decommissioned.

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

PREVIOUS ACTION

August 23, 2005 – The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution supporting a State Question-1 grant application for the construction of the Brown's Creek Trailhead and Trail.

BACKGROUND

Washoe County owns the parcel on which the Brown's Creek Trailhead is located along Joy Lake Road. Washoe County Parks staff submitted a State Question-1 grant application in 2005 for the construction of the trailhead and trail improvements. The grant was awarded and construction of the improvements took place between 2006 and 2009. With help from trail-building crews, such as Great Basin Institute-Nevada Conservation Corps, as well as volunteer groups, such as Damonte Ranch High School NJROTC, the Poedunks Mountain Biking Group (now known as Biggest Little Trail Stewardship), St. James's Village maintenance crews, and the Truckee Meadows Trails Association, 4.7 miles of additional trails were constructed. Other improvements included installation of the trailhead kiosk and wayfinding signage.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

Based on a letter dated March 5, 2002 between Washoe County and St. James's Village HOA and the conditions of approval for the St. James's Village Development, the intent was for the St. James's Village HOA to dedicate a public trail easement to Washoe County for the Brown's Creek Trail. However, the finalized easement was never recorded. According to Washoe County legal staff, Washoe County holds an implied easement for the trail.

Current Proposal

The parcel on which the beginning of the Brown's Creek Trail is located (APN 154-011-07) was recently sold from St. James's Village, Inc. to Robert and Victoria Loop. The Loops are requesting the relocation of the beginning of the Brown's Creek Trail to better coincide with their future plans to develop a single-family dwelling. Specifically, the location of their proposed driveway and utilities would cross the existing trail, creating both visual and safety impacts. The existing trail also traverses close to their proposed building envelope, impacting both the trail user experience and the homeowners' privacy.

Upon learning of this proposal, Washoe County Parks staff informed the new property owners that the goals of Washoe County Parks are to maintain public access through the parcel, to ensure that any trail re-alignment would be sustainably designed and developed, so as not to require additional maintenance costs, and to maintain or enhance the user experience. The Loops then hired Sierra Trail Works to identify a trail realignment that meets their goals as well as the goals of Washoe County Parks. The current proposal is to relocate the beginning of the Brown's Creek Trail from its existing location through the center of their parcel to the eastern portion of the parcel (see Exhibit 1). The re-aligned trail would also extend onto a parcel managed by the St. James's Village HOA. The HOA is supportive of the proposed trail relocation.

There are pros and cons to the proposed alignment compared to the existing location. The existing location currently has a more secluded feel as it is farther away from housing and located in a canyon area. However, upon completion of future construction, the secluded feel would likely diminish. The proposed trail alignment would pass by several houses and a water tank managed by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). However, the proposed trail location would provide excellent views of Washoe Valley. Additionally, the existing trail was not built to modern sustainability standards, while the new trail would be, thus reducing natural resource impacts and overall trail maintenance costs.

Further, the Loops have agreed to decommission the existing trail and portions of an old Forest Service road. They have also agreed to purchase a new trailhead map and any additional necessary signage. If approved, once construction of the new trail is complete, the Loops would have the new trail area surveyed and would grant a public trail easement to Washoe County over the trail area on their property. St. James's Village HOA would also grant a public trail easement to Washoe County over the new trail area and the existing trail area on HOA property.

Photos of the Proposed Trail Location



Construction and Mitigation

If approved, trail construction would take approximately two weeks to complete. Sierra Trail Works would build the re-route first and then make connections to the existing trail on a weekday when user traffic is low. Temporary signage would be provided warning trail users about construction and informing them of the reroute. Once traffic is shifted to the new trail, the old trail would be closed, decommissioned, and naturalized. The trail would be decommissioned with trail tread utilizing miniature equipment, restoring the bench to a more natural slope to remove the visual scar and managing water runoff, where necessary. This step aerates the soil and removes the compacted dirt of the tread to facilitate growth. The next step is naturalizing the disturbance with locally-sourced vegetation, brush and deadwood. Any necessary reseeding would be completed with a seed mix reviewed and approved by Washoe County Parks.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact to Washoe County. The proposed trail reroute and associated improvements would be funded by the property owners of APN 154-011-07 at the approximate value of \$27,400.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Park Commission recommend that the Board of County Commissioners approve a proposal from the property owners of APN 154-011-07 to relocate the beginning of the Brown's Creek Trail, primarily located on their property, to a new alignment [at no cost to the County and at the approximate value of \$27,400].

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Commission agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners approve a proposal from the property owners of APN 154-011-07 to relocate the beginning of the Brown's Creek Trail, primarily located on their property, to a new alignment [at no cost to the County and at the approximate value of \$27,400]."