



**HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
September 15, 2020**



GENERAL MEMBERS

- Betsy Ross
- Eric Sivers
- Karen Reese
- Brian Barnes
- VACANT

CITY OF HELENA STAFF

- Brad Langsather, Open Lands Manager
- Kristi Ponzozzo, Director, P & R, Open Lands
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

CITY-COUNTY PARKS BOARD

- Ross Johnson

HELENA CITIZENS COUNCIL

- Nick Sovner

ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Helena Tourism Alliance Representative

- Andrea Opitz

PPLT Representative

- Nate Kopp

VIA ZOOM MEETING

TIME: September 15, 2020; 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97467917126?pwd=ZHBqZzY0TFBNTzR6Q01VaXJ4azRyZz09>

Meeting ID: 974 6791 7126

Passcode: 553561

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,97467917126# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,97467917126# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 974 6791 7126

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aeChVVFSAH>

Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm

Welcome/Introductions/Visitors

Minutes Approval

HOLMAC Action Items

New Business

Public Listening Session for Helena Open Lands Projects

Brad opened the public listening session by sharing current city projects to evaluate.

- **DeFord Parking Area Expansion Project**
 - For several years we have had parking capacity issues at this trailhead. This has resulted in visitors parking in the grassy areas to the south of the trailhead as well as a bare area that has been created even further south where people have been parking. Brad would like to formalize the two areas into one parking lot.
 - Brad is proposing that we add an additional approximately 25-foot expansion to the existing trailhead parking area (upper area). Brad is suggesting we then place large rocks to the rest of the grassy area in an effort to prevent parking there. We will level, gravel and fence an additional 100-foot x 30-foot parking area to the southwest of current trailhead. We will divide the access road so people don't block the gate. Brad would also like to add a pet waste station to this area. Both of these projects would involve the purchase of gravel and rail fence material.
 - **Estimated Budget - \$2,000.00 (Fencing and Gravel)**
- **Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project**
 - Further down Davis Street in Dry Gulch, we have the Old Shooting Range Trailhead. Earlier in the year, the Parks Department applied for a Missouri River Resource Advisory Committee Grant for the purchase and installation of a restroom at this location, but that project was sidelined due to the COVID Pandemic. We would like to pursue this getting this project to the public. It would involve installing a double-vaulted restroom facility with a hard-surfaced parking area adjacent to it. We would then make other amenities at the trailhead accessible with decomposed granite surface and doing general repairs on the parking area. This would include grading and adding additional gravel. We would also recommend adding a small footbridge across the ditch to the west of the parking area where you start up the trail. That ditch allows water to go around the trailhead during the spring run-off period. That has always presented a little bit of a problem for visitors.
 - **Estimated Budget - \$16,500.00 (Concrete Parking Pad, Gravel, Grading of Parking Lot, and Installation of Short Footbridge)**
- **Limekiln Trailhead Parking Area Realignment Project**
 - We have an informal parking up on the Limekiln Trailhead area that has gotten busier over the years. Twelve years ago, this area was actually private property and was an access road to the Winnie Water Tanks. This property was later purchased by the City of Helena and become more popular in time. We plow this area in the winter time and we recently received a request to install a trash can at this site in an effort to better manage the trash. We are proposing to add a pet waste station here as well. Brad stated we are also

recommending we create a parking area so people no longer will have to back onto the Limekiln roadway to get turned around. This has become a serious safety issue. We would then like to divide the access road away from the parking area so that we don't have the potential for someone to block the access gate should the water department have to go up there to monitor the reservoir and to do their work activities. This is our reason for wanting to have that access road separate from the trailhead parking area.

- What we hope to do is create a wider area where visitors can get backed up and turned around no matter which direction you leave the parking area from.
- **Estimated Budget - \$2,500.00 (Fencing and Gravel)**
- **Mount Ascension Intersection 2006 Trail / Arrowroot Road Parking Area Expansion Project**
 - As time has gone by and the public has become more aware of the City ownership of Mount Ascension and the ability to access from this particular location, it has gotten busier and busier during all times during the year. We also plow this trailhead in the wintertime. At present, we do not provide any amenities at this trailhead other than the fact that this year we did put a rail fence around one side of it to help keep some of the off-road vehicle traffic from getting into the park.
 - The city is recommending we excavate out some of the southern bank and move that fill material to the northern side and widen it out so you can park either against the fence or the bank. We would then like to add a trashcan and pet waste station at this location and make it a slightly more formal trailhead. When it gets busy people don't have any idea how they should orient themselves when trying to park. The area becomes clustered and then we have issues with people parking off Arrowroot Road onto private property. Therefore, we would like to get a more organized parking arrangement at this trailhead.
 - **Estimated Budget - \$2,500.00 (Fencing and Gravel)**
- **Questions**
 - M Bishop: Do we have a preliminary budget for these items? Brad stated we included an estimated budget on each of the projects (those figures have been added above). Some of these projects are fairly low dollar projects that just involve covering them with the budget that we have for construction and maintenance materials. Many of the projects will be in fiscal year 2022 which means we would probably need to increase construction, maintenance, and materials for those years. The largest of the projects is at the Old Shooting Range restroom and the largest of those costs are related to the hard-surfaced parking area adjacent to the restroom. That will definitely affect our budget, but won't require extensive financial contributions. The actual work to do the projects would all be done with parks employees' equipment. There wouldn't be contractual work other than digging the vault hole for the restroom and the concrete work.
 - With no further questions regarding these projects, Kristi moved on to the projects submitted by members of the community.

Project Recommendations from Helena Community Members (All Proposals Attached)

Directional Trails Exit Trail - Eric Grove, Presenter

Current Situation

- Riders must exit either down to Arrowroot or up to Eddy West. The arrowroot exit back up to Eddy West forces riders to navigate a blind corner against oncoming traffic on Arrowroot and is simply dangerous. The more used route is straight up the old Limekiln Jeep Road and is not sustainable.

Recommendation

- Build a connecting trail from the bridge to the start (Arrowroot) of Eddy West. It would intersect just above Arrowroot and use a large radius climbing turn to direct riders back up Eddy West.

Eric's Comments

- Eric stated he has used this trail a lot this summer as have many others and he is seeing that someone has started to develop a user-created trail up the old Jeep Road. Not only is it a user-created trail, but it is not sustainable because it goes right up the fall line. Eric rides Arrowroot quite a bit and even on his gravel bike, you encounter the corner which is a terrible corner for any cyclist. As he approaches it climbing up, it is so heavily eroded on the inside and you can't see around it. It is dangerous and someone will get hurt and it will be a cyclist. He believes there is an easy fix. It would include several hundred meters of new trail, but Eric thinks that will solve the problem.

Questions

- J Miles: Joan stated she is not understanding what Eric is proposing. She has been using the Eddy West trail a lot this summer and have had high-speed cyclists come down so quickly that, on two separate occasions, she was barely able to get off the trail before they sped through. She does not want to see anything go in that area that will allow for more speed on those trails. There is no signage indicating shared use. The other question Joan had is why wasn't some sort of exit route planned with the original directional trail proposal?
- Brad responded: We did have a request when the directional trail was built to put a trail in similar to what Eric is proposing. At that time the Jeep trail existed and Brad's thought was to give that a try for a while and see how it did. The Jeep trail was already there and is used as an emergency access route for fire services. We tried it and it hasn't work well. People are going up the trail a little ways and then cutting up to Eddy West on what is the power line access road that the power company uses to get to their power line. This was probably a poor decision and we should have included the connector trail in the original proposal. Now is a chance to move on from that and put something in place that works better.
- E Grove: Eric asked to address one of Joan's comments that the exit trail would be directional as well. It wouldn't be encouraging anyone to come down Eddy West – it would do just the opposite. The goal is to get people going up Eddy West and probably using the directional trails as they were intended. At least this is what we hope for. There is no intention to try and encourage more people to come down Eddy West. It would encourage riders to go up Eddy West.
- J Miles: it is too early to really give a lot of substantive comments on it, but any consideration of doing anything else at that location has to include some safety perspective because riders are coming down Eddy McClure West at high speeds, they are apparently not using the directional trails, they are coming up to the top and the coming down Eddy West. Joan stated she isn't sure if the directional trails are attracting more cyclists who are a bit more daring and want to go fast, but we have to do something to ensure safety for hikers. She wants to make sure we address safety issues for multiple users on all of our trails. Joan isn't seeing this as a major project, but believes it

should be. Two key items that need to be addressed include etiquette and safety issues. These need to be a strong consideration in any determination about whether there's a new trail at that location.

New Climbing Routes – Bradley Maddock, Helena Climbers Coalition, Presenter (Kristi Ponzozzo)

Introduction/Recommendation

- As Mr. Maddock was unable to attend, Kristi presented this submission.
- The Helena Climbers Coalition is proposing to develop new rock-climbing routes on Mount Helena during 2021. They would like to propose that up to 15 additional routes be developed along the Mount Helena Cliffs. The location of these new routes will be both intermixed within the current area of routes and also extend eastward toward and around the corner from the cave known as "Devils Kitchen". The Helena Climbers Coalition would like to develop these routes over the next two years starting in the spring of 2021 while also improving the current spur trails and belay pads. The limestone at Mount Helena suits itself to sports climbing. In addition to developing and providing maintenance of routes, the HCC would like to participate in the maintenance of the cliffs themselves by removing existing graffiti on the cliff face as we have done at other local climbing areas. This proposal also addresses how they will deal with user conflicts.

Questions:

- Brad Langsather gave some background on the current rock-climbing routes. The existing climbing areas are located between the 1906 Trail and the Mount Helena cliff face. As Bradley mentioned in his proposal, we have not had any issues with the activities that are occurring up there. So, this is something that we can take a look at.

ADA Trails Expansion - Margareta (Meg) Seyr-Bishop, Presenter

- Consideration for ADA trails. The Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project will create an ADA-compliant vaulted toilet and amenities accessible for people with mobility issues. Although it is wonderful to have an ADA-compliant restroom facility, it would be even better to consider enhancements to existing trails that would provide folks with disabilities and mobility issues extended trail options instead of token access options. An obvious example would be to consider enhancing the DeFord (both upper and lower) to accommodate this need as well as wheelchair access. At a total of 1.5 miles, it is fairly level, scenic, and would require significantly less effort than building a new trail. It is time that people with disabilities and limited mobility be included in these discussions. All members of the community should be able to enjoy the benefit of our open space trail system.

Meg's Comments

- Meg stated she is asking that we consider people with limited mobility and disabilities as we move forward with our trail's discussions. She has noticed on the DeFord trail that a lot of people who use that trail include families with multigenerational, older people that are somewhat slower trail users. We haven't really explored the various options that could provide access to all community members. This is a discussion I have had with others in the community and decided to bring it forward for further consideration.
- Meg added that after other comments she has heard, she believes we have an extensive trail system at this time and feels, it is safe to say, that a lot of the trails are increasingly being used by the biking community. She is requesting that as part of the process this year, Parks and Recreation should do an inventory and consider some adaptive management on how the trails are being used and who is using them. Other concerns include addressing issues about trail use and collecting information about safety concerns and make any necessary changes that should be made for this time. This

would have to do with resource issues, safety issues, as well as multiple-user use. Meg added that we have done a disservice to Helena by not including the disabled community in these discussions and not having them at the table. As she understands it, the wood chip trail is one of the surfaces that is ADA compliant; however, it is going to get packed down which will make it difficult for someone in a wheelchair to navigate. It is not going to work. And to have a few hundred meters of trail for these folks is just really inadequate. I think that it would add to the community and the quality of life for everyone in the community to consider this when talking about any additional trails or any future projects to balance it out with the needs of the community.

Questions

- E Grove: From conversations Eric has had with people in the disabled community, the disability issues have been raised at other hearings. One of the issues that was mentioned was electric powered mobility for some of the trail users. Eric asked if Meg was considering that in her proposal for the wood chip trail, if that is an option she is suggesting, or has that been investigated.
- M Bishop: There has been a lot of conversation surrounding the value of e-bikes in terms of providing more access to people with disabilities or limited mobility. That is useful for a certain segment of that community. So, in terms of mechanized use on these trails, that is something for discussion. She stated that there are other places that have made some of their trails two-lanes which makes them safer for those needing mechanized use. There are a lot of ways to look at this. Meg added that she does think this is valuable discussion and it should be part of the city's open lands project planning. When planning, we will also need to consider providing options such as ADA accessible vaulted toilets.

Trail Etiquette and High Trail Usage - Claudia Clifford, Presenter

- Trail etiquette is a paramount concern that surfaced repeatedly during the Recreation Chapter rewrite. Is there funding allocated elsewhere in the Parks Department budget to work on etiquette issues (such work might include convening user groups to work out solutions to user conflict, trail signage, etiquette education campaigns, use of e-bikes on our trails, and more.)? The possibility for user conflict continues to increase. More than ever, the Helena community needs to come to an agreement on trail use issues around speed, high marking, social trails, e-bikes, etiquette for passing other users, listening to music on the trails, etc. If the Department is allocating funding for this kind of etiquette and trail use work, could you specify how much and any details about your expectations for this work and how it will be conducted? We ask because this work is of utmost importance and should be prioritized as a major project, unless it is being planned and funded elsewhere.

Archery Change Trail Options - Ken Morrison, Presenter

Ken's Comments

- Having spent time running, walking and biking in the Mount Ascension area over the years, it seems it would be a welcome addition to have a more user-friendly option for a short segment of the Archery Range Trail at its northern starting point just south of the intersection with Pay Dirt and Eagle Scout. The old road (trail) heading south from the intersection leads to a rocky and rutted ridge that is difficult to navigate for some walkers and runners and many mountain bike riders. I believe an option for these users would be appreciated.
- There is an unimproved parallel trail to the southeast of the road a few yards that crosses the ridge smoothly and would be safer and more enjoyable for most users. We would cover the cost of upgrading and signing a new trail option or are willing to organize the upgrading work to City trail specifications.

Neighborhood Issue - Ken Morrison, Presenter

Ken's Comments

- Ken also mentioned another area of concern. He lives in a neighborhood off of Beattie Street on Third Street and Sugarloaf.
- Currently, there are many walkers, runners and bikers entering Helena's Southhills open lands from streets surrounding the Sugarloaf and Meatloaf hills area in in the southcentral part of the city. Often the historic trails and old roads being used for access are on private lands. As new homes are built in the area or owners of undeveloped private lands start to assert the boundaries of their properties, conflicts and access restriction will occur.
- Before that becomes a significant problem, it would be good to identify access opportunities that do not use private property. One solution would be to designate the street rights-of-way in the area, and direct users to those rights-of-way and away from the private lands. Existing trails across private lands then could be closed. Examples of street rights-of-way that could be identified are Raleigh Street from Hillsdale to Road Island and then on into Beattie Street Park and 3rd Street from Raleigh Street to city lands to the east or to South Dakota St.
- This solution could be accomplished in cooperation with the Street Department and volunteers, hopefully, at minimal cost.

Davis Gulch Bike Course / Multi-Use Trails, Matt Culpo, Presenter

Davis Gulch Bike Course and DeFord Trails Project. The proposal is shown on the attached maps and is generally described as follows:

- Trail entrance/exit signage and separation improvements between the Davis Gulch Bike Course Trails and the DeFord Multi-Use Trails
- Annual maintenance management on the Davis Gulch Bike Course Trails
- Formalizing the Lower Davis Gulch Bike Course Trail, generally from the Archery Range entrance road to the junction with Davis Gulch Road.
- Providing Trail Maintenance and Improvement Management Liaison for future trail improvements and extension of the Lower Davis Gulch Bike Course to a termination point at Davis Gulch Road.

Matt's Comments

- Matt – the proposal is two parts. There are some immediate needs and some future management working group discussion that need to happen for future improvement. Matt provided maps that he referred to during this discussion.
- The Davis Gulch bike course is fairly established. It is an important community resource at this point. There has been some ad-hoc maintenance occurring on the upper and lower section. The intent of this proposal is to try to start to get this recognized as an important piece of infrastructure and get a formalized way that the biking community can go about maintaining that trail in conjunction with the parallel trail which is the DeFord trail.
- To get things started, this year at the entrance (which is just off of the map to the south) there could be some signage and separation of the trails at the beginning part and then at the outlet, there could also be some additional separation and signage of the trails so people aren't hiking and biking up the bike course when it is primarily used as a directional trail. These improvements would be mainly oriented around safety at this time at the entrance and exit. Because it is a "bike course", maintenance needed on these types of trails isn't typical of the other trails we have in the community where you build the trail and generally it just needs just a little bit of touch up maybe every year or every couple years. These trails need regular cleaning and regular smoothing and buffing. Instead of what is currently happening in regards to maintenance, Matt would like to

discuss and create a way that this can become a more organized part of an approved plan. This is the upper piece and this is the easier of the two proposals as it is already on the map and everyone is already using it and the two trails are both there and fairly separated. Mainly the proposal on this area is entrance and exit signage improvements and maintenance during the year.

- The recommendation on the second map is more involved. Matt pointed out the DeFord trail and the wood chip trail (most specifically, the upper piece of the wood chip trail that doesn't have wood chips on it). It is a fairly wide area. Bikers go down the green trail and also down in the valley area between the road but in the green trail. There is an existing bike course that has been there for decades but over time it has seen more and more use and ad hoc building in there. We have received feedback from the community about the way the DeFord Trail is being used in conjunction with the ad hoc bike trail that exists at that location.
- Matt is recommending that we address both of these issues next year by creating some separation barriers between the DeFord Trail, some signage at the entrance and the exit, and formalizing the bike course trail that currently exists. We need to get some separation and safety improvements signage installed.
- Long term, Matt believes we need to think about how that bike course trail would extend down and continue to parallel with the DeFord Trail before getting to Davis Gulch.
- The improvements are two parts: one is the initial work next year for signage safety improvements and formalization of the trails and second, is to discuss future management and additions to the trail. Part of this proposal includes creating a working group.

Questions

- J Miles: Joan stated that Matt touched on one of the issues that Helena Hikes has been talking about and that is the status of the DeFord Trail. It is a wreck. You can see high markings from bikes going six feet off the trail up against the tree trunks. Two years ago, we discussed having some work done on the bike course part of the trail. She stated she appreciates the fact that Matt has brought up this issue for discussion. There needs to be a comprehensive look at how we rehabilitate the DeFord Trail. Maybe there should not be bikes there. Maybe we should have bikes at the section you have talked about. We should look at this area comprehensively so we can perhaps return the DeFord Trail to what it was originally – a fairly quiet, level trail that fits into what M Bishop was talking about. It merits consideration.
- M Culpo: In response to J Miles, Matt stated you would get a separation between the bikers that want to go down the bike course and what would be a more calm environment on the DeFord Trail.; however, he thinks we should still maintain the multi-use on the DeFord Trail but limit the way the DeFord Trail is used by the different multi users because not everyone that rides a bike wants to go down a bike course. Some riders just want just want a mellow, casual ride down the DeFord Trail. This proposal would just limit the way the bikers ride down the trail and caution them about the type of riding that takes place on certain sections of the trail. That separation will allow the different types of uses so that all people can enjoy the trail.
- E Grove: Eric wanted to second J Miles' comment in the fact that he appreciates Matt bringing this issue to the forefront. This problem has existed for a long time. We all know that it is happening. We need to take action. He also appreciates the comments from M Bishop in regards to the disabled community. There does need to be a working group that considers all those things and looks at this area to come up with a comprehensive plan.
- M Bishop: Meg asked what type of skills does the proposal offer to folks who currently mountain bike on this trail?

- M Culpo: The bikes skills course would be an advanced type skill course. Having been on the upper hill course (the easier one), Matt he has seen children as young as 5- or 6-years old riding with their moms. These kids are just learning how to ride. He has also seen safety concerns because people will hike and/or bike up that course which is not really a good idea. To maintain that long-term, especially in our community and the way Helena continues to grow, is not ideal. Matt's proposal for this year is to get signage and address some of the current safety issues and to formalize a working group in an effort to make decisions on some of the bigger issues and long-term management issues on these two trails.

Dump Gulch Project, Eric Sivers, Presenter

Eric Presented several items for review to:

- Construct a bike-optimized trail down the bottom Dump Gulch
- Re-route portions of the 2006 Trail above Aftershock Trail to reduce the grade.
- Re-route portions of the 2006 trail above Arrowroot Drive to reduce the grade and make it more sustainable.
- Rehabilitate the portion of Paydirt Trail between the two rock outcrops.
- I propose Helena Open Lands provide interpretive signage at appropriate or interesting points in the landscape.
- Recommend that Helena Open Lands conduct a system-wide trail assessment. Purchase of copies of the book, "Natural Surface Trails by Design" for HOLMAC members to read.

Eric's Comments

- E Grove: While Eric didn't go into detail of all items listed, he did want to address one item that needs to go through the planning process. It is the idea that we need a better way of bringing cyclists down off the end of the Helena Ridge Trails. As previously mentioned, the other trails are very popular with hikers. There is a lot of hiking on Mount Helena. Eric has had experience with all of the Helena trails and so he thinks providing a better, safer way to bring people off the mountain is definitely something we should consider moving forward on as we can certainly anticipate increased use. The other items Eric has listed in his proposal are more maintenance and/or improvement suggestions.

Questions

- J Miles: In reviewing all these items on the screen, she is unsure if they have merit or not. She believes it is a "piecemeal" approach to the problem we are experiencing in that we are not taking a really good look overall at the resource we have and how to manage it and those problem areas Eric has mentioned. We are not trying to solve these problems in a methodical approach with a lot of public input. It is Joan's hope that some of these ideas could be worked into some comprehensive plans that can be looked at. She knows that the city completed a trails inventory with PPLT; however, she has not seen what that was. She would like the public to have an opportunity to review the report to see what is in there and maybe what some of the recommendations are. Maybe some of those recommendations will address some of the areas that Eric is talking about. We need to look at how we protect this resource. In looking at what the department submitted, Joan feels it is all about more trails, more parking spots, more people, more usage and we are not managing the resource and she hopes that becomes a major part of the departments work in the next couple of years. We need to look at the kinds of comments that have been mentioned tonight and the kinds of proposals that Eric is talking about.
- M Bishop: Meg agreed with Joan and stated that all of the information this evening is a bit overwhelming to look at. She thinks it is important for Parks and Recreation to look at the trails that

exist now and what is going on with them and consider some sort of adaptive management process. She recommended we do a bit of analysis on how well things are working from a multiple-user perspective and to get feedback from folks who are using trails. This is really important. Right now, we have a multitude of trails. The trail density is getting quite thick and Meg thinks it is important to keep up with what is currently happening within the trail system.

- C Clifford: Claudia asked to clarify one issue regarding the Ridgeline Trail which was mentioned in Eric's proposal. Her issue has to do with how bikes get down to the Gulch. This is a real safety issue. Claudia worked with PPLT this summer and spring on some signage and etiquette issues and overwhelmingly they were hearing from hikers that some of the down-routes, particularly Show Me The Horse, points of conflict. So Claudia would say that looking at some of those areas that have higher speed issues is really important. While she doesn't know if this fits into the major or minor category, she does believe we need to look at how we are going to address some of the speed issues and etiquette issues is important enough that she wouldn't like to see some of the major projects use all the funding this season and that we start to address some of these kinds of etiquette issues that need to be addressed.
- J Wells: Jerry stated that he believes the issue of the inventory of trails and identifying existing problems and potential solutions is really at the crux of many of the things we are talking about tonight and he is interested to that PPLT has done a trails inventory. Helena Hikes has not received any information about what they have found or what they or the city are proposing. It is his hope that this information will be shared.

Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena, Tony Zammit, Presenter

Tony's Comments

- Tony stated that he currently serves as the President of the Helena Rotary Club and they are seeking to expand access to Helena's Open lands with opportunities that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The Rotary reached out to the City of Helena's Parks and Recreation Department in January 2019 to begin discussing the potential of building a new ADA-compliant trail from the Mt. Helena Trailhead parking lot. The proposed trail would travel north and west to a vantage point that provides panoramic views of Helena and the Helena Valley, including the downtown area, the Cathedral, Carroll College, and the Capitol.
- The proposed trail is approximately one-half mile (780 meters) in length and have an overall grade of less than 2%, with the trail gaining approximately 40 feet of elevation (13 meters) over its length. There is a basic rendering attached at the end of the submitted request showing the proposed layout of the new trail. A meeting with the City's ADA Compliance Committee presented the suggestion of ADA-compliant carve-outs with benches along the route. This proposal includes three such carve-outs that would also host an interpretive sign to present information about Mt. Helena's 1) flora and fauna, 2) history, and 3) geology. Additionally, a sign at the terminus of the trail is proposed to explain the surrounding landscape.
- The carve-outs were at the recommendations from the compliance committee. Interpretive signage would be at the location describing the natural features of the area.
- Brad and Tony have developed a proposed budget for this project. At this time, the Rotary has raised \$7,000 for the projects. The Montana Bicycle Guild has volunteered with members, tools, and protective equipment for any volunteers who would like to be a part of this project.

Questions

- M Bishop: Meg asked Tony if this will be a new trail. Tony stated there are some portions of the current social trails that would hopefully consolidate and cause some of the social trails to be obliterated. But given the design of the trail to meet ADA compliance, and even if it was following an existing trail, this would effectively be a new trail. Meg reiterated that she encourages Parks and Recreation to involve the community as much as possible with these discussions and with future discussions of project proposals.
- Tony added that this is really the first opportunity for any sort of interaction for this project to go forward. The City Commission only recently approved the changes to the Chapter 7, Recreation Plan. Therefore, this is the first time we have had the opportunity to bring this project forward in any sort of official capacity.

Proposal for Rerouting Portion of Trail above Beattie, Nate Kopp, PPLT, Presenter

Nate's Comments

- In an effort to eliminate an unsustainable fall-line portion of the existing Beattie Street Trail, it is recommended we reroute the portion of the trail just above the recently constructed Beattie Street Trailhead. This would reroute a short section of the Paydirt trail at the junction of Paydirt and Prickly Pear Trails.
- The trail goes up towards the rocky outcrop that Eric was talking about. There is another steep, eroding pitch that is widening every year and is also presenting some sustainability issues. Therefore, Nate is proposing a reroute to create a more sustainable trail there to eliminate that eroding fall line portion of the trail. This should be shorter than the new route that was just created from the Beattie Street Trailhead (for reference).

Comments

- E Sievers concurs with Nate. This is an update that is needed. That trail is getting worse and worse and is easy to correct.

Kristi

- As there were no more proposals, Kristi asked for any further comments.

Additional Comments

- L Gilstrap: Lindsay expressed appreciation to the city for recognizing the expansion needs of our local trailheads. She added that from a sustainability standpoint, expansion is necessary. She has seen a lot of overflow parking at some of our local trailheads. Lindsay also stated that she believes there has been a good diversity of public presenting projects today. She has heard common themes throughout in regards to safety and etiquette and understanding the needs of all users as well as trying to mitigate areas of conflict through signage, education, and outreach. She also appreciates that everyone agrees to looking at opportunities where we can create accessibility for those that have mobility issues.
- There is a lot of diverse expertise coming to the table this evening to have some very important discussions. Kudos to everyone.
- Tony thanked the city staff for adhering to the revisions of the Chapter 7, Recreation Plan that were made. This evening has been an incredibly wonderful, open, and well-noticed meeting. Thanks to the staff for doing this.

FINAL REMARKS

Kristi then discussed next steps in the process.

- **Appendix P – Public Process of the Chapter 7 Rewrite, is included at the end of these notes.**
- The public has the opportunity to submit additional project ideas and comments to the City and HOLMAC for 15 calendar days following the listening session (September 30, 2020).
- Step 2 is shown below:
 - **Step 2: Development of Draft Major Projects for upcoming calendar year**
 - The City conducts preliminary evaluation of proposed major projects and project suggestions received as of October 1. Projects are evaluated based on alignment with the goals identified in Chapter 7, public feedback received to date, Helena Open Lands (HOL) needs, available resources and guidance from HOLMAC. The City prepares the following documents:
 - a draft list of major projects under consideration for implementation in the upcoming calendar year
 - At HOLMAC's regularly scheduled **mid-October** meeting, the City:
 - presents a draft list of major projects under consideration for implementation in the upcoming calendar year
 - accepts public feedback on proposed projects
 - solicits guidance from HOLMAC
 - The City will notify the public of this HOLMAC meeting at least 10 calendar days prior, using the following notification methods: major trailheads posting, email to stakeholder list maintained by the City, posting on City website, news release, City social media.
- Kristi reminded meeting attendees that all proposals are preliminary at this point. We will take all projects suggested and evaluate them based on the goals identified in the Chapter 7 Rewrite.
- **Please submit additional comments/suggestions to: parksandrec@helenamt.gov.** All comments submitted will be part of the project records. All information presented today will be published on the City of Helena website.

Adjournment: 6:54 pm

ADA NOTICE

The City of Helena is committed to providing access to persons with disabilities for its meetings, in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Montana Human Rights Act. The City will not exclude persons with disabilities from participation at its meetings or otherwise deny them the City's services, programs, or activities.

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the city's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following: Phone: (406) 447- 8490; TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 Email: citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov, Mailing address & physical location: 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.