

**Helena Open Lands Major Projects
Consolidated Comment associated with
September 15, 2020 LISTENING SESSION
And October 20, 2020 LISTENING SESSION**

OCTOBER 20, 2020 LISTENING SESSION DISCUSSION/COMMENTS

Date Submitted	Submitter	Email Address	COMMENTS	CITY RESPONSES/RECOMMENDATIONS
10/20/20 Listening session	Jerry Wells		Summarized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to see a more extensive in-depth look at the entire trail system to address erosion, steepness, trail design, and social trails. • Also would like to see USFS and BLM lands included in the assessment and for USFS and BLM to be non-voting members on HOLMAC 	<p>Although the City of Helena has conducted an inventory/assessment of the current trail system, through a contract with PPLT, we believe this request is referring to more of a trail system functionality assessment. This would likely be a major project because of the cost, requiring the city to bring in a consultant to conduct an in-depth functionality study, assessment, report and recommendations. This is something that the City can look at through our next round of HOL Major projects process. It would be challenging to conduct an assessment that includes USFS and BLM lands, but potentially the City assessment could consider the connection areas where trails connect from City to USFS to BLM lands.</p> <p>The City of Helena is a part of the Helena Regional Trails Steering Committee that includes representation from the USFS and BLM where this issue/assessment could be considered.</p>
10/20/20 - Listening Session	Eric Grove		Summarized:	The City can explore the proposal throughout 2020/2021 with interested parties and potentially bring this, or an

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal to re-route the lower third of the Eddy West Trail: regarding alignment of 200 yards of trail to make it better for both hikers and bikers 	<p>agreed upon proposal, to the 2021 major project process. We recommend working with a representative from user groups: Helena Hikes, Helena Trails Alliance and Montana Bicycle Guild.</p>
10/20/20 - Listening Session	Claudia Clifford		<p>Summarized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Clifford emphasized the need for safety on our trails, a strong etiquette campaign, and conservation efforts (rehabilitation of damaged trails and ongoing maintenance issues, all need to be considered a major projects. 	<p>The City of Helena has conducted an inventory/assessment of the current trail system, through a contract with PPLT. We also have contracted an etiquette campaign and trail maintenance and monitoring where we will look for safety issues in the summer of 2021, including determining if there are speed issues. If there are specific areas where there are issues, we would appreciate recommendations on where we should focus. We don't believe these projects are considered major projects, but there is potential that if we find significant issues with safety, speed, etc., that those issues would lead to a major project proposal such as changing the use of, rerouting, or closing a trail.</p>
10/27/20	Becky Warren	rebeccawarren170@gmail.com	<p>While visiting in the neighborhood, I learned that there's a possibility that one of my favorite trails, the DeFord Trail, could be developed to be ADA accessible. I've felt for years that our community needed a greater number of accessible trails for citizens with disabilities. DeFord, at the edge of a busy neighborhood, would be perfect for meeting that need.</p> <p>I fully support a revision of the DeFord trail to increase the number of Helenans who are able to enjoy our open space.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, see responses below regarding the Davis/DeFord Trail Project.</p>

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10/19/20	Michele Webster	michele.na.mt@gmail.com	Comments Attached in separate PDF	Thank you for your comments, see responses below regarding the Davis/DeFord Trail Project. Responses address the formation of the working group, history of the bike park, etc.
10/20/20	Margareta (Meg) Bishop	gretaseyr56@gmail.com	<p>I appreciate the opportunity to comment. After a review of your comments responding to the public's comments, I feel it necessary to resubmit and reinforce my original comments regarding the City's Project Proposals for 2021. Your responses to my comments indicate little consideration for the aforementioned issues/recommendations.</p> <p>The highlighted portions below provide more detailed discussion/commentary.</p> <p>COMMENTS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before considering the additional of any more trails, as suggested by Ken Morrison and others, I feel that conducting an inventory/assessment of the current trail system is needed to better inform future decisions and provide an adaptive management approach. Your comment to this recommendation was to reiterate that PPLT had already conducted a trail assessment. As I state below, after reviewing PPLT's assessment, it must be said that it is incomplete and deficient – it addresses few of the questions below which are necessary for proactive management planning or adaptive management, as implied in Goal 3 below. It provides small snapshots of potential remedial needs in discreet areas and does not provide a comprehensive view of current baseline. A more comprehensive approach is needed and warranted at this time and should consider the following questions/issues – none of which it or you responded to. 	<p>Thank you for your comment, see responses regarding the Davis DeFord Trail Project. The project will be recommended to be looked at holistically with a working group formed as a sub-group of HOLMAC.</p> <p>Although the City of Helena has conducted an inventory/assessment of the current trail system, through a contract with PPLT, we believe you are referring to more of a trail system functionality assessment. This would likely be a major project because of the cost, requiring the city to bring in a consultant to conduct an in-depth functionality study, assessment, report and recommendations. This is something that the City can look at through our next round of HOL Major projects process.</p> <p>The City of Helena's new Chapter 7 recreation plan does provide goals and direction to consider recreation from a regional perspective for the citizens of Helena and the greater Helena area. For example, we recently provided comments</p>

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			<p>Chapter 7.4, Goal 3 of the Helena Open Lands Management Plan “Future Needs and Growth” states, “Develop a proactive approach to meeting future open lands needs, adapting to environmental and social changes, and conserving the space for future generations.” How can you plan for this if you don’t have a good idea of where you are now? What is an “open land NEED?” You mean “desires?” You often state that the type and level of use dictates the types of projects proposed. Decisions are not based on substantiated data/analysis, but on perceived needs presented by vocal interest groups. That does not allow much space for planning that “conserves the space for future generations.”</p> <p>Our open spaces and trails deserve better than to be relegated to a live-action video experience.</p> <p>Also, PPLT’s relationship with the City is currently unclear. Is there some kind of formalized agreement between PPLT and the City? If so, what is that? Even with a formal agreement, PPLT is NOT a decision-maker. PPLT functions as a contractor to the City, and, thus, does not hold any decision-making authority. And, does PPLT have the necessary expertise to address appropriate stewardship of our trails and open space?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the overall objectives of Helena’s trail system? b. What is the optimal trail density for this area considering resource issues and those surrounding “quality trail experiences” for the various users? c. Is it time to put a “cap” on the addition of new trails? d. Is the trail system meeting the needs of the variety of users? e. How has trail usage changed since the last study was conducted? 	<p>on the Scratch Gravel Recreation Area Management Plan that state: <i>The plan portrays improved recreational amenities. It provides value to the City of Helena and our comments will be guided by the recently revised Recreation Management Chapter of our Helena Open Lands (HOL) Plan. Specifically, Goal 1 of the plan is to provide safe and accessible recreational opportunities for all users and outlines that the City of Helena should “coordinate with other land managers/management agencies to enhance HOL user access”. Specifically, Goal 1.2c guides the City of Helena to “increase trail management coordination to relieve HOL user pressures” and 1.2d guides the City of Helena to “Work with other land management agencies to develop consistent or complementary policies in e-bikes and other future user demands”.</i></p> <p><i>From a regional perspective, this management plan could better position the Scratchgravel Hills with improved recreation to relieve HOL user pressures. For example, spring is often the busiest time for the Helena Open Lands Trail System. It is also a time when our trails are most susceptible to damage from erosion. Having alternative areas within the region for citizens to access</i></p>
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			<p>f. If there is a change in how trails are used, what is the reason? Have some types of uses been displaced by others? If so, why?</p> <p>g. How successful is the multiple-use concept to date? Do changes need to be considered?</p> <p>h. What are the conditions of existing trails? Weeds? Erosion? PPLT's inventory is incomplete. A more comprehensive approach is needed.</p> <p>i. How have specialized bike courses impacted trails? How can these impacts be minimized or prevented?</p> <p>j. Are City open lands the appropriate location for bike courses and skills trails? Given the proximity to town and the variety of users, is this the best use of these front-country trails? Or has a decision been made to create pockets of "sacrifice areas" to accommodate a single use?</p> <p>The proximity of Helena's trail system to town is, arguably, one of Helena's biggest assets. The beauty of the landscape and vistas is promoted nationally (and internationally), as is the trail experience. It also adds considerably to the quality of life of Helena residents. Ensuring sustainable trail usage is essential to maintaining the health of the landscape. Management that minimizes trail degradation, erosion, and the advance of weeds, as well as restoring existing degraded areas, should be a priority.</p> <p>Bike courses and skills trails are not appropriate activities on our multiple-use trail system for reasons surrounding safety and sustainable of the landscape and trails. Many communities throughout the country have realized the implications of these kinds of activities and made necessary changes.</p>	<p><i>that may be drier and more erosion resistant earlier in the season could take some user pressure off our trail system.</i></p> <p><i>The City of Helena is currently exploring future e-bike policies on our Helena Open Lands. The e-bike opportunities in the Scratchgravel, as outlined in the plan, will be something to consider from a regional perspective as we define future HOL e-bike policies that may be consistent or complementary to the Scratchgravel e-bike policies.</i></p> <p>Similar to the Scratch Gravel area other nearby areas (like Great Divide Ski Area) that provide biking and general recreation amenities to the Citizens of Helena can provide relieved resource pressure on our City Open Lands and HOL will remain engaged in those planning efforts.</p>
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			<p>I recently had a long conversation with Travis Campbell, one of the owners of Great Divide Ski Area. They are currently in the process of planning a bike resort up at the ski area. If not for COVID, they would have started last spring. They will be constructing a network of trails using consultants that will design technical trails with safety and risk in mind. They are currently speaking with a consultant who designed the bike trails on Mt. Whistler. Travis said they will, hopefully, begin the process spring 2021.</p> <p>The ski area is the appropriate place for bike courses and skills trails, as well as the Enduro Race. And liability is not an issue for them. I know there is a certain panache to holding an Enduro Race in town, while most of the other races in the series are held at ski areas. However, is it really the most appropriate venue? I understand that expanding mountain biking activities on City open lands is desirable for reasons of convenience, and because it is free. However, it is time to ensure a balance for our open lands, and to head off potential future issues. The ski area provides great opportunities for those who want to hone their skills and thrills. I also understand the interest in expanding tourism possibilities to enhance economic development. A counter to this approach are many communities that have made a priority of creating livable communities that enhance quality of life for their residents. In these communities, economic development became an organic outgrowth of this strategy, attracting many types of new residents and avoiding the trap of relying on tourism for its sustainability.</p> <p>The City has shown a clear bias towards advancing mountain biking interests on our open lands over the interest of other uses. It is also clear that PPLT has also become biased to these activities. Again,</p>	
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			<p>our open spaces and trails deserve better than to be relegated to a live-action video experience.</p> <p>2. (My Proposal) Creating an ADA-compliant, wheelchair accessible trail on DeFord Trail (Upper and Lower). There are few low-gradient trails in the system. This is an opportunity that would benefit folks in our community with disabilities and/or limited mobility, whether it is temporary or permanent. The City trail system should inclusively consider the needs of the entire community. And, often, those with disabilities appreciate the opportunity to travel extended distances and not be confined to short trails or picnic tables.</p> <p>The total distance for this trail would be approximately 1.5 miles. There will need to be consideration of connecting the Upper and Lower segments in a more seamless way. We are hoping this project serves as the start of a broader effort to enhance the livability of our community for everyone. I have discussed this proposal with various representatives of groups advocating for persons with disabilities and/or mobility issues and they are quite excited and are interest in being involved in some way, including a focus on creation of a project area. Those include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacqueline Isaly, Community Health Promotion Division Administrator • Joel Peden, MILP Advocacy Coordinator • Charles Alvarez, MILP IL Specialist I • Meg Traci, Research Associate Professor at the University of Montana Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities. <p>I am currently working with these folks on the development of cost estimates for the project. They may also be available grant funding</p>	
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			<p>for this kind of project and expanding the opportunity more broadly within the City trail system.</p> <p>**Given Matt Culpo’s proposal regarding the “bike course” on DeFord, I recommend organizing an on-site field meeting for the DeFord/Davis projects to allow folks to better understand all the aspects of what is being proposed there and to allow for discussion. According to HOLMAC minutes in 2019, the Lower Davis Bike Jump line was considered “unauthorized construction” (i.e. an illegal trail) in need of reclamation. Unauthorized construction or illegal trails should never be rewarded with legitimacy. You stated that it was re-authorized due to public support. And, since this decision was not made available to the general public at the time, the supporters were likely “insiders,” who were made aware of this issue that would affect the mountain biking community.</p> <p>If, in fact, the City would like to pursue the formation of a “working group,” it should be led by someone with the ability to remain neutral, so as to avoid the perception of impropriety. And, importantly, this group should represent a balanced interest in the community, including stewardship and conservation.</p> <p>3. Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project. I generally don’t understand the trend of installing permanently vaulted toilets at trailheads when there are a number of highly-used City parks that either have no toilet facilities or use portable toilets (Lockey, Memorial, Centennial, etc.). Why are trailheads given a higher priority than parks, that are often heavily used?</p>	
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			<p>Are these restroom installations an effort to accommodate increased mountain bicycling use? Or to further meet IMBA Ride Center criteria? Also, will this parking lot be improved to be used as more than just a parking lot?</p> <p>Your comments to this recommendation, “The Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation project was designed to meet the needs of current and future users of this trailhead.” (?) Again, this statement does not address my comment or justify the project. What future needs are you projecting? How would you know this without my initial suggestion above to conduct a comprehensive inventory/assessment of the entire trails system? And why would this be a higher priority than other City parks that are used with much higher concentrations at various times throughout the year? Arguably, these trailheads will receive much less use in the winter. Why wouldn’t portable toilets serve these trailheads as they do for much higher use parks?</p> <p>4. I understand the discussion surrounding e-bikes is separate from this focus, however, I believe that the City should very carefully consider the complexities and implications of adding any motorized travel to the mix.</p>	
10/20/2020	Lisa Bay	lisamaebay@gmail.com	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to continue a constructive conversation on proposed major projects and the annual workplan for Helena Open Lands.</p> <p>As a member of Helena Hikes Steering Committee, I am concerned about the Davis/Dry Gulch area and the potentially conflicting needs/projects being proposed there. In our initial comments, we suggested that the City convene an on-site meeting so that interested parties could meet with</p>	<p>The City agrees and would like the working group to look at the ADA trail expansion and bike course, and overall use of the Davis/DeFord Trail, holistically. We’d like to structure the working group as a subgroup of HOLMAC and we can explore the possibility of a third-party facilitator.</p>

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			<p>project proponents to more fully understand design elements of the Davis Gulch Bike Course alongside the ADA Trails expansion. From our point of view, it makes most sense to look at these two proposed projects in tandem so that each might go forward without precluding, or impacting the other. These projects also need to be considered in the context of additional facilities proposed for the Old Shooting Range parking lot and increased bike traffic down the gulch.</p> <p>Over the past year, two successful efforts among diverse stakeholders have concluded in collaborative agreements: The City’s public involvement process for HOL projects, and an Alternative C for the BLM to consider regarding management of the Scratchgravel. We know there are divergent and strong opinions about Davis Gulch, and what ought to happen there. Some oppose any additional bike skills course development on Helena Open Lands. Others strongly support additional skills course development. Walkers, families, and x-country skiers value the DeFord trail for its relatively gentle grade, a unique and limited asset for walkers, older folks and families on a trail system that has mostly more challenging trails. For years, as well, there’s been a defacto bike course along the DeFord in Lower Davis that needs to be addressed; either abandoned because of safety and resource damage issues, or developed and maintained.</p> <p>The City’s current recommendation to form a working group associated with HOLMAC is a good start. This group would ideally have diverse representation and a neutral facilitator, and concurrently include the consideration of the ADA trail and increased recreational use in Davis Gulch. The committee would ideally be charged with answering the following questions:</p>	
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			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the optimal experiences being sought by local user groups in this area? 2. How can potential conflicts be addressed through design and signage to potentially provide optimal experiences for each user group, while minimizing impacts on others'? 3. In HOLMAC's Mission Statement in the HOL Management Plan is to carry out the Plan to: "...create a framework to protect or enhance the natural environment, support management and maintenance practices that protect wildlife and natural habitat, enhance the forest resource, provide for fire mitigation, noxious weed control, erosion control, and native plant preservation. The plan will also allow for wise development of recreational uses that are compatible with the environment and each other, plus serve to enhance the enjoyment of Helena's open space system by Helena's citizens and visitors." <p>Since this is part of HOLMAC's mission, all proposed projects being considered, including those in Davis Gulch, should be measured against these standards, not just standards in Chapter 7.</p> <p>There are probably other essential questions to be answered, such as timeframe and facilitation, but the projects and the City would surely benefit from this type of holistic look at Davis Gulch projects.</p>	
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09.15.2020	Greg and Wendy Wheeler	westernwheelers@man.com	Please direct us to an inventory of the trails the Open Lands Division is responsible for maintaining. We're interested in understanding the Helena Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Department's assessment of the condition of those trails and what trail maintenance and construction is being planned for 2021.	In response to your comments concerning trail condition assessments and maintenance, you can find the 2020 City of Helena's open lands system trail conditions assessment report posted on the City Parks Department website.
09.16.2020	Pam Aldrich	finsteach@msn.com	<p>I looked over the proposals for the improved and expanded trailheads for the upcoming year. I agree that several of those areas needs work. However, I am also concerned about the current conditions of our trails.</p> <p>Before we work on the trailheads, I believe we need to make a plan on how to improve our trails. I use the trails daily for biking, hiking, and running. In my opinion, trails needing maintenance work include: the 3 trails going down to the water line trail from Rodney meadows, show me the horse, the bottom part of barking dog, which is really rutted, the trail coming off Mt. Ascension heading to entertainment, and stairway to Heaven. I am not as familiar with the Mt. Helena trails.</p>	In response to your comments related to the maintenance of City managed trails, the Entertainment Trail is the only trail that you have listed that occurs within the City of Helena's open lands system. Annual maintenance operations were conducted on the Entertainment Trail in the spring of 2020.
09.16.2020	Paul Cullen	pcullen@helenaschools.org	<p>I have 5 trail ideas for the Helena area at this time, the first is to link a trail from the bottom of "Hill" trail which joins Grizzly Gulch just south of the Mini Ridge parking lot and build single-track to the sign post on the park city end (south) of the Ridge trail.</p> <p>The second idea is to build a lesser grade trail from park city parking lot to the start of the Ridge trail (at the sign post).</p> <p>Third idea is to add in some progressive wood drop lines to build skills near the directional trails. I.e. a 2 foot drop next to a 4-foot drop, next to a 6-foot drop etc...</p>	In response to your trail idea proposals, only the Directional Trail and Arrowroot projects you have presented occur on lands managed by the City of Helena. The listening session for Major Project ideas occurred on September 15, 2020. City staff proposed completion of a parking area improvement project at the intersection of Arrowroot Road and the 2006 Trail (Mt Ascension Trailhead). If you are interested in proposing your "Wood Drop Line" project in the fall of

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			<p>Fourth would be to but in a better parking lot at the top of Arrowroot rd. 5th Build 2 more single-tracks from the ridge trail down to Grizzly gulch one on either side of show me the horse.</p> <p>Thank you for all your consideration and everything you have done to keep are trails Great!</p>	<p>2021, please put a detailed plan together that you bring forward for the next major projects public process.</p>
09.17.2020	Jeff Bradley	jeff@montanabicycleguild.org	<p>Hello,</p> <p>The Montana Bicycle Guild would like to propose a new trail from the top of Arrowroot Drive near the intersection of Alpine Meadows Access Drive to the bridge at the bottom of the directional trails. This trail would provide a preferred return route for mountain bikers to climb back to parking at the top of Arrowroot. The trail would also intersect with Eddy McClure West allowing for a more sustainable option than the current jeep track for trail users to return to the top of the directional trail.</p> <p>There is minimal parking available on Arrowroot Dr where it intersects with the Eddy McClure West and East. Providing an easy path to parking that is off the road will improve safety.</p> <p>This trail grade should be as low as the landscape allows to facilitate this intent, and we recommend it be designed to limit speeds for any bike traffic that may choose to descend on the trail. This is often the snowiest part of the HOL landscape, so low grades would also help facilitate winter recreation such as XC skiing or snowshoeing. Grade reversals and other trail features should be built with XC skiing and snowshoeing in mind.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this proposal in more detail.</p>	<p>In response to the Montana Bicycle Guilds (MBG) proposal related to the construction of a new trail connecting the Mt Ascension Trailhead (junction Arrowroot Drive/2006 Trail) to the Eddy McClure West Trail, City staff recommends that MBG map an approximated route for the aforementioned trail and devise a method for estimating anticipated volumes of use. The requested background information could potentially be used to provide a more informative proposal during the 2021 Helena Open Lands-Major Projects-Listening Session.</p>

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09.17.2020	Kevin League	kevinleague@gmail.com	<p>Thank you to you and for hosting yesterday's meeting regarding 2021 projects. We have comments we would like to share with you specifically for the DeFord TH proposal.</p> <p>DeFord Trailhead Proposed Expansion Project - Comments from Kevin and Cedar League</p> <p>We live at 650 South Davis Street, directly across from the existing DeFord Trailhead (TH). We observe and interact with DeFord TH users daily and we believe our observations and comments will provide a valuable look at how this parking area operates and provide valuable suggestions about its future.</p> <p>While we have significant safety concerns about the DeFord TH design, where you must 'nose in' to enter the TH and then back out onto a busy, curvy road to exit, we are hesitant to push back on the proposed expansion because there is an obvious need for greater parking capacity at this location.</p> <p>The primary issue with this style of parking arrangement is the safety issues with backing a vehicle onto an increasingly busy thoroughfare, on a curvy road with short sightlines (similar to the issues raised regarding the proposed Limekiln TH expansion). From a traffic engineering perspective it is a bad design. We did notice a recent traffic counter on Davis, so perhaps you have the data at your fingertips, but over the 6 years we have lived here, traffic has likely doubled on this road, and our neighbors agree. This is due to new housing further up the gulch and increasing numbers of trail users. Speeding is an issue on Davis. We have witnessed many close calls with TH users backing their vehicle out when traffic is busy. We will share a new video with you so that you can get a sense of what the normal level of activity is on a weekend or weekday after work -</p>	<p>In response to comments and concerns regarding the Middle DeFord Trailhead expansion project, City staff have decided to delay this project to allow for further consultation with the City Transportation and Engineering Departments to potentially mitigate some of the safety issues involved with having recreationalists back into the Davis Street traffic lane. However, during the interim period of delay City staff will implement your suggestion that signage indicating parking opportunities at the Old Shooting Range Trailhead be installed at the DeFord Trailhead. Also, City staff will look into acquiring some large rocks to discourage parking in the grassy area located south of the current DeFord Trailhead parking area.</p>
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		<p>it gets crazy up here. To safely back out, you need to be able to see up and down Davis. That is why the depth of the parking needs to be adequate enough for drivers to begin backing out, before entering the road, so they can see past the vehicle(s) parked beside them. This is impossible when Vans and other longer RVs use the DeFord TH. They create visual blockades that make an already dangerous maneuver even more dangerous.</p> <p>We make the following suggestions: Prohibit RVs or vehicles over a certain length from parking at the DeFord TH. Use signage to indicate this. Note - RV and Van use is high, especially in springtime when Gallatin County and other out of town users flood Helena.</p> <p>Constantly provide better enforcement of speeding on Davis. Speeding has been a long time issue here. The police periodically take notice.</p> <p>Construct the new TH area deep enough to allow good visual access for drivers.</p> <p>View Video of DeFord TH traffic from Thursday August 20, 2020, 7:30 PM https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HoxxHYsM8MLC-uLAKo-AH68is3dVDRjy/view?usp=sharing</p> <p>Another issue is that our driveway empties onto Davis exactly where the TH is located. This has created a lot of conflict over the years and near collisions with folks as they are backing out onto Davis. TH users do not take into account the vehicles that might be coming down our driveway. This recipe of the two lane Davis traffic, driveway traffic and trailhead user traffic, and recreational bike traffic is a recipe for a collision - and we</p>	
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			<p>want to avoid this. Therefore, we do not advocate for the small 25-ft expansion of the existing DeFord TH but we do advocate for the use of rocks, the replanting of trees and other native vegetation that Brad mentioned during the presentation. See “EXHIBIT A - K. LEAGUE Map”</p> <p>During peak times of use, the TH is very busy and from our observations and conversations with users, many folks are unaware of additional parking further up the road. During peak times, when the TH parking is at capacity, some users will park at the bottom of our driveway or pull onto the vegetation or partially off the side of the road because they are unaware of additional parking further up the road.</p> <p>We offer this suggestion: Use signage at each parking area along Davis (Currently there are two and soon three if the third area south of our house is constructed). Signage should indicate that additional parking is ahead - one sign at each location. The sign at the third and to be constructed parking area should indicate that additional parking lies ahead, in ¾ miles at Old Shooting Range TH.</p> <p>Finally, we believe the best way to provide additional capacity for parking in the area is at the Old Shooting Range TH, where adequate and safe off street parking exists and where there is simply more space for future expansion. During peak times, even that large TH is at capacity and we suggest that an expansion of that TH be the focus of addressing this issue. In our opinion, the DeFord TH does not offer the appropriate location where a large, well designed parking area can be built.</p> <p>Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.</p>	
09.17.2020	Derek Sullivan	derekmsullivan@gmail.com	<u>DeFord Parking Area Expansion Project</u>	In response to your comments related to Trail Etiquette and Signage, City staff have

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		<p>I support the expansion of the DeFord Parking Area. The current overflow areas are frequently filled with vehicles during peak usage times and vehicles are parking on the grass.</p> <p><u>Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project</u> I support the development of amenities including, but not limited to, a vaulted restroom facility, a kiosk, picnic tables, and pet waste stations. This is a highly used trailhead to access both the Rodney Ridge area and Mt. Ascension and these developments will ensure folks of all abilities can have a safe, sanitary, and accessible trail experience.</p> <p><u>Limekiln Parking Area Realignment Project</u> I support the development of improved parking at the current Limekiln Parking Area.</p> <p><u>Mount Ascension Parking Area Expansion Project</u> I support the development and improvements outlined for the Mount Ascension Parking Area.</p> <p><u>Directional Trails Exit Trail</u> I support a connector trail from the bridge to the start of Eddy West. For additional safety, I would also recommend signage at the top of Eddy West/Directional Trail junction that advises downhill Eddy West users of the potential presence of uphill mountain bike traffic.</p> <p><u>New Climbing Routes</u> I support establishing new climbing routes on Mount Helena.</p>	<p>determined that these subjects do not classify as “Major Project”, and are therefore, subject to attention with the Open Lands annual work plan. However, it is important to note that many of the trails that you have referenced in your comments (Show Me The Horse, Rent Money, Pinochet, Mini-Ridge) occur on lands owned and managed by the USFS. The intermixed ownership of the South Hills Trail system can be somewhat confusing, and although the City maintains constant communication with the USFS, the only trails located on USFS that the City manages are portions of the McKelvey, Entertainment and Archery Range trails.</p>
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		<p><u>ADA Trails Expansion</u> I support the improvement of the DeFord trail to ADA standards to offer trail options for people of all abilities, especially in concert with the proposed Old Shooting Range Project.</p> <p><u>Trail Etiquette and High Trail Usage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I support increased signage advising user groups of other user groups who utilize trails in a directional manner. For example, I would support signage at the bottom of Show Me The Horse Trail advising uphill hikers that this is a popular downhill mountain bike trail and to be aware of these users as they are ascending, and to remove headphones and leash dogs to increase the safety of hikers, bikers, and pets. Suggested alternate routes, such as ascending Mini-ridge, Dump Gulch, or Diretissima could be included. • I would advise similar signage at the bottom of Rent Money trail, especially since this trail is built with bikers in mind and many users choose to hike or bike up this trail. Suggested alternate routes, such as ascending Pinochet, or Davis/Dry Gulch Roads could be included. • I would advise similar signage at the bottom of Entertainment Trail where it meets both Archery Range and Davis Gulch, indicating that this is a popular downhill mountain biking route, and hikers should be aware of these users and remove headphones and leash dogs for the safety of all users. Suggested alternate routes, such as ascending from Eagle Scout, could be included. • I do not support the use of limited City funds to address perceived issues related to “speed, high marking, social trails, e-bikes, [and] etiquette. I will address each of these concerns individually as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speed is subjective, and this comment is likely singling out the mountain bike user group as I cannot imagine that Ms. Clifford 	
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			<p>would be interested in a speed limit for hikers, runners, or equestrian users. To be clear, mountain bikers do not ride faster than they can control or see. Mountain bikes are lightweight and equipped with very powerful braking systems. Mountain bikers will not ride faster than they can stop simply because the mountain bike user does not want to hurt themselves or others. While seeing a mountain biker riding at high speeds may be startling to another user (especially if headphones are used by the other user), mountain bikers can slow their speeds very quickly upon seeing another user to prevent conflict. Furthermore, mountain bikes are not equipped with speedometers, so any arbitrary “speed limits” set could not be followed, and there are no “trail police” with radar guns patrolling the trails to enforce said “speed limit”. The perceived speed of the rider would therefore be subjective to both the rider and the observer, unenforceable, and lead to greater arguments among user groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is not totally clear what Ms. Clifford is referring to as “high marking”, but I would have to assume this comment is related to trail users who choose to utilize the entire trail bed, and not just walk or ride down the centerline of the trail. The idea of “trail permanence”, in which the trail bed must (under all circumstances) remain the same indefinitely, is counter to the very notion of the “natural world”. I think we can all agree that the Earth is constantly changing. These very mountains that we choose to recreate within have been formed over millions of years by tectonic action and erosive forces. The trail bed that was decided upon the day it was dug may change over time as users utilize the trail and walk or ride slightly off-center of the bed. The trail will evolve with use and grow to reflect the 	
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			<p>preferred path within the trail corridor itself. Spending limited City funds to attempt to counteract natural forces in a natural environment that have occurred for millions of years is not responsible. The fallacy of “trail permanence” is the real issue, not the natural world evolving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As with the previous bullet, it is not totally clear what Ms. Clifford is referring to as “social trails”. If I assume Ms. Clifford is referring to so-called “unofficial” trails, then the same logic from the previous bullet would apply. These are natural areas subject to constant change. Furthermore, hikers frequently hike off trail along game paths, cut switchbacks, or travel overland on foot in the pursuit of game. It is not reasonable to expect the City to expend limited funding to attempt to police the actions of these parties or the wild game that may influence so-called “social trails”. ▪ The City should not expend resources on a perceived problem such as whether e-bikes are allowed to utilize the trail system. E-bikes can be a useful tool for older folks or those with disabilities who wish to utilize the trail system. Restricting e-bikes would therefore be limiting the trail system to only those users in peak physical condition, and directly discriminating against differently-abled users. ▪ It is not clear what Ms. Clifford is referring to when she speaks of an agreement on etiquette. Better signage that educates user groups on popular riding/hiking directions could help prevent trail conflicts. Based on the rest of Ms. Clifford’s comments, this is likely directed at mountain bike users. While there are always a few bad apples, hikers need to recreate on the trails responsibly too, including being aware of their 	
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			<p>surroundings, leashing their dogs appropriately, and not wearing headphones which limit their awareness. Many times, I have come up behind a hiker with headphones who is then startled to realize that there is a biker behind them. If they had been aware of their surroundings, they would have heard my repeated “hellos” a lot sooner and would have avoided being startled and becoming angry at me as if I did something wrong. Etiquette is a two-way street. As someone who also hikes, I always remain aware of my surroundings and would expect the same of others. Please do not allocate any City resources to this issue of personal responsibility.</p> <p><u>Archery Range Trail Options</u> I support any addition of trails to this area.</p> <p><u>Davis Gulch Bike Course</u> I support all proposed improvements included, especially in regards to the previously proposed ADA Trail Expansion of the DeFord Trail. Additional signage and separation improvements means that both user groups could utilize this area safely.</p> <p><u>Dump Gulch Project</u> I support all proposed actions in this section, especially in regards to trail assessments and outdated trail design and the resulting impacts.</p> <p><u>Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena</u> I fully support the expansion of trail options for those differently-abled. Trails should be available for all users.</p>	
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09.17.2020	William Cook	reho1951@yahoo.com	<p>Hello, I wanted to pass on my comments on the Proposed Major Projects for 2021 for the Open Lands Division. Thanks for this opportunity to comment.</p> <p>I am a very active hiker who hikes the South Hills trail network about 200 days per year. I am generally in support of each of the proposed projects on the list. To highlight some of the proposals which I particularly favor:</p> <p>Limekiln parking area realignment project: Occasionally I drive to the Limekiln trailhead, and park in the tiny spots right next to the trailhead. Sometimes those spots are filled, so I have to park instead at the other parking area next to the water tank gate. I strongly favor the proposed expansion of that parking area, because it will provide more parking spots.</p> <p>Trail Etiquette and high trail usage project: I very strongly support this project. Although actual conflicts are rare among trail users in the South Hills, the significant increase in the number of users is beginning to make interaction among users more stressful. As a hiker, I find that 99 percent of mountain bikers and 75 percent of trail runners are respectful and courteous. But the sheer numbers of bikers and runners, especially on weekends and in the summer, are beginning to impact hikers. It's one thing to step off the trail (to yield to bikers or runners) 20 times during a hike. It's quite another thing to step off the trail 30 or 40 times during a hike. Also, the possibility of having e-bikes on the South Hills trails is very concerning. Speed is already a problem. Anything that enables bikers to move faster on the trails will lead to conflicts and increase the risk of collision. As a hiker, I simply do not want to be on the same trail with an e-bike. Finally, I was glad to see this project description mention the issue of "music on the trails." This summer, I encountered quite a few</p>	<p>In response to your comments associated with trail etiquette and trail usage, City staff have determined that these topics do not meet the definition of "Major Projects", but rather, are items that warrant attention during the development and implementation of the City's annual Open Lands work plan.</p>
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			<p>trail users who were broadcasting radio shows or recorded music while on the South Hills trails. That negatively impacts my experience as a trail user. I do believe that a collaborative group representing trail users can work out ways to deal with these issues. One thing to consider would be a "trail steward" program in which some bikers, runners and hikers are trained to spread the word about trail etiquette, safety and Leave No Trace principles. The Forest Service has wilderness steward programs in areas with high trail users, and I was a wilderness steward for the Mount Hood National Forest for several years. Those programs could serve as a model. Thanks for listening.</p>	
09.21.2020	Bradly Maddock	bradly.maddock@gmail.com	<p>The comments below are submitted by Bradly Maddock of 519 1st St, Helena, MT 59601.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I comment in favor of all parking area and trailhead projects proposed by the City of Helena. 2. I comment in favor of Eric Grove's exit trail proposal 3. I comment in favor of the Mount Helena Rock Climbing area expansion 4. I comment in favor of making the entire length of the DeFord trail ADA compliant as well as Tony Zammit's ADA trail on Mt. Helena 5. I comment in favor of Matt Culpo's Davis Gulch Bike Course proposal. I would like to add that I think this could be a really good location to add in a short dual slalom course if funding can be secured for its construction. See example here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5wnc ic PM (our course would be shorter). 6. I comment in favor of Eric Sivers project recommendations. <p>Thank you and please reach out if you have any questions.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.21.2020	Gregory Zeihen	gzeihen@msn.com	<p>I support the Helena Climbing Coalition's proposal to add 15 more climbing routes to Mt. Helena over the next two years. As per their</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			proposal these routes will meet certain safety standards and will be installed and maintained by Helena Climbers Coalition members.	
09.22.2020	Colton Harris	coltonharris28@gmail.com	RE: Rock Climbing / Hey, my friends and I really enjoy the current climbing routes on Mt. Helena and would love to see more added! We definitely support the proposal to expand the climbing area up there!	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.
09.22.2020	Lynn Hermes	hermeslynn@yahoo.com	RE: Rock Climbing / I support more routes at Mt Helena thanks	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.
09.22.2020	Luke Michelson	lmichelson1@yahoo.com	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I'm copy and pasting my friend Dan Bachen's comments in this email because he has outlined my thoughts so succinctly. Although these are his comments, this is exactly how I feel and, for these reasons I support more development of more climbing routes on MT Helena. I have seen the area grow in popularity over the last 2 years and have enjoyed it myself highly although there is room for needed development.</p> <p>I support this proposal because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having an established rock-climbing area within city limits is a wonderful resource for the city. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sunset slab around half of the routes are developed is one of the best beginner areas in our area b. As it is convenient for those visiting Helena, interest from out of town climbers is high. The crags are even used to promote tourism to Helena. c. One of the most accessible areas and close enough to climb at after work. 2. Need to increase the number of routes because <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To date much of the cliff line has not been developed and the potential for many new routes exists. The city should take 	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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			<p>advantage of this to increase recreation opportunities. Relative to other outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and even Frisbee golf, areas to climb on city of Helena lands are extremely limited, and the city should take advantage of the opportunity to increase climbing on Mt. Helena.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Increasing the number of routes provides more options for climbers and reduces crowding c. As climbing grows more popular, more areas and routes are needed to spread climbers out and prevent over use of all areas <p>Your support for this project has been greatly appreciated, and I look forward to the possibility of being involved with more route development. Thank you.</p>	
09.22.2020	Ellen Fever	efeaver@outlook.com	<p>I am writing in support of the trail proposed by the Rotary Club of Helena. This accessible, gentle sloped trail would provide a means for people of all physical abilities to enjoy the magnificent views and outdoor experiences of our wonderful city park. Based on the use that the flat 10 Mile trails have received, if this trail is built, it will be used.</p> <p>All spring and summer the flat trails at 10 mile hosted the elderly, folks with mobility issues, little children, and everyone in between. No matter the time of day, people are using these flat trails. Our trail system in the south hills has nothing like the ADA Compliant Trail being proposed. Building this trail would be a gift to our community and especially to a segment of our community that is currently underserved by our terrific trail system.</p> <p>The Rotary Club of Helena is 100% behind this project and will assist with person power and fundraising to make the trail a reality. We have a grant we received this year that needs to be used for this project as soon</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			<p>as possible. If the project is approved, we can go ahead and purchase materials with grant funds.</p> <p>I hope you will see the benefits of this project for our community and approve it to move forward.</p>	
09.22.2020	Terry Cowan	tcowan@coldwaterengineering.com	<p>I wanted to extend my thanks to your group in allowing the previous rock climbing route development on Mount Helena. Mount Helena being a city park with so many varied uses truly is a treasure that gives Helena even more appeal. This rock climbing area opens up climbing to a broader group of aspiring and seasoned climbers than the other areas outside of town which cannot be so easily accessed. Please consider the proposal to set additional routes. Thanks again.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.22.2020	Kyle Perkins	kylekperkins@gmail.com	<p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>I wish to express my support and appreciation for the Helena Climbers Coalition and their efforts to provide rock climbing opportunities on Mount Helena. The routes developed there so far have been an incredible asset to recreation in our community, and I support their proposal to expand rock climbing areas. Thank you for your support.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.22.2020	Jane Amdahl	Jane_b_a@hotmail.com	<p>As a member of the Rotary Club of Helena as well as a member of AARP Montana's Executive Council, I heartily support the creation of the proposed ADA compliant trail project. It would be great if people who are not as able-bodied as the rest of us could have a manageable way to get out and enjoy nature. The pandemic has shown us all how hard it is to be confined -- many people with mobility issues face this their whole lives. Such a trail would be an excellent way to expand their horizons. Please approve it!</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.22.2020	Steve Ahlrich	steveA0115@msn.com	<p>Whom It May Concern,</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			<p>I am writing in support of the proposal by the Helena Climber's Coalition to add climbing routes on Mount Helena. I am a climber, and occasionally climb at Mount Helena. It is great having a local community climbing area where climbers can meet for a few hours and enjoy their passion. Additional climbs would be helpful in spreading climbers out and providing a wider variety of climbs. This proposal will benefit both climbers and local area businesses.</p>	
09.23.2020	Chase Clausen	chaseclausen83@gmail.com	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>I am a Helena resident and I fully support the proposal to expand rock climbing at Mount Helena. I am an avid climber and greatly appreciate having some amazing climbing so close to home. One of my favorite things about Helena is the fantastic outdoor opportunities that are within walking/biking distance of where I live. We are blessed to have good climbing limestone so close to town and should develop it fully. The Helena Climber's Coalition has done a great job with the existing trails and routes and I am confident that they will do an excellent job with the expansion. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.24.2020	Dennis McChon	galumphant22@gmail.com	<p>As a frequent hiker in the open-lands, I want to thank you for the complete report on what you heard at the listening session. I couldn't take part (I'm not set up for ZOOM) but It's good to know what happened. Again, I appreciate it.</p> <p>I do have a few comments though. I'd have liked to have seen a little less emphasis on parking lots, and a little more on pedestrian connections between town and open-lands. Are all trailheads to be identified with parking lots from now on? I still favor dispersed access -- a lot of low volume trailheads all along the interface, rather than just a few high-volume ones. That classic, pedestrian-permeable "edge-of-town" interface between older Helena and the open-lands is a rare thing</p>	<p>In response to your comments concerning the City's proposed parking area improvement projects, City staff would like to emphasis that the areas slated for improvement are currently experiencing functional issues related to recreational users who are choosing to access the City's open lands system in a vehicle. Legal, public access points, by definition, provide the public with a right to access public lands at a given location with by an approved mode of transport. In the instance of the Old</p>

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			<p>nowadays -- worthy of study, preservation and extension. It can be done without hurting the resource.</p> <p>Along that line, I hope that planning for trails and pedestrian access in those new additions at the northwest corner of Mount Helena Park (the "Whyte" parcel and the other one pending) will be open and transparent.</p> <p>The Helena open-lands will now apparently adjoin State land and more Forest Service land, which would seem to suggest a possibility for inter-agency trail planning. That would be great. I'm sure the mountain-bike lobby is interested, but I hope that every effort will be made to involve pedestrians as well. That's a fun area to hike -- and hikers and bikers don't necessarily want the same thing.</p> <p>So, what's in mind for trails up there? What about trailheads? What'll happen with that closed section of LeGrande, especially as land just north of that section is developed? I trust you'll keep on letting us know. Again, thanks much.</p>	<p>Shooting Range, Limekiln Road, and Arrowroot/2006 public access points, members of the public are allowed to operate motor vehicles. Therefore, the City Parks Department is responsible for managing the public use and associated needs at the aforementioned locations. The trailhead improvement projects proposed by City staff for implementation in 2021 have been specifically designed to address documented, functional deficiencies that are currently being experienced at each given location.</p> <p>At present, with the exception of forestry and weed management activities, the City has not developed trail or trailhead management plans for the west Le Grande Cannon area. Future trail and trailhead planning for the west Le Grande Cannon area will involve public participation as the City enters a more active phase of management. At present, City staff members are in the process of observing public use patterns, monitoring residential development activities, and researching options for the west Le Grande Cannon area.</p>
09.25.2020	Matt Goudreau	Matt.goudreau@gmail.com	Hello!	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			I wanted to show my support to further developing climbing on Mt Helena by HCC. Mt Helena provides prime rock for further routes and HCC has done a great job thus far discreetly developing the existing area. Consciously providing more outdoor activities makes Helena a better place to live and visit and HCC is one of the great local organizations to do it!	
09.26.2020	Christine Deveny	cmdeveny7@gmail.com	<p>As a daily hiker in Helena’s open space, I appreciated the opportunity to comment on the City and HOLMAC’s proposed open lands projects for 2021.</p> <p>I believe that 2021 would be an excellent time for the City to step back and take care of our current trail system before embarking on any new projects. First off, the City needs to collect accurate data about our existing trail system – we don’t have this now. Then the City needs to identify and prioritize those many places and areas where trails require restoration, rehabilitation, or elimination in order to reduce natural resource damage and user conflicts. Funds should then be allocated for that work. As the work is being completed the city should review and develop policies that will prevent or reduce future resource damage on these local public lands. Only until this work is complete should the city consider moving forward with any new projects. New project development before this restoration/rehabilitation work is done will only exacerbate existing problem areas by attracting more users. Please use 2021 as the opportune time to make our trail system the best it can be.</p>	In response to your comments related to the need for trail data collection, trail restoration/elimination, and trail user conflict resolution, these subjects were addressed in the City’s 2020 Open Lands Work Plan which is currently in the implementation phase. Future City open lands system work plans will be designed to continue to bring management to the trail related items that you have identified.
09.28.2020	Michele Webster	Michele.na.mt@gmail.com	I appreciated the opportunity to attend the Zoom HOLMAC listening session on 9/15/20 and am submitting my initial thoughts. As this process goes forward, more information and conversations might provide insights. So, it is possible these initial thoughts will change. I look forward to being a part of the conversation as we all work together for the benefit of our Helena Open Lands.	The following list highlights the City’s response to your comments: 1. (History – Lower Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course) The construction of the Lower Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course was not officially sanctioned by the City of

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			<p>Here are my thoughts as of 9/28/20 ADA Trail Expansion (MB)- I support this plan. As a senior citizen with occasional muscular-skeletal injuries, I realize the importance of having trails accessible to me as I age. I also support increased opportunities for people with mobility challenges to have recreational opportunities in our open spaces that accommodate their disabilities. This appears to be a trail where the existing features will not require significant change to make these accommodations. Since trail density is an issue, it is better to work with existing trails rather than scar up more of the open land. This project fits with goals of the Chapter 7 Recreational Plan to increase community access and support. (1.1c) We have roughly 40 miles of trails in our Helena Open Lands. Setting aside 1 ½ miles of trails for people with mobility challenges where they can expect a safe recreational experience is a start in the right direction.</p> <p>Davis Gulch Bike Course/DeFord Multi Use-Trails (MC)-The Lower Davis Gulch Bike Course Trails include an area that the mountain bikers call the Lower Davis Jump Line (per Trailforks app). It is an eyesore! What is the history of this project? Did the development of this bike park go through an appropriate approval process or is this a rogue trail area? It appears they are now trying to “formalize” the legality of the project. We need to seriously consider decommissioning this area and returning to its natural state. This would be essential if the decision to go forward with an ADA trail at DeFord. Also, the mountain bikers already have two formalized bike parks. The Upper Davis Gulch Bike Skills Course also shows a destruction of our landscape. It does not appear to represent the goal of Stewardship of our public lands. All citizens are encouraged to walk south on DeFord from the Old Shooting Range Trailhead to the intersection of the road and then walk down the bike course trail. (Best</p>	<p>Helena Parks Department. However, HOLMAC has received two proposals for improvement of the Lower Dry Gulch Bike Skills course, both of which were recommended for implementation should funding be obtained.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. (Removal – Lower Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course) In the 2019 Open Lands Work Plan formation process, City staff recommended removal of the existing bike jumps in the Lower Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course. Considerable public opposition to the removal of the aforementioned bike jumps resulted in no action regarding their removal. 3. (Upper Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course) The Upper Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course was a City Parks Department sanctioned project that was implemented by Prickly Pear Land Trust over a decade ago. The Upper Dry Gulch Bike facility and its associated signage is annually maintained and inspected. 4. (Dump Gulch Proposal) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document.
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		<p>to do this during low traffic times and be ready for speeding bikes. Taking a walking stick is encouraged.) Hiking this 1-mile loop is essential to understanding the issues currently facing our trails. Bike courses that focus on thrills and skill development belong elsewhere, such as an industrial park or ski area.</p> <p>It has been well-established and documented that the modus operandi of the bikers to build trails nationally on our public lands without approval, due to no procedure in place or their blatant disregard for the process. They appear to assume that once the trails are in place, they will remain. This assumption needs to be challenged.</p> <p>Dump Gulch Project (ES)- I oppose this project. There is no data that supports the need for such a project. When we move forward with single-use trails, there should be documented evidence of need. This is driven by the mountain bikers and the Ridge Trail is extremely popular with them. The Trail Rider drops them off at the Trailhead and then they can ride into town and stop at a brewery, per their advertisements. One would assume that if they pick up the Trail Rider downtown, they will mostly want to return to downtown to load their bikes in their vehicles (or maybe they ride home when they exit the trails?).</p> <p>All decisions to move away from multi-use trails must be considered on a case-by-case basis. At times, it will be the best option. When it is driven by the mountain bikers, we really need to look at their motive. Their single-use trails allow them to race on trails without having to slow down for hikers. With trail density an issue, is this something we want to encourage?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. (Mount Ascension Parking) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document. 6. (Old Shooting Range Project) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document. 7. (2006 Reroute) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document. 8. (System Wide Trail Assessment) Not identified as a “Major Project” by City staff. 9. (HOLMAC) HOLMAC members are approved by the Helena City Commission. 10. (PPLT Inventory) The Montana Bicycle Guild and City staff are responsible for the maintenance of the Directional Trail. Removal of the lumber residue associated with the construction of the wooden turn is on the City’s project list. During the 2020 spring/summer field season the Directional Trail received its second grass seed application combined with a follow-up string trimming of weeds occurring adjacent to the trail.
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			<p>Eric Siverson stated in his proposal says the bikers need a “better way” to descend from the Ridge Trail. He acknowledges there are already five ways to exit the trail and get back into town. Why the need for another one? While we can only guess the motivation, it appears it goes back to requirements of being an IMBA Ride Center. They dictate the quality of our trails and trail amenities. There was never a community wide conversation and mandate to have our community become an IMBA Ride Center and we should not have a national organization drive decision regarding our HOL.</p> <p>An old map of the South Hills Trails. copyright in 2008 and prepared by PPLT, shows on the back all the organizations administering the trails and lands. It also noted “With assistance from IMBA.” This is a big deal!!! Most of us hikers in 2008 had no clue what decisions about our Helena Open Lands were being made behind closed doors. When comparing the trail density of 2008 with the trail density of 2020, the results are astonishing! Unfortunately, this growth was not organic based on need. It was based on desire by a special-interest group without regard for the needs of all members of our community.</p> <p>Lime Kiln Parking Area Realignment Project (BL)-While there are more pressing problems currently, I am familiar with that area and agree that it is a dangerous parking lot. The cost is relatively small and might be warranted. People either must back in or back out of the parking lot right now. While traffic on Arrowroot Rd is minimal, it is still dangerous.</p> <p>Mount Ascension Parking Area Expansion Project (BL)-This should be placed on the backburner because there are more pressing needs. It appears the driving force for this is a desire for Bike Helena and MBG to</p>	
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		<p>have a larger area to allow the Trail Rider to turn around more easily for the trip back into town. Parking currently is adequate.</p> <p>Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project (BL)-I generally oppose this because I think it is an attempt by the mountain bikers to increase trailhead amenities to meet IMBA Ride Center criteria. Also, there are rumors of plans for bikers to turn this into an event center and a campground. It would be nice to get more information to either confirm or deny these rumors. When people opposing the Beattie Street Trailhead expansion and vaulted toilet suggested this location as an alternative for the vaulted toilet, city staff said it would not work due to concerns about vandalism. One would assume vandalism would still be a concern.</p> <p>We need to first address the lack of appropriate restroom facilities in some of our City Parks. Why is improving trailhead amenities given a priority? Our Open Lands are seeing increased use, but many people recreate at our City parks where restroom facilities are inadequate.</p> <p>If the proposal for an ADA-accessible trail on DeFord goes forward, it would then make sense to have an ADA-accessible vault toilet and other accessible amenities. Otherwise, this should not be a priority.</p> <p>Reroute 2006 Trail Above Arrowroot Drive (ES)- I probably oppose this project as this appears to be another attempt by the mountain bikers to get the trails up to their expectations. Hikers probably do not have a need to reduce grade. If a portion is steeper, you just work a little harder. You do not have a need to get out there with your tools to reshape the terrain. I have hiked this area and it did not bother me.</p>	
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			<p>Rerouting Portion of Trail above Beattie (NK)-I checked this area out on 9/20/20. It appears to me the re-routing has already occurred. I do recall seeing PPLT was looking for volunteers to build the new trail prior to the opening of the new Beattie Street Trailhead. Are they now going back to obtain permission for work they already completed or is there another re-route plan in place? The former trail section that is currently blocked would benefit from some improvements to make it more aesthetically pleasing.</p> <p>System -Wide Trail Assessment (ES)- Because Eric Sivers will have vastly different criteria about what is needed in a trail assessment, it will be essential that other user groups have a strong presence when determining what will be assessed. We need to be sure that we do not let IMBA dictate design and what is needed for a “Quality Trail Experience” or to meet the requirements of IMBA Ride Center certification. There has never been a community discussion as to whether we want our community to become a mountain biking mecca. Also, we need to place greater focus on trail density and stewardship of lands.</p> <p>We need a moratorium on all new major projects until this system-wide assessment is completed. We should not add more trails, build more trailhead amenities, or conduct re-routes until this is done. It is important that the assessment be conducted by a neutral entity. How else can we be assured the needs of all user groups are adequately represented? Eric Sivers should not be able to establish assessment criteria because he represents a special-interest group. PPLT and Brad Langsather are not neutral entities, as evidenced by their history of supporting the mountain biker’s agenda.</p>	
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			<p>We are experiencing high trail usage, and this should be quantified as to type and frequency. An inventory should also include assessment of wildlife activity and habitat. We need detailed data to inform decision making. Decisions must be made on quantified need rather than desire of some to design our trail system for their pleasure.</p> <p>HOLMAC- The Chapter 7 Recreational Plan stated review of HOLMAC membership was outside the scope of the plan. Did the city ever complete or start their review of HOLMAC? They said they would be reviewing all Advisory Boards. HOLMAC appears it is still heavily controlled by people who support the mountain biking/tourism agenda. Also, they could use reminders about publishing their meeting minutes. I recently checked and found the Agendas for 3/20 and 8/20, but no meeting minutes. Did they meet? Where are the minutes?</p> <p>PPLT Inventory-I hiked one of the Directional Trails this summer with a friend. We found many noxious weeds along the trail. We also noted they did not remove their lumbar debris from the construction of the jump and berm. The debris was behind the constructed pieces. PPLT should inspect this area annually and cannot assume that MBG will keep everything up to standard. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these initial proposals.</p>	
09.28.2020	Bob Goodwyn	ragoodwyn@gmail.com	I love the proposal for new climbing routes on Mt Helena! As a young Helena resident, it's why we live here and why we love Helena. Thanks for your time!	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.
09.28.2020	Keaton Blair	kblair@carroll.edu	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I wholeheartedly support the following proposed projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DeFord Parking Area Expansion Project 	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount Ascension Parking Area Expansion Project • Directional Trails Exit Trail • New Climbing Routes • ADA Trails Expansion • Davis Gulch Bike Course • Dump Gulch Project • Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena <p>As an outdoor enthusiast, I spend much of my time enjoying the wonderful biking and climbing in our beautiful city, and I think that the continued maintenance and improvement of our outdoor recreation options should be a priority for the city of Helena. I believe that all of the above proposals would contribute significantly to this goal.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my opinion.</p>	
09.28.2020	Barb and Tim Wetherill	info@stonetreeclimbing.com	<p>Hello, I am sending an email in support of the proposed Mt. Helena bolting expansion proposal. As the owners of Stonetree Climbing Center, we are excited to see our indoor climbers transition to outdoor climbing. Having bolted routes so close to town is quite special. We hope that you are considering the development of more bolted routes on Mt. Helena. Thank you.</p>	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.
09.29.2020	Matthew Sauer	matthew.sauer@mso.umt.edu	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Matthew Sauer and I've been living in Helena this summer and spending quite a bit of time recreating at Mt Helena. I would like to send my support for the project to develop more climbing routes in the park! Not only are these routes an amazing resource for local climbers, I also met many groups of people from out of town while recreating there. This project would add even more draw for folks out of town to view Helena as a climbing destination. Being that the park is only minutes from</p>	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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			<p>downtown encourages people to contribute to local business. The proposed project to increase the number of routes on the cliff is quite necessary to decrease crowding on the popular routes, and to give locals another set of routes to challenge themselves on. While there is adequate climbing around the city of Helena, most places are around 45 minutes to an hour drive away from town; with the exception of Mt Helena. Allowing for more climbing development in the park would provide a great resource for climbers within city limits. Allowing for people to meet up after work and enjoy the natural beauty of Helena. I fully support this proposal and thank you for considering further development of this already fantastic resource. Thank you.</p>	
<p>09.29.2020</p>	<p>Meg Bishop</p>		<p>1. Before considering the additional of any more trails, as suggested by Ken Morrison and others, I feel that conducting an inventory/assessment of the current trail system is needed to better inform future decisions and provide an adaptive management approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the overall objectives of Helena’s trail system? b. What is the optimal trail density for this area considering resource issues and those surrounding “quality trail experiences” for the various users? c. Is it time to put a “cap” on the addition of new trails? d. Is the trail system meeting the needs of the variety of users? e. How has trail usage changed since the last study was conducted? f. If there is a change in how trails are used, what is the reason? g. Have some types of uses been displaced by others? If so, why? h. How successful is the multiple-use concept to date? Do changes need to be considered? 	<p>The following list outlines City staff response to your corresponding comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Trail Inventory/Assessment) A trail condition/signage inventory was completed as part of the Parks Departments 2020 Open Lands Division Work Plan. 2. (Proposed De Ford ADA Trail) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document. 3. (Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project) The City Parks Department seasonally provides portable restrooms at Lockey and Centennial Park and manages a permanent restroom at Memorial Park during the summer season. During the winter period, the City Parks Department provides a

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What are the conditions of existing trails? Weeds? Erosion? PPLT’s inventory is incomplete. A more comprehensive approach is needed. j. How have specialized bike courses impacted trails? How can these impacts be minimized or prevented? k. Are City open lands the appropriate location for bike courses and skills trails? Given the proximity to town and the variety of users, is this the best use of these front-country trails? Or has a decision been made to create pockets of “sacrifice areas” to accommodate a single use? <p>The proximity of Helena’s trail system to town is, arguably, one of Helena’s biggest assets. The beauty of the landscape and vistas is promoted nationally (and internationally), as is the trail experience. It also adds considerably to the quality of life of Helena residents. Ensuring sustainable trail usage is essential to maintaining the health of the landscape. Management that minimizes trail degradation, erosion, and the advance of weeds, as well as restoring existing degraded areas, should be a priority.</p> <p>Bike courses and skills trails are not appropriate activities on our multiple-use trail system for reasons surrounding safety and sustainable trails. Many communities throughout the country have realized the implications of these kinds of activities and made necessary changes.</p> <p>I recently had a long conversation with Travis Campbell, one of the owners of Great Divide Ski Area. They are currently in the process of planning a bike resort up at the ski area. If not for COVID, they would have started last spring. They will be constructing a network of trails</p>	<p>portable restroom at Memorial Park. The Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation project was designed to meet the needs of current and future users of this trailhead.</p>
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			<p>using consultants that will design technical trails with safety and risk in mind. They are currently speaking with a consultant who designed the bike trails on Mt. Whistler. Travis said they will, hopefully, begin the process spring 2021.</p> <p>The ski area is the appropriate place for bike courses and skills trails, as well as the Enduro Race. And liability is not an issue for them. I know there is a certain panache to holding an Enduro Race in town, while most of the other races in the series are held at ski areas. However, is it really the most appropriate venue?</p> <p>I understand that expanding mountain biking activities on City open lands is desirable for reasons of convenience, and because it is free. However, it is time to ensure a balance for our open lands, and to head off potential future issues. The ski area provides great opportunities for those who want to hone their skills and thrills. I also understand the interest in expanding tourism possibilities to enhance economic development. A counter to this approach are many communities that have made a priority of creating livable communities that enhance quality of life for their residents. In these communities, economic development became an organic outgrowth of this strategy, attracting many types of new residents and avoiding the trap of relying on tourism for its sustainability.</p> <p>2. (My Proposal) Creating an ADA-compliant, wheelchair accessible trail on DeFord Trail (Upper and Lower). There are few low-gradient trails in the system. This is an opportunity that would benefit folks in our community with disabilities and/or limited mobility, whether it is temporary or permanent. The City trail system should inclusively consider the needs of the entire community. And, often, those with</p>	
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			<p>disabilities appreciate the opportunity to travel extended distances and not be confined to short trails or picnic tables.</p> <p>The total distance for this trail would be approximately 1.5 miles. There will need to be consideration of connecting the Upper and Lower segments in a more seamless way. We are hoping this project serves as the start of a broader effort to enhance the livability of our community for everyone. I have discussed this proposal with various representatives of groups advocating for persons with disabilities and/or mobility issues and they are quite excited and are interest in being involved in some way, including a focus on creation of a project area. Those include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacqueline Isaly, Community Health Promotion Division Administrator • Joel Peden, MILP Advocacy Coordinator • Charles Alvarez, MILP IL Specialist I • Meg Traci, Research Associate Professor at the University of Montana Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities. <p>I am currently working with these folks on the development of cost estimates for the project. They may also be available grant funding for this kind of project and expanding the opportunity more broadly within the City trail system.</p> <p>**Given Matt Culpo’s proposal regarding the “bike course” on DeFord, I recommend organizing an on-site field meeting for the DeFord/Davis projects to allow folks to better understand all the aspects of what is being proposed there and to allow for discussion.</p> <p>3. Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project. I generally don’t understand the trend of installing permanently vaulted toilets at</p>	
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			<p>trailheads when there are a number of highly-used City parks that either have no toilet facilities or use portable toilets (Lockey, Memorial, Centennial, etc.). Why are trailheads given a higher priority than parks, that are often heavily used?</p> <p>Are these restroom installations an effort to accommodate increased mountain bicycling use? Or to further meet IMBA Ride Center criteria? Also, will this parking lot be improved to be used as more than just a parking lot?</p> <p>4. I understand the discussion surrounding e-bikes is separate from this focus, however, I believe that the City should very carefully consider the complexities and implications of adding any motorized travel to the mix. Thank you for the opportunity to comment!</p>	
09.29.2020	Tom Kilmer	tom.montana.2011@gmail.com	<p>Hello: Please accept these comments for the record regarding the Helena Open Lands proposed work projects for 2021.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I cannot accept or support any projects that work to increase driving to these local trails. 2. I cannot support any infrastructure improvements to parking lots. I voted for open space bonds to have my money spent on trails and land, not on parking lots. 3. The only trail improvement I can support at this time is to improve and modify the DeFord trail to make it ADA compliant. 4. All other trail work proposals need to be deferred until such time as the Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Department has completed a thorough and comprehensive auditing of our total miles of designated trails and the total miles of user created trails. 5. No new trails should be built until such time as all user created trails are obliterated or reclaimed back to their natural state. 	<p>The following list addresses your comments on an item by item basis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helena Open Lands are public lands open to users of all abilities and from any geographic region, including citizens within our community who are unable to access these lands via foot or directly from their neighborhood. Projects proposed for parking areas are to accommodate current use and safety issues at these trail access areas; they are not being built to attract more users. However, we recognize that Helena

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		<p>6. No new trails should be built until such time as all deferred maintenance and repair on existing designated trails has been completed.</p> <p>7. I propose that 50% of the funds that are budgeted for parking lots be instead be diverted to an education outreach program to encourage trail users to bicycle or walk to the trails. I propose that the other 50 % of parking lot budget items be diverted to the City Streets Department for the paint, striping, marking of more bicycle lanes in Helena. If the money pot from the parking lot plans is sufficient for only one bicycle lane I propose it be spent on Colonial Drive. The entirety of Colonial Drive from the Motel at the corner with California Street all the way out to the City Limits is wide enough to accommodate bicycle lanes on both sides. This would be best accomplished by making the entirety of Colonial Drive a no parking area. Beyond Hunters Pointe there is essentially no existing on street parking at this time so there would be no displacement of parking. Shodair Hospital and the PT medical clinics on the other side of the street should be encouraged to provide sufficient off-street parking for their employees and customers to provide room for bicycle lanes at that spot.</p> <p>8. Lastly I cannot support any new trail construction nor any parking lots until such time as the City of Helena has completed the Centennial Trail as envisioned 30 years ago. Needed infrastructure improvements on the Centennial Trail should take priority with the city over all other trail projects and parking projects. These include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A bridge for the trail over Henderson Street. b) Paving of the entire trail. c) Completion of the trail from the current "Dead Zone" at National Street all the way east to the current trail segments 	<p>Open Lands use continues to grow and we must consider that many of our access points aren't even adequately providing access to the use they are getting, much less the use they will receive in the future as our community grows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Managing open lands system trailhead parking areas falls under the managerial jurisdiction of the City Parks Department. 3. Please reference the City's Major Project Recommendation Document. 4. Please reference the Parks Departments 2020 open Lands Work Plan. 5. Please reference the Parks Departments 2020 open Lands Work Plan. 6. Please reference the 2020 Trail Conditions Report found on the City Parks Department website. 7. Response to this item is beyond the scope of this discussion. 8. Response to this item is beyond the scope of this discussion.
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			<p>behind Walmart and then on to the trail that goes out to East Helena.</p> <p>That is all. Thanks so much.</p>	
09.30.2020	Jeff Bradley	j.jeff.bradley@gmail.com	<p>Hello,</p> <p>Please see my comments below on the City of Helena Open Lands Projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I support the proposals for parking lots developed by the City of Helena. • I support the Old Shooting Range restroom project developed by the city. • I support the proposal by Matt Culpo that would formalize the jumps on Davis Bike Course and DeFord Jump line. These fit well with a RTP grant that PPLT received to do the work previously. • I support the MBG proposal for a trail from the proposed parking lot at the top of Arrowroot to the bridge at the bottom of the directional trails. • I support the proposal by Eric Grove for a trail from the bottom of the directional trails to Eddy as a part of the trail suggested by MBG. • I support the ADA Compliant trail suggested by the Rotary Club • I support all proposals by Eric Sivers. 	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.30.2020	Dan Bachen	Daniel.Bachen@gmail.com	<p>To the City of Helena Open Lands Division,</p> <p>I would like to express my support for the proposed project to increase the number of rock climbing routes on Mt. Helena presented by Brad Maddock on September 15th, 2020. I believe having an established rock climbing area within city limits is a wonderful resource for the city and</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			<p>increasing the opportunity for recreation on city owned lands will benefit not only local climbers, but Helena as a whole.</p> <p>Currently the routes on Mt. Helena include one of the best local areas for beginning and intermediate climbers in our area. These climbs are also some of the closest to the city, and are a wonderful after-work destination. This area also draws interest from many visiting climbers due to its proximity and high concentration of easy and moderate routes. For these reasons, I believe that the previous development of this area has had great benefits for Helena.</p> <p>The proposal submitted to the Open Lands Division details the creation of up to 15 additional routes. I support this as it will continue to expand the opportunities available to local and visiting climbers. To date much of the cliff line has not been developed and the potential for many new routes exists. The city should take advantage of this to increase recreation opportunities. Relative to other outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and even Frisbee golf, areas to climb on city of Helena lands are extremely limited, and the city should take advantage of the opportunity to increase climbing on Mt. Helena. Furthermore, increasing the number of routes provides more options for climbers and reduces crowding on existing routes and as climbing grows more popular, more areas and routes are needed to spread climbers out and prevent overuse of all areas.</p> <p>Thank you for consideration of my opinion on this matter.</p>	
09.30.2020	Eliza Frazer	frazer410@gmail.c	Kudos to you for the new format opening ideas for trail projects to the broad community. Your zoom meeting felt productive and open. I think you received about a decade's worth of good ideas.	The following list attempts to respond to your comments in an organized fashion by extracting subjects from the body of your narrative and specifically addressing them:

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		<p>There is always a question of scarce resources – time and money are often the first – but an equally if not more important scarce resource is the land itself.</p> <p>Please take into consideration that the South Hills trail system does not have unlimited capacity. The number of comments regarding maintenance is a good indicator that build out may have reached a crucial threshold and taking care of our trails that got “pounded” this summer should take precedence over parking lots other than the one that addresses safety.</p> <p>Well intentioned projects that seem to fix one problem, may in fact make the larger problem of overuse worse. It is an understatement to say this year is unusual and basing parking needs on single year, particularly this year seems unwise.</p> <p>In particular, a handicap restroom at the shooting range seems like putting the cart before the horse as there is no handicap trail options there. It would seem better to have handicap access to a repaired DeFord trail. The DeFord trail is wide and level, but not in good repair. Nor is there access from the parking lot that in any way resembles a safe handicap option. Once on the trail, there is no framework for separating slower traffic from blazing fast traffic. This area cries for work on the trails themselves. The Davis Gulch bike course trail plan has much to recommend it and deserves to be explored by the community.</p> <p>The two proposed DeFord/ South Davis parking expansion plans make no sense in light of the Helena roads department’s long stated plan to resurface South Davis. It seems like coordinating these projects would be in the best interest of the tax payers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Taking Care of Trails should have precedence over parking lots) On a yearly basis Helena’s Parks Department attempts to implement activities that increase the effectiveness of both trail & trailhead management without prioritizing one over the other. In Calendar Year 2020, the Parks Department designed a trail maintenance work plan that inventoried trail conditions within the entire open lands system for the expressed purpose of bringing attention to maintenance needs identified within the trails analysis. Concurrently, the Parks Department implemented projects to repair/upgrade/replace existing trailhead infrastructure while managing public needs and vegetation at the various public access points located within the City’s open lands system. To date, both trail and trailhead maintenance needs have been met without either open lands system entity lacking the attention they deserve. 2. (Basing Parking Needs on a single year seems unwise) The Trailhead
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			<p>Focusing on parking does not address the overuse of the system. More trail use may not be desirable or sustainable – or responsible when there is already a backlog of maintenance. Again, thank you for soliciting such broad community input.</p>	<p>improvement projects proseed by City staff are a result of multi-year observation of the public use patterns at the sites in question.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. (Why install an ADA accessible restroom at a trailhead that lacks ADA access) By law, the City of Helena is required to provide ADA access to public facilities when an upgrade is implemented. Therefore, at that point in time when trailhead facilities are upgraded, all amenities located at that site must be made accessible regardless of the ADA access classification of the trail system supported by the site. 4. (Dry Gulch Bike Course Plan) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document. 5. (Coordinating with City Transportation on the De Ford Trailhead Improvement Plan) Please reference the City’s Major Project Recommendation Document. 6. (Focusing on parking does not address over use of the system) The Parks Department is fully aware of the increased volume of use within Helena’s open lands system, however, our mission as a public agency is not
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				to discourage this use, but rather to make our best effort to support and encourage public recreation within Helena's open spaces.
09.30.2020	Denny Palmer	dnj116@gmail.com	<p>Thanks for taking the time to review my individual comments on the proposed Major Projects for Calendar Year 2021. I'll go through each project in the sequence presented in the City's PDF document outlining the proposed projects.</p> <p><u>DeFord Parking Area Expansion Project – Brad Langsather, Presenter</u> I fully support this proposed project. This appears to be a minor expansion project and, in my opinion, it is necessary due to the overflow parking conditions that have been occurring here. Please adopt this project proposal.</p> <p><u>Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project – Brad Langsather, Presenter</u> I fully support this proposed project. Like with the recent Beattie Street trailhead expansion project, there is a present need for a public restroom at this large and heavily used parking lot. I doubt many people would oppose the installation of a restroom here since the people opposed to the restroom installation at Beattie Street suggested that the City should first install a restroom at the Old Shooting Range Parking lot. Those previous arguments show a broad recognition of the actual need for such a facility at the Old Shooting Range Parking lot. Please adopt this project proposal.</p> <p><u>Limekiln Parking Area Realignment Project – Brad Langsather, Presenter</u> I fully support this proposed project. Similar to the DeFord Parking Area expansion proposal, the parking realignment at Limekiln is a minor expansion project and is not expensive. The City should move forward</p>	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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		<p>with this project to improve the parking at this and at other proposed locations in 2021.</p> <p><u>Mount Ascension Parking Area Expansion Project – Brad Langsather, Presenter</u> I fully support this proposed project. The parking area on top of Mount Ascension off Martinez Gulch road has become more and more popular over recent years. In turn, the existing parking area is insufficient to handle the amount of traffic and congestion that is taking place. Oftentimes the vehicles parked here are parked sporadically. The disorganized nature of the parking lot actually worsens congestion here because the parking lot is so narrow. Similar to the other parking lot expansion proposals, this is a minor expansion project, it is not expensive, and it is necessary due to the overflow and inefficient parking conditions that have been occurring here. Please adopt this project proposal.</p> <p><u>Directional Trails Exit Trail - Eric Grove, Presenter</u> I fully support this project proposal. Like Mr. Grove indicated in his proposal, bikers heading back onto Eddy West currently have to travel up the old Limekiln Jeep Road. That road is steep to ride uphill. Nearly every mountain biker dismounts their bikes at the bottom of the directional trails and simply pushes their bikes up this old road. The proposed exit trail would effectively remedy the current situation by building a low angle uphill route back up to Eddy West. Please adopt this proposal.</p> <p><u>New Climbing Routes – Bradley Maddock, Helena Climbers Coalition, Presenter</u> I fully support this project proposal. The climbing routes on Mount</p>	
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			<p>Helena are a great new asset on Helena's Open Lands. The climbing bolts are nearly impossible to see unless one looks closely for them, so they are not an eye sore to the casual observer. Mr. Maddock and the Helena Climbers Coalition have done a great job on the existing routes already in place and it is great to see that they are moving forward with developing new routes. Please adopt this proposal.</p> <p>ADA Trails Expansion - Margareta (Meg) Seyr-Bishop, Presenter</p> <p>I'm unsure exactly what Ms. Bishop has proposed here. It is my understanding that the DeFord Trail is already ADA compliant. Perhaps minor improvements could be made to the trail, but she does not specify what those improvements would entail. I'm not opposed to improvements made to any of our trails, and certainly with respect to improving opportunities for those with mobility issues. Without more specifics outlined in writing by Ms. Bishop, I cannot say for certain whether I support or oppose what she has proposed here. However, Ms. Bishop implied during her oral statements during the City's September 15, 2020 Zoom meeting that her proposal would also entail removing bicycles from the DeFord Trail and that she would like the City to remove the long-standing "highmarking" features found throughout that trail. If this is what she is proposing, then I would strongly oppose either such measure. Bicyclists -- of all abilities -- use DeFord Trail as a means of getting off Davis Gulch Road. Their ability to travel on the DeFord Trail is a safety measure. And it almost goes without saying that uphill riders are not traveling at a high rate of speed. Every one of the "highmarking" features have been there for well over a decade (they've been there for as long as I can remember, so likely closer to 2 decades). Moreover, the existing "highmarking" features are not dangerous. There are good sightlines for every single one of them. In other words, bikers going over any of those "highmarking" features can see an appropriate distance</p>	
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		<p>down the trail to identify whether there is an oncoming hiker or biker. Those highmarking features are not incompatible with safety of other users, nor are they incompatible with the ADA nature of the trail.</p> <p><u>Trail Etiquette and High Trail Usage - Claudia Clifford, Presenter</u> I presume that everyone who attended the September 15 Zoom meeting and everyone taking the time to submit comments are in favor of and recognize the need for good trail etiquette. That is not in itself a contentious issue and is something that clearly needs to be addressed and worked on by all trail users. Both the MBG and PPLT have independently worked on trail etiquette campaigns in the past, and each organization continues to do so. However, I also presume that myself and Ms. Clifford have differing views on appropriate etiquette surrounding some of the topics she addresses in her proposal (i.e., speed, high marking, e-bikes, etc.). The MBG would be open to working with a collaborative group involving the City, PPLT, and perhaps others to develop a uniform trail etiquette campaign and signage. It's my understanding that PPLT has already begun to develop proposed signs, brochures, etc. What that campaign eventually looks like and whether the City allocates funds towards that campaign are both issues that will need to be decided.</p> <p><u>Archery Change Trail Options - Ken Morrison, Presenter</u> For the most part, I'm impartial on this proposal. However, I will say that the rocky ridge section identified by Mr. Morrison is a fun section of downhill trail for mountain bikers. It would be unfortunate if this small rocky section were removed from the trail system altogether.</p> <p><u>Davis Gulch Bike Course / Multi-Use Trails - Matt Culpo, Presenter</u> I fully support this project proposal. It is long past due for the City to</p>	
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		<p>formalize the Davis Gulch Bike Course and allow signage and improvements to the bike course. I urge the City to please adopt Mr. Culpo's project proposal.</p> <p><u>Dump Gulch Project</u> - Eric Sivers, Presenter I fully support each component of Mr. Sivers's project proposal. For a long time now there has been a growing need for a bike-optimized trail leading down to the bottom of Dump Gulch. Building such a trail would alleviate pressure on other trails coming off Mount Helena and would help to decrease the propensity for user conflict (<i>see, e.g., Ms. Clifford's comment</i>).</p> <p>I agree that the City should implement a few minor re-routes on the 2006 Trail above Aftershock Trail to reduce the grade. This isn't a high priority project, in my opinion, but doing so would clearly improve the existing trail since it is a primary uphill route to the top of Mt. Ascension. I urge the City to adopt Mr. Sivers's project proposal.</p> <p><u>Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena</u> - Tony Zammit, Presenter I fully support this project proposal. Mr. Zammit has a clear plan in place to develop a new ADA accessible trail on Mount Helena. This would be a major benefit for Helena's citizens and would improve the opportunities for many people with mobility issues to get out and enjoy Helena's open space. I urge the City to adopt Mr. Zammit's project proposal.</p> <p><u>Proposal for Rerouting Portion of Trail above Beattie</u> - Nate Kopp, PPLT, Presenter I fully support this project proposal. I urge the City to adopt Mr. Kopp's project proposal.</p>	
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			<p>Thanks for taking the time to review these comments and for engaging the public in the process.</p>	
<p>09.30.2020</p>	<p>Helena Hikes Steering Committee:</p> <p>Barry Hood Claudia Clifford Jerry Wells Joan Miles Lisa Bay Sanna Porte Tony Jewett</p>	<p>sanna.porte@gmail.com</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2021 proposed major projects for HOL. It's exciting to see the new public involvement process at work for the first time, and we're pleased to be part of it.</p> <p>Overview comments</p> <p>While Helena Hikes understands the potential needs of several trailhead parking areas, we believe a higher priority would be to address safety on our trails, a strong etiquette campaign, and conservation efforts (rehabilitation of damaged trails and ongoing maintenance issues). It is not clear how the Department's budget is allocated between major projects (such as the parking area proposals) vs. ongoing trail upkeep and education in order to ensure safety on our trails and the conservation of this important resource. This makes it more difficult to comment on specific parking area proposals.</p> <p>We encourage Parks and Recreation to evaluate which are the most critical parking upgrades and balance this with dedicating sufficient funding for important maintenance/rehabilitation issues on our trail system. Many of these maintenance issues (such as some of the issues brought up by Eric Sivers) appear to have safety implications and should be attended to.</p> <p>Helena Hikes also would like to see the Department present a budget overview to HOLMAC and clearly delineate what discretionary funds are available in order to present a balanced workplan for 2021. I.e., the</p>	<p>For the purpose of efficiency, responses to your comments have been organized by topic. Following is an itemized response to your topics of conversation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Open Lands Budget) The Open Lands Division annually presents its yearly budget to City Commission. The public is encouraged to participate in the City's budget planning process. 2. (Trail Maintenance) For Calendar Year 2020, information related to trail maintenance can be found in on the City Parks Department website at: https://www.helenamt.gov/parksdocuments. 3. (HOLMAC Budget Overview) City staff annually present HOLMAC with an overview of the Open Lands Division budget during its developmental phase. 4. (Directional Trail Sessioning Route) Please reference the City's Major Project Recommendation Document.

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		<p>budget should not be overly weighted toward major new projects. Taking care of our trail system should be a priority.</p> <p>Directional Trails exit route, Eric Grove Helena Hikes supports a clear exit route as well as a sessioning route at the bottom of the Directional Trails. This needs to be coupled with safety measures on the lower portion of Eddy West. This is long overdue. Eric Grove has pointed out the safety concerns about riders going from Arrowroot to Eddy West. Additionally, hiking on the lower portions of Eddy West has become extremely dangerous, with riders speeding down the trail – much of which is fairly straight.</p> <p>When the Directional Trails were built two years ago, we strongly urged the City Commission to make sure these new trails did not negatively impact the experience for hikers and walkers on Eddy West, and we offered mitigation suggestions. At that time, the City Commission directed the Department to explore potential mitigating measures, but it hasn't happened. It is time to address not only the safety of riders (which we recognize as a legitimate concern), but also the safety of other trail users. Helena Hikes would welcome the opportunity to work with the Department, the presenter, and others to find workable solutions.</p> <p>New climbing routes, Bradley Maddock We have no comments on these proposals at this time.</p> <p>ADA trails expansion, Margareta (Meg) Seyr-Bishop Helena Hikes strongly supports this concept while recognizing that it needs fleshing out in terms of what its physical characteristics might be,</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. (Directional Trail Mitigation Measures) Any measures to be implemented with regards to Helena's trail system will involve participation from all stakeholders who have expressed interest in the City's open lands system. 6. (De Ford ADA Trail) Please reference the City's Major Project Recommendation Document. 7. (De Ford/Lower Dry Gulch Bike Skills Course Public Process) Please reference the City's Major Project Recommendation Document. 8. (HOLMAC Etiquette Plan Discussion) HOLMAC's 2020 meeting schedule has been significantly impacted by COVID-19, however, upon resumption of normal meeting agendas, HOLMAC will be encouraged to discuss all aspects of the Trail related items that have developed over the last 7-8 months. 9. (Archery Range Trail) Please reference the City's Major Project Recommendation Document. 10. (Dump Gulch) Please reference the City's Major Project Recommendation Document.
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		<p>what it would cost, and the level of support and interest it has from ADA partners.</p> <p>We agree that installation of an ADA-compliant trail would provide a unique and meaningful contribution to our trail system, one that would allow folks with restricted mobility to get a 1.5-mile workout in a natural setting. The City’s proposed ADA-compliant restroom at the Old Shooting Range would complement this proposal.</p> <p>Given that this ADA proposal and the Davis Gulch bike course proposal have potential overlaps and conflicts, we strongly urge the City to hold a public on-site listening session at DeFord Trail/Davis Gulch to determine if and how these proposals can be compatible. These proposals also need to be considered in the context of growing bike use funneling down off the ridges into this popular area.</p> <p>Trail safety & etiquette, Claudia Clifford (Note: Helena Hikes steering committee member Claudia Clifford did not actually submit a proposal on safety and etiquette; she just asked the Department about potential plans and funding for a safety and etiquette campaign.) We were pleasantly surprised recently to see a 2020 trail etiquette plan posted on the Department’s website. We were unaware that the etiquette plan had been completed by PPLT and submitted to the City. We have suggestions to enhance the plan in several areas, and no doubt other trail users will too. Therefore, we urge the Department to ask HOLMAC to put the plan on its agenda for public discussion and comment. A safety and etiquette campaign is bound to be more successful with public input on both the plan itself and the level of funding needed.</p>	<p>11. (Interpretive Signage) City staff determined that this subject did not meet the “Major Project” criteria, and therefore, would be incorporated into the 2021 Work Plan development process.</p> <p>12. (System Wide Trail Assessment) City staff determined that this subject did not meet the “Major Project” criteria, and therefore, would be incorporated into the 2021 Work Plan development process.</p> <p>13. (Natural Surface Trail Management) City staff determined that this subject did not meet the “Major Project” criteria, and therefore, would be incorporated into the 2021 Work Plan development process.</p>
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		<p>Educating both Helenans and out-of-town visitors on trail safety and etiquette will benefit us all into the future, especially given the dramatically increased use of our HOL trails.</p> <p>Archery Range trail options, Ken Morrison As with a number of other proposals, we would love the opportunity to learn more about this. We urge the City to organize a site visit with Ken Morrison and interested citizens.</p> <p>Davis Gulch bike course/multi-use trails, Matt Culpo This project has much to recommend it: It addresses a situation in the lower Gulch where severe damage needs to be dealt with; it incorporates etiquette reminders; it addresses mitigation for damage from bikers high-marking the DeFord trail; and it provides fencing to funnel bike use into the Gulch, rather than off of various points on the DeFord Trail.</p> <p>Our concern is that the formalization of the bike course will likely attract more use to the area, with potential attendant impacts to the DeFord Trail. This trail is a favorite of walkers, families, and x-country skiers in winter. It is one of the few low-gradient trails in the HOL system, and therefore cherished by walkers and families wishing a less challenging experience.</p> <p>We therefore request: 1) that the City hold an on-site meeting with the presenter, Matt Culpo, so the public can understand all aspects of the project, and 2) that in order to mitigate the additional use generated by a bike course, a "sessioning trail" retaining all bike use within the Gulch be incorporated into the proposal. We would like the City to consider making this section of the DeFord Trail walker/runner/and potentially ADA-use only. Helena Hikes would like to explore with the City and the</p>	
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		<p>presenter how to create an "optimal experience" for both bikers and walkers (and potentially ADA users) along the entire DeFord Trail, and we believe it is possible, with some deeper consideration of this entire area.</p> <p>Dump Gulch bike-optimized trail, Aftershock re-route, 2006 trail re-route, Paydirt rehabilitation, Eric Sivers We're not familiar enough with these proposals to offer substantive comments, and we urge the City to conduct public site visits with Eric Sivers and interested citizens so we can better understand the proposals.</p> <p>We acknowledge that Mr. Sivers brings up an important safety issue by raising the need for a way that bikes can descend from the Ridgeline to the gulch. We would also point out that numerous local hikers have raised significant concerns about bikes descending from the Ridgeline down Show Me Horse, McKelvey, and other trails at speeds that endanger hikers. Consideration of a bike-optimized trail down route, accompanied with a hiker-only down route, would minimize the chance of collisions and improve safety for all. This issue is important to explore, and Helena Hikes would commit to participating in discussions.</p> <p>Interpretive & etiquette signage, Eric Sivers We support this proposal and would like to be part of the conversation in developing the signage.</p> <p>System-wide trail assessment, Eric Sivers Helena Hikes believes this ambitious assessment should be the City's highest priority project over the next year. As Mr. Sivers states: "A systematic assessment will help lay out a maintenance work plan for upcoming years." And, we would add, it would help the Department more easily construct its capacity and budget needs into the future, and</p>	
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			<p>offer a more sustainable trail system while creating less environmental damage.</p> <p>This idea was presented to the Department by an ad hoc group comprising Montana Bicycle Guild, Helena Hikes, and Helena Trails Alliance in 2019. The group offered to marshal volunteers to conduct the effort and received a favorable reception at the time from Director Ponozzo. We recognize that the City contracted with PPLT to conduct a trails assessment in 2020; however, the ad hoc group had proposed a far more in-depth assessment, including the mapping and evaluation of social trails.</p> <p>Helena Hikes would like to work with the other groups, PPLT, and the Department during winter 2020 on how such an assessment would be conducted. We would work to recruit volunteers to implement it next spring/summer. This largely volunteer effort would reduce overall costs to the City and could set forth long-term protocols for future trails assessments for the City and its contractors.</p> <p>Natural surface trails, Eric Sivers We have no comments on this proposal at this time.</p> <p>Thanks again for the opportunity to comment, and we look forward to continuing to participate in the public process for the 2021 major projects plan.</p>	
09.30.2020	TJ Lehman	tjlehman3@gmail.com	I want to thank you for your time and energy in this process to finalize the open lands 2021 project plan. I've listed below my support for the major projects with my recommendations or notes in support.	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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			<p>DeFord parking expansion will need to take into account the private driveway across the road so that there's a safe distance for vehicles to enter and exit the parking area and driveway.</p> <p>Old Shooting Range vaulted toilet is a great addition to the trailhead area. If cement picnic tables are an option I would recommend this over wooden tables as they tend to disappear. You could also consider burying a cement anchor block and chaining the wood table(s).</p> <p>Lime Kiln trailhead parking is a safe solution that I think is a great idea. Trail signage and a system map would be a great addition to the parking area. Share the road bicycle signs on Lime Kiln and Martinez gulch would be a great addition too. Thank you for coming up with this.</p> <p>Mt ascension trailhead parking area expansion is much needed. As stated in the listening session the parking is confusing, narrow, and vehicles are parked regularly disjointed. Creating more space will accommodate the current use and should prepare Helena for any future growth. This will also eliminate any vehicles parking on the side of Martinez gulch road or blocking the road for through traffic. Trail signage and a system map would be a great addition to the parking area.</p> <p>The ADA trail on Mount Helena is a fantastic idea for our south hills trail system and the city park of Mount Helena. I especially like the idea of points of interest with historical signage and benches. This will be used by families, people with disabilities, and a great place overall to showcase Helena.</p> <p>The Davis bike skills course improvement and adoption into the trail system is another project I support. This is a great place in our open</p>	
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			<p>lands for our youth to develop their mountain biking skills. I frequently see kids of all ages utilizing this area for bicycling which is great to see kids in the outdoors. Creating a liaison for this trail that has the expertise in trail construction and experience with biking various skill level trails will help improve this area greatly. I support this proposal.</p> <p>The return trail proposal at the bottom of the mt ascension directional trails is another project I support. The current jeep road isn't ideal for climbing or for sustainability. Cutting in a return trail with a more suitable grade, sweeping turns, and long sight lines will be a great project I support. I would also like to see the cones picked up at the bottom of the directional trail as I've considered multiple times dragging them down and delivering them back to the city myself. Any additional signage needed I would personally be happy to help install in this area.</p> <p>Dump Gulch bike-optimized trail is a long discussed idea that has now made its way to a proposal in what I believe to be the perfect project. I believe it will be a great addition to the Helena ridge trail system as it first will create a safe route back into town rather than the more popular "show me the horse trail" that puts riders on the road for 2 miles back into town. The current McKelvey trail is a popular uphill trail that basically goes straight up and down. Putting in a bike-optimized trail in dump gulch is a great way to use what was once the dump for the city. Let's turn dump gulch into a gem with this project. Thank you for taking the time to read my supporting bullets for the projects mentioned above. If you have any questions please let me know and I would be happy to clarify.</p>	
09.30.2020	Lacey Gunther	lacey.gunther95@gmail.com kelsey.gunther21@gmail.com	Please see below for my comments on the proposed trail projects for 2020-2021. The majority seem like great investments for our community, given that the population of trail users will only continue to grow.	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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			<p><u>I support the following projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DeFord Parking Area Expansion Project - this is a very reasonable and welcome addition that recognizes the amount of use the existing parking areas are seeing. If we don't build it people will continue to take matters into their own hands which will not benefit anyone. • Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project - this is a very reasonable and natural addition to one of our largest parking areas. It would also help decrease the use of "off trail bathrooms." • Limekiln Parking Area Realignment Project - this is an awesome suggestion that recognizes that issues with the existing parking area and will help to further disperse users in the trail system by making it safer, larger, and easier to use. • Mount Ascension Parking Area Expansion Project - this is a sorely needed expansion in a highly-used location that will help to prevent the disorganized parking that exists today. • Directional Trails Exit Trail - the suggestion by Eric Grove is natural and a much-needed addition in this area. I frequently use the directional trails and would love to be able to ride my bike back up instead of having to hike-a-bike the old jeep road. • Davis Gulch Bike Course / Multi-Use Trails - I absolutely love to see all of the kids who have flocked to the Davis bike skills area and strongly feel that formalizing and signing the area will be a welcome addition to our trail system. The suggestions by Matt Culpo are great and have low-to-no impact on other trail users. <p>Dump Gulch Project(s) - from Eric Sivers</p>	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bike-optimized trail down to the bottom of dump gulch would be a huge addition to the trail system that would provide an enormous benefit to a significant number of mountain bikers of all skill levels. • Re-routing portions of the 2006 trail above Aftershock to reduce grade is a great suggestion that could be easily accommodated. My legs and lungs thank you for considering this option. • Re-routing portions of the 2006 trail above Arrowroot to reduce grade is a great suggestion that could be easily accommodated. • Rehabilitating the portion of Paydirt Trail between the two rock outcrops is a great suggestion. Eric's idea to provide a soil ramp on the outside will work well. Please maintain the rocky portion in its current state for mountain biking as well. • I support reviewing the trail system with a particular focus on addressing drainage issues caused by out-dated trail building practices. • Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena - this is an awesome project that I would love to see happen. 	
09.30.2020	James Szerwo	szerwo@gmail.com	<p>I am writing to show my support for all the major projects proposed in the City of Helena Open Lands Division Proposed Major Projects - Calendar Year 2021. As a resident, biker, and hiker of Helena, these projects would have a positive impact on the recreation surrounding our city. Improved parking and facilities would ease congestion around trailheads. ADA accessible trails would allow more people to enjoy the outdoors. Improved, rerouted, and new trails would improve the experience of all users. Signage for trail etiquette would help reduce conflict between trail users of different types. Again, I support all of the proposed major projects listed in the City of Helena Open Lands Division Proposed Major Projects - Calendar Year 2021.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			<p>I would also like to add that class 1 e-bikes be allowed in all areas standard bicycles are allowed. Much like the ADA trails increasing access for those that otherwise would not be able to enjoy the outdoor trails, class 1 e-bikes allow for improved access for those that may not otherwise be able. E-bikes could also reduce trailhead congestion by allowing users to ride from home due to the increased range rather than driving or shuttling to the trailheads. Thanks for your time.</p>	
09.30.2020	Vicki Anfinson	vickia31@gmail.com	<p>After reading through the trail projects for 2020-2021, I would like to comment on the importance of trail maintenance. Point #6 of Eric Sivers proposal regarding assessment of current trails for restructuring and maintenance should be a high priority. Trail usage increases every year and by mid-summer many of them are in need of repair. Not only for cyclists but for hikers. Trail expansion is great, but we need to maintain existing trails.</p> <p>I bike most of the single track trails 2-3 times per week and very much appreciate having them in my 'backyard'. Thank you for your work.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
09.30.2020	Jake Gunther	jake.gunther21@gmail.com	<p><u>I strongly support the following projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DeFord Parking Area Expansion Project - this is a very reasonable and welcome addition that recognizes the amount of use the existing parking areas are seeing. If we don't build it people will continue to take matters into their own hands which will not benefit anyone. • Old Shooting Range Restroom Installation Project - this is a very reasonable and natural addition to one of our largest parking areas. My wife and I recently welcomed a new daughter and we are thrilled that the City Parks staff is working to make our future visits to this trailhead more friendly for young children with the addition of restroom facilities. 	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limekiln Parking Area Realignment Project - this is an awesome suggestion that recognizes that issues with the existing parking area and will help to further disperse users in the trail system by making it safer, larger, and easier to use. • Mount Ascension Parking Area Expansion Project - this is a sorely needed expansion in a highly-used location that will help to prevent the disorganized parking that exists today. • Directional Trails Exit Trail - the suggestion by Eric Grove is natural and much-needed addition in this area. I frequently use the directional trails and would love to be able to ride my bike back up instead of having to hike-a-bike the old jeep road. • New Climbing Routes - while I am not a climber myself, I could easily see my daughter become one someday and I am excited about the prospect of expanding the sport climbing on Mt. Helena. • Davis Gulch Bike Course / Multi-Use Trails - I absolutely love to see all of the kids who have flocked to the Davis bike skills area and strongly feel that formalizing and signing the area will be a welcome addition to our trail system. I occasionally use the jumps/skills courses myself and believe the suggestions by Matt Culpo are great and have low-to-no impact on other trail users. • Dump Gulch Project(s) - from Eric Sivers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A bike-optimized trail down to the bottom of dump gulch would be a huge addition to the trail system that would provide an enormous benefit to a significant number of mountain bikers of all skill levels. ○ Re-routing portions of the 2006 trail above Aftershock to reduce grade is a great suggestion that could be easily accommodated. My legs and lungs thank you for considering this option. 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-routing portions of the 2006 trail above Arrowroot to reduce grade is a great suggestion that could be easily accommodated. My legs and lungs thank you for considering this option. ○ Rehabilitating the portion of Paydirt Trail between the two rock outcrops is a great suggestion. Eric's idea to provide a soil ramp on the outside will work well. Please maintain the rocky portion in its current state for mountain biking as well. ○ I support reviewing the trail system with a particular focus on addressing drainage issues caused by out-dated trail building practices. ● Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena - this is an awesome project that I would love to see happen. Our disabled community members deserve no less and I would be happy to volunteer my time for its construction. I could see my wife and I walking our daughter on this trail while she is young. <p>Thank you so much for all of the hard work you do!</p>	
09.30.2020	Aaron Fiaschetti	afiaschetti77@gmail.com	<p>I just wanted to email to support for the following projects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Directional Trails Exit Trail -Eric Grove, Presenter 2. Davis Gulch Bike Course / Multi-Use Trails, Matt Culpo, Presenter 3. Dump Gulch Project, Eric Sivers, Presenter - including other suggestions 4. Proposal for ADA-Compliant Trail on Mt. Helena, Tony Zammit, Presenter <p>The expansion of parking seems practical. Thanks.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>

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09.30.2020	Branton Holmes	brantonion@gmail.com	<p>I wanted to comment on a few of the open lands project proposals.</p> <p>First, I want to support the proposal to add new climbing routes to the headwall on Mount Helena. I have been climbing for years, but only really gotten back into rock climbing this summer after moving to Helena about 3 years ago. I have since climbed most of the routes on Mt Helena in each of the current climbing walls/areas. I think that adding more routes would be a great addition for the local climbing community. With the routes on Mount Helena, we really do have a unique opportunity to have a great climbing area that many people could walk to straight from their front door! There are a few reasons that adding more routes would be a good addition to the climbing area.</p> <p>For one, it would help to spread out climbing users as the community grows, helping to avoid traffic-jams or user conflicts. In addition to that, it could help to provide a safe progression in the sport for users as they grow in their climbing skills. Currently Mt Helena has a decent number of easier routes and moderate routes (5.6 - 5.10d), but only a couple of moderately hard routes in the 5.11 range, and one 5.12 and one 5.13. Opening up more area to climbing route development could lead to more 5.11, 12 and perhaps even harder routes which would give climbers a good number of harder routes to work through. I truly believe that the climbing area has little to no impact on other non-climbing users of the 1906 trail. I have never had someone come to me with an issue when I have been climbing on the closest routes to the trail on the Red Slab area, and often will have people stop to watch and ask questions while I climb a route! As for visual impact, I imagine that if you surveyed most trail users, they would likely have never seen any of the climbing hardware on MT Helena, especially if the climbing area sign wasn't there to warn them that something might be around. The only hardware that a</p>	<p>Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.</p>
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			<p>hiker could really have any chance of seeing are the first couple of bolts on the routes "Apple" and "Black Lung" on the red slab wall.</p> <p>One last note on the climbing area - I'm fairly sure that both of the bolts mentioned in the note about route maintenance were bolts I reported. The online tool to report them is great, but it might be good to look into ways to make more people aware of the bolt reporting tool.</p> <p>I also wanted to comment on the Dump Gulch proposal, but more specifically the proposal to reduce the grade in various steep portions of trails as well as going through a system-wide trail assessment. I am an experienced mountain biker with good fitness, but I have a partner who is fairly new to the sport and who doesn't have the same fitness level and have seen through her how it can really diminish her enjoyment on the local trails. It is very great that our local trails are so easily accessible from town, but for many users, they aren't particularly accessible when it takes so much out of you to get to the top of some of our trails. Improving many of the trails throughout the South Hills could also help to spread out users if there were more trails that were more suitable for riding uphill. On the same note of accessibility, I also fully support adding the ADA-compliant trail from the Mt Helena parking lot. Anything that can allow someone to utilize our public lands who otherwise might not be able to is a benefit to our trail system.</p> <p>I just want to add that I am extremely happy to live in an area with such great and accessible options for outdoor recreation. I have recently started working for a remote job where I can live anywhere, but the uniquely accessible outdoor adventures of Helena keep me here.</p>	
09.30.2020	Tom Palmer	palmers79@gmail.com	Greetings and thank you for the opportunity to comment on your trailhead parking area proposals.	Thank you for taking time to submit your comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Trail System. We appreciate your input.

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			<p>I would encourage Helena Parks And Recreation to place a tighter focus on trail safety, etiquette, conservation and maintenance at this time before building and expanding additional parking facilities.</p> <p>Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.</p>	
09.15.2020	See Attached	2020 September Listening Session	<p>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ARE INCLUDED IN THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 15 LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY</p> <p>See "EXHIBIT B" - COMBINED TRAIL PROJECTS 2020-2021</p>	