



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 19, 2024

**DATE:** October 20, 2024

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Joanne Lowden, Natural Resource Planning Coordinator,  
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**THROUGH:** Aaron Smith, Operations Division Director  
Community Services Department, 328-2172, [aasmith@washoecounty.gov](mailto:aasmith@washoecounty.gov)

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to approve a Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Hunter Creek – Reno Owner, LLC to allow Washoe County to construct and maintain a portion of the Sierra Front Trail and allow public use of the trail through Parcel 2-A of the Ridges at Hunter Creek Phase 2 – Unit 1 Subdivision Tract Map No. 5495, Assessor’s Parcel Number 041-671-04. The easement area consists of 13,134 square feet and is relocatable to the as-built location of the trail after construction is complete. Approximately 0.17-miles of trail will be constructed in the easement area [for an estimated cost of \$8,000.00]. Community Services. (Commission District 1.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION.

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### SUMMARY

Washoe County Parks provided conditions of approval for Amendment of Conditions Case Number WAC22-001 and Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP22-0007 (Ridges at Hunter Creek Phases 1 & 2) which were approved by the planning commission on June 7, 2022. The conditions of approval required the applicant to dedicate a 15’ wide, non-motorized, multi-use, public trail easement through Assessor’s Parcel Number 041-671-04 to Washoe County for construction of the Sierra Front Trail. The Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement will satisfy the conditions of approval and allow Washoe County Parks to construct and maintain the Sierra Front Trail within the easement area and allow the public to use the trail for recreational purposes.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Economic Impacts – Meet the Needs of Our Growing Community.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

**August 27, 2024** – The Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved a Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Caughlin Ranch Homeowner’s Association to allow Washoe County to construct and maintain a portion of the Sierra Front Trail and allow public use of the trail through two undeveloped common areas in the Juniper Trails subdivision, Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 220-011-03 and 220-011-11. The easement area consists of 2.445 acres and is relocatable

AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_

to the as-built location of the trail after construction is complete. Approximately 0.68-miles of trail will be constructed in the easement area for an estimated cost of \$32,000.00.

**July 16, 2024** – The Board approved a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement between Washoe County and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest with an estimated Washoe County non-cash contribution of [\$215,510.00; \$209,310.00 in personnel costs and \$6,200.00 in light maintenance costs] over a 5-year period to allow Washoe County to maintain existing and future trails that cross both jurisdictions along the Sierra Front and to continue maintaining the Whites Creek, Thomas Creek Canyon, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads.

**June 24, 2024** – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission recommended that the Board approve a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement between Washoe County and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest with an estimated Washoe County non-cash contribution of \$215,510.00 primarily in salary and labor costs over a 5-year period to allow Washoe County to maintain existing and future trails that cross both jurisdictions along the Sierra Front and to continue maintaining the Whites Creek, Thomas Creek Canyon, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads.

**June 7, 2022** - The Washoe County Planning Commission approved Amendment of Conditions Case Number WAC22-0001 for Kia Ora, LLC to amend the tentative map previously approved in TM16-005 (Ridges at Hunter Creek) along with the amended conditions included as Exhibit A to this matter, having made all ten findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.608.25. The Planning Commission approved Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP22-0007 for Kia Ora, LLC, with the conditions included as Exhibit A to this matter, having made all five findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.810.30, and approved the applicant's request to vary the grading standards set forth in Washoe County Code Sections 110.438.45(a), (b), (c) and 110.438.50(a).

**July 20, 2021** – The Board accepted a State of Nevada, Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program 2021-10 “Sierra Front Trail Planning” grant [in the amount of \$74,300 with cash match in the amount of \$18,575].

**December 8, 2020** – The Board accepted a State of Nevada, Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program 2020-14 “Thomas Creek to Ballardini Ranch Connector Trail” grant [in the amount of \$40,000 with a Washoe County cash match in the amount of \$10,000].

### **BACKGROUND**

Washoe County Parks is partnering with the Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to construct a portion of the Sierra Front Trail which provides connections between the Thomas Creek, Ballardini Ranch, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads. The Sierra Front Trail crosses a combination of County owned open space and Forest Service lands. The County owns and maintains the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead and maintains the Thomas Creek and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads which are owned by the Forest Service. The Board approved a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement with the

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on July 16, 2024, that allows Washoe County to maintain both current and future sections of the Sierra Front Trail and to continue maintaining the Thomas Creek and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads.

The Board accepted a State of Nevada, Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, to assist with completing the Sierra Front Trail connection between the Thomas Creek and Ballardini Ranch Trailheads. Construction of the 6.5-mile section connecting the Thomas Creek and Ballardini Ranch Trailheads was completed and opened to the public in June 2022. The Board approved an additional RTP grant on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, to complete planning for the next section of the Sierra Front Trail connecting the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead to the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead. The RTP grants require the County to maintain the funded infrastructure for a minimum of 20 years.

All required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) surveys and resource reports for the Sierra Front Trail section connecting the Ballardini Ranch and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads have been completed and accepted by the Forest Service and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence has been received for the project. The final trail alignment includes 13.1-miles of multi-use singletrack trail and 4 proposed bridge crossings. The preferred trail alignment crosses several privately owned parcels where public trail easements are needed to move forward with the project. The Forest Service is expected to issue the final NEPA decision for the project once all the necessary easements have been recorded. Washoe County Parks will continue to pursue grant funding opportunities such as the Recreational Trails Program to help fund construction of the Sierra Front Trail after the NEPA decision has been issued.

Washoe County Parks submitted a request to the Caughlin Ranch Homeowner's Association for a public trail easement through two undeveloped common area parcels in the Juniper Trails subdivision (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 220-011-03 and 220-011-11). The Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement was approved by the Caughlin Ranch Homeowner's Association Board on July 24, 2024, and subsequently approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 27, 2024.

Washoe County Parks provided conditions of approval for Amendment of Conditions Case Number WAC22-001 and Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP22-0007 (Ridges at Hunter Creek Phases 1 & 2) which were approved by the planning commission on June 7, 2022. The conditions of approval required the applicant to dedicate a 15' wide, non-motorized, multi-use, public trail easement through Assessor's Parcel Number 041-671-04 to Washoe County for construction of the Sierra Front Trail. The Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement will satisfy the conditions of approval and allow Washoe County Parks to construct and maintain the Sierra Front Trail within the easement area and allow the public to use the trail for recreational purposes.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Washoe County Parks will construct approximately 0.17-miles of new trail within the easement area for an estimated cost of \$8,000.00. Sufficient funds and budget authority exist in FY25 in the Parks Capital Fund (404), Ballardini Loop Trails WC-1 (PK052111).

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve a Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Hunter Creek – Reno Owner, LLC to allow Washoe County to construct and maintain a portion of the Sierra Front Trail and allow public use of the trail through Parcel 2-A of the Ridges at Hunter Creek Phase 2 – Unit 1 Subdivision Tract Map No. 5495, Assessor’s Parcel Number 041-671-04. The easement area consists of 13,134 square feet and is relocatable to the as-built location of the trail after construction is complete. Approximately 0.17-miles of trail will be constructed in the easement area [for an estimated cost of \$8,000.00].

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to approve a Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Hunter Creek – Reno Owner, LLC to allow Washoe County to construct and maintain a portion of the Sierra Front Trail and allow public use of the trail through Parcel 2-A of the Ridges at Hunter Creek Phase 2 – Unit 1 Subdivision Tract Map No. 5495, Assessor’s Parcel Number 041-671-04. The easement area consists of 13,134 square feet and is relocatable to the as-built location of the trail after construction is complete. Approximately 0.17-miles of trail will be constructed in the easement area [for an estimated cost of \$8,000.00].