



# WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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## STAFF REPORT

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: **May 3rd, 2022**

**DATE:** April 27, 2022  
**TO:** Open Space and Regional Parks Commission  
**FROM:** Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner,  
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**THROUGH:** Eric Crump, Operations Division Director  
Community Services Department, 328-3625, [ecrump@washoecounty.us](mailto:ecrump@washoecounty.us)  
**SUBJECT:** Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to the Board of  
County Commissioners to adopt the 2022 Hidden Valley Regional Park  
Master Plan. (Commission District 4.) (For Possible Action.)

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### SUMMARY

Washoe County, through its Community Services Department, has been working with Stantec and their team to update the Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan. The plan, founded on stakeholder and public input, identifies opportunities and constraints, as well as a vision to guide future development of the park. The recommended improvements include adding constructed wetlands and recharge infiltration areas with a nature trail, repurposing the existing horse arena into an informal recreational turf field, adding restrooms and landscaping, reconfiguring park circulation, and developing a bike park and pump track. The plan also includes an extensive trails component, identifying trail sections to decommission, reconfigure and add, including an ADA-accessible trail.

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

### PREVIOUS ACTION

**February 2, 2021** – The Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Commission (Park Commission) directed Community Services Department staff to apply for a special use permit to construct a one-million-gallon water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of treated effluent water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility.

**December 14, 2004** – The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved the Hidden Valley Regional Park 2004 Master Plan Update.

**December 11, 1990** – The Board approved the Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan developed by DC West.

**August 4, 1966** – The Board accepted a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act patent for a 260-acre portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

**May 23, 1968** – The Board accepted an R&PP Act patent for a 200-acre portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

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**April 29, 1969** – The board accepted an R&PP Act patent for a 40-acre portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

## **BACKGROUND**

Hidden Valley Regional Park is a 480-acre park acquired from the Bureau of Land Management through three Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act patents granted in the mid to late 1960s. Two previous master plans have been developed for the park, the first in 1990 and the second in 2004. Early amenities included equestrian and hiking trails, restrooms and the horse arena. In the 1970s, tennis courts and additional picnic areas were constructed. More recently, a new playground, turf areas and a dog park were added. The park also contains a vast network of trails, including system trails, social trails and horse trails. The park is primarily divided into two areas, a larger developed area in the northern section of the park accessed via Parkway Drive and a smaller, pocket park to the south, accessed via Mia Vista Drive.

In 2020, staff with the Washoe County Community Services Department Sewer Utility approached staff with Washoe County Parks about the potential construction of a one-million-gallon water storage tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of treated effluent water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility. In February of 2021, the Park Commission supported this proposal and directed staff to move forward. One of the benefits related to construction of the tank is the ability to transition the park's existing potable water irrigation system to a reclaim water irrigation system. This less expensive, sustainable water source would allow for installation of further landscaping improvements and other park amenities. The potable water rights currently in use can also be utilized for other purposes.

Prior to the development of new park amenities utilizing the reclaim water, the Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan needed to be updated to respond to current community concerns and recreational needs. In July of 2021, Washoe County hired Stantec to assist with the update of plan. In addition to reflecting the desires of the community, project goals also included preserving open space, updating existing amenities, developing new amenities, supporting distribution of treated effluent water, and improving accessibility and public safety.

The plan development process began with an initial site analysis to identify opportunities (such as better circulation to facilitate movement, highlighting panoramic views, conserving plants and wildlife, and adding interpretive information) as well as constraints (such as access through residential neighborhoods, feral horses, erosion, and informal trails). While analyzing existing conditions at the park, public outreach was conducted through meetings with stakeholder groups, community workshops, public meetings and surveys to ask what existing amenities the community would like to see improved and also what new improvements they would like to see built in the park.

Based on the first round of surveys and initial stakeholder discussions, three conceptual plans were developed for review and were presented at the first public meeting held on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A second survey was then opened to garner additional feedback. The three conceptual plans were then refined into a preferred concept that was presented at the second public meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Based on input from the second public meeting, the poll and other written and oral comments received, the final master plan was

then developed. The biggest concerns identified through the process were related to: traffic and an increase in park use; impacts of the wetland and recharge areas on groundwater, stormwater runoff and nearby septic systems; mosquito abatement related to the wetlands; illegal activities occurring in the park at night; and a potential road easement through the southwest corner of the park. To address concerns, Stantec developed multiple management strategies, including strategies for feral horse management, weed management, traffic, effluent management and sustainable park design. Additionally, any proposed easement would need to follow Washoe County's Parkland Easement Application procedure and would require approval from the Bureau of Land Management.

The current master plan update recommends a number of improvements, while also seeking to maintain undeveloped open space and the more rural park aesthetic. Proposed new amenities include a bike park, pump track and wetlands with a nature trail, which ranked first, second and fourth, respectively, out of 22 items when folks were asked on the first survey what new amenities they wanted to be developed in the park. The plan also proposes repurposing the existing horse arena into an informal recreational turf field, adding restrooms, landscaping, and a dog pasture area, and reconfiguring park circulation. The overarching master plan also includes a trails plan, which identifies a proposed ADA-accessible trail, new trails, trail reroutes and trail sections to decommission.

*Consistency with the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan.*

Hidden Valley Regional Park sits within the Steamboat Planning Area identified in the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan. One of the goals for this planning area is to further develop Hidden Valley Regional Park. Additionally, one of the overarching goals of the 2019 Plan is to focus resources on regional parks rather than investing in smaller pocket parks and community parks. The current proposed master plan is consistent with these priorities.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

No fiscal impact is associated with adoption of the 2022 Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan. The total cost estimate for plan implementation is \$26,723,339. The plan will be built out as funding opportunities arise. In general, Washoe County aims to implement park master plans over a 10-20 year timeline.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Park Commission recommend that the Board of County Commissioners adopt the 2022 Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan.

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Commission agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners adopt the 2022 Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan."